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Racial Countermemory:
Tourism, Spatial Design, and Hegemonic Remembering

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On July 29, 1910, a massacre took place in the town of Slocum, TX, a small rural community 125 miles north of Houston. Three Black men were walking down a dirt road late at night when they passed a few white men, who murdered them in cold blood (Madigan, 2006). While specific details of the incident are sparse, we know that within 48 hours, an unknown number of Black residents (ranging from dozens to possibly hundreds) were murdered. Most of their names were forgotten, and there was no total body count for the massacre, though the sheriff of the county suggested the death toll could be between 200-300 African-Americans. "The [white men] hunted the Negroes down like sheep," he stated (Madigan, 2006). This mass slaughter, while publicized in the *Dallas Morning News* and the *New York Times*, was quickly erased out of any national narrative on racism during the Jim Crow era. Though people in the Slocum area told stories of the massacre for decades, there were no public memorials dedicated to the incident. Many in the area even described the story as a legend rather than a historical event.

However, in 2016, over a century later, the "legends" of the 1910 Slocum Massacre were enshrined by the Texas Historical Commission (THC) with a marker one mile southeast of the town. The marker claims that eight men died (and acknowledges probably many more did, too) and cites a poignant quote from a piece of Texas legislation that recognized the incident in 2011: "Only by shining a light on previous injustice can we learn from and move toward a future of greater healing and reconciliation" (Ramirez, 2016). Many African Americans in the area celebrated the marker. After hearing for years that many of their ancestors were victims of a terrible massacre but lacking the historical proof to authenticate it, they finally had the THC on their side. One confirmed victim's descendant, Constance Hollie-Jawaid, stated of the incident, "It was being ignored, and by ignoring it, you're spitting in the face of those who died during that tragic event. You're basically saying either it didn't happen or it was not important" (Madigan, 2006). Many in the area were overjoyed that a history they had been privately taught for decades had finally been publicly acknowledged through historical research.

Not everyone was happy, though, especially many white people in the area. Jimmy Odom, chair of the Anderson County Historical Commission, the county where Slocum is located, critiqued the marker: "This is a nice, quiet community with a wonderful school system. It would be a shame to mark them as racist from now until the end of time" (Madigan, 2006). Anderson County Commissioner Greg Chapain agreed with Odom, claiming, "So we've looked at all the

information—as far as all the ones that have been supplied to us. Everything has contradicted itself totally—as far as how many were killed—how many weren't killed. How many Blacks? How many whites? ... Nothing was consistent—and then no one was prosecuted on it. No one was convicted" (Davies, 2015). While the Texas Historical Commission believed they had enough research to construct a monument in honor of the dead (some of which was built from E.R. Bills' 2014 book *The 1910 Slocum Massacre*), many people in the area, especially white people, believed the commission didn't have enough evidence to make its claims. Nonetheless, this controversy on how to remember, or, perhaps, forget, the Slocum massacre illustrates a memory problem—specifically, an issue with countermemory.

Countermemory can be defined as a marginalized (or often erased) form of remembering, one that resituates the narratives of the oppressed or forgotten as equal to dominant narratives and often contains the same—if not more—historical evidence. Countermemories can be constructed for people, identities, historical events, or nation-building. In Slocum, the dominant narrative is that the African-American massacre never took place, or that there isn't enough "evidence" to suggest that it did. Though legends of the massacre spread orally around the area for over a century, some citizens of Slocum downplayed their relevance and played off the stories as fake. However, the new marker in Slocum, along with the Texas Historical Commission's approval, E.R. Bill's book, and a dozen articles or so that implicate the town in a historical tragedy, together build a countermemory in the community that resists the dominant discourse. Many white people in the area oppose these countermemories because they damage the perception of white people and their town's reputation. Thus, the power of countermemories is not just that they can build identities and form communities but that they can drastically alter how a community perceives itself.

In this article, we build a working rhetorical theory of countermemory, a term not sufficiently discussed in rhetorical scholarship but used in cultural geography. To do this, we begin by discussing the rhetoric of public memory and explore how public memory has been constructed, utilized, and performed over the last 30 years of scholarship. Though our work here focuses specifically on race, there are broader rhetorical applications of countermemories, and we hope that other rhetoricians might employ countermemory to better understand the relationship between history, memory, identity, and power because these relationships enhance how we understand ideology, sight, and knowledge creation. We then move to defining countermemory by first using interdisciplinary scholarship to illustrate how other fields employ it and then define it in concrete rhetorical terms. From there, we move into three different case studies of the National Museum of Peace and Justice (NMPJ), the Porvenir Massacre, and the Whitney Plantation to demonstrate the rhetorical nature of countermemory. We explore each case study through certain themes that better characterize its rhetorical capabilities: the spatiality of countermemory at the NMPJ, the hegemonic defenses of white memory at Porvenir, and the relationship between heritage tourism sites and countermemory at the Whitney Plantation. As a subversive rhetorical feature, countermemory re/writes heritage tourism sites, memorials, and historical markers in a way that could be transformative in the American South and Texas.

A History of Public Memory in Rhetorical Studies

According to Susannah Radstone (2008), we can trace memory studies back to the late-1980s and 1990s and one of the first interdisciplinary conferences on memory in 1998, titled "Frontiers of Memory." Influenced by these interdisciplinary scholars, rhetoricians began applying these concepts of memory to study public memory. Much in the way classical rhetoric analyzed how orators apply mnemonics to aid their memories (seen in the likes of Quintilian's *Institutio Oratoria* and Cicero's *De Oratore*) public memory scholars studied how mnemonics affect the public. The emphasis on recall and retention evolved to analysis on seeing how space and place hold rhetorical dimensions. The *ars memoriae* (or, the art of memory) transformed from training the individual mind to studying how people collectively train to identify with public objects. This change from memorization mnemonics to mnemonics of identity (mnemonics that highlight how personal and collective identity are shaped) accentuated the rhetorical dimensions of created objects, space, and memory and how they convene publicly. Below, we discuss a brief history of public memory rhetorics as a means to further explore the need of countermemory studies, labeling the exigencies for our study.

One of the first pieces of rhetorical scholarship on public memory is Carole Blair, Marsha S. Jeppeson, and Enrico Pucci, Jr.'s (1991) "Public Memorializing in Postmodernity" published in the *Quarterly Journal of Speech* (*QJS*). Their article uses a public memory lens to analyze the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington D.C., arguing that postmodern texts and monuments are never "complete," and rhetoric scholars should attempt "to grasp the multiplicity of any discourse" (p. 282). This groundbreaking article opened the door for people to study the rhetoric of public memory because it highlights the multiple interpretations of monuments and their effects.

In the 1990s, *QJS* published three more texts on public memory that deal with new issues of public tragedy, race, and rhetoric. First, Stephen H. Browne (1995) published a review essay, "Reading, Rhetoric, and the Texture of Public Memory" in *QJS*. The four books he analyzes, however, are not explicitly "rhetorical" texts; rather, they are public memory texts published in American Studies and History. Browne makes the case that public memory is a rhetorical method, and in his conclusion he argues for public memory to be its own subsection in the field of rhetoric. Cheryl R. Jorgensen-Earp and Lori A. Lanzilotti (1998) followed Browne's lead and published their text on shrines of national tragedy in *QJS* three years later. Their text analyzes the public memories of tragedy (such as the Oklahoma City bombing and the material objects visitors brought to enshrine the horrific event) to see how individuals remember collective pain and create meaning from tragedy. They write, poetically, "The ritual of visiting the site and constructing the new on the ashes of the old, is itself a 'mnemonic device' that helps mourners 'keep in mind certain thoughts and sentiments,'" a way for people to share publicly with others but also to move forward in their private grief (p. 163). Their article challenges how we perceive the differences between public and private grief. Browne (1999) published another piece in *QJS*, titled, "Remembering Crispus Attucks: Race, Rhetoric, and the Politics of Commemoration." His article explores the public ceremonies that commemorate Attucks' life, specifically remarking that the "anxiety" over the proper way to remember Attucks highlights America's collective identity colliding with historical memory (p. 185-186). Browne concludes

his piece by stating that "the relationship between memory and collective identity has always troubled the cultural scene, that Americans well before the advent of 'postmodernity' have imagined, contested, expropriated, and otherwise kept their past alive for unabashedly political purposes" (p. 186). Taken together, these three articles further the subfield of public memory rhetorics by exploring their intersections with race, postmodernism, tragedies, and other avenues of identity-making.

Kendall R. Phillips' (2004) interdisciplinary edited collection *Framing Public Memory* was one of the first books to argue about memory from a rhetorical perspective (though the text is interdisciplinary). He states in the introduction:

> Indeed, the study of memory is largely one of the rhetoric of memories. The ways memories attain meaning, compel others to accept them, and are themselves contested, subverted, and supplanted by other memories are essentially rhetorical. As an art interested in the ways symbols are employed to induce cooperation, achieve understanding, contest understanding, and offer dissent, rhetoric is deeply steeped in a concern for public memories. (p. 2-3)

His collection emphasizes rhetoric as a central construct in understanding public memory and place, space, and politics. Greg Dickinson, Carole Blair, and Brian L. Ott's *Places of Public Memory* (2010) locate museums and memorials around the world that build "place" and public memory; Bradford Vivian's *Public Forgetting* (2010) integrates questions of public forgetting into conversations of memory; and G. Mitchell Reyes' (2010) edited collection *Public Memory, Race, and Ethnicity* analyzes how publics and communities inscribe and interpret race and ethnicity through various sites and act of public memory. Together, these three books (all published in the same year) extend public memory by redefining its significance in modern society.

Defining Countermemory

With a better picture of how memory studies has progressed as a subfield, as well as how scholars in rhetorical studies have engaged memory and public memory, we now turn to focus more specifically on how public memory has been adopted in the American South to illustrate what is missing from this research: countermemory. From there, we will introduce countermemory and racial countermemory as rhetorical concepts birthed out of a problematic memory-politic in the South.

Following the 2017 American Nazi and Klan rally in Charlottesville, Virginia Representative Thomas Garrett made this statement: "[The white supremacists] do not represent who we are as Americans" (Zeitz, 2017). Other public figures made similar comments on social media, including Sally Yates (2017), who tweeted, "The poison spewed by Nazis, white supremacists, and the KKK is not who we are as a country." This line of reasoning, a form of American Exceptionalism, argues that the United States is unique from other nations and plays a specific role in global history. Along with this argument is a parallel one: Because the United States is exceptional, it does not suffer from large scale social ills like Nazism and racial genocide. As a

nation, we may argue that Richard Spencer and his followers are aberrant, but this is an unfounded argument. Racism was a core value when this country was conceived, and hundreds of years later, it is still firmly a part of our national identity. In light of the fact that we suffer from selective amnesia when it comes to remembering our histories, it is not a surprise the memorials, historic markers, and historical societies present a sanitized perspective. As a result, "America has ended up with a landscape of denial" (Loewen, 2007, p. 5). Public memory in the American South is particularly complex, and in many communities, dominant cultural narratives overshadow Other/ed stories. As a way to preserve a distinctly Southern nationalist identity, for much of the 20th and 21st century, African Americans have been written out of public memory. So, the current method of remembering has more to do with forgetting than it does remembering, as well as what and whom we are remembering (Dickinson, Ott, and Aoki, 2006).

We turn first to cultural geographer Stephen Legg (2005) to define and unpack countermemory. Conceptually, Legg draws from Walter Benjamin (1968), but for the actual term, "sites of countermemory," he credits Michel Foucault (1977) as well as Pierre Nora (1989), a French historian. According to Legg, "[s]ites of counter-memory mark times and places in which people have refused to forget. They can rebut the memory schema of a dominant class, caste, race, or nation, providing an alternative form of remembering and identity" (p. 181). Following Walter Benjamin's warning about historicism, Legg asserts that the way public memory is presented historically does not actually recognize the overlooked stories of marginalized individuals and events. For Legg, a more accurate representation of history comes from the idea of melancholia in Benjamin's (1940) "On the Concept of History." Because of the flawed way that we remember history, Benjamin recommends that we maintain an active, evolving, and melancholic attitude towards the past. When we adopt a mournful posture towards history, it ". . . generates sites for memory and history, for the rewriting of the past as well as the reimagining of the future" (Eng and Kazanjian, 2003, p. 1). The focus of Legg's research is how certain memories are repressed or forgotten in Dehli, a similar pattern that we trace in the American South with regard to African American, Indigenous, and Mexican American stories. As he analyzes various contested spaces and places in Dehli, he applies the term, "sites of counter-memory":

> This phrase combines the work of Foucault with French historian Pierre Nora. Nora coined the phrase *lieux de mémoire* (sites, places, or realms of memory) to represent the ways people came to identify with the nation. These could be material sites, such as monuments or battlefields; symbolic, such as idols or flags; or functional, such as histories or institutions. Combining Nora's and Foucault's work allows us to seek out the sites in which dominant processes of ordering and memory formation were challenged, mobilizing a counter-historical narrative—in this case that of nationalism—to forge a site of countermemory, whether it be material, functional, or symbolic. (p. 183)

As such, sites of countermemory are characterized by a challenging—even a disruption—of dominant historical narratives. These sites can also be material, digital, metaphysical, or symbolic.

Also taking up countermemory, cultural geographer Derek Alderman (2010) examines the African American monument in Savannah, Georgia and focuses on the complex relationship between contested public memory and Savannah's African American community. He describes the lengthy battle that teacher and activist Abigail Jordan fought to get the monument approved, the debate over the monument's text (taken from Maya Angelou's writing), and the conflict with local leaders and community members over all aspects of the monument (its placement, the text, and its purpose). Alderman argues that the monument represents a site of countermemory, and, drawing from Legg, also establishes how these sites function to remember the forgotten or suppressed stories:

> These sites 'can affect contemporary restitution and reparation, force recognition of wrongdoing, and increase readiness of groups to listen to the stories of the previously silent'. The construction of counter-memory can be highly contentious because of the political stakes involved and the inherent difficulty of recovering long repressed (and suppressed) memories and identities. (p. 90-91)

We see several important principles from Legg's and Alderman's research as we seek to cultivate a rhetoric of countermemory.

First, countermemory resists dominant/hegemonic cultural narratives for the purpose of exposing and circulating diverse narratives. Dominant cultural narratives are often disguised as "historical facts" that are objectively true. These narratives are normalized as they are repeated from one generation to another; they are also normalized via public discourse (historical monuments, memorials, markers, and museums) and become what Giroux (1991) calls "master narratives." In contrast, countermemory disrupts and deconstructs by either presenting a competing narrative of the same evidence, augmenting the narrative already in place with additional information, or telling the story from the perspective of a marginalized group or person. For example, Dave Tell's (2019) work in *Remembering Emmett Till* demonstrates the process and impact of rewriting and remembering the story of Till's murder in contrast to the problematic ways that his death has been conveyed to the public. Countermemory celebrates story, because as Christina Cedillo (Cedillo et al., 2018) writes, "story [is] research [and] research [is] story." Story disturbs the orderly, hegemonic dynamics at play in public memory sites.

Second, countermemory is both an individual and collective project to remember inequalities, tragedies, and injustices, especially those that are not a part of public memory. Running parallel to our first point, countermemory actively seeks to remember that which has been forgotten, misinterpreted, or co-opted because memorials function as memory-aids for the public. Contrary to the 718 memory sites crafted by the United Daughters of the Confederacy to circulate a Lost Cause narrative (Lowndes, 2017), countermemory identifies individuals who were enslaved, lynched, or bought. For example, at heritage tourism sites like plantation houses, countermemory looks like the Whitney Plantation, where the enslaved are named, the majority of the tour avoids the "Big House," and the docents identify as people of color.

Finally, countermemory is a way to link the past and the present instead of disassociating the present moment from the concerns of the past, or, in other words, countermemory reminds us of "the presentness of the past" (Legg, 2005, p. 186). Because white Americans tend to distance themselves from events or individuals that remind us of our country's racism and settler-colonialism, countermemory creates a continuous narrative that forms connections between past events and current concerns. For example, the National Memorial for Peace and Justice (hereafter NMPJ) depicts the United States' legacy of lynching and begins the tour with sculptures of enslaved individuals, progresses through the indoor section that names the individuals who were lynched, and leads back to an outdoor area with another sculpture of Black men with their hands up. The movement through the memorial takes the visitor on a chronological journey as well, one that materially and physically links the country's history of slavery with its present-day concerns of violence and imprisonment of Black males. Likewise, countermemory functions to remind us of the links between past and present.

In this article, we broadly focus on countermemory but use race as a lens to illustrate this rhetorical concept. We highlight racial countermemory and use the American South (including Texas) as a backdrop for a larger conversation about race and public memory. In his research that focuses on the Mississippi Delta region, Dave Tell (2019) argues for an "ecology of memory," or a deep relationality between place, race, and memory. Tell writes that "histories of racism . . . commemoration . . . and of the Mississippi Delta cannot even be *described* (let alone understood or analyzed) apart from the ways that race, place, and commemoration work through each other--and transform each other" (p. 6). Much of the time, examinations of countermemory intersect with conversations about race (and place). If countermemory opposes dominant narratives, then racial countermemory more specifically looks to identify, analyze, and refute dominant racial narratives and replace them with narratives that have either been forgotten or suppressed. Sites of racial countermemory are frequently fraught with conflict by different groups of people for distinct reasons. In the case of the 2016 memorial for the Slocum Massacre marker, the friction was from white residents who did not want to carry the responsibility of the historical events—although residents framed it as an issue with the number of Black individuals killed or the documentary evidence of those deaths.

Other sites of countermemory have been met with similar contention. When the NMPJ was built in Montgomery, Alabama in 2018, many residents resented it, citing a fear that it would "dredge up the past and incite anger and backlash within Black communities." One resident complained that it was ". . . a waste of money, a waste of space [and was] bringing up bullshit" (as cited in Levin, 2018). Similar reactions occurred in response to the Whitney Plantation in Wallace, Louisiana and the African American Monument in Savannah, Georgia. Suffice it to say: when sites of countermemory are created, white people feel threatened. This country's dominant narrative seeks to deny, forget, or alter the truth about slavery and the persistence of racism and explicit racist policies—so, when countermemory confronts these false histories, the reaction is frequently one of fear, anger, and resentment.

For the remainder of this article, we turn to focus more specifically on three case studies to demonstrate the rhetorical nature of countermemory in action: the NMPJ in Montgomery,

Alabama, the site of the Porvenir massacre in West Texas, and the Whitney Plantation in Wallace, Louisiana. While the case studies are related in their countermemory subject matter, we characterize each based on distinct rhetorical themes. For the NMPJ, we focus on the spatiality of countermemory, both in terms of the memorial's layout as well as its proximity to traditional Southern heritage tourism sites in Montgomery. For the Porvenir massacre, we highlight the way Mexican Americans fought against white people to preserve this history as an opportunity to analyze white resistance to racial countermemories. For the Whitney Plantation, we contrast the tour's spotlight on enslaved individuals and minimization of the wealthy slave owners (and the "Big House") with most plantation tours in the South that valorize slave owners, their wealth, and their lifestyle. Each case study will further enhance our understanding of the principles of countermemories described above through spatial analysis, discursive analysis, and first-hand accounts.

The NMPJ: The Spatiality of Countermemory

The NMPJ, a memorial built to honor the more than 4,400 lynchings of Black people in the United States between 1877 and 1950, opened its doors on April 26, 2018 after much anticipation (Equal Justice Initiative, 2017). The memorial is modeled after the Holocaust Memorial in Berlin and the Apartheid Museum in Johannesburg and is meant to document the thousands of racial terror lynchings in the United States. In spite of the fact that lynchings occurred for nearly 75 years, there were no large-scale sites to remember this atrocity until the NMPJ was built. According to Bryan Stevenson, director of the Equal Justice Initiative, it is important that visitors "see the names of all these people [who have] never been named in public" (as cited in Robertson, 2018). The names are carved on steel columns and arranged according to state and county. April visited the NMPJ in August 2018 and is able to describe firsthand how the memorial's layout and its proximity to Montgomery's Southern heritage tourism sites illustrates how countermemory disrupts the American's South's nostalgia for the antebellum era. The NMPJ accomplishes this disruption by communicating one unbroken narrative of injustice and violence towards Black Americans that continues to present-day concerns about police brutality and mass incarceration.

Other scholars in rhetorical studies have examined the intersection of race, spatiality, and memory, and we, too, see their significance in reference to the NMPJ (Shackel, 2003; Gallagher & LaWare, 2010). The first point of interest is the NMPJ's location in Montgomery, Alabama, a city awash in conflicting racial memories; Montgomery boasts many historical markers that remember Confederate "heroes," annual celebrations for Confederate Memorial Day on the Alabama State Capitol Grounds, and daily tours at the First White House of the Confederacy. These spaces and places in Montgomery demonstrate a Lost Cause ideology, which is a belief that the cause of the Confederacy was honorable and heroic. This outlook is commonly circulated in Southern heritage sites, memorials, historical markers, and monuments. Alongside these spaces and places that valorize a Lost Cause ideology, are contrasting memory sites like the Civil Rights Memorial Center, Court Square Fountain, the Legacy Museum, and the NMPJ. Montgomery is a city divided by how history is remembered for residents and visitors alike. As mentioned earlier, the construction of the NMPJ was not welcomed by many white residents,

and this is a theme that recurs when countermemory disrupts dominant cultural narratives. The NMPJ's location is particularly disruptive to tourists walking around/through Montgomery's Lost Cause sites, as sites like the First White House of the Confederacy and the extensive Confederate Memorial Monument are within walking distance from the NMPJ. These tourism destinations are walkable, so it's not uncommon for tourists to experience these three spaces and places on foot. The proximity of these opposing memory sites from each other sets up a material/metaphysical affect for/to visitors and creates a sense of affective dissonance. The geographic proximity of the NMPJ with these sites that depict a hegemonic cultural narrative is jarring; in some ways, it makes the NMPJ's message even more impactful simply because just a few blocks away, we can see the relevance for this site of countermemory amidst a tourism industry that is founded on Lost Cause principles.

In addition to the NMPJ's location in relation to Southern heritage tourism sites, we highlight its layout within a rhetorical framework of countermemory, including its role that resists dominant hegemonic narratives, remembers injustices that are not a part of public memory, and links the past and present. The memorial is separated into five distinct areas: the outer garden/courtyard, the walkway up to the structure, the memorial with the engraved names (the covered portion), the outdoor memorial with duplicates of the engraved names, and the walkway back around to the entrance/exit. These five regions flow into each other and generally follow a large circular pattern. Each area also has a distinct purpose that ties into the overall narrative, as well as a more generalized chronological pattern. The outdoor courtyard/garden is open to the public, so there is no need to purchase a ticket to walk around and read some of the signage. The centerpiece of the garden is a brick wall composed of bricks made by enslaved Black people in Montgomery in the late 1850s, and according to the exhibit label, ". . . who endured the humiliation of bondage with strength and skill that we can touch today." The wall, a material work of rhetoric, speaks of the talents and skills that are usually overlooked by Southern tourism heritage sites, which tend to cite the white slave owners as the ones who built the plantation homes. For example, the historic markers placed near the plantation homes in northwest South Carolina list the original owner as responsible for building the mansion instead of more accurately attributing the labor to those who were enslaved. Not all parts of the NMPJ are intended for physical touch, but this part is. The exhibit label encourages visitors to run their hands on the bricks and remember the hands and bodies that labored for wealthy white individuals.

Upon purchasing a ticket, visitors can enter the memorial. The main part of the memorial (the part with the roof and the hanging markers) was only a few hundred yards away at the top of a small hill. The sheer size of the memorial in conjunction with the statues of enslaved individuals at different stages of the slave trade immediately evokes an affective response. Ghanaian artist Kwame Akoto-Bamfo created the sculptures in remembrance of the Transatlantic Slave Trade, and in particular, the Trade's lasting mark on his home-country (see Figure 1). Akoto-Bamfo asks this question in all of his artwork: "Are we really free from the legacies of slavery and colonisation?" (as cited in Martin, 2018). On one side of the path was the statues and to the right was informational signage that relayed the story of the Transatlantic Slave Trade. The immediate purpose of the long walkway up to the main part of the memorial is to provide a

Figure 1: Sculptures created by Ghanaian artist Kwame Akoto-Bamfo in remembrance of the Transatlantic Slave Trade. Photograph by April O'Brien.

framework for visitors; it re/tells a story that is notoriously minimized or elided to prevent white Americans from grappling with their violent history. This story leads to the physical memorial where visitors can view the names of some 800 men, women, and children who were lynched. As a site of countermemory, this first space within the NMPJ functions to replace hegemonic Southern narratives of gentility and hospitality with the jarring reality of the suppressed memories of individuals who were lynched.

The main part of the memorial is an open-air structure covered by a roof. Each large, steel rectangle includes the name of an individual, along with the state and county where s/he was lynched. Initially, the steel slabs are face-to-face, but the floor slants down and the slabs become hanging structures, enacting the image of lynching (see Figure 2). Just outside the covered area is a space that corresponds with the main space; in this space, though, duplicates of the steel slabs lie on the ground in parallel rows. One of the volunteer docents informed April that the duplicates were intended for the communities where these individuals were lynched. The Equal Justice Initiative ultimately seeks to circulate this message of counter-memory into the communities where these injustices occurred. These duplicate slabs would then be sent back into the communities so that these individuals can be remembered in the

Figure 2: The inside portion of the NMPJ. Photograph by April O'Brien.

spaces and places where they lived and worked. In the case of the NMPJ, it remembers the 800+ individuals who were lynched around the country, so the Equal Justice Initiative maintains the circulation of these individuals' names beyond the memorial in Montgomery as a long-term goal. In this case, circulation resists the dominant narrative in the South that has erased these names from public memory.

The spatiality of the NMPJ is composed in such a way to tell one continuous narrative—a countermemory of violence, injustice, and racism that persists to this day. The memorial's physical location in Montgomery generates a sense of affective dissonance through its streets named after Confederate leaders, its proximity to the First White House of the Confederacy, as well as to the Alabama River, where enslaved individuals were unloaded and sold like cattle. Whereas a memory site like the First White House of the Confederacy relays a false Lost Cause narrative and valorizes injustices like slavery, the NMPJ, as a site of countermemory, disrupts this dominant cultural narrative by telling one continuous story from the perspective of Black Americans. The NMPJ exposes the fallacy of White America and compels visitors to grapple with a country built on inequality and injustice.

The Porvenir Massacre and Hegemonic Memory

However, countermemories don't only occur in museum spaces; they also conjure resistance on small plaques miles away from society. In West Texas, near the border of Mexico and Big Bend National Park region, lies the unincorporated village of Porvenir. The village has no industry nor discernable population and is only remembered as the site of a terrible, racist massacre. In January 1918, at the height of anti-Mexican sentiments along the Texas-Mexico border, a Texas Rangers squad entered the village looking for the perpetrators of a raid that took place in another part of the county a month prior. They didn't find any evidence that people in the community took part in the raid but arrested three male villagers anyways. The next day the villagers were released and returned home, but the Rangers once again returned--this time with injustice on their minds (Carrigan and Webb, 2013). They separated the male villagers from the female villages and took the 13 men and two boys outside of the town where they proceeded to shoot and kill all 15 of them.[1] The 15 boys and men were murdered as an act of retaliation for the raid, but, as stated, no evidence suggested anyone involved in this crime lived in this camp. The Rangers company was eventually disbanded, yet no one was ever charged with a crime (Carrigan and Webb, 2013).

The memory of this event soon left public knowledge, and it has been left out of Texas state history and even forgotten by many of the descendants of the massacre. This history recently garnered new attention, however, once Arlinda Valencia (a descendant of Longino Flores, killed in the massacre) learned of this incident as an adult. She realized she needed to tell the story and organized a remembrance event at the Texas State Capitol in 2018 that hosted 400 people (Romero, 2019). Before this, though, historian Monica Muñoz Martinez petitioned the Texas Historical Commission to add a marker about the massacre near Porvenir because people needed to understand the "state-sanctioned violence" of the era (Nguyen, 2018). The marker's text was approved in July 2013 and was placed near Marfa, the closest town to the now abandoned Porvenir, in early-2019. The text reads, partly, as follows:

> A group of Texas Rangers from Company B in Marfa, U.S. Army soldiers from Troop G of the 8th Cavalry, and local ranchers arrived at Porvenir in the early morning hours of January 28, 1918. They came to the ranch of Manuel Moralez and separated fifteen able-bodied men and boys from women, children, and other men. Though initial accounts denied any wrongdoing, later testimony confirmed that these 15 victims were shot and killed.

The rest of the text situated the historical context of anti-Mexican aggression at the time and details the lack of investigation into the massacre.

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[1] It is important to us to name the 15 dead boys and men: Manuel Moralez, Román Nieves, Longino Flores, Alberto García, Eutimio Gonzales, Macedonio Huertas, Tiburcio Jaques, Ambrosio Hernández, Antonio Castanedo, Pedro Herrera, Viviano Herrera, Severiano Herrera, Pedro Jiménez, Serapio Jiménez, and Juan Jiménez.

However, this plaque was not placed in Presidio County in early-2019 without controversy. After the text of the marker was approved in July 2018, Presidio County Historical Commission Chair Mona Blocker Garcia attempted to prevent the marker, by sending an email to the Texas Historical Commission, stating, "The militant Hispanics have turned this marker request into a

political rally and want reparations from the federal government for a 100-year-old plus tragic event" (as cited in Tyx, 2018). Other County officials effectively delayed approval of the marker until they all agreed upon the text, which led to the American Historical Association denouncing the delay because of this "dog whistle" (Tyx, 2018). In relation to the other countermemories being presented in this article, the debate around remembering the Porvenir Massacre illustrates the rhetorical power of countermemories in the way it forces the hegemony to react and keep its power intact, revealing the artificial construction of that power in the discourse surrounding these memories.

Hegemonic theory proposes that those in power want to remain in power and will utilize all means to keep power (Gramsci, 2011; Mearsheimer, 2010). This principle translates to memories as well, as those who have power in portraying specific memories that portray them positively will fight to keep them intact. Countermemories exist as direct opposition to maintaining hegemonic memory; countermemories disrupt typical systems of knowledge and how that information is spread because they create *alternative* forms of memory. Thus, when countermemories form, agents with power typically attempt to erase them or challenge their validity. Such is the case in Charleston, SC, when the city quickly scrubbed over spray paint that challenged the Confederate Defenders of Charleston monument as racist (Sanchez and Moore, 2015). Instead of allowing people to stick with this countermemory that the Confederacy might not have been "honorable," the city chose to hide the spray paint but keep the monument intact—a powerful, symbolic gesture that they would not openly deal with arguments against the Confederacy. Or, similarly, the same defenses came to light when a statue of Clarence Darrow, the famed, agnostic defense attorney for the Scopes Trial, was erected beside a statue of William Jennings Bryan, the Christian fundamentalist who was the prosecutor in the trial, at the Rhea County Courthouse in Tennessee in 2017.[2] A statue of Bryan had existed at the courthouse since 2005 and represented rural Tennessee's Christian values, and when the Darrow statue was erected, many in the community felt their values were being challenged because of the "ongoing attempt by secularists in America to blur or remove symbols reminding us of our Judeo-Christian heritage" (Fausset, 2017). Countermemories cause those in power to react, defend, and try to levy their power because countermemories are perceived as a visceral threat to the hegemony.

In Porvenir, hegemonic defenses developed swiftly. People, many of whom were white but some who were Mexican-American, attempted to charge the countermemory as being nothing more than a political stunt to gain power (as seen above in Garcia's quote). Of course, such an argument leaves out the fact that this countermemory is a *true*, under-reported incident.

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[2] James attributes this research to his student, Porter Bowman, who wrote a seminar paper on the memory of the Scopes Trial at the Rhea County Courthouse in a recent course.

Garcia's argument solely relies upon perceived politics. Yet, her entire argument could be analyzed as a red herring that attempts to move people away from the real history in West Texas to align them with different political beliefs. Others in the community have attempted to fight back against this countermemory by questioning why it was labelled a "massacre" or saying "radicals in the 'brown power' movement" *only* want to share negative stories about white people (as cited in Tyx, 2018). Nonetheless, the argument that we should remember the massacre was met with harsh criticism by those who argue that remembering it as a crime is solely as a political act.

The marker itself lies 27 miles from Marfa (the closest incorporated town) and over 10 miles away from Porvenir on US Highway 90. It exists—almost quite literally—in the middle of nowhere (as can be seen in Figure 3). It doesn't interact with other memories in the same way the NMPJ does because there is nothing to interact with. Yet, even this marker, placed miles away from civilization, still causes people with power to react because it simply exists. Hegemonic memory calls for Black and white interpretations of history and balks at any sign of dissent. White people in the area don't have to face their tragedies every single day with the placement of this marker. Actually, one would have to go out of their way to interact with it. Yet, its mere presence and the idea that a tragedy was misremembered forces them to combat it, even when the state history board tells them that this massacre took place. Hegemonic views of memory cause people to revolt against anything that might be perceived as a challenge, even when the site of the memory is distant.

Figure 3: A picture of the Porvenir Massacre plaque 27 miles west of Marfa, TX (*New York Times*).

All of these arguments are extensions of hegemonic views of history that attempt to downplay or negate the real history of the massacre. They exist solely as defenses for a hegemonic view of history—not one concerned with truth, but one concerned with power. Countermemories are political because their very nature emphasizes disruption of normalized discourse that is either wrong or that downplays negative historical moments. The fight to remember the Porvenir Massacre emphasizes the logical hoops people will jump through in order to preserve their imagined view of history, one that systemically erases dissenting points of view.

Whitney Plantation: How Countermemory Challenges Heritage Tourism Sites

Located less than an hour from New Orleans, Whitney Plantation is situated on the west bank of the Mississippi River in St. John the Baptist Parish. While it is relatively close to New Orleans, Whitney feels worlds away from the hustle of the city's tourism industry. Aside from a handful of cottages, churches, and one or two gas stations, there is little activity between the city and Whitney. Whitney opened to the public in December 2014 as the first slavery museum in the United States. Although it may seem logical to house such a museum within the borders of a plantation house, as we have already indicated, these heritage tourism sites are instead used to circulate a narrative of the Old South (Poirot and Watson, 2015; Azaryahu and Foote, 2008). Consequently, John Cummings's decision to turn the property into a slavery museum directly opposes the U.S.'s long history of remembering wealthy plantation owners, their furnishings, and a Lost Cause ideology and omitting/limiting slavery, enslaved individuals, or how their labor directly funded the country's early economy. Mitch Landrieu, mayor of New Orleans from 2010-2018, called Whitney "America's Auschwitz," citing the similarities between the Holocaust and slavery, a comparison that many Americans are not willing to make (as cited in Amsden, 2015).

We position the Whitney Plantation as a site of countermemory and focus especially on how it radically departs from plantation tours in the American South. In fact, its countermemory actually challenges heritage tourism dogma. While it is true that some plantation tours have begun to incorporate more Black history, including McLeod and Magnolia (both outside of Charleston), Whitney is distinct in that its entire purpose is, in the words of Sen-egal-ese scholar Ibrahima Seck, is to make ". . . reparations. Real reparations" (as cited in Amsden, 2015). Seck, who works alongside Cummings as the director of research for Whitney, explains that Cummings's goal in opening Whitney was to shift "the consciousness of others as his own has been altered." As with the NMPJ and the marker for the Porvenir Massacre, Whitney's opening was also met with protest from the white community, who argued that the tour would be too disturbing. In response, Cummings contends, "It is disturbing . . . But you know what else? It happened. It happened right here on this road" (as cited in Amsden, 2015).

While we draw from Poirot and Watson's (2015) article that examines the relationship between place and public memory in Southern heritage tourism sites like Charleston; Dickinson, Blair, and Ott's (2010) work with public memory and museums; as well as research in cultural and human geography that examines tours in plantation houses (Azaryahu and Foote, 2008), we intentionally position Whitney as a site of countermemory to inspire more discussion about

memory and plantation houses in rhetorical studies. It cannot be stressed enough that Whitney forcefully and powerfully rejects the traditional plantation tour narrative, and, instead, uses the genre of tourism as a disruption of the white-centric, slave owner story.

Outside the visitor's center is a dramatic metal sculpture of an anchor with chains to commemorate the slave trade with a pewter plaque that reads:

> Every slave and every slave owner came to this place from different villages on different boats. Today we find ourselves all in the same boat awaiting another voyage. We must take the voyage together, regardless of the difficulty and the pain. Together we chart a course to a place where we can understand our part and find a cure for all evils brought here when the first boat visited our shore. Welcome to Whitney.

From the moment April entered the visitor center, it was apparent that this tour would be dramatically different from the other tours that she had previously taken. While the center includes a small gift shop (where visitors can peruse slave narratives, handmade goods from local Black artisans, and fair trade jewelry from West Africa), it also includes a mini-museum to educate visitors before their tour. After paying for her ticket, she was given a lanyard with a picture of a young Black girl who was enslaved at Whitney along with some biographical information about her. The three-room museum documents various aspects of the transatlantic and domestic slave trade and specifically focuses on the process of suppression and resistance among enslaved individuals in Louisiana. The tour-before-the-tour sets the tone for Whitney, and it's immediately obvious that the tour would not focus on the wealthy slave owners' furnishings, clothing, or their privileged lives.

It's helpful to contrast a typical plantation tour with Whitney. In their examination of two antebellum plantation tours, Stephen Hanna et al. (2019) studied the relationship between the ordering of space and narrative. Through the use of narrative mapping, Hanna and his colleagues were able to map how traditional plantation tours ". . . give voice and legitimacy to certain historical actors and interpretations while eliding others" (p. 49). In one of their case studies at Berkeley Plantation, they found that docents and visitors used vague and distancing language to discussed enslaved individuals or the concept of slavery in sharp contrast to the language used about the slave owners:

> Observers noted that when guides and visitors mentioned Berkeley's enslaved population, they only discussed basic facts, such as the number of slaves the Harrisons owned or the labor performed by enslaved persons. Some observers found that guides used passive voice, such as 'there were 110 slaves', or deployed words like 'servants' and 'they'. Guides never named enslaved individuals, did not provide humanizing details about their lives, and did not attempt to engage visitors emotionally on the topic. This contrasts with the rich biographical details visitors learn about members of the Harrison family. (p. 9)

These findings are to be expected and are also matched by April's study of Woodburn Plantation in Pendleton, South Carolina. During her tour of Woodburn (in spite of the fact that it was a private tour and the docent was aware of her research about Black history in

Pendleton, South Carolina), the docent spent the majority of the time delineating the slave owner family's opulent lifestyle. When she discussed the enslaved individuals, she explained that one reason that the kitchen was located in an out-building was because the slaves could not be trusted to not burn the house down because they were not used to such fine furnishings. She also attempted to downplay the humiliation and lack of freedom that the enslaved experienced, citing their freedom to move around the region at night while the owner and his family slept. These examples, along with Hanna et al.'s, illustrate a typical plantation tour in Southern heritage sites. While there are an increasing number of plantation tours that now include the perspective of enslaved individuals and even provide names and narratives, Whitney diverges from these by re/making the plantation tour into a slavery museum.

The tour begins in a church, where visitors are shown a short video that builds on the information from the visitor center. It sets the expectation for the tour: the focus will be on the actual people who labored on this plantation. For this tour, the white slave owners would be the footnote instead of the heroes of the narrative. In the church a few clay sculptures of enslaved children were scattered around the sanctuary—the same children that many of the visitors wear around their neck on a lanyard, and the same children that re/appear in various sites on the grounds. These sculptures are, in Jared Keller's (2016) words, ". . . a ghostly

Figure 4: The Wall of Honor. Photograph by April O'Brien.

Figure 5: Clay sculpture of an enslaved child at Whitney. Photograph by April O'Brien.

monument to [the children's] lost childhoods." From there, the guide, a Black man named Ali, took us to the Wall of Honor, where the names of Whitney's enslaved are engraved on a row of stone walls in random order to demonstrate their chaotic and tumultuous lived experience. The tour weaves through the grounds, stopping at various memorials/art installations that mark the many children and babies who died at Whitney, like the *Field of Angels Coming Home,* a monument that records the 107,000 held in bondage in Louisiana from 1719-1820, as well as the slave cabins and the prison for slaves who were being punished for various "crimes" like poor production. After an hour and a half walking around the grounds, the last 15 minutes were spent at the Big House.

Rather than beginning at the Big House, the Whitney tour ends there, and somehow seems inconsequential when compared to the stories presented throughout the tour. We argue that this decision is a rhetorical one: It explicitly demonstrates the impact of countermemory when employed in typical Southern heritage sites. Keeping the Big House at the end of the tour functions to footnote what is usually the highlight of a plantation tour. In doing so, Whitney enacts the principles of countermemory. It replaces a dominant hegemonic narrative with the perspective of those who were enslaved. It poignantly remembers the injustices that the American South has attempted to conceal. And it materially links the past with the present, through the clay sculptures of enslaved children, the various memorials on site, and the open

discussion with Whitney's docents. At one point, April turned to the guide and asked him, "It seems like most of the people on this tour are prepared for the narrative that Whitney tells. Have you ever given a tour where your audience was surprised or offended by Whitney's message?" He nodded his head, chuckled, and told April about an older white lady who marched off in a huff and waited for two hours in the tour bus rather than take the tour, as well as others who were clearly shocked by his statements about structural racism that persists to this day. Whitney Plantation represents an important feature of countermemory—a rhetoric of countermemory subverts and re/writes heritage tourism sites in a way that could be transformative in the American South.

Conclusion

Memories are all that we are. Memories create identity and community and share our values on both the personal and collective levels. Yet, as with all systems of knowledge, memories can normalize or disrupt. Countermemories challenge the power dynamics of normalized memory—whether spatially, through designs that dispute the towns in which they exist (as with the NMPJ), or how they disrupt hegemonic views of history (as with the Porvenir Massacre), or the capacity in which they can confront tourism industries (as with the Whitney Plantation). Countermemories are vital to ensuring that the typical ways of remembering do not go unchecked by consistently confronting what memories can be tied back to historical interpretations and which exist as a means to preserve certain ideologies. If memories are all that we are, then countermemories make sure that we don't just accept memories at face value. We must continually revisit and reexamine how our memories exist, what they say, and how they affect different audiences.

While research on countermemories has been furthered in other interdisciplinary fields, we argue that rhetoricians need to better consider the impact of such work not just on memory and history but on how these subjects greatly influence systems of knowledge, ways of seeing and thinking, and ideology. Memory is never apolitical and does not exist in a vacuum. And countermemory specifically influences public discourse on a daily basis and has the potential to alter the spaces and places that we inhabit. Rhetoricians should explore countermemories not because the field is ripe for analysis (though it is) but because countermemories are uniquely positioned to "alter reality" as Bitzer (1968) might say. Their rhetorical charges are ever-present. They exist to dispute, change, and persuade.

On a personal note, the countermemories we have engaged in this essay have forever altered some of our own understandings of history and even our personal memories. They reshaped our emotional connections to the lack of history on slavery, as April notes in visiting the Whitney Plantation and the NMPJ, and repositioned how James viewed his own Mexican-American heritage in light of understanding the Porvenir Massacre and the history of Texas Ranger violence near the Mexico border. We have discussed our own memories of race; reflected on space, time, and place; and considered how they contributed to this article. This is the capability of countermemories—to mold and affect people on deeply personal and emotional levels because they ask us to contemplate our own lives, our own understandings of

history, our own memories. Countermemories continually call for us to question ourselves and the memories that construct our realities.

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A Feeling for the Algorithm:
A Feminist Methodology for Algorithmic Writing and Research

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Abstract

I offer this narrative as a feminist methodology for algorithmic research methods, insisting that affect, collaboration, community and embodiment are rich resources for algorithmic writing and research. I highlight these feminist themes because much of the research on algorithmic writing focuses procedural rhetoric and the relationship between the programmer and the program. In my narrative, I highlight the social and embodied experiences that shape my process as a feminist working with algorithmic research methods. In doing, I resist the assumption that feminist scholars have a technical deficiency that must be overcome in order to engage in DH research. Instead, I position our feminist practices and values as vital assets for conducing compelling feminist research in digital humanities.

Keywords: Feminist; Digital Humanities; Methodology; Affect; Embodiment.

Introduction

Barbara McClintock is now famous for her scientific breakthroughs regarding genetic code. However, for 30 years, no one took her seriously. Genome sequences were, and largely still are, understood as mechanical, code, immutable, and 'objective' in so far as DNA was assumed to be independent of context. McClintock approached the genome with an intuition, intimacy, and a holistic view that included ecological context (see Keller, 1984). From these methods, she sensed and felt for the organism. Her intuition made all the difference. McClintock was awarded a Nobel prize in honor of her research demonstrating that genetic code is flexible, relational, and responsive to contexts.

There has been a long metaphorical slippage between DNA code and computer code. For both, code is widely understood as a logical process that cannot be questioned or modified, except by experts. For DNA code and computer code, Wendy Hui Kyong Chun argues that this metaphor of code creates a black box: we assume it works, and because it's working it must be correct (Chun, 2008). Blackboxing occurs any time complex technologies are used without questioning or understanding the design choices, thereby allowing the technology to be a mystery to the user. Chun identifies blackboxing throughout the history of computing, from the shift for early computers to use graphic interfaces, to the desktop metaphors of our current computers, to the open source movement. She posits that programming is "sold as offering the programmer

more and easier control, but they also necessitated blackboxing even more the operations of the machines they supposedly instructed" (45).

Advocates of open source code may reply, "Github means that there is no blackboxing!" as if giving access to code is to offer complete transparency. This is precisely the promise of democratization of which Chun is most critical. She writes, "The history of computing is littered with moments of "computer liberation," that are also moments of greater obfuscation" (45). That obfuscation may be the relationship between hardware and software, the relationship between syntax and function, or the choices made by the programmer. The promise of transparency offered with open source code also obfuscates the complex work of code literacy, which is a complex social, embodied, and hegemonic process.

Most significantly for my feminist intervention, code itself hides the work of coding and the coder. When I make programming choices, I make them based on my experience, education, goals, values, and embodied process of composing. These elements of code literacy are overlooked with open source promises of transparency. The most famous example of this is likely the facial recognition software that was programmed to only recognize white faces. When this was first reported,[1] news headlines read "Facial Recognition Systems Show Rampant Racial Bias" (CNN) and "Facial-recognition Technology has a racial-bias problem" (Business Insider). These headlines place the technology in the subject position; the code is the actor. Hence, by this logic, the code has a racial-bias problem. Again, these headlines entirely erase the people who made decisions, the context in which they work, and the process of algorithmic writing. Does the technology itself have a racial-bias problem? Or the people who programmed?

For Chun, as well as myself, transparency is not the goal. After describing the layers of blackboxing in the history of computing, she "does not argue we need to move beyond specters and the undead, but rather contends that we should make our interfaces more productively spectral" (60). The promise of transparency itself is what she is skeptical of. There will always be unknowns, mysteries, layers we don't understand.

Depending on where you look, the history of computing can also be read as is also a history of intuition, emotion, and affection. Most famously, Ada Lovelace identified herself as the "high priestess of mathematics," and her letters show her deep devotion to both the logic of mathematics and the personal commitment to the metaphysical. Her letters to collaborator Charles Babbage are equal parts love letter and equal parts computer programming, and I'm not sure which got her blood pumping more, Charles or the mechanical brain.

Flash forward to 1953, we find Christopher Strachey, British mathematician and computer scientist, writing what was at the time the longest computer program. This program would also create the first computer generated writing. What, you may wonder, did Christopher teach this early computer to write? Love letters, of course. Strachey worked through the night on the Manchester Mark 1, or the baby as its operators called it. In the morning, the baby could write

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[1] For a thorough and in-depth analysis of racist programming practices, *Algorithms of Oppression* by Safiya Noble.

awkward, clunky, endearing love letters with lines like "FANCIFUL MOPPET, MY WISTFUL LITTLE LIKING HOPES FOR YOUR ENCHANTMENT." and "MY LOVEABLE HUNGER LONGS FOR YOUR LUST. YOURS IMPATIENTLY, M.U.C." Be still my heart.

Just as Barbara McClintock proceeded with her research with a feeling for the organism, I proceeded with my own digital humanities methods, and, in particular, my work with learning to program in R with a *feeling for the algorithms*. This essay is a methodological narrative that outlines a heuristic for a feminist rhetoric of code. I base my heuristic on a collaborative research project published in *Peitho Journal*, with my mentors and collaborators Gesa Kirsch and Alison Williams. For that research, our methods included both close reading and distant reading, for which I learned to program to compose data visualizations. I will first offer an overview of that project and our goals. Then, I will identify what is at stake for my two primary audiences. First, I am writing for scholars studying algorithmic rhetoric and rhetoric of code.[2] For them I address the particular needs of this subfield for a deeper engagement with feminist methodology. Next, I am writing for feminist scholars for who I highlight emerging scholarship in feminist engagement with DH that I am indebted to for my own work.

I offer a heuristic for DH feminist methodology in 4 overlapping phases-- listening phase, dreaming phase, conversation phase, and tinkering phase.[3] In each phase, I will narrate how feminist rhetorical practices prepared me to learn and compose algorithmic rhetoric. I call it a heuristic, but I'm just telling stories. I've learned to value stories from the community of Cultural Rhetoric scholars and their methods of performing the deep ties between bodies, communities, and research (Powell, 2012; Powell et al., 2014; Cobos et al, 2018). In addition, feminists have drawn on stories in order to feature embodiment as central to theory (Johnson et al, 2015). I hope this article will inform future scholars as they envision digital humanities projects engaged with feminist rhetorical practices. I invite you, as well, to consider your own work with code, and the affective, social, lively aspects of the work.

Overview of Research Project on Women's Medical Journal

Over the past two years, I've worked collaboratively with Gesa Kirsch and Alison Williams on the research presented in "Feminist Practices in Digital Humanities Research: Visualizing Women Physician's Networks of Solidarity, Struggle and Exclusion," recently published in *Peitho Journal*. Based on original archival material in the *Woman's Medical Journal* from 1900-1919,

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[2] Algorithmic rhetoric and rhetoric of code are aligned subfields within digital rhetorics. These subfields take up programming, code, and algorithms as rhetorical processes and rhetorical texts. This research enables scholars to both make rhetorical choices while composing in code as well as to identify and understand the rhetorical power embedded in computer programs.

[3] I note here that I am not outlining a pragmatic set of steps that others would necessarily want to follow. In fact, I encourage a more efficient process than mine, if you're able. The narrative is intended to highlight my feminist process, which was embodied, affective, collaborative, and social.

we studied this community of early 20th century women physicians, their evolving community, rhetorics of solidarity, and the limits of that solidarity. In order to arrive at empathetic, nuanced claims, we had to view this community from a distance, up close, and also with a focus on the margins and erasures. For our feminist goals, these three methods and three ways of viewing informed each other so that we grappled with complex themes of community, solidarity, and exclusion while also placing this community in historical context and treating the women with empathy as well as accountability. This research required mixed methods, including close reading familiar to feminist scholars as well as innovative methods from digital humanities.

It is widely accepted that the process of interpretation and analysis involves intuition and subjective reading. However, many scholars of DH assume that subjectivity is limited to the interpretation. Beyond analysis, I feature the deeply intuitive process that was involved in every step of the methods including programming and writing with code. I outline this intuitive process in 4 main phases: listening phase, dreaming phase, conversation phase, and tinkering phase. In each of these phases, I collaborated with experienced programmers and programmed myself. In each phase, the programming opened new opportunities for feminist interventions and feminist rhetorical practices.

In this article, I am going to narrate how we created the visualizations like the one below:
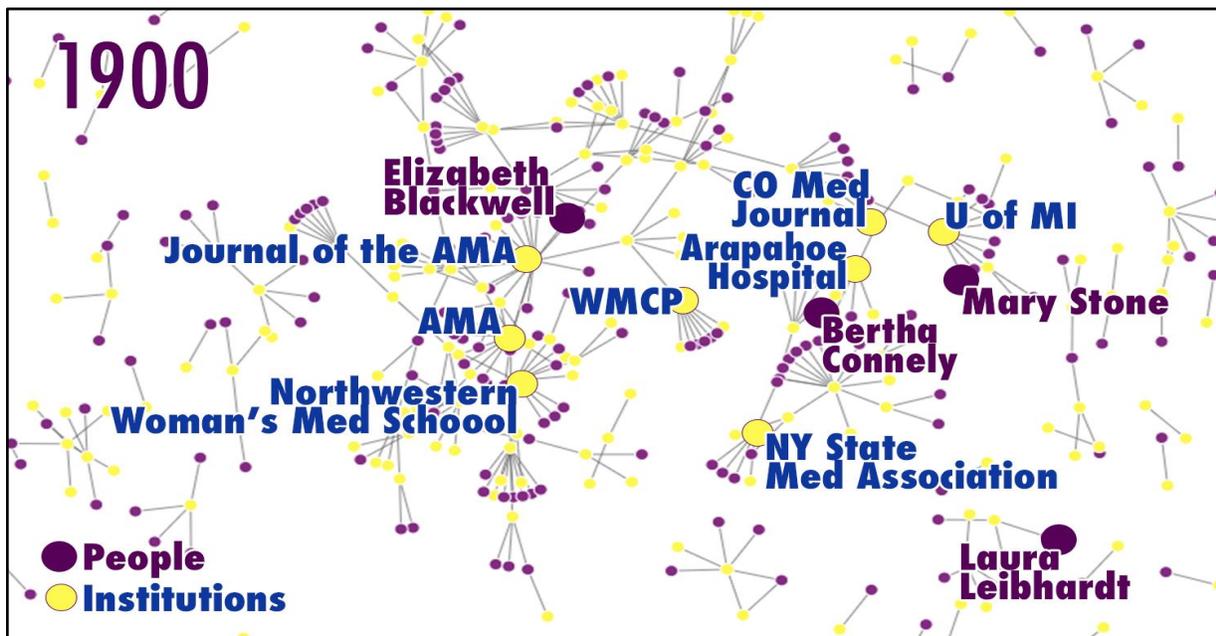
**Figure 1:** A social network analysis featuring people and institutions who were included in the 1900 archive of the *Women's Medical Journal*. This visualization was created in R[4] and labels added with Photoshop.

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[4] R is an open source programming language that is most often used by social scientists. It is a robust language designed for large data sets and complex data relations. It's relatively easy to learn.

Due to the complex, layered mixed methods used in the project, there was very little space to explain the process for creating this visualization and no space to explain the programming choices we made. In fact, in the article reporting this research published in *Peitho*, we reduced the description of the method for creating the visualization to 1 sentence, effectively blackboxing nearly the entire process.

If I were to outline the method in a series of logical, efficient steps, I would offer these instructions:

> **Step 1:** Code the archival material for all "actors" defined as people and institutions and locations using a google form that creates a spreadsheet.

> **Step 2:** Upload spreadsheet to Google graphs and Tableaux, use network graph to create beta visualization.

> **Step 3:** Format and clean data.

> **Step 4:** Program in R using social network analysis and igraph packages to create visualizations, which included loading the packages igraph, networkD3, and htmltools.

> **Step 5:** Program in JavaScript using force-network to add interactivity.

Hypothetically, if you wanted to create a similar visualization, you could follow similar steps and thereby reproduce similar research. Emphasis on the *hypothetically.*

What We Do When We Program

In the step-by-step instructions above I've *excluded* 90% of the energy and intellectual labor. That 90% was the intuitive process whereby we arrived at these instructions. Herein lies the danger of black boxing algorithmic work for a feminist scholar: precisely what is removed is the embodiment, emotions, context and the feeling for the algorithm.

The rule-based, logical work with algorithms is preserved and celebrated. This is most obvious in previous work on coding rhetoric that centers on procedural rhetoric. Ian Bogost (2008) defines the work of programming as fundamentally procedural: "To write procedurally, one authors code that enforces rules to generate some kind of representation, rather than authoring the representation itself. Procedural systems generate behaviors based on rule-based models; they are machines capable of producing many outcomes, each conforming to the same overall guidelines" (122). Defining programming as authoring "code that enforces rules to generate a representation" is certainly accurate in a technical sense. However, the work looks, feels, and is enacted in a more complex way. Bogost essentially erases the labor and full process of writing with code because he is most interested in the play that code makes possible.

Behind this procedural rhetoric is the human programming, her goals, embodied experiences, histories, and attachments to the work. I would add, there's a fair amount of play involved throughout the process of programming. Annette Vee (2013) offers a detailed historical

account of computational literacy,[5] placing programming as a literate practice that emerges within historical and cultural contexts. Understanding programming as literacy includes attention to the "powerful social and historical dynamics of composing code" (46). Vee defines computational literacy as "constellation of abilities to break a complex process down into small procedures and then express—or "write"—those procedures using the technology of code that may be "read" by a non-human entity such as a computer" (47). Given that my collaborators and I are first-and-foremost committed to feminist rhetorical practices, these feminist practices are central in my own constellation of abilities as I gained programming literacy.

I especially encourage scholars of rhetorical code studies and algorithmic rhetoric to consider the importance of feminist methodology and feminist rhetorical practices. The field of Computers and Composition broadly speaking has been led by feminists, informed by feminist research, and is a collaboration among feminist to the point that Estee Beck in conversation with Gail Hawisher and Cynthia Selfe (2013) discuss the field broadly as having "feminist leanings." However, emerging research on code studies and algorithmic rhetorics do not seem to be currently following this tradition. Lori BethDe Hertogh, Liz Lane, Jessica Ouellette tested these "feminist leanings" through a comprehensive, qualitative analysis of *Computers and Composition*. Their findings must taken seriously by all scholar algorithmic rhetoric committed to ethical and inclusive scholarship:

> "The period of 2009 to the present brought in an interesting mix of more recent publications on intersectionality and technofeminism, but at the same time, recent publication trends also indicate a shift (particularly in areas such as *rhetorical code studies*, *algorithmic rhetorics*, posthumanism, object-oriented ontology, and game theory) away from either explicit or implicit uses of feminist and intersectional frameworks." (10 emphasis mine)

This has also been my experience: there is a gap between the feminist leanings of computers and composition as a field and the particularly process-focused, a-political, seemingly gender neutral but also male-dominated authors in the emerging field of rhetorical code studies and algorithmic rhetorics. The shift to focus on code and algorithmic rhetoric has not fully included some of the shared values for scholarship in composition studies, including embodiment and intersectional frameworks.

Although scholars of rhetorical code have not integrated feminist and intersectional methodologies into their work, the goals of this emerging subfield do align with much of feminist scholarship, especially technofeminist scholarship. In *Rhetorical Code Studies,* Kevin Brock outlines the significance of composing in code for all composition scholars "the practice

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[5] Parallel to Vee's history of programming literacy, one could build a gendered history of programming literacy. In this history, we could see that men and women often developed and given access to programming literacy in different spaces and with different foci. Importantly, in this literacy history, as women begin to increasing gain proficiency in a particular computational literacy, that literacy is then considered less specialized, "downsourced," paid less, and even defined as "not real" programming. This story is for another day.

of composing in code will absolutely benefit our subsequent rhetorical analysis and critique of code if we are to effect change in a world in which it is more or less impossible to escape the influence of software and digital technology" (151). Composing in code is one emerging yet exciting avenue for feminists to shape in our algorithmic landscape, or at least to gain the literacy to critically assess research methods that incorporate algorithmic methods. This work is well underway. I'll proceed with a brief review existing feminist scholarship that engages in digital humanities methods, especially composing in code.

Feminist Interventions in DH

In their 2013 article "Meaningful engagements: Feminist historiography and the digital humanities," Jessica Enoch and Jean Bessette invited feminist scholars to consider the fruitful potential of DH methods. Scholars of feminist rhetorics have widely adopted DH methods feminist historiography and especially for digital archival methods (Sullivan and Graban, 2010; Ramsey-Tobienne, 2012; Enoch, 2013; Enoch, Bessette, & VanHaitsma, 2014; Graban & Rose, 2014; Gutenson & Bachelor, 2016). There has been both enthusiasm for the new methods as well as a sense of caution, hesitant to take up new methods that do not obviously converge with feminist practices that foreground ethics of care, situated knowledge, and personal engagement.

Among digital humanities scholars, there is a growing body of research that explores the complex tensions and possibilities that arise when feminists adopt digital humanities methods (Bailey, 2011; Enoch & Bessette, 2013; Wernimont, 2013; Sayers, 2018) as well as research that makes visible the politics encoded into algorithms and computer assisted research methods (Kimme Hea, 2007; Grunwell, 2018; Edwards & Gelms, 2018; Blair, 2018; Beck, 2018; Noble, 2018). I am also indebted to the long tradition of Technofeminist research in the field of Computers and Composition, which is a field is committed to the embodied, political, and social dynamics that are encoded into technology (for reviews of this work see Haas et al, 2019; De Hertogh et al, 2019; Devoss, 2019; as well as my own modest attempts to contribute to this conversation Fancher, 2019). For me, technofeminism is empowering for its commitment to simultaneously engaging in critique as well as production, building, and creation with technology by and for feminists (Wajcman, 2004). This feminist scholarship, especially technofeminist scholarship, underscore that when we program, we bring our constellations of literacies and our embodied experiences. I offer a narrative of my own constellation of literacies as I engage in writing with code.

Feeling for the Code: Listening, Dreaming, Conversing, and Tinkering

First, there was a **listening phase**, where I read through the primary archival material in the *Woman's Medical Journal* and paid attention to what caught my eye or my ear, the announcements in particular are rich, celebratory, and confident. I waded through the complexity of their discourse. I listened to these women's advice and problems, and pondered their at times strange medical practices. I was impressed with the nuanced ways that they

addressed issues like sex work, pay disparity, and sexist discrimination. I listened to my collaborators, what caught their ears, and their impressions. I enjoyed this phase of open listening.

Feminist methodology taught me to listen with care and empathy. In this listening phase, I needed to listen as Krista Ratcliffe has taught us: to let the discourse wash over, to seek understanding, and to attune myself to tropes of whiteness both in the archive as well as in my own analysis. From Jacqueline Royster and Gesa Kirsch, I've learned to listen with critical imagination, leading me to ask questions about what could have been, what may be missing, and to carefully attune myself to the affect, desires, dreams, and motivations of the women in the journal. This listening phase felt like time travel, immersing myself in another world and way of being. I listened towards understanding and towards empathy.

I also listened as I experimented with code. I listened by exploring and attuning myself to previous feminist and rhetorical studies DH project. I explored DH projects featured in the *Programming Historian* collection. The edited collections *Making Things and Drawing Boundaries* and *Bodies of Information: Intersectional Feminism and the Digital Humanities* include discussions of case studies, featured projects, and citations to a fascinating diversity of digital humanities projects that are also engaged with feminists, queer, and anti-racist critiques. In Rhetoric and Composition, the digital projects of Laurie Gries, Michael Faris and Derek Mueller have been especially inspiring and instructive. I listened to these projects, the rhetoric of the code, and how that rhetoric shapes their research. This listening included attuning myself to the values, frameworks, and paths that their research questions led them down.

Beck has argued that "algorithms are persuasive because of their performative nature and the values and beliefs embedded and encoded in their structures" (2016). These persuasive elements include inclusion and exclusion of data, systematic organization of information, "ideological beliefs of relationships." When I listened to the code, I also felt the suasive pull. I listened and attuned myself to programming options. From this listening, these research projects that integrate DH methods persuade their users to engage with specific modes of inquiry and relations between variables.

Even before this, the code persuades the researcher to think in programming terms. I had previously never thought of a woman physician as a 'variable,' but in order to create a visualization I needed to think in those terms. Thinking of women as variables made me uncomfortable, uneasy with the erasure of embodiment and situation. I had to sit with this discomfort and notice that my training as a feminist scholar has helped me value embodied experience. This was now in my bones. We couldn't simply let the visualizations carry the weight of the argument. By listening to this discomfort, we planned methods that integrate both distant and close reading.

In addition, code invites particular kinds of relationships and organizations. In the case of my visualization, there had to be a hierarchy. The line has to start at one point and go towards another. We experimented with different relationships: from institutions to people, people to

institutions, also from person to person. Each of these offered different ways of reading and could each have led to a different research project.[6]

Much of this listening was also practicing: downloading tutorials, performing exercises in code, and fiddling with open source code.[7] Yes, I did learn how to program in this phase. More importantly, I learned what programming could do and how it may shape research questions and methods. When I listened to code as I also practiced programming, I felt myself get lost in the patterns, structure, and rhythm of the work. Programming has its own flow that is quite different from writing, in my experience. There is an interactive moving back and forth between code and visualization, code and test, code and instructions. The rhythm of the work was absorbing.

My training in feminist rhetorical practices enabled me to listen carefully throughout the research process. My attention to listening moved me to consider many different perspectives, approaches, and attune myself to a wide range of previous work. In addition, this listening led us to new questions, to think critically about assumptions, and to trust our intuition when and where we felt discomfort in the process. Hence, the feminst rhetorical practice of listening was a vital resource as we designed this project and as I shifted to participate in algorithmic rhetoric.

Then, there was the **dreaming phase**: This is the phase in which we imagined what could be possible. The dream started with Jacqueline Royster and Gesa Kirsch in their chapter "Social Circulation and Legacies of Mobility for Nineteenth Century Women" in *Rhetoric, Writing, and Circulation*. They imagine using digital humanities tools to visualize the movement of this community of women physicians. When Gesa, Alison, and I began collaborating, we took up Royster and Kirsch's questions and asked more. What would we gain by visualizing the community? What stories would these visualizations tell? What relationships or changes in relationships could we possibly locate?

We dreamed big. We played with mapping software, interactive storytelling, and timelines. I can't tell you how many hours I've spent scrolling through the D3 library of Javascript packages for data visualization. As I explored, I imagined how each algorithm may interact with the archival data. How could an algorithm help us see the community differently? What stories could another algorithm help us tell? When brainstorming, Gesa, Alison and I covered every inch of the walls of our work space with drawings, lists, sketches of the different ways we could imagine visualizing this community. We moved around the room drawing, arranging Post-Its of

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[6] In fact, we created several of those different versions with different relationships, with a particular focus on relationships between people. However, that work ended up being beyond the scope of the arguments and stories we wanted to develop in our research.

[7] My experience of listening would have been far easier if I had benefited from Kevin Brock's *Rhetorical Code Studies*, especially the very rhetorically focused and also practical chapter "Composing in Code," which was published long after I moved past this phase.

various sizes and colors, and discussing our plans. We also moved outside, walking and running through long, warm evenings returning each day with coffee and fresh perspective on plans.

While we spent hours and days dreaming up possibilities, we also spent as much time whittling these dreams down to those that would best address our research questions. I still hold in my head and my notebooks the dreams of how many different ways algorithms can tell the stories of a community. This process of dreaming, imagining, questioning, and choosing was guided by our goals as feminist researchers. Again and again, we returned to issues of intersectionality and how the archive excluded Black Women. We needed to dream anew, imagining ways of resisting that erasure. When I share the code with fellow researchers, these dreams are concealed, hidden within the code. However, our dreams are precisely what guided our choices working with algorithmic rhetoric.

Then, there was a **conversation phase**: we talked to everyone. The UCSB digital humanities librarian, Thomas Padilla, pointed me towards resources, examples, and programs. I'm fortunate to be colleagues at UCSB with Jeremy Douglas, a DH scholar who has been generous and supportive. Gesa consulted friends and colleagues with expertise in programming, visualization as well as medical history. Alison was in close conversation with mentors. We shared their insights and resources, allowing our own social network to shape our research methods.

A major turning point in the project as well as my own literacy with digital humanities methods came when I attended Kairos Camp and benefited from the community of scholars, both instructors Cheryl Ball and Doug Eyman and the fellow students. And then the next year, Alison, Gesa, and I all attended, making great strides in the development and design of our research project. The conversations at Kairos Camp were instrumental for sussing out the right tools, coding methods, and processes that would help us answer some of our research questions. Most importantly, we were encouraged to focus first and foremost on the research question and our audience, not the research tool. Often, when learning a new tool, such as DH methods or algorithmic writing, it is easy to focus on what the tool can do, how it works, and the new affordances offered. With their many years of experience, Ball and Eyman mentored us to learn both the new DH methods as well while keeping in mind my goals as a researcher and the needs of our audiences.

I also engaged in frequent conversations with undergraduate student programmers. Working with the students is where the rubber hit the road. I addressed questions like how I planned to turn archival material into programmable data, how I defined variables, how much data was enough or too much, and what could be the relationships between those variables. The students moved me to speak in precise, concrete plans that they could use to aid in coding the archival material and prototyping visualizations. In our conversations, I felt a closeness build, as we oscillated between the roles of teacher and student. As we took our turns teaching and learning, these relationships grew into partnerships through collaboration.

I was also in constant conversation with my collaborators, Gesa Kirsch and Alison Williams. This project emerged within and through our dialogue together. In conversation with them, we

thought about the visualizations with a keen attention to feminist research practices: How can we preserve an ethic of care while representing this community? How can distant reading feature situated knowledge and account for context? What assumptions are we making? Who may be marginalized or excluded through our methodological choices? How may our own situated, embodied experiences be shaping our methods, the visualizations, and our analyses? I brought the voices and care of these intelligent, feminist collaborators with me as I programmed.

Throughout this conversation phase, I noticed myself gaining confidence and fluency in debates around digital humanities, methodologies, and ethics of those methods. It was through dialogue and collaboration that I grew as a researcher while also refining the methods. Through this phase, I am indebted the long-documented practices of feminist collaboration (Ede & Lunsford, 2001). In addition, feminist scholars in Rhetoric and Composition have narrated their own broad, multidirectional mentoring networks (Gaillet, Aley & Horner, 1994; Bloom, 2007; Gaillet & Guglielmo, 2014; VanHaitsma & Ceraso, 2017). In our research project and among feminist scholars generally, mentoring and collaborating are intertwining practices. Be they student, colleague, friend or partner, each person who shared their time and experience served as a vital mentor as I grew into the identity of digital humanities researcher and as we refined our research methods.

Then, there was the longest phase, which was the **tinkering phase**. In this phase I toggled between coding the archival materials, testing out a program, going back and re-coding, trying out new programs. Giving up on especially cumbersome programs. Asking for help…a lot.

I call this phase "tinkering" because I want to highlight a process of negotiation with computer programs and programming languages. Tinkering highlights the kind of relationship I have with algorithms: I can change, adjust, fiddle with the program, but I cannot build it from scratch and I do not have total control over the final product. The algorithmic logic itself maintains some control, recalcitrant against my fiddling at times and flexible at other times. At the same time, the algorithm does not control everything.

Jacqueline Wernimont's feminist approach to DH also resonates with my experience of tinkering: "'Interaction' resonates with the ongoing emphasis on collaboration in the field, but also suggests the use or inhabiting of the space between actions – between 'use' and 'creation/making,' or between 'making' and 'theorizing.'" She defines feminist DH work at the threshold between actions. I've also found that to be the case. The algorithm and I interacted: I acted and it reacted, and vice versa. I'm at the threshold between coder, archiver, researcher, feminist, teacher, collaborator, and programmer. I interact with each of these thresholds.

While tinkering, I created the prototypes in programs Google graphs and Tableaux. While neither of these programs gave me the flexibility and control that we needed, they allowed me to make prototypes of visualizations. With each prototype, we could see the community in slightly different ways. The prototyping process helped us to decide what kind of visualizations would help us tell this story.

For example, the image below was made in Google graphs. This was a prototype that helped us decide the direction of the final visualization. Our final visualization looks quite different and tells a more complex story. However, they both tell an important part of the story: the American Medical Association was a powerful organization in these women physicians' professional lives, even though the AMA did not widely accept women as members.
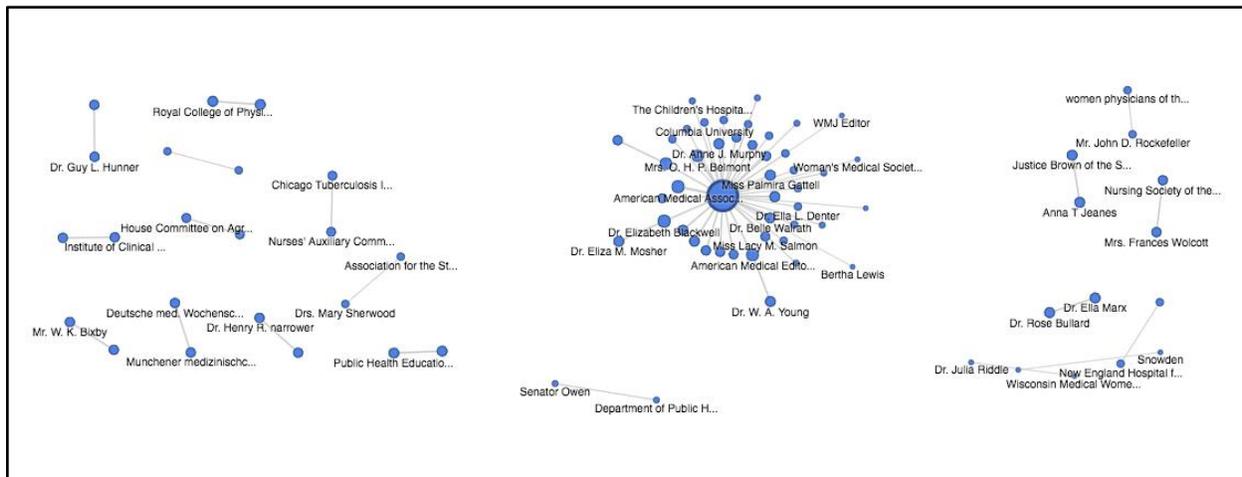

Figure 2: An early prototype of the social network analysis featuring people and institutions who were included in the 1900 archive of the *Women's Medical Journal*. This visualization was created in Google Graph.

While this prototyping process was not programming, it was still working with algorithms as a means of research because the visualizations were generated through Google graphs or Tableaux's algorithms. At this point, I had little control over the algorithm. However, working with these programs allowed me to see the community and the archival material in different ways. With Gesa and Alison, we thought with the algorithms insofar as we imagined how these visualizations could best help us to study this community of women.

Most of the decisions made in this phase were based on one question: does this tell an interesting story? Based on how we answered this question, we would go back to the drawing board: Do we need more or less data? Why did we include or exclude some texts? What variables will we include? How do we format our data? How can we cut down on errors?

When I first learned R, I was frustrated. There were days when it seemed like nothing would work. A series of red error messages seemed to be my fate. At the most basic level, there are a few main steps:

- download a package,
- create a dataframe,
- define a table with values,
- and assign a function.

Those steps appear simple. And in some ways, it is easy to play with simple data sets and graphs to get started. The frustration comes in the fact that there are many different ways to design each step, with different values, variables, design choices, and relations between data. The frustration also arose when I created visualizations, and they didn't appear as I had imagined or planned. This phase taught me to practice patience and care. In particular, I had to be patient with myself, letting myself learn and grow would take time.

After a while, there were days when I felt like I found my flow. You could walk by my office door and hear Pranati Shah, a research assistant I worked with, and me cheering and giving each other high fives. On Friday afternoons, Pranati would teach me something new, but we both learned along the way through a process of trial and error. After a while, the errors became fewer and the trials led to usable visualizations. My shoulders relaxed. We lost track of time, tinkering in my office side by side on warm fall afternoons. By the end of our time working together, each Friday I looked forward to experimenting, trying out new data, and eating pizza with Pranati.

Finally, I tinkered with the design of the visualization, which included a shift to think more actively about aesthetics, audience, and usability. What colors or interactive options should we include? What determines the center? margins? size? proximity? There is no particular correct answer to these questions, but there were better and worse choices. For instance, the student research assistant I worked with initially designed the social network analysis with pink dots for people and blue dots for institutions, a color choice so traditionally gendered that it would have inflected interpretations that we were not comfortable with.

This tinkering phase is when I really developed a feeling for the algorithm. At the same time, I brought to this work each of the earlier phases. I continued to listen, but this time I was listening while programming. I continued to dream, but these dreams focused on the specific variables and possibilities afforded in the programming languages. Of course, conversation and dialogue with Gesa Kirsch and Alison Williams guided each interaction with the algorithm. In addition, they were my first audience. Their responses and reactions became my first round of user testing. Together, we discussed design and usability options. Throughout every step, this feeling for the algorithm emerged through my embodied, social, and feminist practices.

Tinkering was a vital feminist practice for my own algorithmic methods because tinkering foregrounds interaction and interative process. I didn't wield mastery over the algorithm. Nor was I entirely subject to its demands. Instead, I was able to recognize my own power to enact changes as well as the limits of that power. I was already familiar with this notion of change by learning from the generations of feminist activists that came before me, including the women physicians in the archival materials. Feminist activism is far more significant than the term 'tinkering' suggests. But in this instance, I felt empowered to tinker with programming and learn a new literacy because of the broader constellation of literacies, including feminist rhetorics, which prepared me for collaborative, interative, and experimental process of composing.

Conclusion

I hope my readers note that, in each of these phases, my work emerged out of my embodied experience, my communities, feminist values, and social contexts. I've narrated my process in order to highlight what algorithmic composition looked like for me. I am no stereotype of a programmer, which I imagine as white guy with poor posture, pale skin, working alone listening to EDM. That's not me, and that's not how I've worked. Most importantly, I did not work alone nor did I try to exclude my values from my work. Rather, I worked actively to think as a feminist who was working with algorithmic writing towards feminist rhetorical goals. In the black box of the instruction set, I define only a few of the steps that I took while programming. However, in order to arrive at these steps, I drew upon a community and am indebted to that community. I've also drawn upon my embodied experiences and values, which shaped my process and the product of my programming.

I stress the community because one of the earliest arguments for the parallel between composition and coding (Cummings, 2006) revises the rhetorical triangle. Rather than the traditional author, audience and text, Robert E. Cummings defines the coding rhetorical triangle as coder, machine, program. When we adopt coding as a means of composition, yes, the machine does become one audience, but it is not the only audience. We still program for and with people. Our audiences are many. And the algorithmic rhetoric that we compose will interact with all bodies in different ways. In addition, I am not just composing with code. I am not just a programmer; I'm also an author, with my goals, values, biases, and priorities. I am a teacher, friend, feminist and colleague. My students, friends, and colleagues are vital resources for my programming literacy.

I am a feminist, and I code as such. I find it vitally important to resist a shift to over-determine programming through its relationship to the machine, thereby isolating the programmer and machine apart from the broader social context.

I also call attention to my social and embodied experiences as a novice programmer in order to invite us to think differently about the process of working with algorithmic rhetorics. Moya Z Bailey invites DH scholars "challenge the "add and stir" model of diversity" because "as opposed to meeting people where they are, where people of color, women, people with disabilities are already engaged in digital projects, there's a making of room at an already established table." If we are to meet feminist scholars where they are in Digital Humanities research, we would also be inviting a new set of questions, processes, and experiences. In this essay, I've highlighted the embodied, collaborative, and the social process of programming in order to center these foundational concepts of feminist writing and rhetoric within the compositional process of writing with code.

I seek to resist the presupposition that feminist scholars are deficient or lacking in skills necessary to complete DH research. Jessica Enoch and Jean Bessette, while they invite feminist interventions in digital humanities research, also note that technical skills may be a limitation or a barrier to feminist scholars. Other feminist scholars may feel the same way. To them I say: our expertise and experience as feminist researchers are assets, rich resources that qualify and

prepare us to complete nuanced, ethical, important research in digital humanities. Let these feminist practices shape the technical work.

Acknowledgements

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Utilizing Digital, Multimodal Practices in Composing Apocalyptic/Post-apocalyptic Stories:
A Case Study of Southwestern College Students in a Written and Visual Media Course

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Abstract

In the writing classroom, presenting a curriculum where students write apocalyptic/ post-apocalyptic fiction to connect with the literature and share their futuristic concerns is a pedagogical strategy that has grown in popularity, with teachers asking students to compose in more diverse genres. As assignment outcomes, students can fashion a digital, multimodal storybook about an apocalyptic/post-apocalyptic event in order to think more critically; explore and research their personal and larger concerns; show creativity; promote a digital, critical multimodal literacy and digital multimodal prowess; gain dexterity in drafting, composing, and revising a narrative for an audience's entertainment; and increase their ability to reflect upon their work, as well as identify with apocalyptic/post-apocalyptic subjects. This article, involving 80 student participants, discusses a three-year case study at a Southwestern university of a digital storybook assignment. Students, engaging with apocalyptic/post-apocalyptic novels in a Written and Visual Media course, composed a genre-conforming, digitalized story with written, alphabetic textual; pictorial; and aural elements, as well as a corresponding reflective essay. The assignment's assessment criteria are presented, with raters measuring students' outcomes, and students self-reporting on their engagement with the task. The study's results have implications for implementing a multimodal writing curriculum supporting students' critical multimodal literacy and the composition of digital stories in which students can connect apocalyptic/post-apocalyptic fiction's themes to their individual and greater stressors, especially following the COVID-19 outbreak.

Keywords: Digital; Multimodal Composition; Digital Storytelling; Apocalyptic/Post-apocalyptic Fiction; Critical Multimodal Literacy; Rhetorical Construction of Identity

Introduction
Apocalyptic/post-apocalyptic fiction portrays the worries of a fractured world dealing with new technologies post-World War II, with the potential for social, political, biological, and ecological systems to go awry. Apocalyptic/post-apocalyptic or speculative fiction is a subgenre of Science Fiction, Science Fantasy, or Horror where the Earth's technological capacities are failing or have

collapsed, and it bears similarities to Utopic/Dystopic fiction in employing alternate universes (Lucas, 2011). Apocalyptic events can be climatic, manmade, medical, eschatological, or imaginative in nature (Zimbaro, 1996). In definition, "genre fiction" is supposedly formulaic in presenting its topics, characters, and settings (McHale, 2005), yet good apocalyptic/post-apocalyptic fiction subsumes these categorical limitations through offering originality, innovation, and the function of transcendence (Lucas, 2011). Likewise, the range of apocalyptic/post-apocalyptic fiction writers and their choice of topics have grown more diverse, with the field portraying not only male, Caucasian, superhero types but also a range of "everyday" people from racial/ethnic, gender, ability, age, and socioeconomic categories representative of a larger population.

Today, more people are reading apocalyptic/post-apocalyptic literature than ever (Cohen & Pielak, 2016), with the public displaying an ongoing interest in the genre since the appearance of the COVID-19 outbreak (Kirsner, 2020). Coinciding with this popular reading movement, some university composition faculty are integrating apocalyptic/post-apocalyptic fictional themes into their classrooms (Shimkus, 2012). Yet, reading and writing apocalyptic/post-apocalyptic fiction provide students with more than just a sense of escapism. The genre allows readers to explore topics they might not encounter otherwise and to think critically in envisioning how a text's imagined realities and disasters could be similar to ones that they themselves have experienced or might face (see Grossman, 2012). In college, students must learn to envision their personal backgrounds as fitting within their wider locale (Weis, Benmayor, O'Leary, & Eynon, 2002). In turn, writing teachers selecting apocalyptic/post-apocalyptic stories as focal texts for reading and writing assignments can assist students in investigating and sharing their individual, family, social, and career aspirations, as well as any fears they hold about their future well-being.

Most faculty of reading- and writing-related courses forgo the option of giving their students assignments related to the apocalyptic/post-apocalyptic genre. Comparably, many instructors avoid utilizing storytelling, including digital storytelling, in the classroom despite its similar value (Holtzblatt & Tschakert, 2011; Pyne & Means, 2013). Responding to these contexts, as a teacher implementing digital, multimodal, writing course design in an upper-level, "Written and Visual Media" class, I considered the potential worth in asking students, who are English majors, to read apocalyptic/post-apocalyptic fiction and fashion their own genre-affiliated, digital, multimodal storybook via PowerPoint's software. Aligned with the trend toward teachers' and students' examination of the growing corpus of apocalyptic/post-apocalyptic fiction, practicing digital storytelling is another newly lauded method of teaching students to read, think (Robin & McNeil, 2012), research a topic (Robin, 2008), and compose work, including writing creatively (Reyes & Clark, 2013). As a student-centered approach, storytelling can be applied to promote students' deep learning and meaning-making (McLean, 2005) while meeting the needs of those with diverse learning styles (Kortegast & Davis, 2017). Similar to featuring apocalyptic/ post-apocalyptic fictional texts in the classroom, pursuing digital storytelling also encourages students to contemplate, critique, and act upon cultural norms (Porfilio, Gorlewski, & Gorlewski, 2017), as well as grappling with their own and others' identities (Coscarelli & Ribeiro, 2018). Indeed, because of an emphasis on representing worldview, students engaged in digital

storytelling may demonstrate more interest in a class's subject matter than otherwise (Suwardy, Pan, & Seow, 2013).

Through digital storytelling, students can learn digital technology and participate in multimodal writing by merging oral storytelling, print writing, and technical applications. Also valuable to the digital, multimodal composition classroom's goals, students can construct digital texts as a creative replacement for some "traditional" writing assignments prioritizing an alphabetic text (Comer, 2015), a scenario promoting their discovery of the literate performances attached to a range of multimodal texts (Jacobs, 2013). With digital storytelling, students can practice process writing by choosing a topic and conducting research; composing an alphabetic textual narrative; and developing its corresponding pictorial and audial components (Sheafer, 2016), including images and graphics, a recording of the author reading the alphabetic text, and music and other sound effects. Moreover, students employing digital storytelling can implement differing modes in arranging, synthesizing, and presenting their information (Kortegast & Davis, 2017; Wang & Zhan, 2010) in order to generate important tales for themselves, define their content (McGee, 2014), reflect upon their work (Yang & Wu, 2012), and share it with the public to garner a greater audience (Robin & McNeil, 2012).

For the study's "Written and Visual Media" class, students read apocalyptic/post-apocalyptic novels, including graphic novels, and generated a digital storybook based upon an apocalyptic/post-apocalyptic event for one unit. The course's texts included Jose Saramago's novel, *Blindness* (1998); Jean Hegeland's *Into the Forest* (1996); Cormac McCarthy's *The Road* (2006); Margaret Atwood's *Oryx and Crake* (2003); and Robert Kirkman's and Tony Moore's graphic novel episode, *The Walking Dead: Volume 1* (2013). Students also watched films associated with some books and discussed genre conventions for apocalyptic/post-apocalyptic works (see Rubens, 2012). In composing the storybook, students utilized PowerPoint, a user-friendly program familiar to most students through which they implemented written, alphabetic textual; pictorial; and audial elements in crafting a digital, apocalyptic/post-apocalyptic narrative based on an event they believed could occur in the future (see Mackey, 2008). As the assignment's learning objectives, students were to 1) think critically; 2) explore and research their personal and social concerns (see Coscarelli & Ribeiro, 2018; Porfilio, Gorlewski, & Gorlewski, 2017); 3) display creativity; 4) demonstrate a digital, critical multimodal literacy and digital multimodal prowess in composing alphabetic text and mixing it with visual and aural elements in order to participate in the larger, social power structures at play within digital multimodal texts (see Comber & Nixon, 2014); 5) show dexterity in applying "process writing" or drafting, composing, and revising a narrative for an audience (see Bahl, 2015); and 6) reflect on their work.

The storybook unit contained assignments asking students to both study samples of digital storybooks and produce their own. Before beginning the storybook, students viewed examples on YouTube, many of which came from my previous classes, as a guide to envisioning their tale. Then, to foster critical thinking skills and conjure a storyline for their book, students brainstormed for topics both connected to their identity and imminent concerns, including those linked to their family, friends, disciplinary focus, and home. Once students decided upon

a storyline, they storyboarded their narrative by sketching scenes on paper, jotting plot points, and noting key dialogue. In imagining their storybook, students also opted for their tale to be serious or humorous, realistic or fantastical, and present-day or futuristic. After composing their narrative's text in a Microsoft Word document, students decided likewise how much text would appear on each PowerPoint book page, in some cases using only pull quotes. Separately, students recorded themselves reading their story and inserted an audio clip per page to match the corresponding chunk of written text, as presenting a narrating voice is an important component adding a sense of reality to a digital tale (see Alonso, Molina, & Porto, 2013). Moreover, some students included music as aural background. Finally, students selected photos and/or images of their characters, settings, and props for their book's pages. At the semester's end, I built a class website to showcase students' storybooks for public view (see Brown & Begoray, 2017), and some submitted their work to the undergraduate literary journal. Besides producing a digital story for the unit, students wrote a reflective essay discussing how they generated their tale, for whom, and why, as well as contemplating its design and focus. Additionally, students commented on exploring and researching their personal and greater concerns as a background for their tale and speculated on whether the apprehensions they raised could be "solved" socially (see Cohen & Pielak, 2016; Shimkus, 2012). (See Appendix I for assignment questions). This article, involving a three-year case study, explores and assesses a digital, multimodal, storybook assignment conforming with the apocalyptic/post-apocalyptic genre, as well as a reflective essay based upon the former's composition.

Literature Review
Reading and Writing Apocalyptic/Post-Apocalyptic Fiction
In exploring college teachers' employment of apocalyptic/post-apocalyptic literature in the writing classroom, a small number of research designs exist. These studies, where students read and/or compose work related to apocalyptic/post-apocalyptic literature, point to valuable outcomes, with students utilizing their critical thinking skills and imagination, and investigating and researching their personal and social concerns connected to the genre. In the first-year composition (FYC) classroom, Katherine Hiser (2010) utilized post-apocalyptic novels, so her students could discuss the individual, cultural, and environmental issues raised. Comparatively, Jay Shimkus (2012), teaching FYC, assigned speculative fiction, including dystopian novels, to engender dialogues about current happenings, as well as the potential horrors that a society could impose individually and collectively. In imagining how the world might end, Shimkus's students identified who and where they were in the present time and how their actions and ideologies might either forestall or precipitate an apocalyptic occurrence. Meanwhile, Mary Mackie (2008), also teaching FYC, employed post-apocalyptic texts, including McCarthy's *The Road*, to assist students in critically and creatively envisioning futuristic events similarly. A last study involving Amy Rubens (2012), who asked FYC students to read apocalyptic/post-apocalyptic literature and write genre-affiliated stories, is especially relevant. By both reading and authoring apocalyptic/ post-apocalyptic fiction, Ruben's students familiarized themselves with its elements, leading them to understand storytelling's purposes more generally.

Engaging in Digital Storytelling

A small number of studies describing the inclusion of apocalyptic/post-apocalyptic literature in the college writing classroom exist. Likewise, the same is true of those detailing college students' engagement in storytelling, including digital storytelling, which point to important and often overlapping outcomes with students implementing critical thinking skills, utilizing their imagination, and investigating their individual and cultural ideals. Current curricular designs for storytelling, including digital storytelling, describe students enrolled in a basic writing (BW) class who engaged in the practice. In implementing a storytelling format, Andrea Parmegiani (2014), a BW teacher, found that it facilitated her students' entrance into academic discourse systems, a process necessitating their critical thinking skills. Similarly, Soba Bandi-Rao and Mary Sepp (2014), teaching BW, determined that participating in digital storytelling presented their students with self-directed learning opportunities, prompting them to examine their personal and social concerns. Moreover, through digital storytelling, as Bandi-Rao and Sepp concluded, basic writers can compose a story and shape it into a digital, multimodal, and multidimensional experience, encouraging their sense of creativity and a digital multimodal prowess. Finally, for Rebecca Mlynarczyk (2014), storytelling assists basic writers in undertaking various academic writing processes in order to gain a greater dexterity in drafting, composing, revising a text for an audience's viewing, and reflecting upon their work.

Employing a Digital, Critical Multimodal Literacy by Composing Digital Storybooks

For college students, the relevance of reading, reacting to, and writing apocalyptic/post-apocalyptic stories, as well as that of composing digital tales, has been established. However, despite what is known, more can be stated about the value of students' investigation and generation of multimodal texts themselves as an important educational design, with the National Council for Teachers of English ([NCTE] 2005) calling upon teachers and students to study and fashion multimodal texts. Enacting multimodality involves embedding diverse elements within a composition that provide unique ways for students to read and formulate texts (Kress, Jewitt, Bourne, Franks, Hardcastle, Jones, & Reid, 2005). Likewise, applying a critical literacy lens to a work involves not only detailing its design choices but also analyzing its racial, gender, and/or cultural structures as power frameworks (Rankine & Callow, 2017). Indeed, through multimodal composition, students can understand how the traditional defining of author, audience, genre, and linear sequence can be broadened (Lim, O'Halloran, Tan, & K. L. E., 2015). One way related to the current study in which students can achieve a greater critical literacy in analyzing others' works is by formulating their own story's characters and narrative structures (Comber & Nixon, 2014; Exley, Woods, & Dooley, 2014). Additionally, generating multimodal texts assists students in thinking critically and self-directedly in employing differing modes for their particular communicative rationales, showcasing their artistic and creative sensibilities (NCTE, 2005), and affirming and documenting their individual and cultural backgrounds (Ajayi, 2015). Meanwhile, students who construct multimodal texts with digital features, such as digital stories, can include videos, sounds, graphics, images, and colors in their work (see Coscarelli & Ribeiro, 2018) in order to increase their digital multimodal prowess, as well as achieve a greater dexterity in drafting, composing, and revising a narrative.

In the literature reviewed, some students read and/or wrote apocalyptic/post-apocalyptic fiction, while others composed stories, with a few implementing digital and/or multimodal elements. Such examples contribute to discussions of students' requisite for interacting with diverse genre and modal forms (see Coscarelli & Ribeiro, 2018). Nonetheless, a gap in the research remains concerning the question of how the curricular practices of reading, responding to, and writing apocalyptic/post-apocalyptic stories, as well as composing digital tales, could be combined into a singular assignment, the digital storybook, and with what success. Indeed, the literature outlining college students' engagement with reading and writing apocalyptic/post-apocalyptic fiction and producing stories more generally tends to be largely theoretical (i.e., Ajayi, 2015) or anecdotal (i.e., Mlynarczyk, 2014), lacking many or all of these features: a detailed description of students' assignments and how they were enacted; a substantial enough sample of student participants from which to draw results (i.e., Bandi-Rao & Sepp, 2014); a categorical delineation of how many students improved their compositional practices, which ones, and to what degree; and a digital and/or multimodal component (i.e., Rubens, 2012). Additionally, the studies reviewed did not employ an exploratory model framework or utilize a greater number of instruments from which to benefit.

Thus, this article explores and assesses a major assignment, a digital, multimodal storybook conforming with the apocalyptic/post-apocalyptic genre, as well a reflective essay based upon the former's rendering. For the study, I asked these research questions: How does foregrounding digital, multimodal writing assignments, such as a PowerPoint storybook, affect students' 1) critical thinking skills; 2) exploration and research of their personal and social concerns; 3) creativity; 4) digital, critical multimodal literacy and digital multimodal prowess; 5) dexterity in drafting, composing, and revising a narrative for an audience's entertainment; and 6) ability to reflect upon their work, as well as identify with the apocalyptic/post-apocalyptic genre's subject matter?

Method

Research Site

From 2017 through 2020, the study was conducted at a rural Oklahoma university serving the state's lowest income county. The town where the university resides is in the Choctaw Nation tribe's capital, but the college itself lays outside of tribal nation jurisdiction. Many undergraduates have low-income backgrounds, 57% are first-generation students, and 30% are Native Americans, mostly Choctaw and Chickasaw. Academically, only a little over 11% of students graduate within five years, and 28% finish at all, even though, according to prospects at similar institutions, students should be graduating at a rate of over 39% (Deidentified University "Factbook," 2019). Thus, at the study's university, like elsewhere, some students, including rurally located and racial minorities, face persistence issues as marginalized groups. Regionally, high-speed, internet service also remains sometimes unavailable (for the area's "digital divide," see Hembrough, Madewell, & Dunn, 2018). Consequently, upon enrolling at the university, most students possess little experience with composing digitally and do not own household computers. Before the COVID-19 outbreak, many students also drove to campus to

utilize computer labs but then found other means of completing their work, such as sitting in a fast-food restaurant's parking lot and utilizing their phone to address their assignments.

Research Methods

Having Institutional Review Board approval, I designed an exploratory case study offering an "opportunity to learn" (Stake, 1995, p. 6). In conjunction with the study's aims and a knowledge of the existing literature, I explored how students' fashioning of a digital storybook about a possible cataclysmic event would impact their ability to implement multimodal composition practices, as well as portray their personal and greater social worries. Additionally, I investigated how the storybook assignment might be assessed to measure students' writing outcomes. I utilized diverse forms of data to produce results, including a post-assignment survey with Likert-style and open-ended questions, students' prewriting activities and reflective essays, and classroom observations, all of which revealed aspects of students' engagement with multimodal reading and writing practices, critical thinking, research, and reflection. Furthermore, acting as raters, another researcher and I evaluated students' prewriting work, storybook, and reflective essay for themes and indicators related to students' identity, as well as their writing processes. Finally, I created a rubric to measure students' results for the storybook. I selected this assignment for assessment because in producing it, students discussed their identity, and the unit also reflected a measure of their interaction with multimodal discourses. As raters, we also compared students' storybooks for academic outcomes. On a five-point scale, we rated each storybook's organization; development and clarification of ideas; diction, style, and voice; audience and genre features; artwork; and synthesis of information and cohesion.

Sample Demographics

The 80 participants ranged in age from 19 to 48, with the majority in their early twenties. Men represented 42% (*n* = 34), and women were 58% (*n* = 46). Caucasian students were the majority, with Native Americans, Choctaw and Chickasaw, ranking second. More than half of students (*n* = 41) had a combined household income of below $30,000, thus living at the poverty level, and most came from rural backgrounds. Additionally, as elsewhere nationally, students in the study's final year were affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Refer to Table 1 for group demographics.

Findings
Students' Engagement in Digital Storytelling and Their Composition-related Outcomes for the Storybook

At the unit's beginning, some students, who asked to compose storybooks about a cataclysmic event that might reflect their personal anxieties and/or society's greater worries, seemed hesitant to do so. Nonetheless, once they began to explore their qualms about the future,

Table 1. Students' Demographic Characteristics

Race	Caucasian 52% (42)	Native American 39% (31)	Hispanic/Latino 4% (3)	African-American 3% (2)	Asian/Pacific Islander 2% (2)
Age	18-21 52% (42)	22-25 43% (34)	26-29 1% (1)	35-39 1% (1)	45-49 2% (2)
Annual Household Income	$0-15,000 24% (19)	$16,000-30,000 27% (22)	$31,000-45,000 12% (10)	$46,000-60,000 15% (12)	> $60,000 22% (18)
Permanent Residence	Oklahoma 81% (65)	Texas 19% (15)	NA		
Town Size	Under 5,000 43% (34)	5,000-10,000 23% (18)	11,000-20,000 21% (17)	30,000-50,000 11% (9)	60,000 + 2% (2)

N = 80

Note: The number of students per category has been rounded to the nearest whole number.

contemplate their personal and larger identities, and decide upon a storyline for an apocalyptic event, they were eager to produce their storybooks, which, like comics, distilled an idea into a limited number of frames or pages while offering an entertaining premise (see Appling, Weaver, & Lay, 2009). As findings, in composing a digital storybook, a majority of students fulfilled these assignment criteria to an average or better degree: 1) employed critical thinking; 42) explored and researched personal and social concerns; 3) showed creativity; 4) demonstrated a digital, critical multimodal literacy and digital multimodal prowess; 5) exhibited a dexterity in drafting, composing, and revising a narrative for an audience's entertainment; and 6) displayed an ability to reflect upon their work, as well as identify with apocalyptic/post-apocalyptic genre subjects.

Students addressed these outcomes in specific ways. They practiced critical thinking and creativity in completing prewriting tasks, namely listing their individual and communal apprehensions and brainstorming for storybook ideas. Additionally, students explored and researched their concerns by utilizing internet searches to gather information about apocalyptic-related topics in which they were interested. Moreover, students employed a digital, critical multimodal literacy by deciding independently how to proceed with their work, as well as demonstrating a digital multimodal prowess in composing alphabetic text and mixing it with visual and audial elements in utilizing PowerPoint to compile their story's written text, pictures and/or graphics, and an edited recording of themselves reading their tale. Interestingly, as a side note, in addressing PowerPoint, students also showed more collaboration and unity of intention in their interactions than usual (see Appling, Weaver, & Lay, 2009; Hembrough, 2019). Next, students applied process writing in beginning their storybook with prewriting, composing and peer reviewing the rough draft, receiving input from me, and

revising and producing a final version, thus effecting a dexterity in drafting, composing, and revising a narrative for an audience's entertainment. Finally, students wrote a reflective essay propelling them to contemplate their reactions to apocalyptic/post-apocalyptic literature, digital storytelling, and multimodality; ponder the concepts and choices behind their tale, including its strengths and weaknesses; and assess their learning outcomes.

Upon interacting with the storybook assignment, only two students, in the reflective essay, reported their dislike of tackling it: One called digital storybooks "juvenile," and the other commented on how she had to rerecord audio clips of her reading her story because of interruptions, including her cat knocking over items, rendering background noise. However, as elements impacting students' unit involvement, their past reading, viewing, and writing experiences and familiarity with apocalyptic/post-apocalyptic, as well as digital texts, influenced their perception of the storybook assignment (see Jacobs, 2013; Rubens, 2012). Some students, who indicated, at the outset, that they "did not know how" to formulate a futuristic digital storybook had reported possessing limited experience with writing fiction and/or composing multimodally. Others admitted to feeling "nervous" about addressing the project's visual and audio aspects. Yet, because the assignment's emphasis on depicting students' backgrounds and outlooks remained open to their preferences, they found that they could portray many current or looming anxieties within their texts. Additionally, as many were familiar with apocalyptic/post-apocalyptic films, students also utilized these as models about which to think critically and envision their own projects (see Rubens, 2012) while retaining their self-purpose and sense of creativity.

As the unit progressed, students discussed the apocalyptic/post-apocalyptic texts, including the digital and the graphic, and thus multimodal, novels, we were reading in an increasingly complex manner, thus enacting a critical digital literacy. However, not everyone liked the reading list's selections, as it became apparent. During an early class discussion, one older student dubbed the texts we were covering as "low work," "popular," and "trash fiction." Indeed, as it became clear to me, stereotypes about apocalyptic/post-apocalyptic texts and graphic novels as being unsuited for advanced readers desiring to investigate complicated topics still exist (see Richardson, 2017). Likewise, other students expressed their continued preference for "traditional" print instead of graphic novels, since they enjoyed mentally formulating the plot while utilizing the author's language for the backdrop (see Frey & Fisher, 2007). Nonetheless, as I affirmed for students, apocalyptic/post-apocalyptic and graphic novels as genres can play a lifelong role in students' reading practices (see Crawford, 2004) as they possess an established literary and cultural merit and provide concepts and patterns that one might not encounter elsewhere (Gravett, 2005).

In the survey and reflective essay, students identified achieving various outcomes in composing the storybook, including 1) implementing critical thinking; 2) exploring and researching personal and social concerns; 3) expressing creativity; 4) demonstrating a digital, critical multimodal literacy and digital multimodal prowess; 5) showing a dexterity in drafting, composing, and revising a narrative for an audience's entertainment; and 6) displaying an ability to reflect upon their work, as well as identify with apocalyptic/post-apocalyptic genre ideals. Notably, three

quarters or more of students reacted positively to nearly all of the associated survey items tabulated below, thus demonstrating their interest in apocalyptic/post-apocalyptic fiction topics, as well as digital storytelling, with this calculation excluding only the last two items listed concerning whether students would consider generating future digital storybooks and/or revising their digital storybook as a capstone project. (See Table 2 for students' self-reported survey outcomes upon completing the storybook.)

Proceeding, according to the survey and themes generated from students' reflective essays, most believed that the storybook assignment strengthened their critical thinking, exploration and research of personal and social concerns, and creativity, as well as promoting their educational interests. Specifically, as some racial minority students relayed in the reflective essay, in formulating a storybook, they had enjoyed the process of describing and researching their concerns as a means of constructing their identity and perceived path. One Choctaw woman commented, "When I sleep, I have dreams about how the future might be. By writing a story, I used my reoccurring ideas about how the end of the world might take place, along with a new beginning." Likewise, an African-American student provided an insight about how the assignment required her to exert a "higher creativity level" than usual: "Before, I thought digital

Table 2. Survey of Students' Self-reported Outcomes upon Finishing the Storybook

Academic Outcomes for Digital Storybook Assignment	
Strengthened critical thinking skills	95% (76)
Strengthened exploration and research of personal and greater social concerns	92% (74)
Strengthened creativity	85% (68)
Strengthened critical, reading skills, including reading digital multimodal texts	97% (78)
Proved useful in learning more about digital storybooks as a multimodal genre	86% (69)
Strengthened digital, multimodal writing skills	98% (78)
Strengthened drafting, composing, and revising skills in writing a narrative	90% (72)
Strengthened ability to write for a said purpose, specifically for an audience's entertainment	86% (69)
Strengthened reflective skills	94% (75)
Strengthened ability to identify with the apocalyptic/ post-apocalyptic genre's topics	95% (76)
Promoted or reinforced educational interests	74% (59)
Prompted student to consider making future digital storybooks	53% (42)
Motivated student to consider lengthening and revising the current digital storybook as a capstone senior project	22% (18)

N = 80 students

storytelling was for children. However, I see how placing pictures in the book and including my voice in narrating the story added further layers." Separately, many Teacher Education majors claimed that the assignment reinforced their educational interests because they planned to assign future students to read apocalyptic/post-apocalyptic novels, as well as author digital storybooks, in their own classrooms. Incidentally, in the reflective essay, students who discussed composing their storybook more positively also performed better on the unit assignment.

According to the survey and reflective essays, the storybook also promoted students' reading and writing processes, including a digital, critical multimodal literacy and digital multimodal prowess; dexterity in drafting, composing, and revising a narrative for an audience's entertainment; and ability to reflect upon one's work, as well as identify with apocalyptic/post-apocalyptic genre topics. At least 97% of students (n = 78) surveyed reported that the storybook assignment facilitated advancements in their reading and writing skills, including those addressing digital, multimodal texts. Additionally, almost all students surveyed agreed that completing the storybook improved their understanding of composing digital multimodal texts more largely. As a further outcome, in writing the reflective essay, half of students (n = 40) also commented that generating the storybook strengthened their comprehension of and/or interaction with general academic writing procedures in some significant way, including their recognizing the requirement for process writing and revision. One Caucasian student remarked in her essay, "I never thought about the need to draft a story instead of writing it all at once and being done. Also, I had never considered the need to keep a story moving in order to maintain audience interest. In writing my plot, I had to get rid of digressions. Interestingly, the same situations apply when I write an academic essay." Additionally, for 95% of students (n = 76) surveyed, reading the unit's fictional works heightened their ability to connect with apocalyptic/post-apocalyptic genre subjects and, by association, to contemplate and reflect upon their own storybook's themes.

Besides accounting for students' self-reported results, another rater and I assessed their storybook outcomes. We ascertained that students performed highest in the areas of "synthesis of information and cohesion" and "development and clarity," with at least 87% (n = 70) fulfilling these objectives. Findings suggest that the assignment's multimodal focus also aided most in satisfying the storybook's other components, with at least 82% (n = 66) meeting "diction, style, and voice" and "audience and genre" requirements. Overall, at least 60% of students (n = 48) fulfilled all storybook goals, with the category of "artwork" ranking lowest. See Table 3 for raters' assessment of students' academic outcomes for the storybook.

Students' Examination of Personal Worries and Societal Concerns and Their Development of Character Conflicts in Composing the Storybook

The study's overall findings have been delineated, but additional attention can be paid to how the storybook assignment led students to explore their personal and social concerns and connect with apocalyptic/post-apocalyptic genre topics by linking their worries to those of a

Table 3. Raters' Assessment of Students' Academic Outcomes for the Storybook

Writing Outcomes for the Digital Storybook	Percentage of Assignments Associated with Each Outcome, with "1" Being the Lowest and "5" the Highest				
	Fails to Meet Requirements 1	Fair 2	Meets Requirements 3	Good 4	Excellent 5
Synthesis of Information and Cohesion	6% $n = 5$	7% $n = 6$	23% $n = 18$	52% $n = 42$	12% $n = 12$
Development and Clarity	6% $n = 5$	6% $n = 5$	24% $n = 19$	36% $n = 29$	28% $n = 22$
Diction, Style, and Voice	11% $n = 9$	7% $n = 6$	37% $n = 30$	34% $n = 27$	11% $n = 9$
Audience and Genre Requirements	6% $n = 5$	11% $n = 9$	27% $n = 22$	24% $n = 19$	32% $n = 26$
Artwork/Images	7% $n = 6$	33% $n = 26$	39% $n = 31$	9% $n = 7$	12% $n = 10$

N = 80 students

main character created for the storybook. Indeed, one prewriting assignment allowed students to pinpoint their stressors and potentially link them to one(s) that their main character navigating a futuristic setting might also face. Offered near the unit's beginning, the task, having five parts, promoted critical thinking, creativity, and process writing. First, students listed personal and cultural stressors that college students collectively could face currently or might have faced in the past six months, with these being listed on the board. Second, students wrote down personal and cultural stressors that they themselves had felt within this period, as well as their degree of strength from "strongly" to "very strongly." Third, all class members voluntarily discussed at least one of their individually reported stressors. Fourth, students generated sketches for their proposed story's characters and plot and noted the difficulties that their protagonist might undergo. Fifth, students shared aloud their second brainstorming session's contents, with many mentioning that they held their main character's stressor(s) similarly.

Stemming from this exercise, a calculation of students' self-reported stressors is presented in Table 4. Concerning students' individual stress rates, nearly a third or more reported feeling anxiety about personal, family, housing, and job issues, with the following factors ranking highest: an existential issue ($n = 38$), having responsibility for a partner and/or a child ($n = 38$), a family member's major injury/illness ($n = 36$), a psychological condition ($n = 28$), substance abuse ($n = 28$), a problem at work ($n = 27$), roommate difficulty ($n = 25$), and housing issues ($n = 25$). More greatly and socially, students felt stressed by national economic issues ($n = 54$), a potential or actual pandemic ($n = 51$), and political conflicts ($n = 51$). Meanwhile, during the

Table 4. Students' Stressors

Personal Stressors	Strongly	Very strongly
A family member's injury/illness	16	20
An existential issue or a question about the "bigger picture"	13	25
Caring for a partner and/or child	12	26
A conflict with a roommate	11	14
A conflict at one's job	10	17
A psychological condition, such as depression or anxiety	9	19
Substance abuse issues	9	19
A reduction in income	9	13
Going out with friends more or less than usual	9	12
A conflict with a spouse/partner	8	20
Housing issues	8	17
A family member's/friend's demise	7	9
Transportation issues	6	10
Sleeping more or less than usual	5	4
An argument with a parent	4	10
A significant personal injury or illness	3	14
Issues with a teacher	3	5
Eating more or less than usual	3	3
Difficulty in choosing a future career	1	8
A legal issue	0	8
Being pregnant	0	5
A personal separation/divorce	0	2
Having sexual issues	0	2
Greater Social Stressors	Strongly	Very strongly
An act of God, including a tornado, hurricane, earthquake, etc.	7	28
National political issues, such as a presidential election	3	48
Country's national involvement in a war or conflict	3	18
Environmental sustainability issues	3	14
Homelessness	2	12
Immigration issues	2	4
Substance abuse issues	1	7
Economic issues, such as a recession	0	54
A pandemic	0	51
Threat of terrorist attacks	0	8

N = 80

study's final year, students' anxieties were affected by COVID-19 considerations, with an actual pandemic's appearance, related economic crisis, and approaching presidential election.

As delineated for the class prewriting activity, students outlined their set of stressors, as well as those of their potential main character, in order to seek direction and gain inspiration in composing their storybook. Afterwards, upon finishing the storybook, students viewed their prewriting material again to assist them in producing their reflective essay, a segment of which entailed gauging potential connections between themselves and their main character. Notably, for raters, as a reference point emblematic of both sets of writing, many students' personal and social concerns were associated with factors that David Lester outlined in his "Stressful Life Events Checklist" for college students (Lester, 2014). Nationally, students' worries about their college enrollment correlate with their long-term psychological well-being (Lee & Jeong, 2014), with today's university students of the traditional age experiencing higher stress levels and poorer psychological conditions than those of previous generations (Greene, Jewell, Fuentes, & Smith, 2019). Among their anxieties, students at large feel especially apprehensive about the status of their physiological and psychological health, family relationships and friendships (Lee & Jeong, 2014), college loan debt, and other financial problems (Heckman, Lim, & Montalto, 2014), a finding that the current study echoes concerning students' desire to foreground their personal and social concerns both within the class and their storybook. Additionally, first-generation and rural students feel less academically prepared for college than do their peers, as well as doubting their ability to graduate (Morton, Ramirez, Meece, Demetriou, & Panter, 2018) and do well academically (Lee & Jeong, 2014), further findings ringing true for the current study's mostly rural and first-generation student population, with many students worried about their relationships with instructors ($n = 8$) and capacity to do well in their classes ($n = 21$).

Besides identifying students' and their characters' stressors by evaluating their prewriting activity and reflective essay, raters viewed students' storybooks to generate themes concerning their rendering of character traits, plotlines, genre aspects, and secondary characters. (See Table 5). In an apocalyptic/post-apocalyptic story, one can envision the last days as a challenge, journey, battle between two forces, and/or an introduction of alien forces (Leigh, 2008). Correspondingly, students' characters dealt with such challenges as plot patterns.

In composing the storybook, students utilized critical thinking skills and creativity, as well as enacting a sense of critical literacy skills and comprehension of the apocalyptic/post-apocalyptic genre, in presenting the new worlds and troubles their characters faced for an audience. Additionally, most students acknowledged their personal and social concerns or stressors in formulating their main character's obstacles. Overall, many students held apprehensions related to their own physical and/or mental health, as well as possessing worries about family issues, and their characters struggled with these same problems if in larger numbers. For example, almost a fifth of students ($n = 17$) reported experiencing a major personal injury/illness, and over a quarter ($n = 28$) faced depression or anxiety. Similarly, around half of students' main characters displayed an injury/illness ($n = 39$) and/or felt depressed or anxious ($n = 54$). On another note, almost half of students felt concerned about being responsible for a partner and/or a child ($n = 38$) and/or handling a family member's major injury/illness ($n = 36$),

Table 5. Themes for Character Traits, Plotlines, Genre Aspects, and Secondary Characters that Students Generated in the Storybook

Main Character's Traits
Character represents a superhero (0).
Character has a secret power/skill (0) or special prop, like a sword (0).
Character has a special or known flaw/weakness (6).
Character possesses a sense of fear (57), anxiety or depression (54), alienation (56), apathy (48), indecision (47), uncertainty (43), and/or anger (54).
Story Plotline Type and Conflicts
Story relies upon causal events, with a beginning and ending, and the story is a comedy (20) or tragedy (60).
Story is open-ended (68) or closed-ended (12).
Story involves an actual journey in time and space for the main character (57).
Story is about a traumatic event for the main character, including a family member's death (45); friend's death (11); major personal injury/illness (39); substance abuse (2); and/or mental health condition, such as depression (38) or anxiety (39).
Story is about the drug culture's negative effects (2) or an overreliance on technology (4).
Story is about a natural or man-made disaster/emergency, including a fire (7), tornado (1), earthquake (1), hurricane (11), bombing (14), war (28), and/or pandemic (26).
Story is about a change in political leadership (45), including through the arrival of alien forces (12).
Story includes negative events for the main character, including abandonment (56), physical fighting (42), rape (14), cannibalism (9), harsh elements (47), and/or slavery (21).
Story includes positive events for the main character, including marriage (11), the birth of a child (9), the act of applying new skills for survival (59), and/or the assumption of a leadership role (36).
Genre Aspects
Story involves a lesson or moral that the main character learns (61).
Story is realistic or plausible (51).
Secondary Characters
Story has a guide, including a parent, god figure, coach, etc. (38).

N = 80 students

while a key conflict within students' tales included a family member's death (*n* = 45). Other student worries included housing (*n* = 25), job (*n* = 27), and/or pregnancy issues (*n* = 5), whereas students' characters experienced the more dire, but potentially aligning events of abandonment (*n* = 56), living in harsh elements (*n* = 47), slavery (*n* = 21), and/or rape (*n* = 14). Besides being tied to students' personal conflicts, their tales called attention to larger cultural uncertainties. More than half of students were bothered by the status of political (*n* = 51) and economic matters (*n* = 54), along with the threat or actuality of a pandemic (*n* = 51), themes

portrayed in a quarter to nearly half of their tales. Comparably, approximately half of students (n = 35) were leery about a possibly impending act of God, while over a quarter (*n* = 21) felt nervous about a potential outbreak of war, with students' stories featuring disasters, including a war (*n* = 28), pandemic (*n* = 26), bombing (*n* = 14), hurricane (*n* = 11), fire (*n* = 7), tornado (*n* = 1), and/or earthquake (*n* = 1). (See Appendix II for students' digital storybook examples.)

 In other ways, students' main characters and their circumstances also presented a parallel to students' lives themselves. For instance, no student conceived of a main character as a "superhero" or someone with a secret power/skill or special prop, like a magical sword. Instead, similar to the students, their main characters could be considered average people, with only six characters possessing a known, supernatural flaw/weakness by which they were defined. Most students also wrote realistic or feasible tales (*n* = 51), rendering the types of roadblocks with which their characters grappled as possibly similar to those that students themselves faced. Separately, just as many students desired advice from teachers about completing their assignments and/or beginning their careers as per their list of needs to be addressed, some of their stories also featured the role of guides or mentors (*n* = 38). Likewise, as a plot choice, most students' stories remained open-ended (*n* = 68), paralleling their existence at this point, open to diverging roads in terms of a profession, romantic relationship, and/or decision to start a family. Indeed, as students mused upon their careers, alliances, and settings, many stories involved a lesson or moral that the character learned (*n* = 61) and/or journey taken (*n* = 57).

Discussion

To navigate within various "systems of meaning making" (Jacobs, 2013), students must learn to read and compose work in multiple textual modes and genres, such as through practicing digital storytelling and writing apocalyptic/post-apocalyptic fiction. Within the study, regardless of the struggle on some students' part, producing a storybook led most to consider and expand upon their composing capabilities, especially concerning multimodality aspects. Likewise, in generating a storybook, all were willing to contemplate their individual and larger social concerns connected to identity factors of gender, race/ethnicity, background, major, family and career expectations, and location in some significant way, including by linking them to apocalyptic/post-apocalyptic fiction's leitmotifs. When the unit began, nearly all students possessed a limited experience with reading and/or writing both apocalyptic/post-apocalyptic literature (see Shimkus, 2012) and digital storybooks (see Bandi-Rao & Sepp, 2014). Still, most were able to grasp and enjoy the storybook assignment with its interdisciplinary focus and digital, multimodal elements. Many students, as English majors, reported their continued preference for writing alphabetic-based texts, yet nearly all were willing, especially the creative writers, to commit much time to digitally composing the storybook.

For the study, foregrounding digital, multimodal writing assignments, such as a PowerPoint storybook with alphabetic text, mixed with visual and audial elements, assisted students in addressing key composition-related processes, including 1) critical thinking; 2) an exploration and research of their personal and social concerns; 3) creativity; 4) a digital, critical multimodal literacy and digital multimodal prowess; 5) a dexterity in drafting, composing, and revising a

narrative for an audience's entertainment; and 6) an ability to reflect upon their work, as well as identify with apocalyptic/post-apocalyptic topics. Indeed, overall, at least 85% of students (*n* = 68) surveyed reported that the storybook assignment facilitated advancements in these categories for them. Arriving at a similar figure in utilizing comparable writing-outcome-based criteria, raters assessing the storybook assignment also found at least 82% of students (*n* = 66) were also able to synthesize information and create cohesion; develop their work and offer clarity; utilize the appropriate diction, style, and voice; and meet audience and genre requirements in undertaking this task. These self-reported and rater-assessed results, with a high degree of overlap, indicate that the storybook assignment benefited a good number of students in achieving various composition-oriented outcomes valuable to the larger course.

Largely, this study is significant in providing writing teachers with information about the benefits and obstacles involved in formulating a digital storybook with an apocalyptic/post-apocalyptic outlook for a multimodal composition course as an assignment hereto undescribed in the literature. Additionally, the study offers new knowledge concerning both students' self-reported and rater-assessed outlooks, patterns, and outcomes upon producing a digital storybook. Moreover, the study is unique in presenting a set of student stressors and a list of fictional literary devices and categories affiliated with character, plot, and setting types that students rendered in their storybook, with many students aligning their anxieties surrounding death; injury; disease; and the loss of family, friends, livelihoods, educational pursuits, and homes with those of their main character. Altogether, thus, the study fills specific gaps in the literature. A few studies discuss students' participation in storytelling (i.e., Mlynarczyk, 2014), including digital storytelling (i.e., Bandi-Rao & Sepp, 2014), while others portray their composition of apocalyptic/post-apocalyptic fiction (i.e., Rubens, 2012) or at least a response to the genre's themes (i.e., Hiser, 2010). However, the current study is unique in combining multiple genre elements in a single assignment. As a further factor separating past studies from the current one, the existing literature is limited to portraying students enrolled in basic writing and first-year composition classes, while the current study contributes to the spectrum in depicting a population of English majors enrolled in an upper-division, multimodal writing class. In other opposition to the current study, the prior literature available tends to be largely theoretical (i.e., Ajayi, 2015) or anecdotal (i.e., Mlynarczyk, 2014), lacking many or all of these features: a detailed description of the context and results of students' readings covered and assignments enacted; a substantial student sample from which to draw conclusive results (i.e., Bandi-Rao & Sepp, 2014); a categorical delineation of how many students improved their composition practices, which ones, and to what degree; and a digital or multimodal component tied to the task (i.e., Rubens, 2012). Also, the studies reviewed did not employ an exploratory model framework or implement a greater number of study instruments from which to benefit.

According to study findings, as the first assignment outcome, the storybook assisted students in building their critical thinking skills (see Coscarelli & Ribeiro, 2018), creativity, and comprehension and identification with apocalyptic/post-apocalyptic subjects. In composing apocalyptic/post-apocalyptic texts, writers can test the basic theories that people hold about themselves, including the concept of what it means to be "human" (Harold, 2011). Indeed, interacting with both apocalyptic/post-apocalyptic fictional texts and digital stories can provoke

students to contemplate, critique, and act upon cultural norms (see Porfilio, Gorlewski, & Gorlewski, 2017). Upholding and extending such axioms from previous research, the study's storybook assignment also prompted students to explore apocalyptic/post-apocalyptic themes, ones they might not encounter otherwise, and think critically in positing relationships amongst humans and their current and future world (see Grossman, 2012). Such contemplation proves important, as many people concentrate on present-day issues, with an inability to conceive of what could lie ahead. Similarly, for the study, the storybook assignment provided students with opportunities to showcase their creativity, as the task compelled them to choose from an unending array of characters, plots, settings, and styles in examining everyday premises and posing the question, "What if?" During the third year specifically, students' worries were affected by the advent of COVID-19, making their problems and circumstances seem apocalyptic in nature as never before, as some remarked. Good apocalyptic/post-apocalyptic fiction affords for originality, innovation, and transcendence (Lucas, 2011), and in the storybook, students, drawing upon their stressors, backgrounds, and experiences, utilized material generated from their prewriting exercises similarly in portraying memorable characters located in interesting situations, with existing social, political, biological, and/or ecological systems having gone amuck. Notably, a few students even formulated tales offering a fictional reaction to COVID-19 itself because, as they explained in their reflective essay, they wanted their work to be "relevant" to the present day in capturing their fears and desires.

As the second, related assignment outcome, the storybook aided students in exploring and researching their personal and greater cultural concerns (see Porfilio, Gorlewski, & Gorlewski, 2017). Within and outside of the classroom, students read and write to comprehend the universe around them and how they connect to it (Grossman, 2012). Likewise, in the study, the storybook assignment led students to embody this stricture by analyzing and researching their surroundings and pondering how they and their stressors were linked to the larger landscape. During the COVID-19 outbreak particularly, students became consumed with locating information about how they and their plans and dreams might be affected physically, socially, and economically by the virus, and they fashioned characters facing similar worries. As a student-centered approach, storytelling can be employed for stimulating deep learning and meaning-making (McLean, 2005), while students engaging in digital storytelling may show more interest in the subject matter being taught than otherwise (Suwardy, Pan, & Seow, 2013). Correspondingly, for the study, students also reported that the research they undertook was more "useful" to them than "usual," as they investigated phenomenon that they believed could possess some present or future personal impact. Moreover, having connected with the apocalyptic/post-apocalyptic genre and its painting of diverse heroes by race, gender, background, and economic condition, students constructed their characters as being ordinary yet complex people, who, like the students themselves, could become heroes in a new world, no matter their individual and group attributes (see Coscarelli & Ribeiro, 2018). Notably, by tackling a digital storybook emphasizing oral and visual communication patterns, some marginalized students, facing racial, educational, and economic inequities, also found a forum for their stories where they could express the natures of their histories, cultural traumas, practices, and communication styles and preferences (see Royal, 2010). Likewise, the storybook assignment, similar to a comic's rendering, permitted students to present their tales through

the use of metaphor or a fictional stance, allowing them to cover topics, such as pregnancy, suicidality, the death/injury of family members, and homelessness, that are difficult to present (see Eisner, 1996). In the reflective essay, one Choctaw student claimed, "In the apocalyptic genre, the future is open. That's good for me because most of the time, stories about Natives that people tell are closed, over, past tense, historical, end of the line. What about me? My story is just beginning, and only I can shut the book."

 The third assignment outcome with which the storybook aided students learning to navigate PowerPoint was in bolstering their digital, critical multimodal literacy and digital multimodal prowess in addressing the locale's digital divide (see NCTE, 2005). In constructing a digital tale as a creative replacement for other "traditional" writing assignments (see Comer, 2015), students may investigate the literate performances attached to diverse multimodal texts (see Jacobs, 2013). Indeed, within the study, students discovered that a textual message containing multimodal elements is different than one without them (see Coscarelli & Ribeiro, 2018). On this point, students discussed how implementing multimodal elements within their story, including sound, images, and color, added to its complexity as modes that viewers would have to consider as they read the alphabetic text. Notably, in the reflective essay, students reported that by inserting a voice recording of the story's alphabetic text, they could provide additional information about the narrator, while including pictures and images produced a more detailed configuration of the setting, and implementing background music presented a specific mood for the story. Storytelling can also be utilized to meet the needs of students with diverse learning styles (Kortegast & Davis, 2017). Comparatively, in the study, the storybook assignment promoted the strengths of a range of students, including those who preferred employing oral and/or visual elements over the written alphabetic text. As another valuable feature of digital storybooks that is also similar to that of comics, the former permit students to present their tales in a medium that might not hold readers' attention otherwise (see Eisner, 1996). In response, for the study, students were eager to share their storybook not only with one another but also with family, friends, and the larger public, with two students showcasing their work on Facebook. Overall, through digital multimodal composition, students can compose, formulate, and publish their work in a manner impossible before its advent (NCTE, 2005), with this context benefitting the study's students, who generated the storybook according to their chosen modal elements, purposes, and talents.

As the fourth outcome, the storybook promoted students' dexterity in drafting, composing, and revising a narrative for an audience's entertainment, as well as fostering their potential for reflection. Largely, through the assignment, students applied process writing by synthesizing their ideas (see Kortegast & Davis, 2017), presenting and arranging information (see Wang & Zhan, 2010), generating important tales and defining their content (see McGee, 2014), reflecting upon their work (see Yang & Wu, 2012), and sharing it with the public to capture a larger audience (see Robin & McNeil, 2012). Indeed, in fulfilling the assignment, as many students declared, they engaged in process writing if only because the assignment sequence prevented them from sitting down the night before the storybook was due, writing for a single period, and submitting their work. Instead, students had composed their storybook in segments that fit together in selecting a topic; conducting research; composing an alphabetic textual

narrative; and developing its corresponding pictorial and audial components (see Sheafer, 2016), including images and graphics, a recording of the author reading the alphabetic text, and/or music and other sound effects (see Wang & Zhan, 2010). Additionally, for purposes beyond the class, at least a dozen students planned to expand their storybook into a longer piece. One student revealed in his reflective essay, "I keep waking up at night and wondering what's going to happen next in my story. Most times, I get up and work on it. That never happened with any essay I wrote for a class. I used to struggle to find ideas, get interested in the topic, and make the word count. Now, I tell everybody I meet, 'Hey, I'm writing a story. It's about me, but not about me! Would you like to see it?' I didn't even mind writing the reflective essay because it helped me figure out my story and plan what to do next."

Study Limitations and Future Directions

This study has shown that foregrounding digital, multimodal writing assignments, such as a PowerPoint storybook, promoted students' various composition-based skills, including 1) critical thinking; 2) an exploration and research of their personal and social concerns; 3) creativity; 4) a digital, critical multimodal literacy and digital multimodal prowess; 5) a dexterity in drafting, composing, and revising a narrative for an audience's entertainment; and 6) an ability to reflect upon their work, as well as identify with the apocalyptic/post-apocalyptic genre's topics. As a limitation, the study did not apply a scale measuring students' compiled list of stressors, such as via implementing the field-recognized "Life Stressor Checklist Revised" (see U.S. Veteran Affairs, 2020), which provides information about an individual's psychologically defined stressors and range of degree, yet future studies could do so. Namely, this would provide further information about how students' stressors align with nationally defined categories. Moving forward, as an additional direction to pursue, researchers could focus on other outcomes of potential significance stemming from composing a digital storybook, such as how much the assignment propels students to collaborate with one another and whether this degree is noteworthy as a topic that the current study touches on in describing students' enaction of a digital, critical multimodal literacy and willingness to share their digital multimodal prowess with others in teaching them the assignment's PowerPoint technology. Finally, future studies might investigate the impact of composing digital storybooks for marginalized populations, such as Native American students, who are a large group represented in the current study but whose identity, background, and concerns were not assessed independently.

Conclusion

In the writing classroom, there is a new focus on possessing multiliteracies, including visual, audial, digital, and critical literacies with which one can interact with today's complicated and multimodal texts (Serafini, 2010), implement a particular text in a given rhetorical situation, and seek higher multimodal literacy levels by investigating diverse genres (Misemer, 2015), such as involve the study's students' composition of a digital storybook. In order to succeed in today's media-rich workplaces, students must be provided with opportunities to increase their digital technology skills connected to enacting a digital, visual, and information literacy (Niemi &

Multisilta, 2015). However, it is also important for students to present their stories, identities, backgrounds, and stressors in the writing classroom (see Parmegiani, 2014) because through culturally responsive storytelling, teachers can help students to face obstacles associated with obtaining an education in a global age (see Gay, 2010). Instead of viewing stories as a lesser discourse form unworthy of attention, one must also concede that the aptitude for constructing narratives is what differentiates humans from other species, as well as providing a comparison amongst individual storytellers as authors themselves. In the writing classroom itself, incorporating digital assignments into one's course design can be difficult, especially when faculty do not possess digital technology backgrounds (Selfe, 2004) and models demonstrating how computer-based assignments can be integrated (Sealey-Morris, 2015). Nevertheless, by utilizing digital storybooks as focal texts for writing assignments, teachers and students can address not only multimodal composition literacy requisites, but also prompt students to investigate their personal and larger cultural, identity-related conflicts, with students opting to compose digital storybooks as a creative replacement for some traditional, print-based writing assignments.

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Appendix I: Major Questions Students Addressed in the Reflective Essay

1. Discuss how you composed your storybook, with its strengths and weaknesses, and the effect on viewers you hoped to produce and why.

2. Did the Storybook assignment strengthen your critical thinking and research skills? If so, how?

3. Did the Storybook unit strengthen your multimodal reading skills? If so, how?

4. Did the Storybook assignment strengthen your multimodal writing skills? If so, how?

5. Did the Storybook assignment strengthen your reflective practices? If so, how?

6. Did the Storybook assignment strengthen your collaborative practices? If so, how?

7. Did the Storybook assignment promote your educational and personal interests? If so, how?

8. Did the Storybook assignment prompt you to consider continuing to compose stories in the future? If so, why?

9. Describe your Storybook's main character and his/her main motivation or goal.

10. Describe your Storybook's setting.

11. Describe your Storybook's secondary characters.

12. Describe your Storybook's lesson or moral, if there is one.

Appendix II: Examples of Students' Digital Storybooks

A. "Survival in a Dying World"
https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=51&v=uYQjiokqhU0

In this storybook, a teenage girl named Catherine has changed her name to Blaze. She is writing her story in a journal and talking to the reader in a self-reflexive way as she imagines the reader finding and publishing her journal in the future. Alone now, Blaze lives in a small, unremarkable town and has lost her family and friends. Overall, Blaze is tired of her new existence. She is a frank and postmodern hero.

B. "The Appointed"
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zMwXv7h9Qhs&feature=youtu.be

Kia is a teenage girl who lives in a futuristic world that is crowded and smog-filled. When she is appointed to be part of a special community with a unique task, she and her family are excited at this honor. However, Kia does not understand until it is too late that she has been appointed to die in order to reduce the population problem.

C. "The Recording Machine"
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1SRVhc5myA8&feature=youtu.be

The narrator is part of a community formed to be a safe haven. However, the government has placed the occupants here in order to imprison and separate them from the greater society. On the recording machine, a man gives an account about this plan to others, but his warning is grasped too late.

D. "The Epidemic"
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NMEt1tZ_4wg&feature=youtu.be

A girl in third grade is writing an account in her diary. She sees that her classmates are beginning to be absent from school because of a form of the flu, which changes before a vaccine can be made. This strain of influenza wipes out most of the world's population, and the narrator sees many of her family and friends die.

E. "Scavenger"
https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=12&v=DThh0Olzm8M

This story shows a lone boy, who is taken into safety by an older man, a sage. Together, they scavenge the landscape because there is no food, and little is alive. However, as it becomes apparent, when this duo meets another group, the former will have to deal with the prospect of cannibalism.

Constellating Arts-Based and Queer Approaches:
Transgenre Composing in/as Writing Studies Pedagogy

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Abstract

Visual art, when intersected with writing, resists traditional norms in composition and creates space to embrace alternative composing forms and voices, and this project argues for the benefits of intersecting art and writing in the teaching of writing (and I use the term "transgenre" to refer to work that contains both elements of visual art and writing). This research uses arts-based and queer methodologies to explore the benefits of transgenre composing and the ways it challenges composition teachers and students to rethink their composing practices and pedagogical approaches to writing. Traditionally, the alphabetic document has been privileged in academic settings, but arts-based and queer approaches provide lenses through which to (re)examine traditional academic practices so that over-simplified binaries can be broken down. This project also utilizes textual analysis, interviews (from authors who have published transgenre compositions), and collage as methods. In employing these methods and methodologies (and in being a tangible representation of what transgenre composing can look like through the intersection of image and text), this project works to (re)imagine traditional academic norms and advocate for the use of art in writing.

Keywords: Arts-based Research; Arts-based Pedagogy; Queer Theory; Transgenre Composing.

Introduction

Note: This project is designed for the reader to analyze/perceive images as text, so visual art (particularly collage work) is woven into the text. Excepting student examples, all of the artwork in this project is my own work.

This essay begins with a story. I spent the first three years of my undergraduate career as a pre-med student. In the middle of my third year, I told my academic advisor I wanted to change my major. She asked me what else I liked, and I told her I liked to write. She suggested English and creative writing and I said I would give it a try. The next semester was a trial-run for me, but I enjoyed all my classes and decided to continue on as an English major. During the final semester of my program, I needed to take an upper-level English course to fulfill a humanities elective. I chose a class called "Narrative Collage." I didn't know what the class was about going into it, but we ended up discussing the intersections of art and writing (what our professor referred to as "narrative collages"), reading and analyzing works of narrative collage, and

creating our own compositions that combined both art and writing. I kept a collage novel throughout the entire class and continued to use it and the art supplies I accumulated during the class even after graduation. Two weeks after finishing my final courses during summer school for my undergraduate degree, I began a master's program in English and creative writing at the same institution. My concentration was in poetry, but when the time came to assemble a committee and start my thesis project, I talked with the professor who taught the narrative collage course and asked if my thesis could be a narrative collage. She loved the idea but needed to check with the department chair to see if it would meet the requirements for a thesis project in the program. She was concerned that the project would be considered too much "art" and not enough "writing" (see Figure 1). While the project was eventually approved, I had to submit an alphabetic "context essay" that provided background information on the project and discussed other pertinent authors/artists whose work impacted the thesis project. The initial skepticism about my thesis project and the need for a context essay led me to question whether creative work was valued on the same level as traditional scholarly work, especially work that incorporated art. I began wondering: *As an "academic," was my passion for art and writing always going to be unrecognized?*

As a doctoral student, I began making connections between "multimodal composing" and narrative collage: Both composing forms were "non-typical" in that they didn't follow the traditionally valued print, alphabetic form. Both forms conveyed messages and engaged with audiences in different ways. Both gave audiences the opportunity to experience "writing" in new and exciting ways. During my doctorate, I came across a multitude of research in writing studies on multimodality and saw my professors and my colleagues advocating for the use of digital tools both in their own work and in their classroom spaces. While I frequently use digital tools in my own work and encourage students to do the same, and while I saw many similarities between multimodal work and the work I was doing at the intersections of art and writing, I still questioned whether there was space for creative work in writing studies and in academia as a whole. This questioning came from the pressure I felt as a rising scholar in the field to produce "scholarship"; while there are people in writing studies making creative work (for example, using multimodal tools), this work is not typically considered "creative," but is rather for "scholarly" or "academic" purposes.

Early on in my doctoral program, I attended a workshop on arts-based research where the facilitator talked about how beneficial it can be for students to utilize creativity and art in the classroom to grasp difficult concepts and, in my case, learn how to become more effective writers. In that workshop, I started to see more clearly that my background as a creative writer could help me as a writing studies scholar and teacher. My passion for art and writing could be used to help students, and my work at the intersections of art and writing had value. In the introduction to *Handbook of Arts-Based Research*, Patricia Leavy (2017) writes, "Recent research in neuroscience…indicates that art may have unmatched potential to promote deep engagement, make lasting impressions, and therefore possesses unlimited potential to educate" (p. 3). Art's "unlimited potential to educate" is what has led to this project, and using arts-based and queer approaches, I argue that art is a valuable tool in the teaching of writing. In
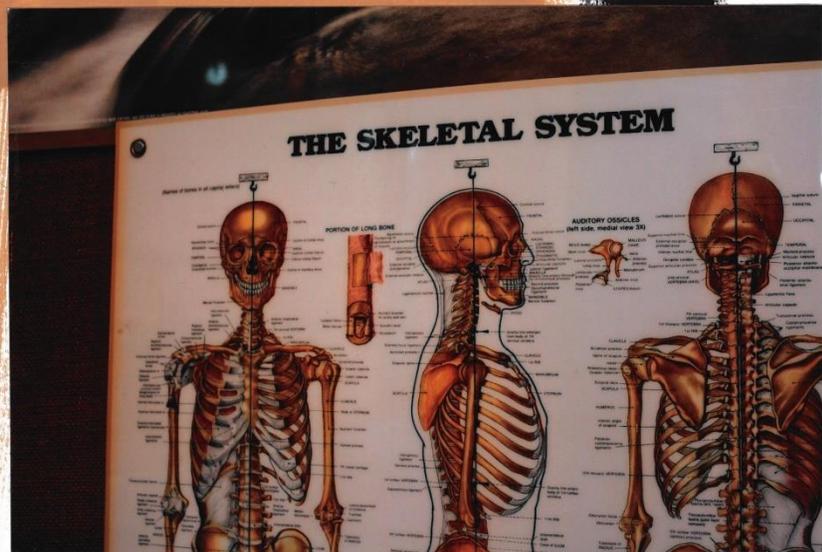
Figure 1: Composing is too complex for simplistic binaries that claim it's either this or that (ex. scholarly or creative).

arts-based and queer approaches, I argue that art is a valuable tool in the teaching of writing. In performing this research, I developed, taught, and reflected upon a writing course that embraced an arts-based pedagogy. In addition, I also used collage as a research method, interspersing this text with visual art and creating my own transgenre composition in the process. The questions I sought to answer in this research project are as follows:

- How does intersecting art and text challenge dominant norms in writing, and how does it break down traditional expectations of writing?
- How can art be used in the writing classroom to help teach writing? How can art and writing work together to create more effective and rhetorically aware composers?
- What is the process of composing transgenre work like?

Before moving forward, I think it's important to define my key terms. For years, I used the term "narrative collage" to define work that combined both art and writing, eventually adopting the term "hybrid-genre." Discussions about this project with creative-critical scholar Ames Hawkins eventually led me to adopt the term "transgenre"; they suggested that "hybrid-genre" perpetuated an either/or dichotomy (implying that composing is either this *or* that) and that "transgenre" better reflected the complex way that composing happens and compositions come to be. While transgenre can be used to refer to any composition that crosses the boundaries of genre, for the purposes of this project, I use transgenre to specifically refer to compositions that use both elements of art and writing (visual art/imagery and text are both present in the composition). I think it's important to also note that the "trans" prefix in the term "transgenre" is not an appropriation of the term "transgender." As mentioned, this project embraces a queer methodology and, because of that, I can see how easy it would be to create connections between the terms as this essay goes back and forth between discussions of "queering," "queer theory," and "transgenre." However, I see "transgenre" as a "transdisciplinary" or "transcendent" concept; transgenre composing is an approach that moves freely across boundaries, borders, disciplines, genres, and expectations. It challenges norms while resisting constraints. In this way, it *moves beyond* what we think/know about traditional ways/forms of writing.

I also want to differentiate between the terms transgenre and "multimodal." I specifically used the term "multimodal" in this project to refer to digital compositions that utilize digital tools and modalities (audio, video, digital imagery, blog and social media interfaces, etc.). In short, multimodal is used to refer to digital compositions and transgenre is used to refer to compositions that combine art and writing; however, these transgenre compositions (in their "final," polished forms) may be digital or non-digital, and may have been created using digital or non-digital means. I acknowledge here that a strict separation between digital and non-digital doesn't often exist in our contemporary world where digital tools and technologies are so prevalent. Instead, many works that start out as non-digital works of art and writing may end up undergoing remediation in the process of being shared with the world online or through eventual print publication. In addition, while this essay is an enactment of the combination of art and writing I advocate for, it is both digital and non-digital. The words have been typed on these pages using a word processor on a computer. The art was created by hand but was then scanned and added to this document. The student work discussed later was created using both

non-digital and digital means. While I often refer to artwork in this essay that is made by hand, I acknowledge that even non-digital work can and so often does become digital at some point in time in order to be remediated, reviewed, or shared with a wider audience.

While creating art is a frequently messy process and can require large physical spaces to move around, Paula Gerstenblatt (2013) notes the benefits of creating art when she writes that "the visual arts can open up dialogue among diverse people, offer new insights and reflection, and provide new ways to critique a subject" (p. 296). While multimodality offers scholars and students important tools, digital composing isn't the only way to experiment with multiple forms. If a composer wants to incorporate drawings, paintings, or cut-and-pasted scraps into their work, this might not be as feasible or doable with only digital tools. Transgenre composing works toward the same goals of multimodality (to give composers a broader range of tools to convey their message and reach their audience) but can involve a more hands-on approach. As mentioned, art has immense potential to educate, and its abilities to enhance the composing process for students deserves more attention and consideration. While I use the terms "transgenre composing" and "multimodal composing" to mean different things, they both utilize composing tools beyond the alphabetic; further, little scholarship exists in writing studies on transgenre composing, but much has been written about multimodal composing. As such, scholarship surrounding multimodal composing served as a springboard in this project for discussing transgenre composing.

Methodologies and Methods

Arts-Based and Queer Methodologies: A Constellated Approach

Within the subfield of cultural rhetorics, the concept of "constellating" has been used in decolonial approaches inside and outside of academic institutions. To decolonize is to break down existing norms and barriers that have been put in place by the dominant culture and/or society. Western ideals are what created the academy, and to decolonize means to challenge those ideals and work toward creating space for all cultures, all ways of knowing, all ways of meaning-making, and all ways of existing and being in the world. "Constellating" allows for this difficult work of decolonizing and emphasizes relationships, culture, storytelling, and the complex ways knowledges are formed and meaning is made. In "Our Story Begins Here: Constellating Cultural Rhetorics," Malea Powell et al. write that "the practice of *constellating* gives us a visual metaphor for those relationships that honor all possible realities" (emphasis original). Powell et al. go on to say that the concept of "intersecting" is a linear one that privileges certain knowledges and marginalizes others, but that constellating allows for "different ways of seeing any single configuration within that constellation, based on positionality and culture." This idea of decolonizing and constellating connects to the concept of an arts-based, queer pedagogy and transgenre composing. Traditionally, only certain forms of writing have been accepted and valued by the academy. The idea that nothing of value exists outside of this is absurd, but these ideals have persevered over time. Scholars in writing studies have attempted to tackle and dismantle these norms in various ways. One way has involved advocating for multimodal composing and the importance of considering constellations – the

unique identities and abilities of students, the numerous modalities available to composers, the development of digital tools and technologies, the teaching approaches of instructors, etc.

In this essay, I emphasize the importance of recognizing and celebrating constellations and argue that the arts-based and queer methodologies discussed here are constellated: they are intertwined, are working together simultaneously, and are inseparable. This constellated approach is present both in this essay and in the arts-based, queer pedagogical approach of using art as a tool to teach writing. If the alphabetic document has been the most valued form of the past, then a composition that constellates art and writing is breaking down barriers about what writing is, what writing looks like, and who can be a writer. Powell et al. write, "A constellation…allows for all the meaning-making practices and their relationships to matter. It allows for multiply-situated subjects to connect to multiple discourses at the same time, as well as for those relationships (among subjects, among discourses, among kinds of connections) to shift and change without holding a subject captive." The constellated arts-based and queer approach creates space for students with complex backgrounds and experiences to utilize their unique identities and to connect to their knowledges and meaning-making practices (and the knowledges and meaning-making practices of others) in their work. While an arts-based approach recognizes the importance of creative-critical thinking and the uniqueness of composers and audiences, queer theory celebrates identity and non-traditional approaches, and this constellation of methodologies is woven within and throughout this essay (and throughout the pedagogical approach this essay advocates for).

An Arts-Based (and Queer) Methodology

I used an arts-based approach to explore the role art has/can have in composition pedagogy. Art allows people to see and understand concepts in new and different ways, and this is part of what makes an arts-based approach to research so valuable (see Figure 2). In "Arts-Based Methods," Sandra L. Faulkner and Stormy P. Trotter (2017) note that "arts-based research (ABR) represents diverse qualitative methodologies that rely on an aesthetic process of imagination and artistic expression through various art mediums as a way to understand and examine a research problem, subject, or text" (p. 1). Further, Faulkner and Trotter (2017) state that arts-based approaches involve "the use of art and artistic forms as research represents a holistic methodology that intertwines theory, method, and praxis" (p. 1). My research questions focused on the role transgenre composing can have in shifting traditional ways of teaching composing, and an arts-based approach helped me work toward answering those questions.

Specifically, collage is the artistic medium I used in this project. Put simply, I included original collage work throughout so that this project is a representation of what transgenre composing can be/look like and to help me organize and identify important data points (I discuss this in more depth in the paragraphs that follow this one). Collage work, like many forms of art, is a form that works to challenge (or *queer*) traditional ways of thinking and creating. Dada and Surrealist artists worked to shift what people in the 1910s and 1920s saw as art and shifted who could be viewed as an artist. In *Dadaism and Surrealism: A Very Short Introduction*, David Hopkins (2004) notes that artists in these movements "were ambivalent…about art as an institution, [and] the Dadaists often pledged to destroy it" (p. 62). Collage helped them work

toward that goal as they sought to show that anyone could create collage art with any number of materials. With collage, there isn't one way of viewing or perceiving. Rather, as Gerstenblatt

Figure 2: In collage work, the artist assembles an archive of materials and the materials work together to communicate a unique story or message.

(2013) writes, collage "fragments space" and "repurposes objects," including found materials that wouldn't normally be considered art, to create a new reality outside the confines of what is traditionally conceived (p. 295). This is a queer notion; the concept of challenging long-held traditions and values about art and artists is woven in and throughout Dada and Surrealist ideals and work (including collage). Certain forms of art were considered superior to others and only certain people could be artists; Dada, Surrealism, and the art of collage queered these ideas and shifted the focus of the art world.

I specifically decided to use collage as opposed to another art form as a method for performing this research for a few reasons. One reason is that transgenre composing developed from Dada and Surrealism, and many of the artists in those movements were creating collage art. Further, since this project argues for the use of art in writing, the collages act as a manifestation of that argument and what the intersections of art and writing can look like. Another reason is that collages are mixed-media and can involve numerous materials, and I think this artistic freedom lends itself to better communicating the goals of this project, which are to advocate for the use of art in the teaching of writing. Further, collage art has the potential to make composition students more comfortable with creating art. It can be intimidating for students who don't consider themselves "artists" to create art, but collage can be a more approachable way to have students intersect art and writing in their work because they have the option to use already-existing materials (like magazine and newspaper clippings, photographs, etc.). Collaging also helped me analyze the data I gathered while researching this project. Before starting the collages, I pulled words and phrases from the data I was gathering that "stuck out." I printed the phrases I selected, cut them out, and laid them all out on my desk. I asked myself:

- How are these pieces of data furthering my project?
- How are they helping me better understand creative-critical work and intersecting art and writing in pedagogy?

In response to these questions, I created collages to accompany the data I pulled from the project, and each of the selected pieces of data was used as the focus for one collage. The resulting collages represented, for me, what I was learning from the data and were a visual representation of the data. The collages also give readers a moment to pause, look at the artwork, and reflect on the important data it represents (and what the artwork/data means to them). The visual elements of each collage don't merely illustrate the textual elements of the collage, but rather work toward queering readers' perceptions of the data, following the tenets of Dada and Surrealism.

A Queer (and Arts-Based) Methodology

In developing (and constellating) a queer methodology, I've built upon scholar Meg-John Barker's (2016) definition of queer theory: "Queer theory is a *theoretical approach* that goes beyond queer studies to question the categories and assumptions on which current popular and academic understandings are based" (p. 15). (I want to make clear, however, that while this definition doesn't directly make the connection, queer theory is inseparable from LGBTQ studies; I make note here of queer theory's beginnings in LGBTQ studies to acknowledge and appreciate the history of queer theory as a critical lens and methodology). While, as Barker

(2016) notes, "queer" describes sexualities, relationships, and gender identities beyond heteronormative traditions, this definition has been expanded to a contemporary theoretical definition that encompasses anything that challenges dominant norms. In examining transgenre work as a queered composing form, I explored the ways it challenges traditional and dominant norms in the teaching of writing (see Figure 3). To use an arts-based approach, to embrace transgenre composing, is queer; to queer is to challenge the status quo, and arts-based approaches in writing classrooms, much like Dada and Surrealist work, attempt to do just that. In "Engaging Queerness and Contact Zones, Reimagining Writing Difference," Martha Marinara (2012) writes,

> At many different moments, queerness erupts to trouble normalcy, legitimacy and signification. Queerness skews, bends, or queers the realities we construct around ourselves...It isn't only the heteronormative that needs to be bent; all of our centers of *status quo* stability...need to be refracted, redirected in their transparency to a burst of their colorful parts...In other words, queerness ruffles or disturbs the boundaries and borders of knowledge and practice already in place in the academy. (p. 200)

As Marinara notes, queer theory disrupts long-held traditions and beliefs and challenges people to think critically about constructs. When we queer things (when we see a "burst of colorful parts" rather than the stable object/concept we saw before), we start thinking, seeing, and exploring differently (and the creation of art helps us to queer what we think we know—that writing is "words on a page"—and create/see that "burst of colorful parts"). The alphabetic, print document has been the traditionally valued composing form; intersecting art with writing (in the many forms it can take, both digital and non-digital) breaks through the boundaries of what composing has been in the past and shows what it can be. As such, a queer theory methodology consistently informed this research as I examined the ways that transgenre composing challenges traditional norms in writing studies pedagogy, and this project itself is an enactment of that queer methodology through the constellation of text (writing) and image (art).

A Framework for Transgenre Composing in/as Writing Studies Pedagogy

Art, Multimodality, and Identity

In Jody Shipka's (2011) *Toward a Composition Made Whole*, she writes about making students aware of the alternative composing methods available to them. As mentioned, transgenre composing developed out of the Dada and Surrealist art movements, which employed any materials necessary to communicate the goal/purpose of the art. While Surrealist artist Marcel Duchamp's famous "sculpture" *Fountain* was nothing more than a urinal, it "needed the arrogance of the art world context in order to be read as art, [and] its readability as art sought to debunk the arrogance on which it thrived" (Bradley, 1997, p. 14). By using a urinal and calling the work *Fountain*, the object was given much more prestige than a urinal; Duchamp understood that, in order for the piece to communicate what he wanted it to, he needed to use

Figure 3: To queer or "misperform" writing is to create something unconventional, to alter assumptions about the forms writing can take.

a material that would achieve that goal. Shipka (2011) similarly talks about this awareness and notes that

> what makes this framework for composing unique is the responsibility it places on students to determine the purposes of their work and how best to achieve them…A mediated activity-based multimodal framework for composing provides metacommunicative awareness *without* predetermining for students the specific genres, media, and audiences with which they will work. (p. 87)

Duchamp understood the purpose of *Fountain* and created the art accordingly; transgenre composing gives students the opportunity to do the same thing and become more effective and aware composers in the process.

Proponents of multimodal composing have argued for years that students benefit when they are given the opportunity to use the composing form that best fits their needs and message. In "The Movement of Air, the Breath of Meaning: Aurality and Multimodal Composing," Cynthia Selfe (2009) argues that the field of writing studies' history of valuing the print document over other composing methods has worked to limit "our professional understanding of composing as a multimodal rhetorical activity and [has deprived] students of valuable semiotic resources for meaning making" (p. 617). Transgenre composing works toward breaking down these outdated expectations in writing studies; a prime example of this is the "ballet shoes" example Shipka (2011) discusses in the introduction to *Toward a Composition Made Whole*. A student wrote her essay on a pair of ballet shoes and, when Shipka was facilitating a workshop on multimodal composing and mentioned this particular student project, workshop attendees expressed skepticism about the project's "scholarly" nature. However, Shipka (2011) noted, "I was positioned…in ways that allowed me to see, and so to understand, the final product *in relation to* the complex and highly rigorous decision-making processes the student employed while producing this text" (p. 3). Here, Shipka focused on a remixing of the traditional where process and rhetorical decision-making are just as valuable as the final product. Creating art is a hands-on process and involves making rhetorical decisions about the use of certain materials, the placement of certain pieces/parts, etc., and we know that writing is also a deeply rhetorical process. Including both art and writing together not only works toward this process-focused approach of teaching writing, but also gives students the opportunity to create and write about things that are important to them.

This essay focuses on a constellation of arts-based and queer approaches, and expression and identity are both at the forefront of these approaches. In *Experimental Writing in Composition: Aesthetics and Pedagogies*, Patricia Sullivan (2012) writes about how alternative composing forms create space for identity, individuality, and artistic freedom:

> Though the lines dividing different pedagogical projects can be blurry and shifting, in general these arguments claim that through the 'freer' aesthetic space created by experimental and alternative discourses, students may be allowed to express their unique individualities, articulate marginal or underrepresented social realities, and/or critique the limits of dominant sociopolitical discourses and the institutions that perpetuate these discourses. (p. 2)

This statement reflects an arts-based and queer focus which works to destabilize the prescribed norms that have pervaded academic institutions and, specifically, composition classrooms for years. There are forms and ways of composing that have traditionally been valued over others, and transgenre composing provides a way for students to work around those prescribed norms and create new realities through freedom of expression (see Figure 4).
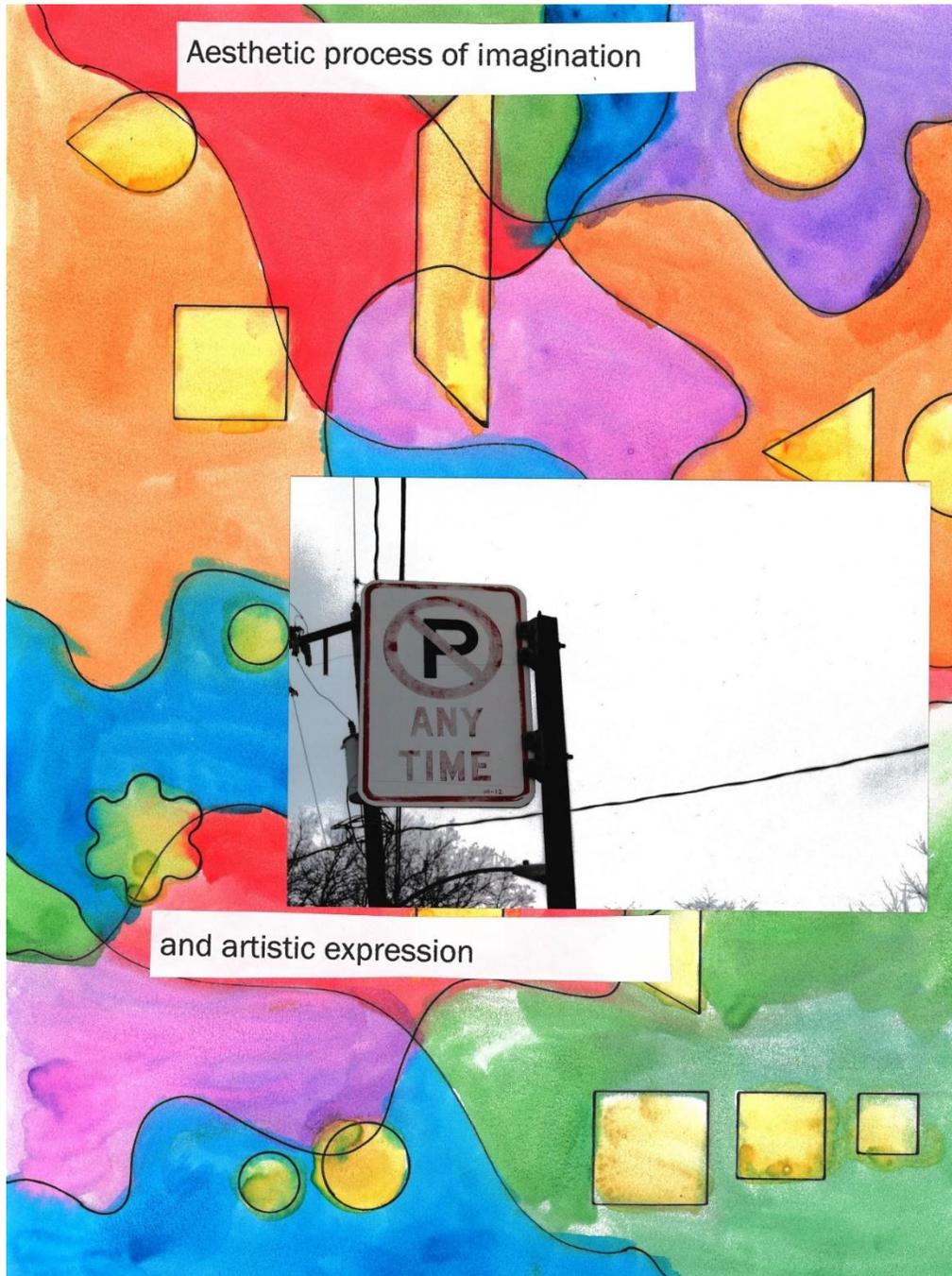
Figure 4: Transgenre composing allows students to embrace their interests and identities and experience freedom of expression.

Art as a Tool for Teaching Queer

In Stacey Waite's (2017) *Teaching Queer: Radical Possibilities for Writing and Knowing*, she talks about several patterns in scholarship on queer pedagogy, including that these discussions are typically specific to LGBTQ subjects (students and/or teachers who are queer), that queer teaching is limited to the reading of LGBTQ texts, and that discussions of student writing seem to be focused on how to respond to homophobic writing or how to teach students to celebrate diversity in writing (p. 5). Waite (2017) writes that she values these discussions and considers them in her own teaching; however, in her book, she examines the intersections of queer theory, writing, and pedagogy and how they "move into one another" (p. 5). She writes, "I want to consider queer possibilities for the teaching of writing with particular attention to college writing courses. I want to continually develop queer methodologies, thinking of queer pedagogies as sets of theorized practices that any student or teacher might engage" (Waite, 2017, p. 5). Similar to what Waite notes here, I think of queer pedagogical approaches as being for *all* instructors and *all* students in writing classrooms. Waite (2017) goes on to say,

> I offer writing and teaching as already queer practices, and I contend that if we honor the overlaps between queer theory and composition, we encounter complex and evolving possibilities for teaching writing. I argue for and employ what I call 'queer forms'—nonnormative and category-resistant forms of writing that move between the critical and the creative, the theoretical and the practical, the rhetorical and the poetic, the queer and the often invisible normative functions of classrooms. (p. 6)

In my writing courses (and in the intermediate writing course/case study I will discuss in a moment), these "queer forms" come through via transgenre composing; students are learning about and practicing writing, but are weaving that writing into creative, practical, and poetic forms, to use Waite's terms.

In *Teaching Queer*, Waite (2017) also argues that the individual components of our identities cannot be separated from each other and that a queer pedagogy involves intersecting theory, story, and identity (and I utilize this same intersecting—or constellating—in this essay). Like the arts-based pedagogical approach I discussed in the previous subsection, a queer approach similarly creates space for identity and writers' unique forms of expression. Waite (2017) claims that narrative is just as important as theory and that stories are knowledge (emphasizing the importance of constellations and constellating), much in the same way art and writing can work together to create new ways of thinking and telling a story. Waite (2017) writes,

> I want to offer a particularly queer understanding of what narrative might mean to theory and, dialectically, what theory might mean to narrative. I most closely link my own understanding of the scholarly use of narrative to Nancy K. Miller's understanding in *Getting Personal: Feminist Occasions and Other Autobiographical Acts*. She writes, "…By turning its authorial voice into spectacle, personal writing theorizes the stakes of its own performance…Personal writing opens an inquiry on the cost of writing—critical writing or Theory—and its effects." (p. 15)

Waite's idea of queer pedagogy involves the personal and the narrative as "spectacle," or making public what is usually left private. In understanding, discussing, and interacting with

one's selfhood and embodied subjectivities, a queer pedagogy can be enacted in the teaching of writing. Art not only allows students to choose the form that best fits their project, goals, and the needs of their audience, but it creates opportunities for self-expression.

This concept of identity as a central tenant of queer theory and a queer pedagogy is furthered in Hawkins et al.'s "Courting the Peculiar: The Ever-Changing Queerness of Creative Nonfiction." In the essay, Barrie Jean Borich (2014) stated,

> As a teacher to have no center means to me, in part, that there is no one canon, no one mandatory reading list, no center bar to which we are all to aspire. This means when I teach I focus on authorial intention, within a world view where the author and the world the author speaks from is their own, while still attempting to embrace all the ways one writer's center may not be another's.

Here, Borich talks about her own pedagogy, the decentralized nature of it, and how it accounts for identity. Instead of there being one "truth," "level" to work toward, or dominant reading list, her queered teaching creates space for all writers and voices. This is a queer concept as classroom spaces have traditionally labeled the instructor the as "expert" and students as the "novices"; in a traditional system, the instructor is the holder of knowledge or "truth," and they transfer this knowledge to their students over the course of a semester, frequently testing students' abilities to understand and retain that knowledge with tests and assignments. However, in Borich's teaching approach, a queering takes place where the instructor and the students act as mutual teachers and learners and individual identity is not only considered but valued (her classes are encouraged to "embrace all the ways one writer's center may not be another's"). Transgenre composing (a constellated arts-based and queer approach) works to achieve these goals through providing clear opportunities for self-expression and rhetorical thinking and decision-making. It gives students more ownership over their work, allows them to include their voices and identities at the forefront of their work, and recognizes that one student's approach may be different than another's (see Figure 5).

The Case Study: Transgenre Composition in Intermediate Writing

The Queer Art of Writing

During the Spring 2018 semester at Bowling Green State University, I had the opportunity to design and teach a writing course that encouraged students to create transgenre work; here, I discuss the rationale for that course, explain the transgenre assignments and how some students approached them, and reflect on teaching the course and how the course impacted how I embrace transgenre composing as a teaching tool and a key aspect of my pedagogy. The course I designed was titled ENG 2070 Intermediate Writing, and I subtitled the course Understanding Identity and Queer Theory in Academic Communities. To sum up the course, we focused on queer theory as a lens for thinking critically and writing about identity, normative and traditional constructs and ideologies, and what it means to be a part of an academic community, and we did this through transgenre composing. The goal of the course was for students to learn to write well in their discipline while also exploring the shift from the
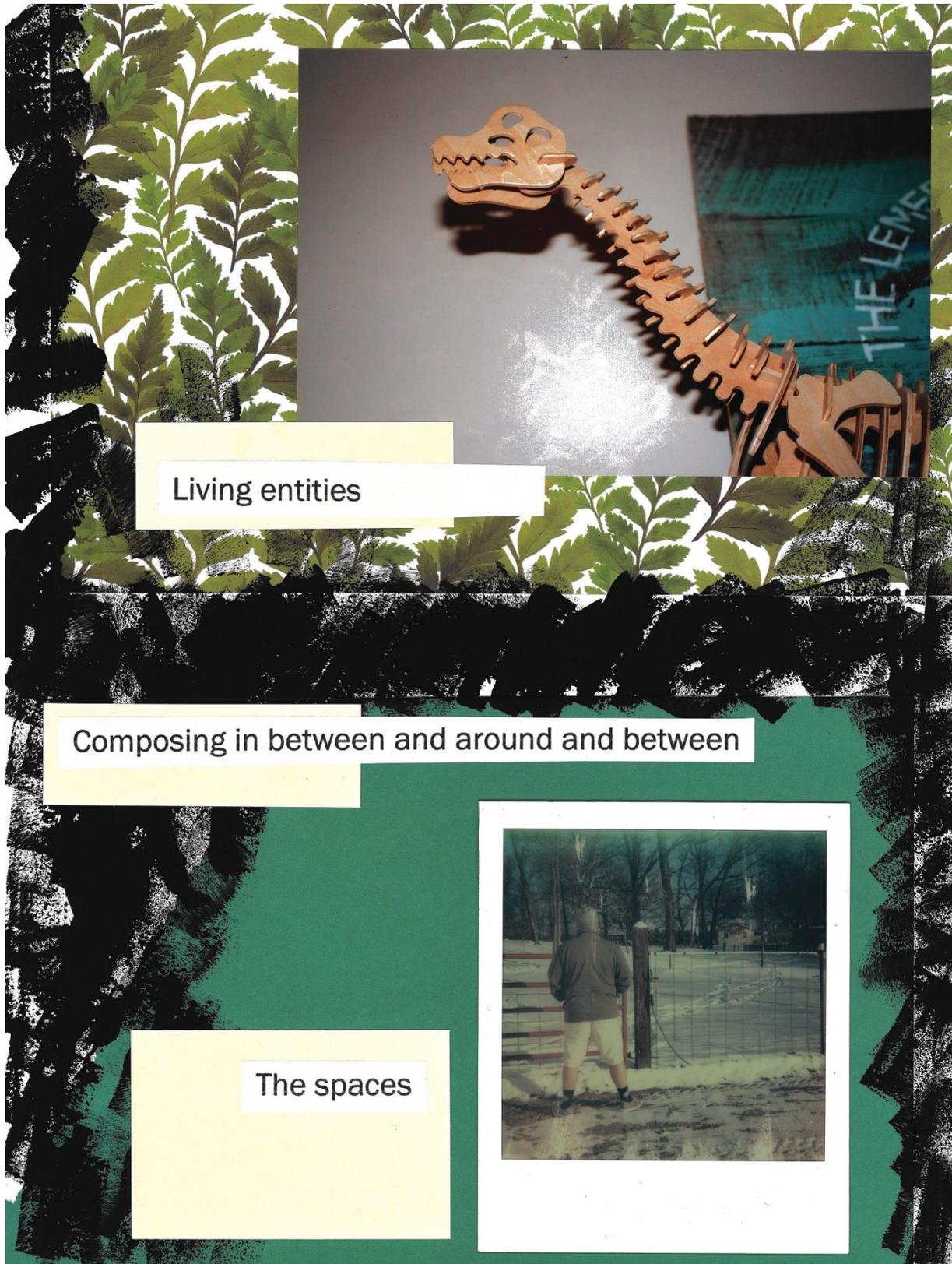
Figure 5: Queered compositions exist outside of traditional understandings of genre.

normative to the non-normative through a queering of traditional academic and writing practices. The course encouraged students to explore the ways composing has been and can be remixed with the use of various digital and non-digital tools and modalities and that choosing a composing form is a very specific rhetorical choice. The traditional alphabetic isn't the only way to compose, and helping students understand the variety of tools available to them in the course helped them better articulate the rhetorical decisions they made in their compositions, both within and outside their discipline (see Figure 6). The full syllabus/schedule from the course can be found in Appendix A.

Figure 6: Composers should have the ability to choose the form that best fits the meaning they wish to convey.

The course description on the syllabus stated that the class would focus on "remixing (or reimagining) long-standing divisions, dichotomies, and categories" and that students would examine "how queer theory is a lens for seeing how texts cross boundaries and how we can critique those boundaries." While developing the course curriculum, I saw "remixing" as a queer practice that would help the class understand and embrace non-traditional composing tools and methods (like intersecting art and writing), not just for the sake of being different, but because the particular projects called for a queering of the traditional. This remixing would require students to think in new and exciting ways (which didn't turn out to always be a comfortable process for them).

Since queer theory gives us the opportunity to examine our own identities and the ways we think, create, learn, and communicate, I wanted students in the course to consider the following in reference to their composing practices:

- Do you compose using only the alphabetic because it's easy, or because it serves your project well?
- If you are hesitant to embrace new composing forms, why?
- How can queer theory help you be a better scholar and future employee in your field? How can it impact and benefit your composing practices?

The readings and assignments in the course (refer to Appendix A) attempted to help students develop a fuller understanding of the genres of writing that take place inside and outside of their discipline and how to best communicate to their audience. There were five assignments students completed over the course of the semester, and while each assignment helped students build their writing skills and gain knowledge about their disciplines, the assignments themselves remixed long-standing traditions in academic writing in that they incorporated opportunities for alternative composing forms (including multimodal composing—using programs like VoiceThread, Piktochart, and Prezi—and art-making—through methods like collaging, drawing, and painting). I chose to integrate transgenre and multimodal composing into the course to give students many more elements and tools to work with; in doing this, I hoped students would explore and learn more about making sound rhetorical choices and reflecting on how those choices benefit their projects and their audience(s).

Transgenre Student Projects from the Course

Here, I focus on a few examples of the artwork students created in the course to accompany the written portion(s) of their assignments. Figure 7 features two collages by the same student, whom I will refer to as Jane; the first collage is a depiction of an interview the student did with a faculty member on campus (Project #1), and the second collage was a visual explanation of a conversation Jane explored about architecture in a public forum (Project #2). As Sullivan (2012) notes, normative forms of composing have been critiqued by writing studies scholars "by invoking the liberating and critical power of art" (p. 2). Further, as Sullivan (2012) states, collage also works toward the Surrealist ideals of "breaking away from traditional codes of mimesis and the aesthetics of coherence, and exploring the language of the irrational and the chance encounter'" (p. 109). When creating art and, specifically, collages, students create work that is
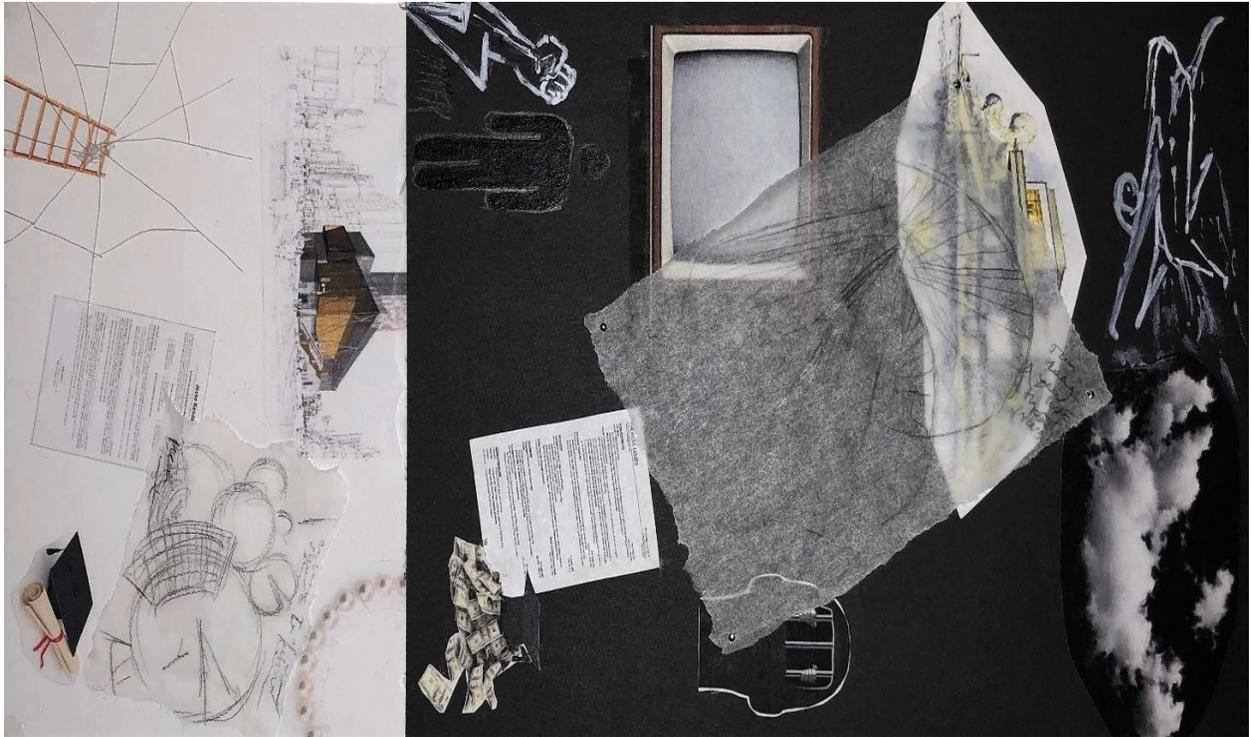
Figure 7: Jane's collages.

new, exciting, and entirely theirs. Jane's collage work is a great combination of experimentation with form/materials and her identity as an architecture scholar, and reading her written work while referring to her visual(s) created an altogether new reading/viewing experience.

Figure 8 is a collage that a student, whom I will refer to as Kayla, created to accompany her essay recalling the path that led her to study architecture (Project #4). Kayla's collage is unique in that it combines several of her own pieces of artwork, including multiple drawings and a photograph of her posing with one of her architecture projects. This collage was completed as
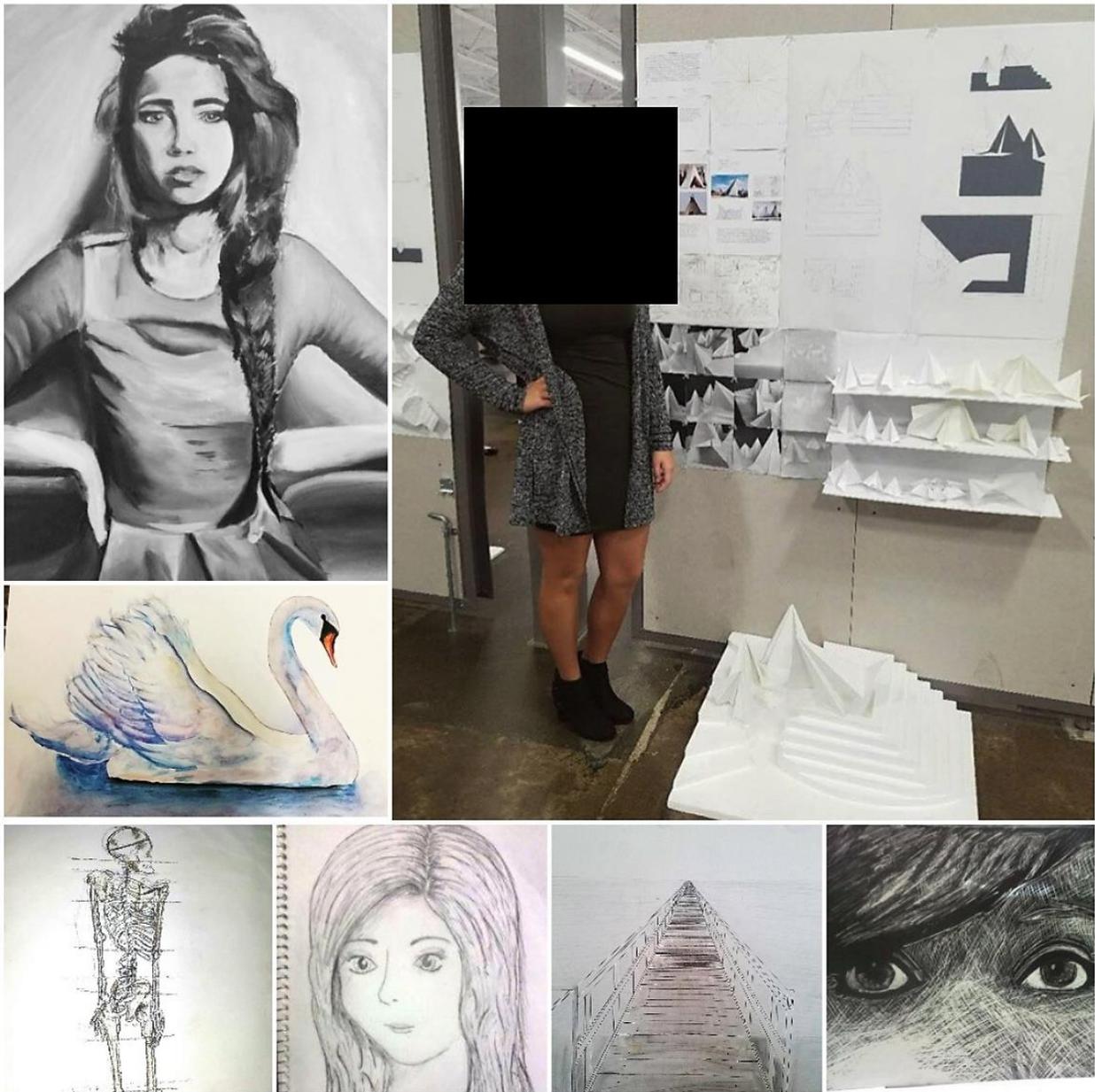
Figure 8: Kayla's collage.

part of Project #4, which asked students to use transgenre composing to convey their journey to their chosen discipline. Kayla's collage tells this story through her own sketches and she noted in her essay how much her love of art and drawing contributed to her pursuing a degree in architecture. Her collage showcased that artwork and, through the artwork and writing, she told a more complete story of her path to becoming an architect (a story that would not have been as engaging or intriguing with text alone). The artwork brings the reader-viewer into the narrative and better communicates her message.

Figure 9 is a piece of artwork that explains the multiple facets of this student's (whom I will refer to as John) personal and professional identities (Project #4). John (also an architecture student) used his drawing and sketching talents to create the artistic component of his transgenre Project #4. During a conference after the project was complete, he informed me that his ink drawing took him over ten hours to complete. While the Project #4 assignment called for students to discuss/illustrate the path that brought them to their academic fields (and where they saw themselves in a future career), John queered the assignment a bit. He said his love of art certainly contributed to him pursuing an architecture degree, but that there was so much more to his identity as a person and a professional that he wanted to convey through the

Figure 9: John's drawing (the student's name was spelled out in the circles, so those circles have been blacked out).

project. He decided to create this drawing, which is made up of small circles with different symbols in each one; for John, these symbols show who he is as a person and the multiple identities he inhabits on and off campus. The symbols show his spirituality, his love of nature and hiking, his interest in architecture, and more. John very specifically chose to do an ink drawing as opposed to other art forms because he thought it best helped to illustrate his essay, his story, and his identity. Further, as I was reading his essay, the art worked together with the narrative to give me a fuller picture of who John is as a person. John shared a draft of his drawing with the class during workshop/peer review time and many other students were inspired by his drawing and wanted to create a more "artistic" component for their own projects. He was proud of his work, and he enjoyed the opportunity to utilize his skills and talents as an artist. His creativity was contagious, as well, and once other students saw the various forms the art could take, they were more open to trying it themselves.

Finally, Figure 10 is a comic strip that illustrates how this student, whom I will call Mary, became a computer science student (Project #4). After introducing Project #4 and brainstorming with Mary in my office, she said the best way for her to tell the story of how she became a computer science major was through a comic strip. Mary described herself as a non-artist, but said she enjoyed sketching and doodling from time to time. Her comic is wonderfully drawn and does a great job of narrating the story of how she came to study computer science. While her essay component was well-written, the combination of image and text in the comic told a better story than the alphabetic alone ever could, and Jason Helms (2017) talks about this unique storytelling experience created by comics in *Rhizcomics: Rhetoric, Technology, and New Media Composition*. Helms (2017) writes, "Text may call to mind words only, but I am indicating the woven nature of [comics], distinct modes overlapping in a unique composition but also the various other texts (discursive and nondiscursive) to which this thing responds." While Mary said she was anxious about her drawing skills and creating a comic, she stepped out of her comfort zone and created a transgenre composition. Her project was a wonderful representation of what I was attempting to teach students by encouraging them to intersect art and writing: to become aware of the various composing methods available to them to communicate, and to use the method(s) best suited for their projects to create unique, multifaceted, and interesting compositions.

In past courses I've taught, students were usually more open to digital composing than they were to art-making. They often felt like they didn't possess enough artistic skill to create a "good" or "interesting" piece of art for their assignment. However, the student population in the ENG 2070 course I describe here was about 50% architecture students. Art is already so much a part of what architecture students do, so many of them excitedly brought their artistic skills into our class for several of their assignments. The results were stunning, and the artwork greatly improved their projects. In addition, the students reported enjoying the assignments more, were proud of their work, and frequently shared the work with the class. When I asked for permission to include the student artwork in this essay, they all enthusiastically agreed. While Jane and Kayla were excited from the beginning about the artistic components of the projects, John and Mary were initially unsure (but they were open to it). When I conferenced with John and Mary and they had the opportunity to map out their projects with me and
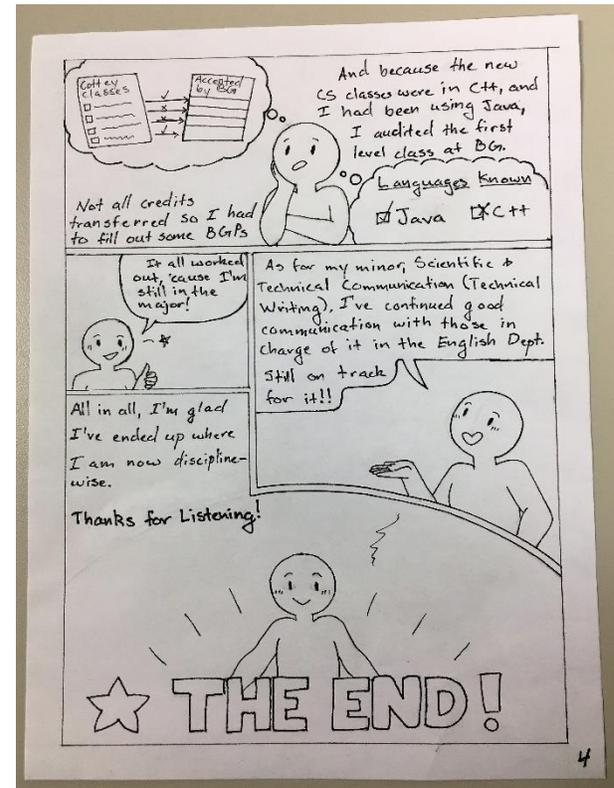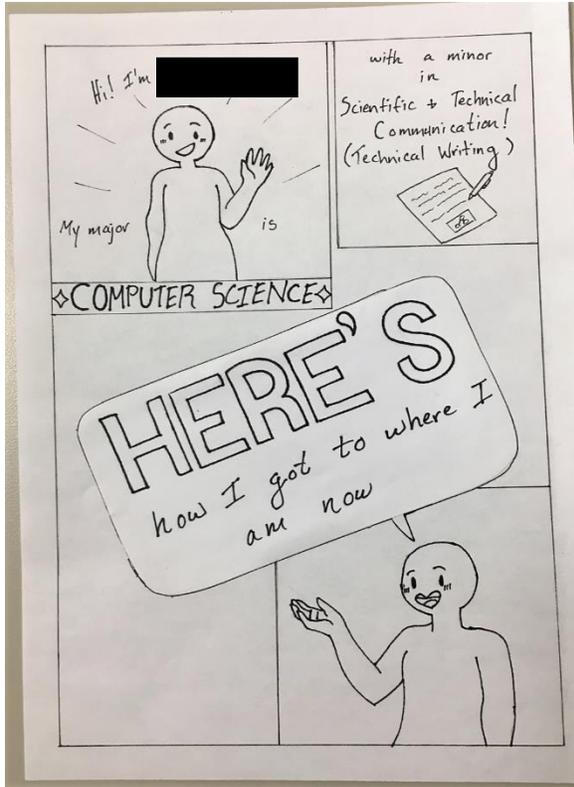
Figure 10: Mary's comic strip (with some identifying information blacked out).

brainstorm the possibilities, creating art became an approachable and exciting prospect for them, and their art and overall projects reflect that. I also modeled art-making for them, brought in examples of my own artwork, and allowed students to ask questions about my rhetorical decision-making processes.

Ultimately, the students' transgenre projects were a wonderful showcase of creativity, artistic skills, and the ability to "think outside the box" in a college composition course. I saw firsthand how transgenre composing encouraged them to approach their assignments in new ways, and the art-making gave them excellent opportunities to describe their composing process(es) to me. When prompted, they were able to clearly articulate why they chose the art form they did, why they chose specific materials/colors/ arrangements, and how they were working to better engage their audience with both the art and the writing. Further, they were able to talk about the ways they saw the art and writing working together to facilitate "free thinking."

Creating, Reading, and Viewing Transgenre Work: A Heuristic

At this point, it's important to provide a heuristic for how you can think about, consider, and "read" transgenre compositions (including this one). In order to enact an effective pedagogical approach, students should consistently be reminded of *why* they are doing this work and *how* they should read/experience their own transgenre compositions and the transgenre compositions of others. How can we teach students to "read" transgenre compositions and fully engage with them so they know how to approach/create them?

1) Reading/viewing transgenre work: Read/view the individual aspects of the transgenre composition several times. Try "reading" the composition from left to right, right to left, top to bottom, and bottom to top. How did your understanding/perception of the composition change/evolve/expand when reading/viewing the composition from all directions?

2) Creating transgenre work: Think about your goals as a writer and an artist. How might you constellate words and images to challenge (or queer) your reader-viewer's perception of the composition? How might you use unlikely pairings of text and image to work toward the overall goal of your composition?

3) Reading/viewing and creating transgenre work: Helms (2017) writes that scholar Marshall McLuhan ("the medium is the message") saw the truly participatory nature of "reading" comics and that the "reader is forced to interact with the comic more consciously than with a traditional text." As such, carefully consider the individual aspects of the composition you are reading/viewing or creating, then think about the ways those individual aspects work together to create the whole. Why did the writer/artist (or you as the writer/artist) choose that layout or those specific colors, images, and/or words? The images and words necessarily work together and aren't separate entities. How does this impact your perception of a composition or the way you approach creating a transgenre composition? Just like Dada and Surrealist work, transgenre compositions encourage reader-viewers to "think outside the box." It's okay to feel uncomfortable or not understand what you are reading/seeing at first and, as a

writer/artist, it's okay to feel challenged by the concept of creating something new and different.

Above all, transgenre compositions embrace the messiness of composition; give students the space to be truly creative, and encourage them to take risks.

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Appendix A: Materials from ENG 2070 Intermediate Writing Course

ENG 2070 – Intermediate Writing: Understanding Identity and Queer Theory in Academic Communities (Abridged Syllabus)

Required Texts
- *Writing about Writing* (Second Edition) ed. by Elizabeth Wardle and Doug Downs
- Additional readings will be posted on Canvas throughout the course of the semester

Course Description
This course introduces students to key terms, concepts, theories, and approaches to rhetoric and writing and asks students to draw on that knowledge to analyze and produce a variety of genres, both alphabetic and multimodal, for a variety of audiences and purposes. As a gateway to the Writing Minor, this course provides a broad theoretical framework intended to help students critically analyze authentic texts characteristic of their discipline/major as well as texts that circulate beyond and across traditional academic boundaries. Students will develop a nuanced understanding of concepts and practices widely used by contemporary rhetoricians to better understand and manipulate the discourses that suffuse their literate worlds. Major course projects include critical analyses of rhetorical practices in and across academic settings, developing a communication strategy for intervening in an ongoing public dialogue, as well as a culminating reflective project in which students assess their own learning trajectory throughout the semester and describe the features of their emerging expertise in rhetoric and writing.

Queer theory will provide a critical lens/theoretical framework for this course. Queer theory is all about identifying and remixing (or reimagining) long-standing divisions, dichotomies, and categories, and we will particularly be using queer theory as a lens for seeing how texts cross boundaries and how we can critique those boundaries. In addition, one of our assignments will further discuss the crossing of boundaries by using queer theory to analyze the ways that the public and private are eroded through the use of social media/public forums. In an effort to stay true to the goals of queer theory, our discussions, assignments, and the overall structure of the course will be queered. Queer theory will be used in two ways throughout this course: first, we will be using queer theory to open up new ways of teaching/experiencing a writing course and, second, students will actively use queer theory as they work toward becoming active members of their discipline. As Jacqueline Rhodes and Judith Butler note, queer teaching makes room for a number of possibilities and leaves room for students to discover some of those possibilities themselves.

Learning Outcomes
- Students will critically analyze how the principles of rhetoric work together to promote effective communication by inserting themselves into the conversations taking place in rhetoric and composition studies as well as in their own disciplines

- Students will participate in the rhetoric and composition discipline and their own discipline through an application of queer theory and queer rhetorics
- Students will construct materials which respond effectively to the needs of a variety of audiences and will demonstrate critical thinking, reading, and writing strategies when crafting written work that synthesizes multiple points of view
- Students will be critical of what it means to participate in a classroom space, read a text, and complete an assignment and use queer theory in their own lives to build inclusion, value diversity, and see the ways identities intersect

Assignments

Project #1: Interview of a Faculty Member and Analysis of a Written Work in Your Discipline – 100 points

This project will give you the opportunity to further explore writing in your discipline. You will perform an interview with a faculty member in your discipline at Bowling Green State University.

- Here are some questions to guide your interview (but you can certainly ask other questions in addition to these)
    - What does the faculty member do?
    - Who are they as a researcher and a scholar?
    - How does the faculty member "do" writing? For example, if they write emails, how are they written and who are they written to?
- You can also think about questions through a queer theory lens by asking about prescribed academic practices
    - What are the established ways to be an academic?
    - How has their writing been influenced by their history?
    - How is gender/sexuality treated in the discipline?

After completing the interview, find an article written in your discipline; you will explore the rhetorical practices characteristic of the discipline and analyze the genre(s) produced by people in your discipline. The interview should lead into an analysis of the article you've chosen.

- What writing genres are unique to your discipline?
- What types of writing are happening in your discipline that other disciplines aren't doing?
- Does the writing in your coursework and in your discipline/field match?

The assignment will be completed in two parts. The first part of the assignment will take the form of a formal report (4-5 pages) in which you analyze your chosen article. However, we will be queering the assignment when it comes to conveying the interview. You will discuss the interview using multimodal means: a video recording, an audio recording, a Prezi, a VoiceThread, a Piktochart, etc. In the multimodal part of your project, you will discuss/convey/portray the interview and your thoughts about the interview and writing in your discipline. If you are unsure about how to queer your project or if your idea is acceptable, don't hesitate to talk with me or schedule an appointment in my office.

Project #2: Writing Across Boundaries – 100 points

For Project #2, you will pull an interesting issue or topic from Project #1 and think about it in a public space outside of academic boundaries. You can choose something that you find interesting in your specific field of study or something that led you to study in your discipline (ex. an engineering student might choose to examine car design). You will focus on how this particular issue or topic is discussed in a text outside of academia (Reddit, Twitter, Facebook, Tumblr, a magazine article, etc.).

- Analyze the communication strategies taking place in that venue
  - What is the issue or topic you've chosen to examine?
  - In what space is this topic discussed? What is the space like?
  - In what ways are people communicating about the topic?
  - Do you know anything about the people participating in this forum?

One aspect of this project should involve thinking about the ways this topic was discussed in Project #1 (academic space) and how it is discussed in Project #2 (public, non-academic space). This assignment will be completed in two parts. The first part will be a traditional written component (3-4 pages) and the second part will take the form of a multimodal (physical or digital) project that will be used in a brief (3-5 minutes) presentation of your results to the class. The second part of this project is up to you: create a Piktochart, a collage, a video, a drawing, a poem, etc.

Project #3: Communication in an Outside Space – 100 points

This assignment is similar to Project #2, but now you have the opportunity to participate in a conversation taking place in a public forum. You will be examining and analyzing a topic related to your field of study OR a topic in queer theory (related to gender, sexuality studies, a queering of the traditional, etc.) in a public forum (Reddit, Twitter, Facebook, Tumblr, etc.) and will get involved with the conversation taking place (by posting, commenting, Tweeting, etc.). The project will take the form of a written component (4-5 pages) that will explain the topic/forum (ex. queer theory on Twitter) and answer/discuss the following:

- How did you enter the conversation?
- How did you contribute to the conversation?
- How did others in the forum interact with you?
- What responses did you get?

Feel free to include screenshots of the forum/conversation to illustrate your discussion, but these images should not be counted as part of the overall page requirement.

Project #4: Assembling an Identity Kit – 100 points

This reflective project will address Gee's notion of identity kits. Queer theory allows for new ways of being in the world, and this project gives you the opportunity to be critical of your own ways of being and how those ways of being have been constructed and assembled.

- Your disciplinary self is assembled by discourses – what relationship does this have to writing?

- How do discourses inform/use us and shift across contexts?
- How can we think about rhetoric and writing through the lens of queer theory?
- What readings have you done outside of class that can inform this project?
- What scholars/readings resonate with you?

This project will be informed by the interview you performed and readings from the semester inside and outside of class. You can think of it as an inventory or an articulation of your learning (a "theory" of your learning) this semester. This project will take the form of a visual map that illustrates your identity kit and a written reflective piece (4-5 pages) that explains your map and tells me how to "read" it. Work toward answering this question: What is it like to be a member of your discipline?

Project #5: Reading Journal – 100 points

You will be expected to maintain a weekly reading journal (physical or digital) where you will take notes and jot down your thoughts and ideas on the readings. There should be a new entry each week, and the goal is for you to use your journal as a springboard for in-class discussion and to help you keep track of reading questions, important/interesting concepts, and ideas for course projects. The reading journal will be turned in in its entirety at the end of the semester.

In addition to completing the reading journal, part of your overall grade with this project is to complete a reading facilitation with a group during the Project #3 unit. You will choose a group and sign up for a day to facilitate. You and your group will choose a reading (or a multimodal project) related to queer theory, composition, identity, academic communities, etc. and will open up conversation at the beginning of class by discussing the reading and how it relates to the course. The reading can be a selection from the *Writing about Writing* textbook that we haven't read yet for class or can be any outside source (it doesn't necessarily have to be "scholarly," but your group needs to make a case for why that piece was chosen and how it helps further the goals of the course). Your group should bring/electronically disperse a handout with some questions to guide our in-class discussion (this can be multimodal, as well) and you should reflect a bit on this group activity in your reading journal. This activity is a way to "flip" or queer the classroom and give students the opportunity to take ownership of their learning in the course and provide them with moments to teach their classmates and instructor (the learners become the teachers). This part of Project #5 will be graded holistically and, as stated previously, will be a part of your overall Project #5 grade.

ENG 2070 – Intermediate Writing
Identity and Queer Theory in Academic Communities

Assignment Schedule
The assignment schedule is subject to changes and amendments throughout the course of the semester. If you miss class, be sure to check with the instructor about what was missed and what needs to be made up.

WAW – *Writing about Writing: A College Reader*
Canvas – reading is available under "Files" in our Canvas course shell
Online – reading is available in an e-book format (search for the title in Google)

Day	Class/Due Dates	Readings/Homework
Project #1 – Interview/Writing in Your Discipline		
Week #1		
Monday 1/8	Introductions, review syllabus	Read "What is Rhetoric?" by William Covino and David Jolliffe (pg. 325) in WAW, reading journal
Wednesday 1/10	Introduce queer theory, introduce Project #1 assignment	Read excerpt from *Queer: A Graphic History* (Canvas) and "The Concept of Discourse Community" by John Swales (pg. 215) in WAW, reading journal, work on Project #1 interview questions
Friday 1/12	In-class workshopping	
Week #2		
Monday 1/15	No class, Martin Luther King, Jr. Day	
Wednesday 1/17	Review Project #1 interview questions	Read "Speech Acts, Genres, and Activity Systems: How Texts Organize Activity and People" by Charles Bazerman (pg. 365) in WAW, reading journal
Friday 1/19	In-class workshopping	Read "Introduction" from *Queer Theory: An Introduction* (Canvas), reading journal
Week #3		
Monday 1/22		Read "Literacy, Discourse, and Linguistics: Introduction" by James Paul Gee (e-pages, PDF version also available on

		Canvas) in WAW, work on Project #1 rough draft, reading journal
Wednesday 1/24	Project #1 rough draft due, in-class peer review	Read "Limits of Identity" from *Queer Theory: An Introduction* (Canvas), reading journal, revise Project #1 based on peer review feedback
Friday 1/26	In-class workshopping	Work on Project #1 final draft
Week #4		
Monday 1/29	Project #1 final draft due, introduce Project #2 assignment	Read "Genre as Social Action" by Carolyn R. Miller (Canvas), reading journal
Wednesday 1/31		Read "Sponsors of Literacy" by Deborah Brandt (pg. 43) in WAW, reading journal
Friday 2/2	In-class workshopping, sign up for conferences	
Project #2 – Writing Across Boundaries		
Week #5		
Monday 2/5	No class this week, meet in my office (East Hall 360) for your scheduled conference	
Wednesday 2/7		
Friday 2/9		Read "Introduction" from *Techne: Queer Meditations on Writing the Self* (online), reading journal
Week #6		
Monday 2/12		Read "Tracing Trajectories of Practice: Repurposing in One Student's Developing Disciplinary Writing Processes" by Kevin Roozen (pg. 157) in WAW, reading journal
Wednesday 2/14	Sign up for presentations	Read "Rhizomes" from *Techne: Queer Meditations on Writing the Self* (online), reading journal
Friday 2/16	In-class workshopping	

Week #7		
Monday 2/19	In-class presentations	Read "Draw Me a Word, Write Me a Picture" by Thomas Newkirk (pg. 76) in WAW, reading journal, work on Project #2 rough draft
Wednesday 2/21	In-class presentations	Work on Project #2 rough draft
Friday 2/23	In-class presentations	Work on Project #2 rough draft
Week #8		
Monday 2/26	Project #2 rough draft due, in-class peer review	Revise Project #2 based on peer review feedback
Wednesday 2/28	In-class workshopping	Work on Project #2 final draft
Friday 3/2	Project #2 final draft due, introduce Project #3 assignment	Read "Writing What Matters: A Student's Struggle to Bridge the Academic/Personal Divide" by Emily Strasser (pg. 199) in WAW, reading journal
Project #3 – Communication in an Outside Space		
Week #9		
Monday 3/5	No class, Spring Break	
Wednesday 3/7		
Friday 3/9		
Week #10		
Monday 3/12	Sign up for reading facilitation with a group	Read "Prosumerism, Photo Manipulation, and Queer Spectacle" from *On Multimodality: New Media in Composition Studies* by Jonathan Alexander and Jacqueline Rhodes (Canvas), reading journal
Wednesday 3/14		Student reading choice, reading journal
Friday 3/16	In-class workshopping	Student reading choice, reading journal
Week #11		
Monday 3/19		Student reading choice, reading journal
Wednesday 3/21	Project #3 rough draft due, in-class peer review	Revise Project #3 based on peer review feedback

Friday 3/23	In-class workshopping	Work on Project #3 final draft
Week #12		
Monday 3/26	Project #3 final draft due, introduce Project #4 assignment	Student reading choice, reading journal
Wednesday 3/28		Read "Identity, Authority, and Learning to Write in New Workplaces" by Donna Kain and Elizabeth Wardle (pg. 273) in WAW, reading journal
Friday 3/30	In-class workshopping	Student reading choice, reading journal
Project #4 – Assembling an Identity Kit		
Week #13		
Monday 4/2	In-class workshopping	Student reading choice, reading journal
Wednesday 4/4	In-class workshopping	
Friday 4/6	In-class workshopping, sign up for conferences	
Week #14		
Monday 4/9	No class this week, meet in my office (East Hall 360) for your scheduled conference	
Wednesday 4/11		
Friday 4/13		Work on Project #4 rough draft
Week #15		
Monday 4/16	Project #4 rough draft due, in-class peer review	Revise Project #4 based on peer review feedback
Wednesday 4/18	In-class workshopping	Work on Project #4 final draft
Friday 4/20	Project #4 final draft due	
Week #16		
Monday 4/23		Prepare to turn in Project #5
Wednesday 4/25	Project #5 due	

Friday 4/27	Last day of class	
Final Exam Week		
4/30-5/4, no exam		

artifact:
a comic essay about a revision of a revision assessment rubric for student writing

Karah Parks, San Francisco State University

Abstract

Many scholars have examined the ecosystem of the writing process in pursuit of more effective composition pedagogies over the past forty years. Of current interest are ways of applying community-centered, participatory approaches to the assessment and revision stages of writing as a non-linear process, uniquely traversed by each individual within a larger discourse community. Several recent studies have demonstrated that this kind of approach to revision and assessment increases students' confidence as writers and their value for revision in particular as a discrete part of the writing process. However, despite these findings both past and present, revision continues to be taught as an afterthought at the end of the writing process, and many students lack confidence to both produce and engage meaningful feedback that leads to better revision work, and, eventually, better writing. The content of this comic essay is a metacognitive journey about my revising of an assessment rubric of revision work performed in an advanced writing course for English speakers of other languages (ESOL) at the community college level. It reviews and integrates what scholarship has taught us about revision and assessment starting with foundational writing process theories and ending in their relationship to current social justice pedagogies in composition courses that seek to empower students by involving them in the assessment cycle. Along the way, I reflect on ways I have practically applied these theories in my own classroom, and in the process, share what was learned, reinforcing what the literature up to now has stated: allowing more time and space to teach and practice revision, providing regular assessment of feedback throughout the writing process, and designing assessment in collaboration with students to assess revision, can enrich students' value for revision and confidence as writers.
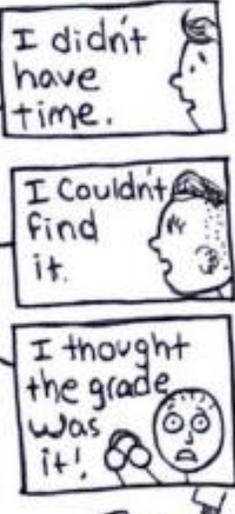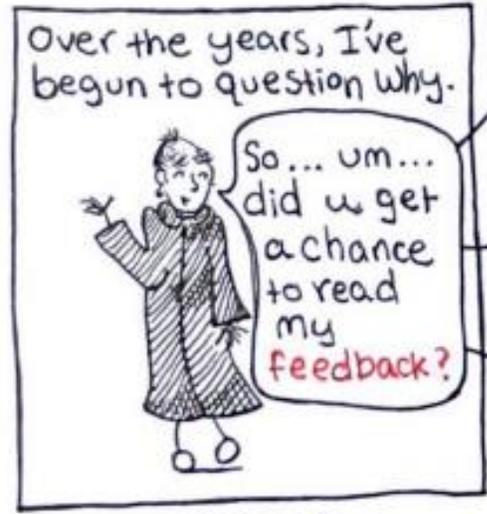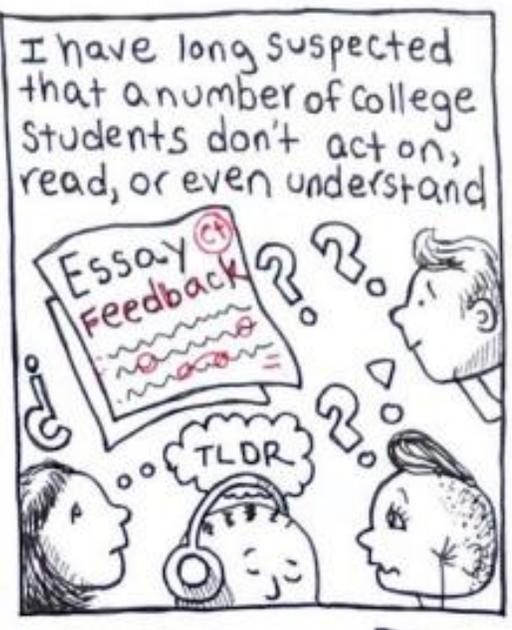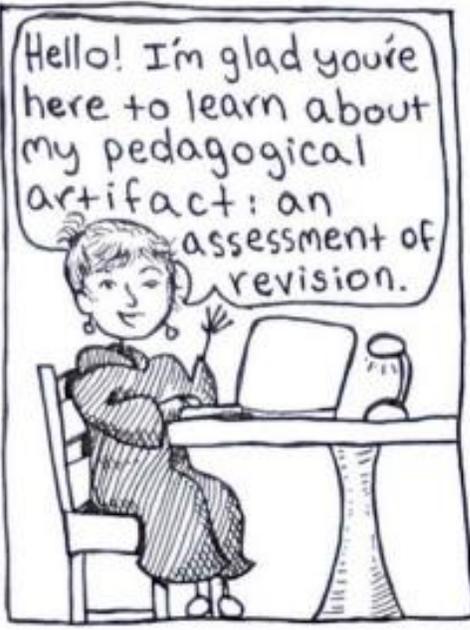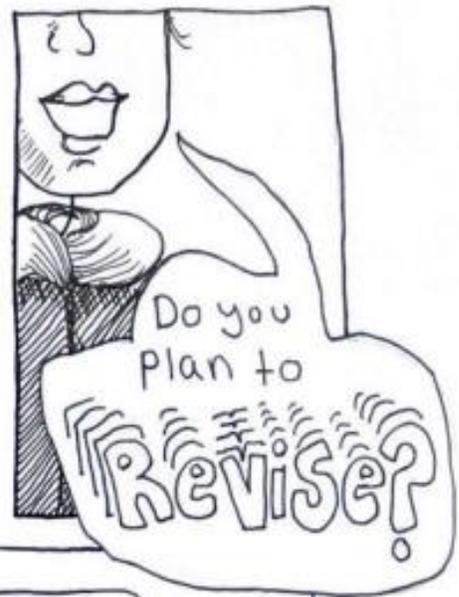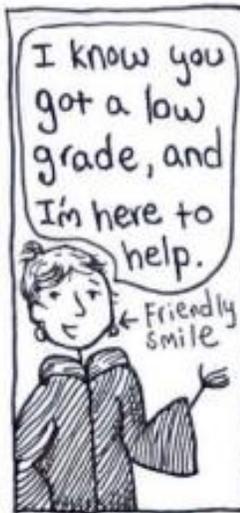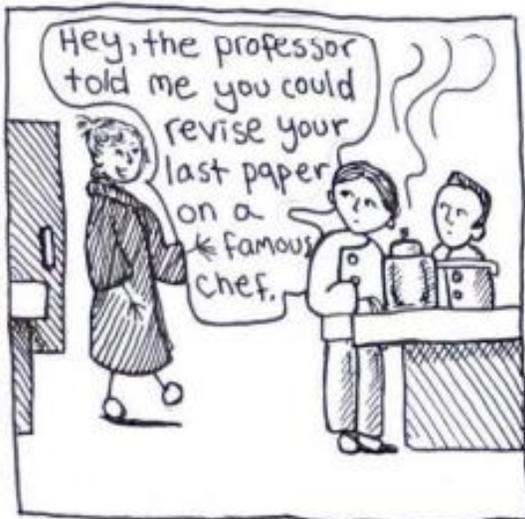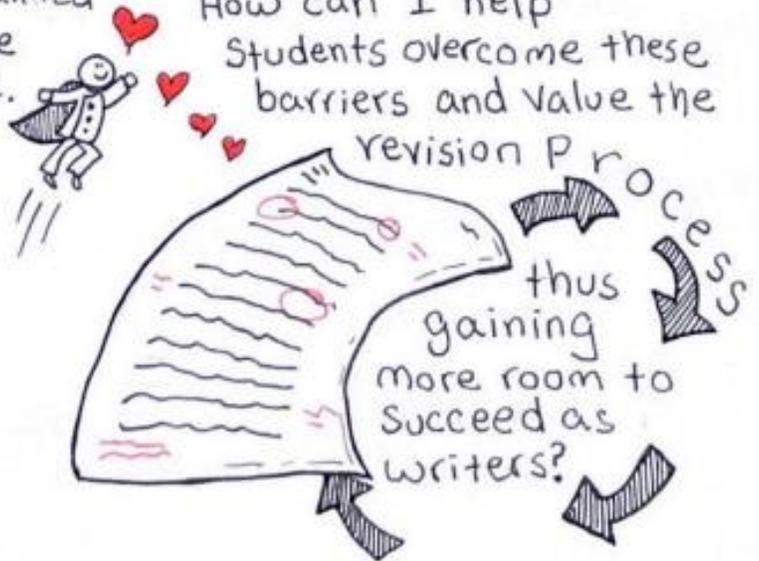
Pedagogical Artifact

Wouldn't it make sense to review process first?

Not part of my artifact

Drafts/Process	2	1	-
This portfolio....			
15. was submitted with one or more peer reviewed drafts for each writing project			
16. was submitted with response sheet or in-text responses to at least one partner's clear and actional feedback for each writing project			
17. shows evidence of careful proofreading and attention to at least one colleague's clear and actional feedback for each writing project			
18. includes one or more pages of self-reflection and evaluation in-text or in a cover letter about the particular genres of the writing chosen			

Do I want students to fill this in?

I'll share my revision process of the part of my original rubric that assessed the students' revision process for a writing portfolio in an advanced ESOL* writing course at the at the community college level.

*English Speakers of Other Languages
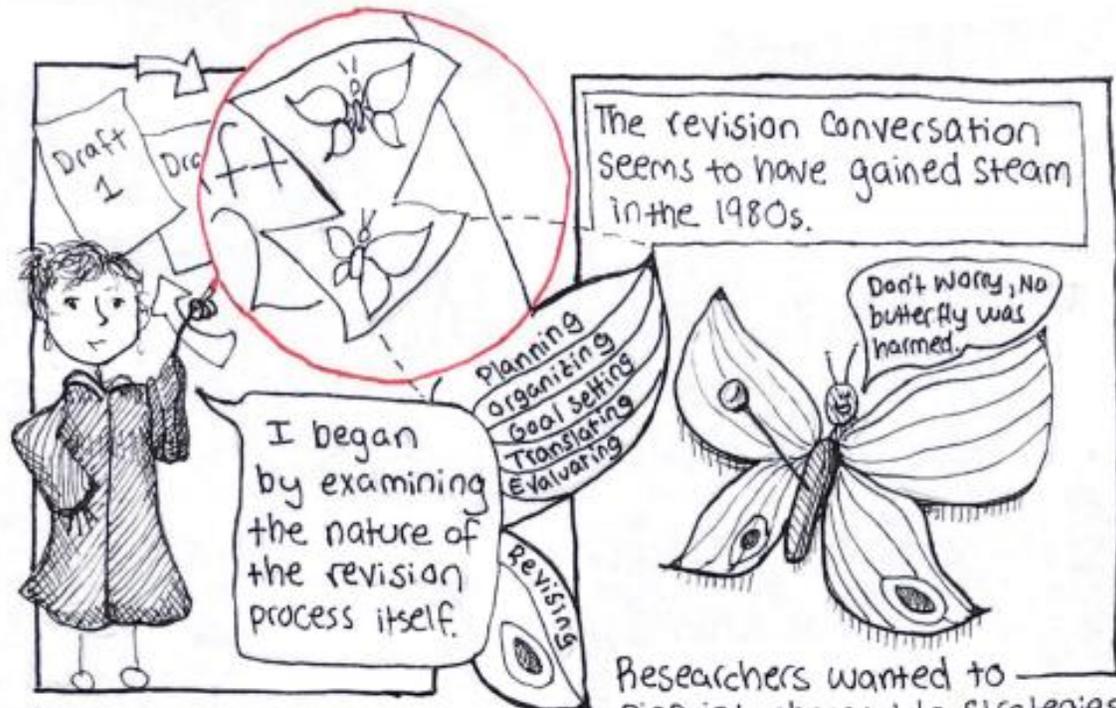
Planning
organizing
Goal setting
translating
evaluating

Revising

Sommer's study begins with a critique.

...the linear models [of the writing process] reduce revision ...to no more than an afterthought.

(P. 397)

...Writing appears to be more like a seed than a line.

(P. 386)
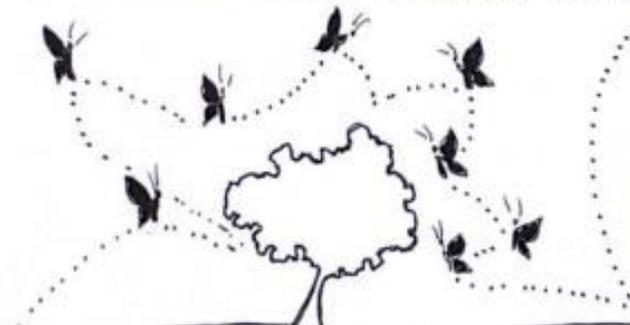
A seed does not grow linearly, at the same rate, or in an orderly fashion.

Sommers found in her study that mature writers had a better sense of their writing as a whole as well as in detail.

They better understood the recursive nature of revision, seeing their writing from many angles.
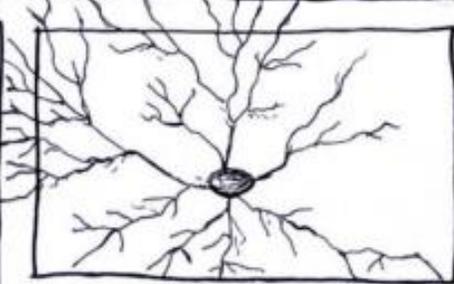
[when students are taught to see and re-see their writing this way

they will revise more successfully.]

In 1986, Flower et al. conducted a study similar to Sommers'.

Mature writer (vs.) Student Writer

..Hmmmmm.........

Results

The key process [in revision] may not be reading but building a working image of the text.

(P. 18)

As an artist, I find this idea of revision as closer to seeing than reading...

...intriguing

This is another useful metaphor I can use to help students understand the revision process.

I move backwards and forwards in a constant effort to gain consonnance, balance in the whole Piece.

Students + revision 4 Eva

Perhaps understanding will lead to value.

Being experts in cognitive Process Theory, Flower et al. (1986) wrote in more detail about the process of revision. They found mature writers have two important revision qualities.

Knowledge

Intention

1.

2.

A revisor's intention is defined in two parts: a sense of what is being asked and a plan for how to accomplish it.

Let's move into ardha Chandrasana.

Ardha Chandrasana = Half Moon

1. Engage core
2. Push off back foot
3. Arch back
4. Lengthen torso
5. Don't Panic.

Half Moon

So, my pedagogical artifact creates value...

Revision 4 eva

...for this practice of building knowledge and intention...

...by collaborative learning...

...in peer review...

...which improves one's ability to see one's own writing through others' eyes...

But I'd like to hear more about training student writers to give feedback...

Drafts/Process This portfolio….	2	1	-
15. was submitted with one or more peer-reviewed drafts for each writing project			
16. was submitted with response sheet or in-text responses to at least one partner's clear and actionable feedback for each writing project			
17. shows evidence of careful proofreading and attention to at least one colleague's *clear and actionable feedback for each writing project*			

...so I can more fairly assess them.

Collaborative building of a genre-based rubric leads to increased student engagement as well as recognition of audience and genre.

Drafts/Process This portfolio....	2	1	-
15. was submitted with one or more peer-reviewed drafts for each writing project			
16. was submitted with response sheet or in-text responses to at least one partner's clear and actionable feedback for each writing project			
17. shows evidence of careful proofreading and attention to at least one colleague's *clear and actionable feedback* for each writing project			
18. includes one or more pages of self-reflection and evaluation, either in-text or in a cover letter about the particular genres of writing chosen			

part of whole essay assessment

Is this harsh? should 0 be on the rubric?
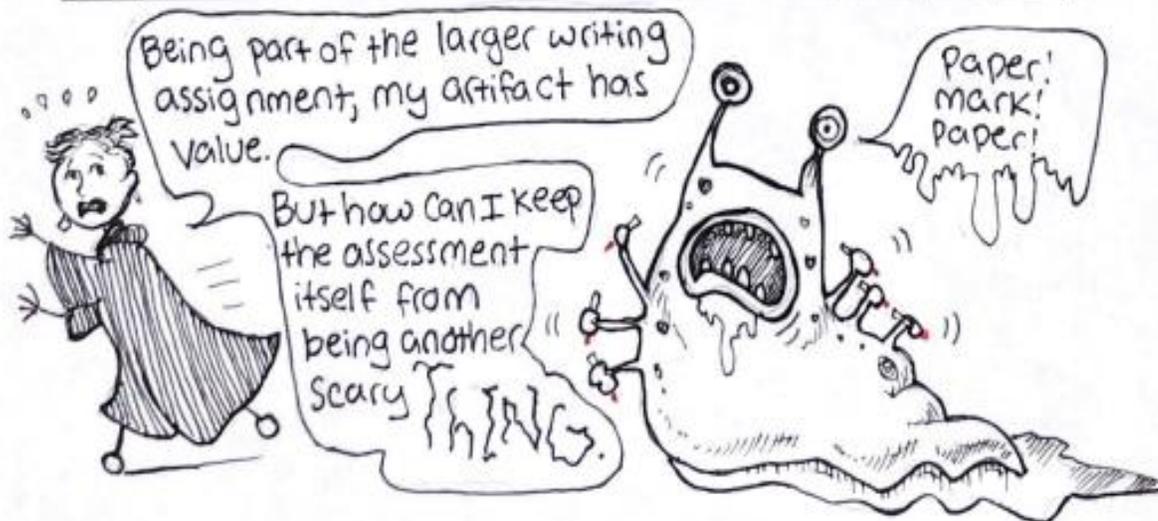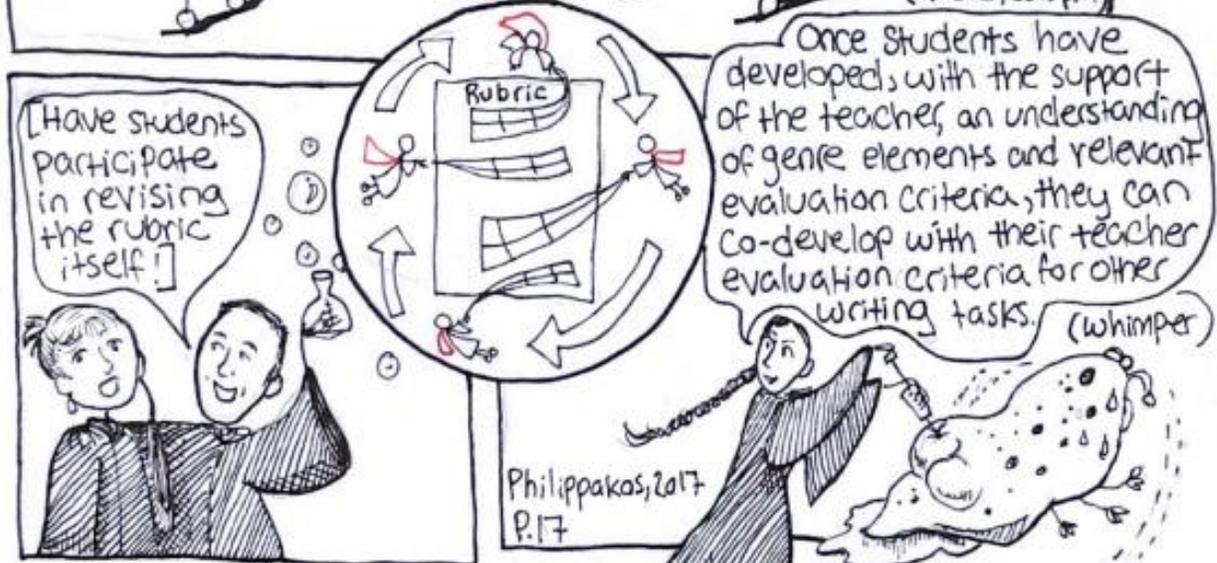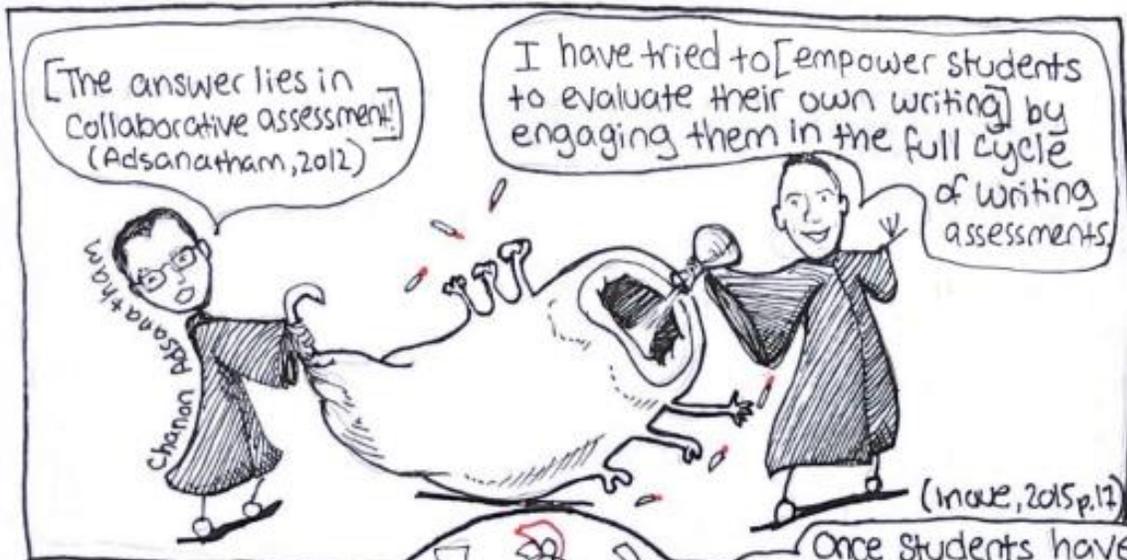
Still thkg I want ss to fill this in ?

Being part of the larger writing assignment, my artifact has value.

But how can I keep the assessment itself from being another Scary THING.

Paper! mark! Paper!

GENRE _____ RUBRIC

	Expected Genre Elements
Beginning	
Middle	
End	
Drafts/Process	A good revision is...

Adapted from Philippakos, Z. A. (2017). Giving feedback: preparing students for peer review and self-evaluation. The Reading Teacher, 71(1), 13–22. http://doi.org/10.1002/trtr.1568

This pedagogical artifact, an assessment of revision as a discrete part of the writing process, produces value for revision and confidence in student writers when it is a living document.

Like Sommers' seed, it is only a beginning.

A space we all, as part of the learning community construct.

It takes time, but teaching students the genre of assessment cultivates their ability to critically and creatively assess their own writing and to value the giving and recieving of feedback.

Revision becomes a garden of discourse in which communities can grow...

....open and accessible to all.
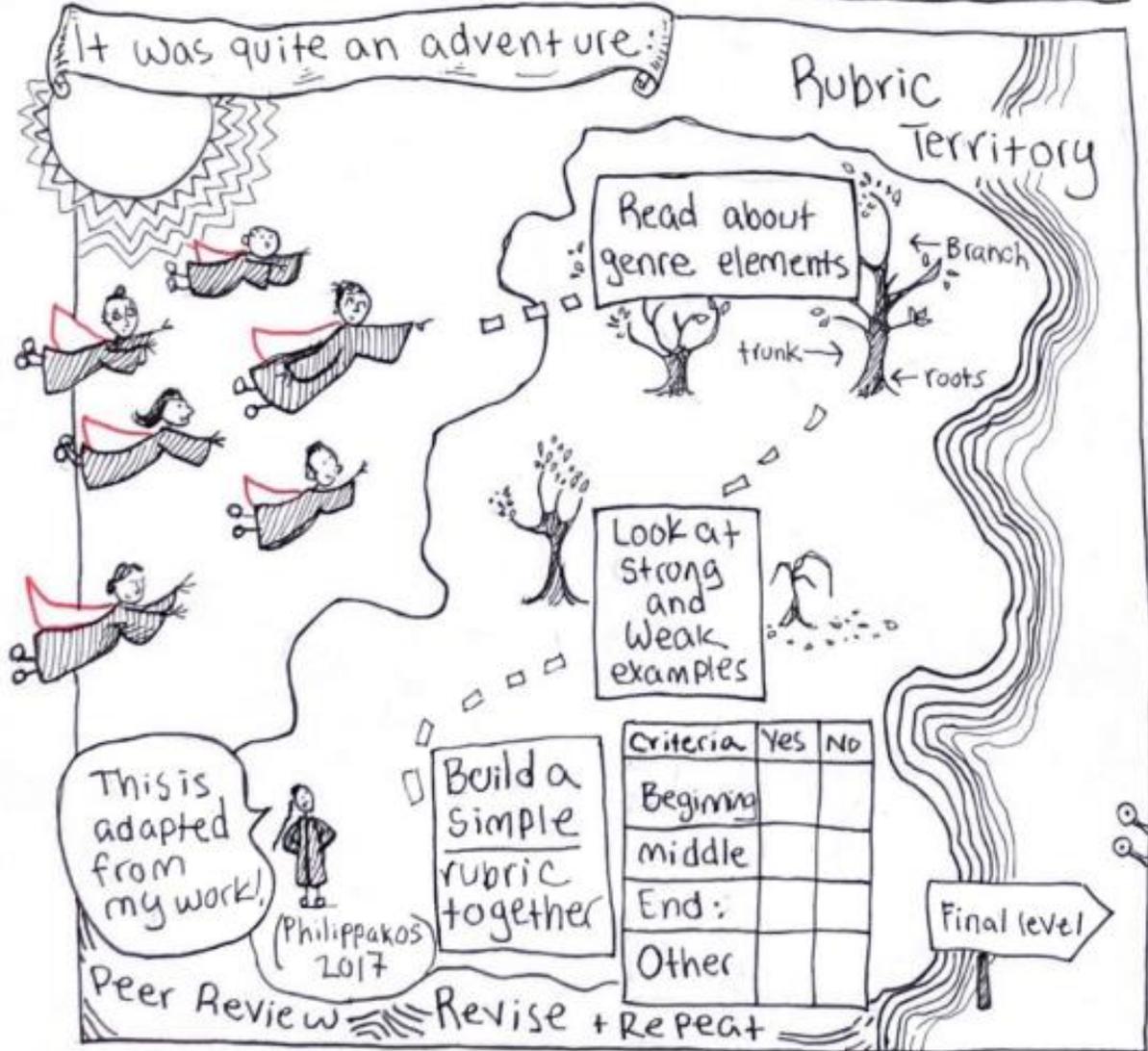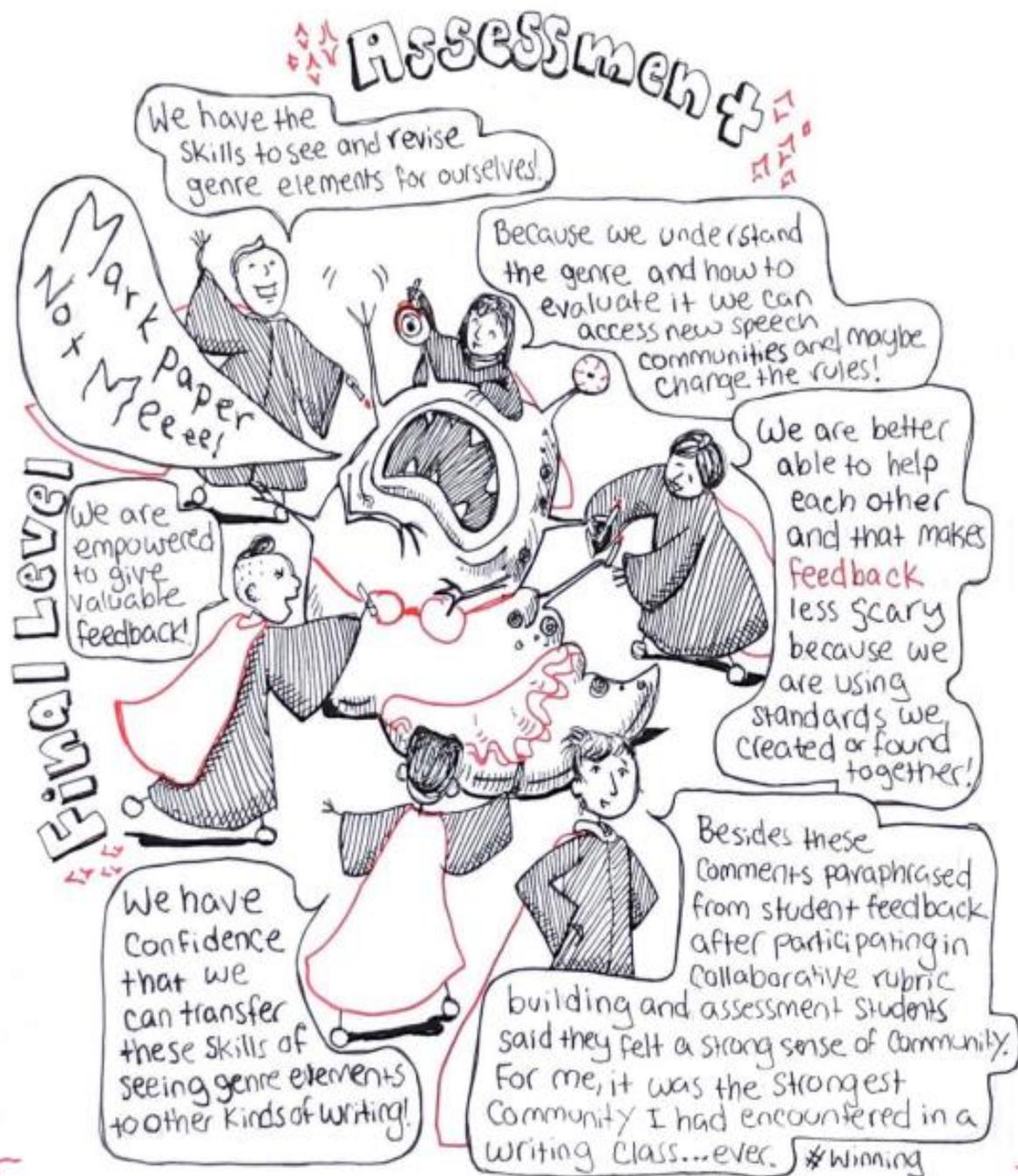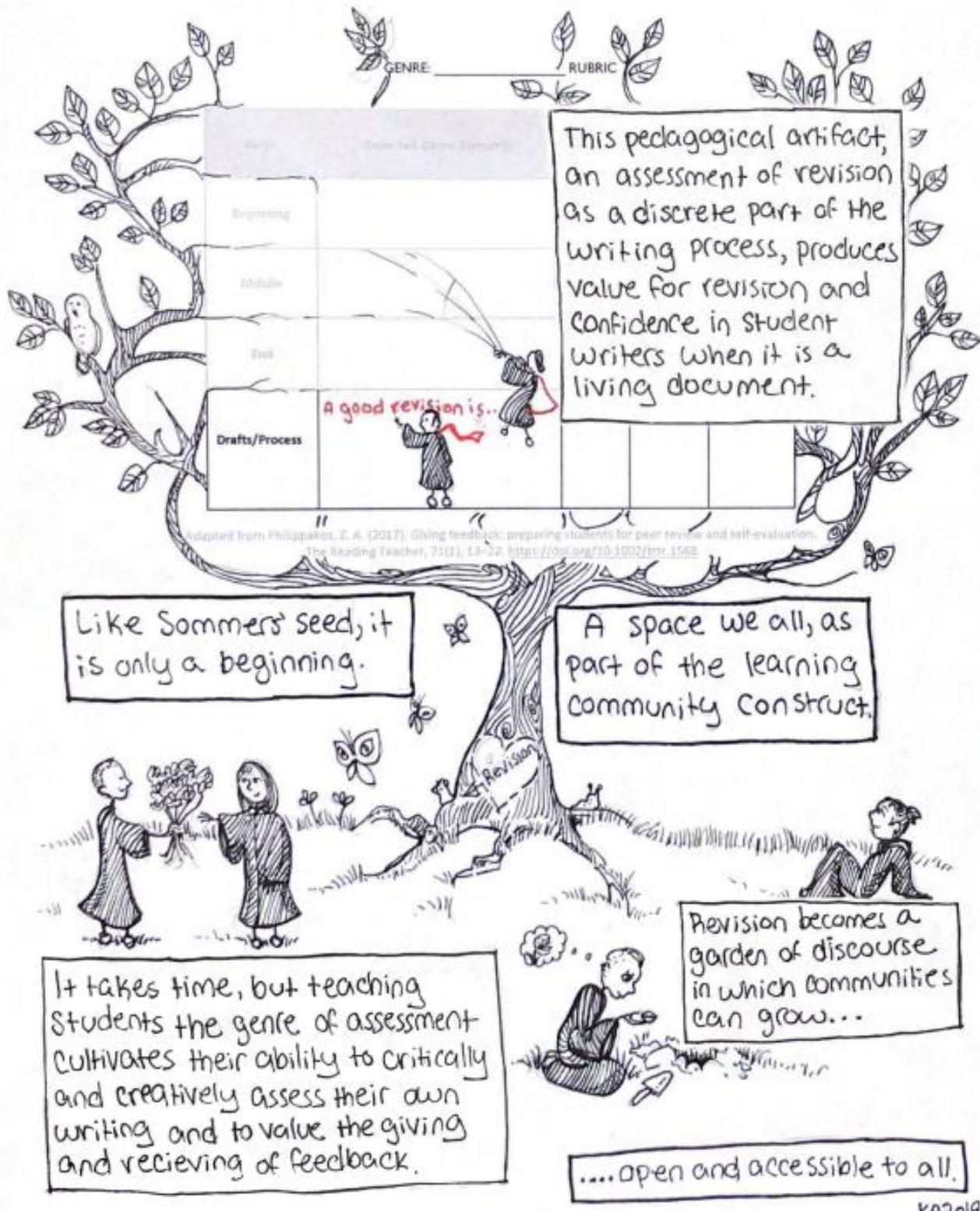
KP2019

Acknowledgements

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Writing as Designing:
Integrating Infographics

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Abstract

Infographics are used in academic, professional and even non-academic settings for a variety of purposes and are valuable tools for spreading knowledge and understanding about research topics. Infographics also represent a unique way of composing visually by being attentive to the importance of titles, concise information, and the striking visual layout of images, graphics, icons and design elements for an audience. Instructors should learn these platforms and be equipped with scholarship, direction and resources in order to aid, assess, and evaluate student infographic products. This study looks at the importance of data visualization and information design using a qualitative research study involving students in an advanced writing course composing with infographics. The data results show students who compose with infographics gain a more metacognitive perspective of design choices which impacts an audience. The results demonstrate that students also develop crucial professional presentation practices and gain valuable research, graphic design, and marketing skills. Finally, the results from this study culminate in a useful infographic heuristic model for instructors, designers and students to use when reflecting on their visual composing choices.

Keywords: Infographics, Visual rhetoric, Visual pedagogy, Data visualization, Information design, New media, Modes.

Introduction

"...I learned that sometimes you are only given so much space to work with, so pictures and icons can speak louder than the actual words on the infographic, so that's why it is important to me to find icons that match research and facts that I wanted to present." - Emily Kahn

"Infographics are really a great way to transmit our knowledge, what we know to other people; a great way to bring all the knowledge that we know together… so it's working with the pictures and the effect they have." - Tin Bui

"You know, there's the evidence-based learning style, and summarizing is one of the styles there and a proven way to learn different information for students and it's really helpful for honing in on a topic and learning about it." - Olivia Branson

Visuals are all around us. We see them on our commute to work. Images always flood our computers, whether through websites, social media, or search engines. There are many ways in which creating and using visuals is at the forefront not only of academic environments but also

in professional contexts. Pictures and icons in fact "can'' speak louder than words especially within informative and argumentative based research. This is a research study which seeks to demonstrate the intersection between the research writing process and visual information design. One platform which allows for this process between research writing and information design is infographics. In more familiar territory, they often are used in flyers, posters, and advertisements you may see from groceries and doctor's offices to classrooms of all disciplines. The value of composing such multimodal products is highly valuable today for instruction. According to Lauer (2013) instructors who utilize multimodal and visual pedagogies such as multimodal projects provide students with benefits in technical and professional fields because such strategies embrace "visual literacy, visual rhetoric, and graphic design" in order to construct diverse contexts and meanings (p.172). Infographic platforms can transform writers into designers, students into makers, and ultimately the instructor into a dynamic and fluid practitioner of innovative multimodal learning strategies to help all.

This is a study which provides context to students who are asked to compose visually with infographics connected to research. Thus, it is important instructors gain valuable insight into student visual writing processes. The emergence of these new modes of composing and thinking about writing has the ability to change what we know about the writing process by showing how genres of writing can be restructured within digital environments (Graham and Whalen, 2008; MAP, 2013). I am a graduate instructor who teaches first-year and second-year generalist composition courses in Miami's composition program which are open to any student in the university (specialized technical and professional writing classes are also available). Due to the student population, I often teach students who are not as familiar with multimodal practices in writing and because of this I often embrace new ways of designing assignments, framing the experience from the perspective of a journey itself (see Fig.1). In creating highly visual and interactive ways of exploring class content, I find that students are better prepared for actually understanding the importance of multimodality, visual design, and representing their research through the use of infographics. So why not feel that the process of writing transformation can be a journey? The purpose of this study as well as the findings and resources here can better help instructors and students understand the argumentative potential among new modalities of composing. Creating infographics especially shows considerable promise to students thinking in metacognitive and innovative ways about their writing.

Visual composing with infographics has transformed what we know about writing. In this article I first position my study within the scholarship of infographic (multimodal) design by providing context of what we know about how students compose in online digital platforms. I specifically will explore these questions:

- What are the visual design processes composition students undertake when making infographic arguments?
- How can we provide better tools and instruction for students composing infographics for research, presentation, professional, or marketing purposes?
- Given the students' experiences, what can instructors do to have better pedagogy in the classroom related to teaching about infographics and information design?

Fig. 1: "Visual design principles in research and ads: A road trip for learners"
(Links to outside resource found in Appendices)

These are important questions that I will address and analyze more fully in the following sections starting with a review of important scholarship. In the methods section I will outline the procedures, recruitment tools, and artifacts used in order to make this study possible. I will analyze actual student responses and infographic products related to a generalist advanced writing course. Many of the results will show students possess an attention towards conciseness, icon usage, platform accessibility, and infographic applications. Lastly, I will synthesize my findings for a usable heuristic model for thinking about working with infographics.

Infographics and Data Visualization: A Literature Review

Infographics are valuable digital tools and how a designer takes their findings, research, and experiences and translates them into visuals is a unique process. For example, Sorapure (2019), focusses on an immersive, narrative based platform called *Dollar Street*, where visitors experience a visual representation of people's lives by underlining the interaction between text, images, and graphics. This idea of information visualization (infovis) here is that "infovis is an increasingly rich and relevant object of study for writing researchers and teachers who endeavor to help students gain proficiency with new digital literacies and practices" (Sorapure, 2019, p.1). Furthermore, this study reinforces among many things the importance of visual relationships where color, spacing, image/text representation or places draw our attention to emphasizing, bolding, or highlighting instances of typographic design (Sorapure, 2019, p.6). As in the case of both Sorapure (2019)'s *Dollar Street* and Graham and Whalen's (2008) graphic design among builders of websites, goes back to how data visualizations are linked to professional contexts as well. As described in Mauldin's text, data visualizations in the form of infographics which take numbers, images, and icons together are a great narrative by which many professional settings from library science, marketing, programming, and education can demonstrate the value of communicating information quickly among audiences (2015, p.8). There are many other ways in which data visualizations are enhanced through infographic platforms.

Many studies which demonstrate how infographics are used are also reflective of the many disciplines which students come from. The unique interdisciplinary nature of infographics can go beyond composition and graphic design instruction, but also demonstrate the visualization of mathematical principles in early education studies (Ozdamli and Ozdal, 2018) or how the public health and medical communities can make people more aware of factual data which can help people lead better lives (Wansink and Robbins, 2016). However, on a deeper level of study, infographics are concerned with not just data visualization but the cognitive process of helping information retention. According to a cognitive study by Majooni et al. (2018), "infographic presentation is necessary for attracting the attention of the viewer; to deliver abstract information; therefore, comprehension and retention are the key factors in the design of any infographic" (p.258). Through these studies, infographic design has potential beyond the classroom to reach publics in medical, professional, business, and other communication-based fields and contexts.

Within each of the critical person-based studies on infographics represent important angles for understanding the power of presenting information and creating meaning. For example, in Marjooni et al. (2018) the investigation involved the use of an eye-tracking device to measure whether certain infographics reduced the "cognitive loads" of the participants and the results ultimately showed how viewers of infographics are responsive to aspects of design layout, often returning and revisiting previous visual information based on the patterns of the visuals (p.264). The recording of how participants processed, viewed, and retained visual information also represents a unique glimpse into the quantitative side of infographic designs. In similar fashion, in Wansink and Robbins (2016), different focus groups were used to view and evaluate the efficiency of information presented in health-related infographics determining that the designs that scored higher among participants contained, "action-oriented titles or short titles, simple text, color, and humor" (p.781).

Strikingly, these studies show the mixed methods approach in gathering data and research about infographics. By establishing a specific model for working with infographics such as ADDIE (Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation and Evaluation) researchers are better able to provide not only students but instructors with diverse development practices for integrating these infographic practices in teaching (Ozdamli & Ozdal, 2017). Within each study on infographics and data visualization there is a concern of transferring knowledge and concepts to visual/digital platforms and implementing design practices in both students and instructors. The concept of visualization, digital composing and the products made, show a move in visual literacies that creates new meanings and reasons for further rhetorical investigation (MAP, 2013, p. 17). Students and instructors can use infographics as either design artifacts or presentation platforms in order to gain new experiences as designers.

Instructors, therefore, need to integrate pedagogical strategies for better visual instruction among students composing infographics. For instance, Lauer (2013) demonstrates a study involving an on-going, semester long project where visually engaged assignments were integrated into different stages of student work. Essentially, the instructor assigned poster projects concerned with rhetorical design choices of images, shapes, symbols, colors and

typography, while a final brochure assignment culminated in "requiring students to apply design and rhetorical principles while managing greater amounts of visual and verbal information than typically used in a poster" (Lauer, 2013, p.176). Infographic assignments on a similar level have far-reaching potential in both academic and professional contexts especially in how students establish professional presence in online spaces. In many ways, all instructors are involved in a process of understanding how to adopt productive instruction using visuals and as proposed by Wierszewski (2013), we must start with certain evaluation criteria such as "formal arrangement, overall organization, and audience" (p.14). Many scholars such as Lauer and Wierszewski also help demonstrate the conversation of how products like infographics provide unique ways of visualizing data.

Methods, Materials, and Data

In this study I wanted to use student projects and the design choices they made while creating infographics to support the rhetorical need for design-based pedagogies. To acquire the data would mean using a highly qualitative form of research based on two areas: stimulated recall and retrospective analysis. For the purposes of this study, I'm defining stimulated recall as the cognitive act of triggering student response based on a physical product or assignment they created as part of the course requirements, in this case the visual, research infographic. Secondly, I define retrospective analysis as developing a set of interview questions which will highlight the students' experiences, reflections, and creative choices. The qualitative data was also represented in two different ways: the visual products (infographics) and the interview responses. This data would also seek to answer core questions at the heart of the study regarding infographic arguments, design choices, and productive pedagogy.

Curriculum

This study stemmed from teaching ENG 225, Advanced Composition, a general composition course option for fulfilling the advanced writing requirement in the Global Miami Plan, which can also be fulfilled through a Business or Technical Writing course. The courses I designed and taught occurred during the Fall 2019 and Spring 2020 semesters. The curriculum followed three major units: discourse community, genre, and research which were major sections of a teaching practicum which helped prepare instructors to teach advanced level composition courses. The 225 course also allowed for instructors to tweak and design course content more to their specialized area of focus. So in my section students often engaged with thinking about how visual rhetoric exists in many ways, such as the work of graffiti writers/street artists, gamers, bloggers, websites, and advertisements. The curriculum first grounds students in readings which give proper definition, analysis and study on terms such as discourse community and genre.

The final project of this course required students to think critically about how to visualize, market, and present their research to their peers to help everyone better understand their topics. Part of the research process was to design a research infographic, presenting what the key points of their research were and why they made the design decisions they did. Many of the resources such as the visual design Prezi and slideshow (in appendices) existed as resource

links which students could interact with. I first use a variety of influential texts on writing research in the *Writing Spaces* online text such as Kyle Stedman's (2011) "Annoying Ways People Use Sources," Karen Rosenberg's (2011) "Reading Scholarly Sources," among others, and then work in the visual angles of research, where I ask students to reflect on design elements using Robin Williams' (2004) design elements from the *Non-Designers Design Book*. I integrate conversations about color theory and contrast, proper alignment and space usage, as well as the representation between images, text, and icons on screen. I also have since provided my students access to key studies in this article (Wansink and Robbins, 2016, Marjooni et al., 2018; Ozdamli and Ozdal, 2018). While there are always additional materials I'd like to include, I believe this study can also help build an instructor's visual rhetoric and research writing toolbox as well.

Participants

I specifically recruited three students, Olivia Branson, Emily Kahn, and Tin Bui who agreed to be identified with this study as their work and responses reflected both highly polished and refined understanding of their design choices. I initially sent out recruitment emails and consent forms to these past students, electronically asking permission to conduct and use recorded audio interview data as well as finished infographic products. Despite the current pandemic crisis at the time, I was concerned about the response rate but when students emailed their interest and willingness the project was in progress. I later recorded interviews via phone onto GarageBand and then I transcribed these at a later date. My reasoning for selecting these three as part of this pilot study was due to the overwhelming connections they made to scholarship I researched and to my investigative questions. Many of their actual responses (including the opening quotes) were part of the interview process and I include their visuals in this study to better aid in the research discussion.

Coding Process

For the coding process I chose to use my interview questions as a guide to determine what key areas and themes would be at the central focus of the study. I also wanted to be sure that my interview questions (included in the appendices), focused on student experiences (benefits and challenges) of composing research infographics and how they chose the design choices they did. Below are the following four areas I initially coded for:

- **Area One:** Responses tended to rely on traditional print research methods (e.g. thesis construction, main points, sources) when making their design decisions. Also, students would bring background research into their answer.
- **Area Two:** Students indicated design decisions associated with color, typography, image choices, graphics, layout or other design elements. Students here demonstrated the relationships between visual elements and their ideas.
- **Area Three:** Specifically looked at students' reflective thoughts on the values or challenges of using and composing infographics. Stimulated recall with infographics and retrospective analysis were key areas of this qualitative data.
- **Area Four:** Examined students' reflections towards the larger, professional context when creating infographics and what they can do. Here, students would often branch out beyond the course curriculum itself.

After coding these areas, I concluded that students who create infographics possess a unique metacognitive attention towards visual composing and how there exists an intricate relationship between images, texts, graphics, and meaning. There were the 3 major themes that could be derived from the data results after initial coding was completed:

- **Importance of short and concise information transfer:** The students discuss the process of getting their information from page to digital platform.
- **Connection between research topic and the layout/design:** Students discuss how and why certain visual elements were included with their topics.
- **Presentation strategies and setbacks with the project:** Students discuss the technical side of the project, working with digital technologies.

Furthermore, the students in this study recognized that while concise information is an important feature of the infographic especially as it relates to viewer comprehension of information (Wansink and Robbins, 2016, Marjooni et al., 2018), as a designer, students have to learn to work with the medium. Many of these themes are showcased in a case-by-case basis throughout the analysis.

Infographic Assignment

Lastly, to better foreground student responses and visuals, I also must highlight the expectations of the assignment. Essentially for the final project in ENG 225, students are first asked to assemble a collection of sources to build their research topics which either will take an informative or argumentative stance. Once students have a focus for their research topics and have completed an annotated bibliography or source chart assignment, which organized their sources in a table format, they can then begin composing their visual based on the four infographic building tools I provide: Piktochart, Canva, Venngage, or Easel-Ly. As each of these are free to sign up for, I encouraged students to practice and play around with different platforms to find what works best for them. Before the final draft of the research paper was due, students will present their research infographic in a professional, conference-based environment followed by a question and answer session in the class. Participation, feedback, and analysis was a part of student engagement with each other's work where I asked them to respond to each day's presenters. The core of the data results show specifically in each case study what central themes emerge that instructors can learn from.

Results and Discussion: Student Perceptions of Infographic Design

Olivia Branson: Information Transfer and Learning the Tech

Olivia Branson is a Public Health major and wanted to research a topic interesting to her and important to the field she studied: childhood obesity connected to family situations. This connection between research and visuals in public health would also relate to other infographic studies in professional settings. In many ways, Olivia's responses represented an investigative glimpse into the transformative processes between traditional research and infographic design. One of the first key issues was how to take the bulk of research from sources and best represent it visually and to an audience. When it came to dealing with larger articles and

research, Olivia Branson states that these, "can be kind of difficult to shorten into a sentence or two; when you read through it a couple of times and use the key components you know you want to include, then you can get a better grasp of what you want to put on here [infographic]" (225 *interview*). In many ways the interview questions and responses represented a "from the ground up" approach when thinking about traditional research practices reinforcing how research design can work.

When reflecting on the infographic platforms themselves, Olivia as well as the other participants often would use their past experiences to reinforce why a certain platform would work. Olivia states of one platform: "Canva is really great in providing a lot of templates that google doesn't have; like google has 10 or 15 different templates but Canva has so many I can choose from; even has ones that are filled out so that I can get an idea of how my project would look" (Branson, 225 *interview*). One of the interesting qualities about the stimulated recall responses related to the infographics is that students often are engaged when tweaking, arranging, and organizing pre-existing design elements to rhetorically fit their own research purposes. For example, Olivia's response reflects an interesting metacognitive response to seeing specific design layouts and realizing that for her topic, "Familial Influences on Childhood Obesity" would have to have a certain appearance that no one single template could provide. This would lead students into a unique composing process where they are given diverse design choices but MUST rhetorically choose what best fits their topic and whether the layout/design can be arranged for the specific audience.

Going off this conversation was a central theme running through the data results which was the attention towards design decisions once a platform was decided on. Next to the personal experiences as a researcher, Olivia like many of her classmates reflected in a detail driven way about their choices. Many of these responses related to design choices reflect many of the critical assessments that are involved with many studies of infographics in classroom curriculum (e.g. Lauer, 2013; MAP, 2013; Wierszewski, 2013). Essentially, when researching infographic design/layout, key features come into play with how students choose to distribute information to certain sections, explain color choices, and work through the presentation style they want. For example, the relationship between color/design choices and key concepts in research (see Fig. 2) is discussed at every stage of the composing process:

> I thought the color scheme was for young children, with blue and light pink I think is pretty typical when it comes to young children, you know with gender and everything. And so, I thought it aesthetically pleasing and looked good; the little graphics that they had, the little family on the third slide; google doesn't really have things like that or even PowerPoint. - Olivia Branson, 225 *interview*

Examining Olivia's infographic showcases how designing such projects places students in positions as creators and designers of infographics meant to engage specific audiences. First and most noticeable is the attention towards the color and layout, specifically the information and statistics arranged in a descending order. The use of graphics and images is also reflective of the type of public-health-aware infographics that could be seen occupying a doctor's office space, meant to engage waiting room patients with concise and visually interesting information
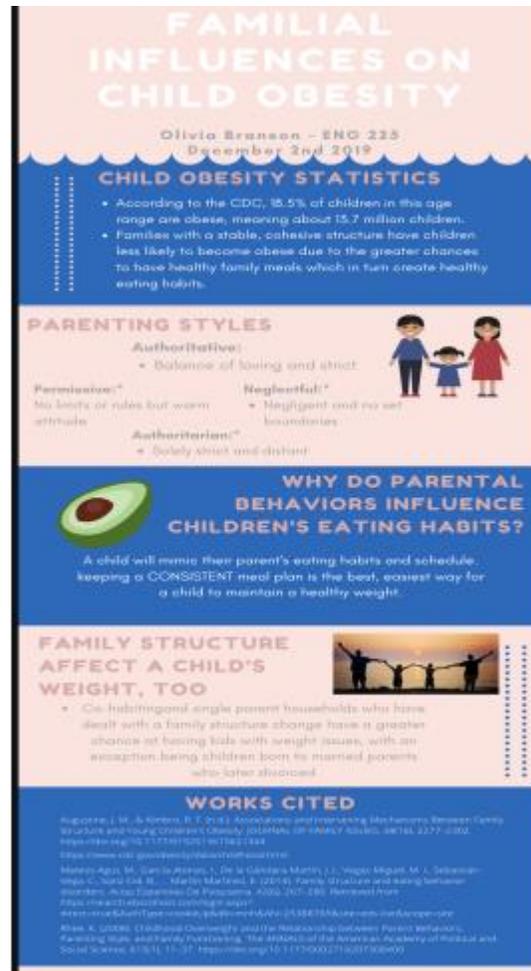
Fig. 2: "Familial influences on child obesity" by Olivia Branson

(Wansink and Robbins, 2016). Students also become aware of the impact of their titles, headings, and overall look of their research information once they engage with an audience as well. Olivia is very "meta" aware of how color and layout of the research infographic can affect the viewer. This reflects a set of composing skills that goes beyond the initial prompt and demonstrates the attention students have between the concepts of their research and how that research would look visually if explained before an audience.

The excitement that these responses provide for future research and developing pedagogy is in thinking about how to better provide resources, instruction, and workshopping for these kinds of projects. For example, Olivia also discussed the technical challenges of projects like this, for instance, the presentation difficulties such as zoom features, and the challenges between the toggle features of edit and present mode (225 *interview*). Furthermore Olivia states: "I would say that when you're talking about Canva specifically or different forms of social media where you can create something like this on; you have to adjust to learning how to use it if you don't have experience with it" (225 *interview*). Olivia showcases here not only the benefits and affordances of creating research visuals but also demonstrates the need for a research and pedagogical heuristic that instructors can use to understand what kind of curriculum to create

(e.g. readings, activities, workshops, tutorials). Furthermore, by creating an infographic with the audience of families/children in mind among public health circles, Olivia strategically chooses design choices appropriate for those she wants to view the visual. Also, as a foreshadow to what her written research paper was like, her infographic fully demonstrates the importance of information transfer which infographics are capable of.

Emily Kahn: Creating Images and Designing the Text

Emily Kahn is a Kinesiology major who also wanted to bring in her specific field of study into research infographics, focusing on social media and body image. She specifically brought fresh insight into how design choices impact the overall presentation of the content. Many of the responses for this interview delved further into the intricate reasons for including certain choices when it came to colors, graphics, icons, and layout. Similar to Olivia though, Emily chose to foreground the "ground-up" approach in starting with their research topics and sources and figuring out how to define using infographics and how this could reinforce the later research paper they would write. For example, Emily Kahn also discusses the theme of concise information transfer and reflects: "you don't have that much space to put the different info you find so having summarized it into such small portions; that makes it easier to learn" (225 *interview*). She goes on to state again that the information had to be "presented in a clean and concise way" and that her topic had "overflow of information; I wanted to be clear and concise and to the point" (Khan, 225 *interview*). In all cases represented, before students engaged with visual/design choices one of the big questions that seems to be on their minds is: What are the main key concepts I need to include in the research infographic? Why should I include some facts and info from some sources and not from others? What is the best way to visually represent my research from the sources, topic, thesis, and argument I have to work with? Emily's responses reflected these questions but also demonstrated the progression of working between traditional research and adapting it into a visual for an audience.

Emily's data also provided excellent, and detailed attention towards design elements and the rhetoric of those design choices. Emily showed attention towards color and layout design but also was aware how smaller parts contribute to the whole of the piece. Similar to Olivia, Emily's project, "Social Media and Body Image," also asked questions about the role of social media in changing what scholars know about what writing genres are. However, Emily gives a poignant response to how her infographic was designed and the rhetorical messages behind these choices (see Fig. 3):

> When I did a lot of the research on social media and body image it was talking about women's body image specifically so I went with the more pink, red, purple tone based on the research I was getting pertaining to women's body image… the icons I chose, the heart; that one went with following accounts that promote body positivity and loving yourself and loving your body; another one I used at the bottom was the handshake one that goes along with being a better user; that means leaving respectful comments aside from negative comments on social media. - Emily Kahn, 225 *interview*

Fig. 3: "Social media and body image" by Emily Kahn

An analysis of Emily's infographic also shows a very important attention towards the organization of content based on sections which are organized by icons. As a viewer, the use of the colors and section icons, visually help the transfer of knowledge when moving through the infographic. Notice how the top two icons (heart and mind) specifically concern important values, ethical practices, and positive thinking in online spaces. Next, the icons make connections between eating disorder and reality (person and lightbulb). Lastly, as Emily discusses, the handshake icon helps give the viewer a sense of transaction with what can be learned to improve user experience online. Icons like these greatly increase the viewers reception of textual data and keep the flow of the visual moving. Interestingly, Emily's responses often connect infographics and social media platforms as networks of communication and information. Emily goes on to say when asked about infographics in marketing/advertising and whether they are useful:

> ...Especially in today's age with social media and digitized posters; you see posters around campus with mostly pictures and a few bullet points. As society goes on we will still use infographics but most people when they walk by and see and glance at a flyer or poster, what stands out is the icons, photos, not necessarily the bullet points - Emily Kahn, 225 *interview*

Lastly, another major theme to think about when students compose infographics is how to address some of the challenges within the assignment prompts and teaching curriculum. As any

instructor in writing, graphic design, or other English and Media courses, the question becomes how to address such assignments, assign readings, create resources, and help provide and equip students with what they need to visualize research for themselves and for audiences. Or it can be a mixed learning experience:

> ...making the infographic was kind of hard for me because I had so much research, but one thing I did like was the ability to be creative; pick and choose what I thought the main points were. Infographics do that, they force you to look at the main points of your research, and I like that because I can be creative and put my own input on what would be most beneficial for the class. - Emily Kahn, 225 *interview*

Emily, like Olivia, would also point out many of the ways where learning these platforms, how to toggle features, add text boxes, and figuring out where information goes is a major part of the experience. Specifically, as both participants used Canva, they often commented on certain features such as the zoom, presentation, and editing modes; ultimately preferring the editing mode because the content was much larger on screen from one section to the next versus the "sharable" finished product. Of course, the infographic platform itself, whether Canva, Piktochart, Venngage, or Easel-Ly provided technical understanding that involved experimenting and tweaking the content. The following participant also presented an awareness of the technical setbacks as well but also the value of learning these platforms.

Tin Bui: Infographics and Networked Media Connections
Tin Bui is a Biology major and for this assignment he returned to a previous unit and activity in the course which discussed the role of genres in composition. He specifically chose to think about the negative impact of video games on childhood development. Another viable option for the research infographic and paper outside a field of study or academic major focus, was to select a research topic centered around understanding diverse genres and technologies. Tin responded in a different way than the first two participants as his responses brought in his personal experience of gaming knowledge but also the professional improvements that could be made with these types of assignments. Tin was very reflective of the challenges posed by condensing information within an infographic and thus echoed the theme of conciseness when creating an infographic. Tin Bui talks of this challenge of creating infographics by saying you have "to find accurate information and right pictures because it has to be short and concise" (Bui, 225 *interview*). Tin Bui also spoke of the historical and personal nature of his research topic: "Violence In Video Games" as his responses reflect his gaming knowledge.

Tin's visual infographic also represented a unique chronological layout, in a zig-zagging format which helps the viewers comprehension of the layout and reduces the cognitive difficulty of where to start first (Marjooni et al., 2016). For example, in Fig. 4 and 5, Tin researches the effect of video games on young players. Similar in feature to the others, it can be noted that students are both conscious and aware of the patterns and sequences of infographic layouts and compose their information in linear, chronological ways, with major key concepts worked in. Furthermore, students like Tin Bui for example, also are reflective of the positionality of infographics in relation to other mediums of information:

Figs. 4 and 5: "Violence [in] video games" by Tin Bui

> I think this [infographic] is very valuable in terms of pictures and context of it; especially when you look at how newspapers used to be published; newspapers are very hard to reach the audience. They had to go to the store to buy the newspaper; but with technology and infographics we can post it online and to social media like that and it can be short and concise and have a high accuracy of what is established - Tin Bui, 225 *interview*

While the challenges can be related to learning the technical features of infographic sites (such as PiktoChart, Canva, Easel-Ly, Venngage among others), or thinking about what content to include and leave out, sometimes learning a new platform or digital tool presents its own rhetorical and pedagogical questions. Another interesting suggestion for projects like these came from Tin Bui who suggested another unique way of presenting this material: "people can stand up and walk around in a workshop and come around and look at each other's' work which would be more engaging and a great way to pay attention when looking at infographics" (225 *interview*). In other words, instructors should make the decision early on whether to use infographics in presentation style settings or as virtual workshops or convention spaces. Tin's responses, while reflecting on his own design decisions, often branched out to ways of better understanding how presentations methods could increase engagement with these visuals.

Toward Infographic Pedagogy: Text, Image and Data

The data I collected with Olivia, Emily, and Tin's student responses and infographics places emphasis on how design elements are reflective of navigating between two types of information presentation: the written research and the visualization of that information. There

are three primary outcomes with using infographics that are important for instructors to consider:

1. Infographics can act as a visual alternative to traditional written outlining, brainstorming and mind-mapping. By creating these, students can have a better visual understanding of how to write and organize more effective written papers based on their topics/headings. This can be an extremely productive pre-writing aid.
2. Infographics can train students in professional and business communication contexts; by using a visual during presentation time, students can become more proficient at public speaking using an infographic to develop conversation with an audience.
3. Infographics can help students explore new modes of composing and develop skills valuable within graphic design, public policy, health, and other professional careers.

In my study, Olivia, Emily, and Tin clearly demonstrate the importance of how infographics can be useful in both academic and non-academic contexts. They are valuable examples of how infographic composing is a major part of thinking about research practices related to visual rhetoric, graphic design, and using digital tools. There is an intricate relationship between text and image that researchers, students, and instructors have when navigating how different modes adapt and change in the composing process. It is important to also note the hierarchy of elements when it comes to design rhetorics as audience, purpose, and context still play a crucial role just as with traditional research projects.

Using the research here and students' responses, I propose a new model heuristic (see Fig. 6) based on this study so that instructors can have a way of understanding the cognitive questions and functions of student infographic projects. A full link is also provided in the figure description. This heuristic model infographic is meant to act as a tutorial demonstration for students who want to have a set of criteria and factors to consider when making an infographic. Instructors can also apply this heuristic model to their own teaching practices and evaluation methods when it comes to student products. Furthermore, instructors can ask students what specific areas of this heuristic they are most concerned about or want to concentrate the most on for grading purposes (also see Appendix A resource). In considering my own audience for this infographic, I designed it specifically for both teachers and students in mind as we all continue learning together when embracing digital composing tools. Also, by organizing the infographic in specific categories, both students and instructors can navigate each section to determine whether enough textual and visual content is included in the final product. Instructors and scholars who help students compose visually with design rhetorics move one step forward into truly dynamic pedagogical and professional practices that will benefit all.

Fig. 6: "An infographic heuristic: Model for learning"

Also for Accessibility Options, go to: https://infograph.venngage.com/ps/gYyIESHYkKY/eric-codysmothers

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Appendix A: Interview Questions and Infographic Pointers

Interview Questions:

- When looking back at your infographic (show students the visual), what did you consider the most important part of designing a visual to present on your research? What were the strengths in doing an assignment like this? Think about what was going through your mind as you decided what images, graphics, texts to use with this assignment.
- On the flipside, what are some of the challenges with composing infographics? Did you experience any difficulty? If so, what would you recommend as a way other students can overcome these difficulties or what can instructors do better when assigning multimodal projects?
- As a student, do you find the creation of a visual product or assignment of vital importance in a twenty-first century world? Why or Why not? What more should be done in creating visually and digitally friendly assignments in the classroom?
- What did you like or dislike about creating an infographic? Why? Do you think composing visually with infographics or similar tools online helps you communicate better, why/why not?
- Are there any additional questions in your mind that you would like to talk about? What haven't I asked you about?

Pointers for Infographic and Presentation:

- Visual has **proper contrast (color usage, shades, tints)** and is aesthetically pleasing to look at (Ex: no colored font blending into the background, or disappearing in an image)
- Visual product is in **harmony with both text and visuals**, repeating the use of the same fonts and sizes of images, where appropriate, creating a distinctive style.
- Visual product makes **effective use of space** throughout, aligning text appropriately with images and vice versa, therefore not allowing for excessive empty space.
- There is an awareness of the relationships between images and texts and choices towards placing group related images together, **being creatively conscious rather than choosing random** design.
- Where appropriate in the visual, the student successfully quotes and cites from their essay in MLA or APA format. Is there **EVIDENCE provided from their sources**?
- There is **transition between one topic to the next**, whether in discussing the infographic/poster or presentation.
- There is successful demonstration in the relationships between the product they present (how a group of images relate to one another) and how the **visuals/audio connect to sources and overall research**.
- Appropriate presentation etiquette: **explaining their product by looking directly at the audience** rather than reading off of the poster or computer screen the entire time.
- The visual product **"shows" the story of their research**, spending more time evaluating creative content than summarizing/reading all the points of the research?

Appendix B: Visual Journey Resource

https://prezi.com/m-wwzqvij_lq/visual-design-in-research-and-ads/

OR

https://slides.com/codys/deck-83cf00

Musical Listening:
Addressing the Rhetoric of Music in Sonic and Multimodal Composition

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Abstract

Students of Rhetoric and Composition are in need of heuristics that allow them to explore the rhetorical affordances of sound alone and sound integrated into multimodal compositions. The rhythms that pervade speech and prose exhibit a rhetoric of music that contributes to the entirety of a message. Musical Listening is a heuristic that gives students the opportunity to analyze and experiment with the rhetoric of music in speech and prose, as well as instrumental music. It applies the theory of musical expectation to prose, speech, and instrumental music for the purposes of building students' understanding of the affordances of sonic rhetoric and preparing them to integrate sonic rhetoric into their multimodal compositions. Musical Listening teaches students to recognize themselves as multimodal rhetors whose reactions to sonic rhetorics are constantly informed by their history of listening experiences. This article explains the theory of musical expectation in detail, how it applies to speech and prose, and how its practice in the Rhetoric and Composition classroom creates an opportunity to improve students' composition with sonic and multimodal rhetorics. It identifies Musical Listening's contributions to sonic rhetorics, multimodal rhetorics, and rhetorical listening. Several course projects assigned in conjunction with Musical Listening are described that outline students' work with the rhetoric of music both in sonic and multimodal compositions.

Keywords: Sonic Rhetorics, Multimodal Rhetorics, Rhetoric of Music, Rhetoric of Listening.

> "Stop, collaborate and listen."
> —Vanilla Ice, "Ice Ice Baby"

Introduction

Students are born listeners, more skilled and influenced by this faculty than we are able to know. As teachers of rhetoric we already inherently talk to our students about listening. Rhetorical analysis is built on listening. We listen to texts to determine what audiences the authors of those texts are listening to, or to what audiences they could be listening. Students' listening skills, as well as our own, are culturally informed and powerful rhetorical tools. There is a connection between affect, action, and *aesthetic* that is waiting to be discovered by students through Musical Listening.[1] Musical Listening is a heuristic informed by the theory of

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[1] My use of the term *musical listening* is not meant to be confused with Tom Rice's (2015) employment of it in "Listening" (p. 102). While the pedagogy of Musical Listening pertains to

musical expectation that shapes teaching and learning in the rhetoric and composition classroom. The basic tenets of Musical Listening are that 1) we are constantly composing with the rhetoric of music, 2) the rhetoric of music shapes the messages we absorb, and 3) our understanding of the music that pervades us and our rhetoric shapes how we compose and *how we listen*.

We are composers, performers, and audiences of music. We swim in a sea of rhythms that affect us bodily and emotionally, even intellectually. We absorb music through sight as well as sound. For example, when we read, synesthetic rhythms violate or deny our expectations and thus contribute to complex physical and emotional responses that reflect a matrix of relations including cultural style, our attitudes and history of reading experiences, and the dynamics of the piece being read. These rhythms are musical in nature and express the rhetoric of music. By remaining aware as much as possible of their interactions with rhythms, students can shape how they listen and how they perform the rhetorically charged music that pervades their bodies, their media, and their environments.

Musical Listening is a heuristic through which students apply musical expectation theory to rhetorical studies. It is significant to both multimodal rhetorics and sonic rhetorics. It offers students a methodology through which to better understand not only the rhetoric of instrumental music but the rhetoric of music as it manifests in prose and speech. Activities assigned in conjunction with Musical Listening encourage students to experiment and practice with both aural rhetoric alone and integration of sound into multimodal rhetoric. Practices that lead to an intimate understanding of the rhetorical affordances of sound increase students' ability to compose and deliver effectively with sonic rhetoric alone and to understand how sonic rhetoric functions when integrated into a multimodal composition. Musical Listening is also significant to rhetorical listening because it adds a sensuous dimension and offers new ways to consider, discuss, and enact what Cheryl Glenn (2004) and Krista Ratcliffe (2005) call "cross-cultural conduct" (pp. 152, 17).

The following literature review reflects a call for heuristics and pedagogies that highlight sonic rhetorics, the rhetoric of music, and multimodal composition. Following the literature review, I will establish the prevalence of rhythms in prose and speech. Next, I will explicate musical expectation theory, then I will demonstrate how its claims about music's effects on the body are bolstered by arguments within rhetorical studies. Lastly, I will explain Musical Listening in detail and describe several course projects assigned in conjunction with Musical Listening.

Literature Review

Multimodal composition has gained quite a bit of momentum on its journey to the foreground of Composition Pedagogy, but it still needs proponents. The push to integrate multimodal

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listening to music, it treats the category of music as a vast category encompassing elements of speech and even our own *selectivity* (Burke, 2018, p.176) in absorption and production of media.

composition into Composition and Rhetoric curriculum is nothing new. Cynthia Selfe is just one among a plethora of voices including Kathleen Blake Yancey (2004) and Jody Shipka (2016) who champion multimodal composition as a means of engaging with the media-saturated environment, digital and analog, and as a way to expand on students' ability to experiment with multiple media in the invention phase of their composition. Selfe (2009) calls for the promotion of multiple literacies in the composition classroom beyond merely print text. She writes in "The Movement of Air, the Breath of Meaning: Aurality and Multimodal Composing,"

> Composition classrooms can provide a context not only for *talking about* different literacies, but also for *practicing* different literacies, learning to create texts that combine a range of modalities as communicative resources: exploring their affordances, the special capabilities they offer to authors; identifying what audiences expect of texts that deploy different modalities and how they respond to such texts. (p. 643)

Aurality and our relationship with the rhetoric of music constitute a particular literacy. Musical Listening not only encourages students to talk about and practice aural rhetoric in multiple modes, but it encourages them to explore the affordances of a rhetoric that they already use. Furthermore, Musical Listening helps students to build aural literacy by practicing with multimodal compositions that require the inclusion of music.

The call for heuristics that promote effective multimodal composition and students' understanding of and practice with multimodal rhetoric are echoing in Composition Pedagogy. Paul Dan Martin (2018) calls for instructors to offer students new design strategies for multimodal composition. Martin argues that heuristics that guide the design of multimodal compositions and teaching strategies that "provide writing instructors an opportunity to teach students multimodal writing strategies grounded in rhetorical theories and design principles" will improve students' understanding and composition of multimodal rhetoric (p. 150). Musical Listening, both as a heuristic and a teaching strategy, contributes to students' understanding of the rhetoric of music in aurality alone and in multimodality. Students practice with sonic rhetoric independently and focus without interference on the affordances of sound, considering all of their past listening experiences while they are listening to themselves both in performance and playback.

In *Sounding Composition: Multimodal Pedagogies for Embodied Listening*, Steph Ceraso (2018) promotes classroom engagement with sonic persuasion through multimodal listening pedagogy. Specifically, she stresses the import of multimodal activities in the classroom that engage the body as a sonic object. she reflects in *Sounding Composition* on examples of multimodal listening pedagogy in her courses. Ceraso offers the example of a project in which one student, David, "focused his experience of using sound as a rhythmic coping mechanism to deal with anxiety" (p. 62). When she suggests methods of "embodied listening," she means this very literally: attuning oneself to rhythms by learning to feel them in the body, not just at the ears. Ceraso's work with sonic rhetorics in the classroom captures the true complexity of the music of rhetoric, and our potential to practice embodied listening in the classroom.

Musical Listening uses the rhetoric of music and thereby the rhetorical affordances of sound as a starting point from which to approach multimodal composition. Sound is an intimate mode of communication by which we dramatically influence each other's attitudes and actions. Ben Harley (2018) writes that sound "is a communicative mode, a semiotic channel, and a way of engaging one another that allows not only for persuasion but also for rearticulation of who we are in relation to ourselves and a whole assembled host of others." He asserts that educators can help students to use sound "ethically and productively" in their rhetorical endeavors. Harley recognizes the true power of sound in its intimacy with us, both physical and emotional: "we should remember that sound's intimacy is its power – its closeness makes it impactful."

Steven B. Katz (1996) applies Leonard Meyer's (1956) "principles of pattern perception" (p. 73), key to Meyer's take on the theory of musical expectation, to composition pedagogy. In Katz's words, "As a unity of sensuous form and intellectual content, perhaps affective response in reading and writing can best be taught by the performance and imitation of the sensuous music of rhetoric" (p. 197). Musical Listening builds on Katz's pedagogy with the addition of David Huron's work in the theory of musical expectation. Thomas Rickert (2008) offers the following powerful call to action at the conclusion of "Language's Duality and the Problem of Music": we should seek new ways of understanding, theorizing, and working with rhetoric as both an affective and musical art. This will mean, among other things, expanding greatly on our ability to theorize, codify, teach, and perform the musical aspects of language to achieve our persuasive aims (p. 162). Musical Listening pushes for recognition of the rhetoric of music and offers students an interdisciplinary heuristic for rethinking all of the texts they absorb and compose, including multimodal rhetoric.

Krista Ratcliffe and Cheryl Glenn have carved out a place for Musical Listening to fit into the category of rhetorical listening. Ratcliffe (2005) defines rhetorical listening in the context of her book *Rhetorical Listening: Identification, Gender, Whiteness* as "generally a trope for interpretive invention" and "a code of cross-cultural conduct" (p. 17). Glenn (2004) rounds out this thought in *Unspoken: A Rhetoric of Silence*, regardless of its previous publication, when she writes that rhetorical listening "opens the silences surrounding codes of cross-cultural conduct" (p. 152). Musical Listening adds to rhetorical listening the dimension of rhythm – not of intellectual content, but of *sound*. In response to Glenn, Musical Listening cocks its ears to codes in the rhetoric of music to spark discussions about codes of cross-cultural conduct. Specifically, it opens a space to address how we listen and reflect, reject, or ignore each other's aural rhythms and when doing so is either beneficial or harmful. For example, this might develop into a conversation about code-switching.

The Rhythms of Prose and Speech

Rhythms, and therefore music, are not present only in instrumental music. They are fundamental elements of prose and speech. Morris Croll, Timothy M. B. O'Callaghan, and Diane Davis confirm the rhythm and thereby the music of all texts, and Cynthia Selfe confirms the rhythm of speech. The music of these rhythms is rhetorically charged and conveys meaning. The term *rhythm* has broad and specific functions. A composition, whether

instrumental music, prose or speech, has rhythm; it also has changing rhythms. Prose and speech rhythms are not often highly repetitive like poetry or instrumental music. At times when we say "rhythm," it means more than patterns stressed and unstressed sounds occurring in highly systematic, highly repetitive patterns. Each quality of voice represented by Cicero (1942) in Book III of *De Oratore*, for example, occurs in its own rhythms, including volume and pitch (lviii.217-9).

Timothy M. B. O'Callaghan (1984) argues in "Prose Rhythm: An Analysis for Instruction" that "rhythm in prose is not confined to syllables" (p. 103). Alternatively, building on D. W. Harding's investigation of syllabic runs and pauses, O'Callaghan argues that mere alternation does not constitute rhythm. However, O'Callaghan also indicates that it is up to the reader to discover and identify these rhythms, thus in some sense creating them in writing that is itself neutral, and that there is always potentially more rhythm to be discovered, given enough dedication to analysis. Thus, rhythm is consistently present where we look and listen for it. This may be because we are born into rhythm are create it ourselves, so we cannot escape it. Schaeffer (1977) writes, "The heartbeat is nothing more than a rhythm module, roughly dividing humanly perceived rhythms into fast and slow" (p. 227).

The shapes of sounds constitute noise, but rhythms created by the interchanges between sounds (however "arhythmic" they may seem) and expectation of particular rhythms in absentia create the rhetoric of music. Rhythm is common to any mode of rhetorical delivery, but the musical quality of rhythm is most evident in instrumental music and in language. Diane Davis (2011) asserts in "Writing with Sound" that "every text is at the very least part musical score – even in a printed text, the synesthetic event of persuasion depends to a large degree (larger than is usually acknowledged) on tone, style, beat, rhythm – and static." Cynthia Selfe (2009) confirms that "pace, volume, rhythm, emphasis, and tone of voice" express abundant meaning in speech (p. 633). The musical element of the "synesthetic event of persuasion" is often underplayed or entirely overlooked, increasing the need for heuristics like those of Katz, Ceraso, and Martin to address and promote awareness of the rhetoric of music.

Rhythm is fundamental the rhetoric of prose and speech. Morris Croll demonstrates that rhythm is present and highly rhetorical in both texts that are designed to be eloquent and texts that are designed to be stoic. In "Attic Prose in the Seventeenth Century," Morris Croll (1966) demonstrates that rhythms characterize and qualify even the most apparently dry pieces, those reflecting a popular view of Greece's Attic style, or Cicero's low style. This is especially evident in his analysis of the essay style, for example Francis Bacon's prose, which treats language as a direct conduit for information not to be adorned or unnecessarily inflected (p. 82). Thus, as Davis indicates above, and so many scholars in sonic rhetorics echo, the music of language is inescapable. Where there is language, there is rhythm and therefore music. And where there is music, there is rhetoric.

An example of prose form that exhibits rhythm is *Cursus*, Latin for "course" ("Latin Definition," 2020). Merriam-Webster (2020) defines *cursus* as "a pattern of cadence at the end of a sentence or phrase in medieval Latin prose which aimed by varying rhythm to avoid stressing

the ultimate syllable." Croll (1966) borrows the term in his discussion of the rhythms of prose. As Robert O. Evans (1966) notes in his introduction to Croll's essay "The Cadence of English Oratorical Prose," "Croll makes a very important discovery when he demonstrates that cursus effects need not take place only in terminal positions; that is, at the ends of commata" (p. 300). I might add that specifically, pauses in oral delivery need not take place only in terminal positions found in prose.

Leonard Meyer points to Curt Sach's (1953) argument that form is not a type of rhythm, countering that form can be described in rhythmic terms because the roots of rhythm are naturally present in form due to its lack of monotony. Meyer writes that "any discussion of form in rhythmic terms [should not] be taken to exclude other viewpoints" (p. 112). Thus, non-musical explanations of form don't negate its description in rhythmic, or generally musical for that matter, terms. Kenneth Burke (1931) agrees with Meyer regarding the analysis of music and literature: "As in musical theory, one chord is capable of various analyses, so in literature the appeal of one event may be explained by various principles" (p. 129). By "literature" Burke refers to both writing and speech (p. 123).

Rhythms and "Motor Sympathy"

The musical rhythms that lead to motor sympathies are the same aural rhythms that contribute to the rhetorical effect produced when reading prose and listening to speech and instrumental music. Whether someone is listening to prose, speech, or an orchestra, the effect is both emotional and physical. Anna Gibbs and Kenneth Burke address the unconscious sympathetic motor responses to sights and sounds. Gibbs (2010) describes the process by which we exhibit imitative physical responses to the "motor schema" of others:

> When we watch someone performing an action, the mirror system in human beings evokes both the "sensory description" of the stimuli and the motor schema of the action itself [citation omitted].[2] In other words, when we see an action performed, the same neural networks that would be involved if we were to perform it ourselves are activated. In fact, we may actually experience something of what it *feels* like to perform the action, as when we watch someone jump and feel our own body strain toward the movement. Darwin describes this as the motor sympathy between two bodies. (pp. 196-7)

Gibbs' description of the "motor sympathy" that a person experiences via sight also applies to aural stimuli. When we hear speech or listen internally to reading, we hear either the actual rise and fall or our imagined rise and fall of the text's music. We identify with the speaker through our sensation of their linguistic rhythms and find ourselves gratified or agitated respectively with fulfillment or violation of expectation.

Kenneth Burke (1931) confirms the "motor sympathy" that one feels when interacting with the rhythms of aesthetic form. He writes, "The appeal of form as exemplified in rhythm enjoys a special advantage in that rhythm is more closely allied with 'bodily' processes. Systole and

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[2] Gibbs is quoting V. Gallese (2007) from "The 'Conscious' Dorsal Stream."

diastole, alternation of the feet in walking, inhalation and exhalation, up and down, in and out, back and forth, such are the types of distinctly motor experiences 'tapped' by rhythm" (p. 140). Burke (1969) writes that when the body originally succumbs to a particular consistent rhythm, it falls in line with that pattern and as long as that rhythm or collection of rhythms continues uninterrupted, it appeals to the listener and leaves them susceptible to accepting associated intellectual content (p. 58).

In light of the observations of Anna Gibbs and Kenneth Burke, it is becoming increasingly evident that humans don't just have multimodal experiences: humans are multimodal *beings*. When we experience the rhythms of language, there is an inevitable synthesis of senses – modes of communication – that occurs both in the communicator and the audience. Gibbs (2010) calls this multisensory synthesis "reassembling." It brings together, among other senses, the intimately connected sights and sounds that constitute an alphabet as well as bodily sensations of rising and falling, speeding up and slowing down. The real beauty of Gibbs's take on the relationship between mimesis and multimodal reassembling is that, much in the spirit of Burke's approach to language, Gibbs highlights the ambiguity between media and sensory categories. These separate or bleed into each according to each rhetorical situation as it arises.

Students become "sensitive to prose rhythms" (Burke, 1931, p. 141) by the act of listening to (silent) reading – an interior hearing of the language which they absorb visually. However, the scope of musicality in prose does not go unchallenged. While Susanne K. Langer (1953) recognizes rhythmic patterns in speech and prose, she argues that the sound of music, however coded, manifests its full potential through oral performance, while the sound of prose can reach its full potential only by means of the "inner ear" (p. 135). She asserts that the inner ear crops language, and prose need not be understood for its higher-level oratorical features. Langer argues that music is "artistic" while language tends toward the "practical"; thus the musical elements of volume, duration, tone, timbre, stress, and consonance and dissonance are not perceived directly by the inner ear during reading as they are during the act of listening to speech (pp. 135-7).

However, readers cannot escape the rhetorical effects of music that are implied to the ear through their synesthetic representation in visual prose. Whether we listen with the limited musical experience afforded us by "inner ear" suggested by Langer (1953, pp. 135-7) or the more encompassing silent reading promoted by Steven B. Katz, we possess a natural faculty for listening to reading, and prose rings with musical rhythms when we absorb it. Knowing thus that we cannot escape the music of rhetoric, we must learn to recognize it, listen to it, and mold it for our rhetorical purposes. We must teach it.

The Theory of Musical Expectation
The theory of musical expectation in the hands of Leonard Meyer and David Huron is a versatile and efficient tool for understanding the similar experience various listeners have when listening to instrumental music, speech, prose. In his discussion of the principles of pattern perception, Leonard Meyer (1956) argues that our patterned expectations of the progression of aural forms

within a given musical composition, including both melody *and* rhythm, define how we respond to music both physically and emotionally as it unfolds. According to Meyer, we experience physical arrest and emotional arousal at moments when our expectations of musical development are violated (pp. 24, 31). David Huron (2006) builds upon Meyer's work and applies to it evolutionary theory, arguing that our sense of expectation and fulfillment in relation to musical patterns is influenced by our instinct to maintain survival (p. 357).

Meyer (1956) and Huron (2006) demonstrate that as a listener predicts oncoming events in a musical sequence, the listener exhibits unconscious physical preparation for the expected stimulus. This tension is known by both authors as "expectation." Meyer also refers to expectation as "suspense" (p. 28) and Huron describes it as "a phenomenon akin to stress" (p. 305). The amount of tension a listener will feel is inversely proportional to how confident the listener is of the predictability of an oncoming musical stimulus. When music become highly predictable with little variation, the likelihood of tension drops very low. High predictability is characterized by a great degree of largely faithful repetition with just enough variation to avoid "saturation." Meyer's term for dependable repetition is "good continuation" (p. 92). The ongoing struggle between good continuity and deviation affects the listener both physically through what Huron terms the "tension response" (p. 9) and emotionally through the "prediction response" (p. 12).

When musical shape is predictable in its repetition, expectation for good continuation is fulfilled. Meyer (1956) refers to fulfillment in the music as "completion" and fulfillment in the listener as "closure" (p. 129). This fulfillment leads to what Huron terms a "positively valenced prediction response" in the listener (p. 24). When good continuation is interrupted by deviation the listener alternately experiences a negatively valenced prediction response (p. 23). In this instance the listener is denied closure. The matter can become more complicated when the listener is having a layered sonic experience whereby they are simultaneously experiencing multiple emotions regarding the same stimulus. In this case, the greater weight of either positive or negative limbic responses can determine whether a prediction response is negatively or positively valenced. Degrees of expectation and responses are proportional: the more tension, the greater the emotional response. They also vary according to length and strength of deviation and to levels of closure. When expected completion is delayed, tension builds and leads to an increased positively valenced prediction response.

A listener's attitude toward a musical experience is not determined by tension and prediction responses alone (Huron, 2006). According to Huron (2006), the "appraisal response" contributes conscious awareness of the situation and may differ from the prediction response, resulting in the phenomenon of "contrastive valence" (p. 22). Contrastive valence occurs when a negatively valenced prediction response is followed by a neutral or positively valenced appraisal response, and vice-versa. (p. 15). The faster, unconscious prediction response is followed by the slower, conscious appraisal response (pp. 17, 29, 39). Thus, it is possible for an individual to experience pleasure as a result of surprise, despite the fact that surprise causes the "*fight, flight,* and *freeze* responses" (pp. 31-33, 35).

There are two different kinds of expectation: dynamic and schematic. Dynamic expectation is based on how a piece unfolds in the moment with no concern for a greater context. Schematic expectation is based on a person's entire listening history. It incorporates Huron's (2006) description of the psychological schemas that we develop from individual listening history and interaction with styles and genres. This means that responses to music are culturally informed. The consequence is that there is at times a margin of error. Meyer (1956) places the potential of fault by ignorance on the listener, who may understandably not be educated in music well enough to know which cultural rhythms to expect (pp. ix, 160). Huron supports this theory of potential "accurate" or "inaccurate" expectations based on one's listening history (p. 204). Referring to a musical experiment led by conducted by Robin W. Wilkins and others, Ben Harley (2018) writes, "The listener, their experiences, and the music co-create the neural pathways of the individual's brain, and the researchers speculate that sound could drastically alter how brain networks are organized."

The theory of musical expectation indicates that our responses to music, however similar, are not universally consistent (Huron, 2006, p. 26). Some studies by Honing (2013), Fritz et al. (2009), and others verify similarities in response across various cultures to consistent musical patterns. However, these studies simply do not cover enough variables, namely cultures and musical styles, to establish positively the underlying mechanisms cueing these apparently universal patterns of response (Honing). It appears that while some responses may in fact be universal, the causes could be biological, psychological, and culturally informed. What has emerged undoubtedly is, in the words of Thomas Fritz et al., "the notion that similar emotion-specific acoustic cues are used to communicate emotion in both speech and music" (p. 574), a notion confirmed by Klaus. R. Scherer (1995, p. 245) as well as Justin and Laukka (2003, p. 797), among others. The emotional cues observed by musical expectation theory can be interpreted similarly in speech using the principles of expectation and affect.[3]

Musical Listening

Musical Listening is a heuristic based on the theory of musical expectation that encourages students to listen for and compose with the rhetoric of music in prose, speech, and instrumental music, as well as multimodal rhetoric. Where there are rhythms there is music, and where there is music there is rhetoric. Rhythms are present in speech and prose; thus speech and prose exhibit the rhetoric of music. The theory of musical expectation indicates that fulfillment and violation of expected rhythms, both dynamically and schematically, shapes the physical and emotional quality and intensity of listener responses. Musical Listening teaches students that 1) they are constantly compositing with the rhetoric of music, 2) the rhetoric of music shapes the messages they absorb, and 3) their understanding of the music that pervades them and their rhetoric shapes how they compose and how they listen.

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[3] There are several striking similarities between musical expectation and Burke's (1931) theory of literary form. I address these in my dissertation, "'Questioning Attitude: The Rhetoric of Kenneth Burke's Musical Compositions.'" See *Counter-Statement.*

Martin (2018) seeks heuristics that focus on structure and form to inform design of multimodal composition (p. 135). He desires to see teachers open students' senses to the rhetorical power of literacies beyond the traditional classroom focus on print. Martin writes,

> Students have internalized and normalized the structure and form of print literacy as a stabilizing feature for content and knowledge-making. They do not initially see how structure in multimodal writing instantiates an argument and that the structuring of semiotic materials is the argument. *Structure argues*. Learning how to see the structure as the argument of a multimodal form is vital for developing rhetorically-minded multimodal writers. (pp.143-44)

Martin is both referring to the overall structure of the multimodal composition and structure within each material that goes into that structure. There are "structural conventions for sound and aurality" including volume, pacing, rhythm, tone, and "emphasis," and there is the structure that sees multiple kinds of content (aural, visual, text) brought together in various potential combinations with various degrees of emphasis (p. 144).

Each structural decision changes the form, the form of a single mode and the form of the overall composition (Martin, 2018, pp. 139, 141). In adjusting the structure and thereby the form of sound, the rhetor shifts emphasis in the multimodal composition and affects the efficiency level of the message: "Instead of revising a paragraph of words and sentences, a multimodal rhetor might adjust the volume of a sound clip, and then add an additional sound clip to increase the efficiency of the message design" (p. 144) When students are learning and practicing with aural rhetoric alone, they are simultaneously practicing for multimodal composition that integrates sound. Students' understanding of the rhetorical affordances of the form and structure of sound alone informs how they approach the integration of sound with other modes. Musical Listening fulfills Martin's vision of students connecting the shaping of a single mode with the shaping of a multimodal message. Martin argues, "Students can practice structuring volume, pace, tone, and rhythm to generate emphasis in multimodal forms – to examine how volume, rhythm, and tone shape the emphasis of the message" (p. 145). Musical Listening applies the theory of musical expectation to aural rhetoric, analyzing it for form and structure. Musical Listening activities, some of which are described below, offer students an opportunity and a guide by which to shape the rhetoric of music to operate cooperatively with other rhetorical modes.

Incorporating the study of musical expectation theory, Musical Listening answers Steph Ceraso's call for more embodied listening activities by bringing awareness to the relationship between physical, emotional, and intellectual responses to the rhetoric of music. We address the rhetoric of music by applying the theory of musical expectation theory to the rhythms of prose, speech, and instrumental music as they exist alone and as they are incorporated multimodal compositions. This means physical, emotional, and intellectual responses. As I have argued thus far, the scope of aural rhythms, encompasses far more than mere rhythmic tapping to the beat of a familiar tune. Musical Listening is an embodied listening activity. Students reflect on their physical, emotional, and intellectual responses to the rhetoric of music and to their listening histories. Students learn to literally feel their own rhythmic tendencies and the

tendencies of others around them, to be aware of those tendencies, and to use their knowledge of those tendencies and how listeners react to craft their own musical rhetoric.

Musical Listening challenges students to listen for cultural expressions of style and encourages students to hear and respect the rhythms of surrounding cultures. It fulfills Ratcliffe's definition of rhetorical listening: applying the theory of musical expectation to speech and prose gives students an opportunity for interpretive invention. Furthermore, Musical Listening is arguably a code of cross-cultural conduct: students are encouraged to listen and consider their own listening biases. Understanding one's own composition and listening rhythms is more than an exercise in self-exploration and improvement of rhetorical skills; it is an exercise in understanding how we identify with and reject the rhythms of our fellow rhetors. Both ethics and the goal of truly effective persuasion demand that listeners aware of the tenets of Musical Listening should learn to recognize, respect, learn, and respond respectfully to aural rhetoric that is not native to their own cultures.

Exploring the affordances of sound while respecting the cultural identities of all involved is by no means a simple task, but it creates teachable moments and is a valuable skill. Enacting the necessary respect requires much consideration and preparation. Socioeconomic constrains complicate the classroom situation; students and teachers find themselves needing to bridge gaps of technology and exposure. Martin (2018) writes,

> Rhetors must recognize the cultural and social limitations they face when deciding how to access and compose with multiple modes for multiple audiences. Students working from and within strained socio-economic backgrounds or underprivileged communities will need to consider the unique demographic and constraints that shape their rhetorical moves. Some of our students may not have access to certain mediums or mode, or they may not have access to the multiliteracies required to use them effectively. (pp. 142-43)

Listeners must be open to more than just the rhythms of cultural elements like nationality and religion. Socioeconomic backgrounds greatly determine listeners' and composers' access to literacies. Musical Listening's address of the rhetoric of music in the classroom and in course projects gives students a language for discussing the elements of music regardless of their existing knowledge of traditional music theory. Incorporation of web-based audio composition and editing software like Soundation and Flat allows students to create audio compositions that require little to no musical knowledge or skill but also allow for students to utilize musical knowledge and skill to create complex, intricate compositions. Soundation and Flat, being web-based software that offer free access, only require internet access to operate.

Musical Listening allows students to recognize themselves as musical agents in a sonic world. With the introduction of Musical Listening into rhetoric and composition studies, I am calling for students to participate holistically in sonic rhetorics. Students consistently operate with the rhetoric of music *and* body language, not to consider other modes: they are multimodal beings. Harley (2018) deems students who compose multimodal rhetoric to be "multimodal rhetors" (pp.138,144). The practice of Musical Listening recognizes students as multimodal beings

swimming in aural (and other) media. Students are ultimately encouraged to see (or hear) themselves as musical instruments, to recognize musical rhetoric across media, and to understand how the music that pervades them and their media shapes the way they listen. When students listen to rhythm through Musical Listening, they listen not only for the parsing and repetition of aural symbols, but also to their own responses to aural rhythms.

The principles of expectation theory do not just apply to music or even to the rhetoric of music; they are applicable to all of our experiences. Huron (2006) writes that *Sweet Anticipation* is not for an audience of musicians, it is a "general theory of expectation" for psychologists and cognitive scientists as well (p. vii). In this light, schematic expectation is an especially important element to consider when designing assignments in conjunction with Musical Listening. Schematic expectation is vital to the building of students' composition skills because it shapes how they and interact with genres. For example, deviations in standard technical documents like résumés and proposals violate schematic expectation and thus hurt the audience's reception of the composition. Students must refer to mental schema to recognize and compose genres accurately.

Students can apply Musical Listening to course activities to strengthen their relationship with the rhetoric of music across rhetorical modes. Below are key Musical Listening activities that challenge students to listen and experiment with the rhetoric of music in prose, speech, and even instrumental music, strengthening their understanding of the rhetorical affordances of sound alone and integrated into multimodal composition.

Activity A: Oral Interpretations of Class Readings

Students orally present their interpretations of various readings for class each week. Practice with oral delivery allows them an opportunity to consider the role of rhythm in both what they read and their speech. Often textbook readings flow in a manner reflective of what Croll called "anti-Ciceronian," "Baroque" style. (p. 208, 201). They evidence style that attempts to minimize musical effects. These readings are designed to be neither eloquent nor pathos-laden, but rather for the most part informative. However, practice with reading sections of them aloud, as well as other classroom texts, can increase students' understanding of rhythm. Students listening are encouraged to consider rhythms as well as content, and to comment on the rhythms they observe. When students encounter difficulty in their delivery, I will intervene by having them pause for breath, consider their next statement in the context of their delivery rhythm, perform an oral exercise such as counting or brief repetition, and ultimately cue them to continue speaking. This almost overwhelmingly results in a stronger delivery.

Activity B: Oral Instructions

Before implementing speech and instrumental music into multimodal compositions, students practice with aural rhetoric alone. The following project is assigned directly following the Written Instructions project, which can cover the same topic and task but is geared toward an audience with a different knowledge level. In the spirit of sonic rhetorics, they are studying the rhetorical affordances of sound. Tone, volume, pacing, and rhythm all shape the rhetorical

force of the student's composition. Below is the description from my Oral Instructions assignment prompt.

> Using audio recording software, produce a second set of instructions, with your options for your instructional video project in mind. Compose a set of numbered instructions that meet the needs of an audience who is already highly familiar with your topic (*the topic*, not necessarily the task that you are detailing). Do not provide basic details or definitions for terms that an audience highly familiar with the topic will likely already know. Spend your time explaining more complicated concepts and steps that even a well-informed audience might not know about the particular task that you are detailing. Use audio editing software to clear your recording of background noise, clicks and pops, and clipping. Audio recording should be between two and four minutes and free of background noise. Recommended tools for this project include Adobe Audition and Audacity.

> *Musical Listening:*

> *Consider your rhythm, pitch, tone, and pacing when delivering your instructions. You may want to study and imitate the rhetorical choices made by authors who have composed oral instructions that you have found particularly useful in your own listening history.*

Students frequently improve on their oral delivery skills with this project. In the revision process, they commonly are asked to address issues of tone, pacing, and volume, all of which affect delivery. Furthermore, students are able to weigh their oral instructions against their written instructions and get a clearer sense of the rhetorical affordances of aural rhetoric alone.

Activity C: Exploring Arguments with Music

My First-Year Composition students have in the past used web-based software including Flat and Soundation to create musical expressions of their major arguments within a series of project-based assignments, and the results were extremely rewarding. Specifically, students chose between two pieces of software. Soundation is more accessible to students who have less or no experience composing music. In Soundation, the user can choose audio loops from a number of different instruments and styles. In this way, they both get to choose particular sound gradients, but they also have the opportunity to express themselves by choosing musical styles with which they identify, and which they also feel is appropriate to represent their arguments. Flat.io features essentially digital sheet music and requires a little more experience and knowledge of music theory. However, I was quickly able to acclimate even students with no history in music theory to this software as well. Below is the description from my Arguing with Music assignment prompt:

> Interpret your major argument using the rhetoric of music. Using audio composition and editing software and/or recording your own instrumentation, layer at least 3 parts in a two-to-three-minute musical piece that represents your argument. Vocals count as an instrument, but don't apply lyrics. Factors to consider when expressing your argument include topic, tone, appeals to pathos, counterarguments and the voices behind those

counterarguments. Recommended tools for composition include Adobe Audition and the web-based software Soundation and Flat.

Musical Listening:

How do altering sounds and progressions in your piece reflect the various elements of your argument? Consider your topic, claim, evidence, audience, and counterarguments. Does continuity and conflict between musical styles reflect the nuanced character of your argument and its rhetorical context? How does arrangement and design reflect rhythm and expectation associated with the research essay genre? How do rhythms set up within your document interact with expected rhythms and comfort or agitate the reader?[4]

Students not only used music that appealed to them personally and reflected their individual cultural identities, but they created intricate combinations of sounds, usually with different instruments representing different voices and perspectives on a single issue, such as a bass line to represent the counterargument. Students' explanations of their musical arguments were impressively complex, and it was evident that the challenge of designing an audio argument helped them immensely to identify, separate, and consider the interactions of conflicting strains in a well-rounded debate. I hope to find the opportunity to practice this activity again in the future. Depending on the learning needs of each particular class, there is not always time in a busy semester to devote to this aural exploration of students' major arguments. Nevertheless, when the time is available, this is an invaluable activity.

Activity D: Multimodal Composition with Speech and Instrumental Music

Students are encouraged to practice Musical Listening when composing multimodally. For example, when students compose video arguments whether for capstone video arguments for Composition and Rhetoric or tutorial videos for Technical Writing, they familiarize themselves with the genre by watching similar media from their classmates and from the internet, and observing stylistic trends within those genres. Students consider their own listening predispositions and the reasons for the development of their listening schemas, listening to their own work and the work of others according to the tenets of musical expectation theory, and adjust their scripts and delivery accordingly. The following is the assignment prompt for a version of this activity from my Technical Writing syllabus:

Choose a task that requires a significant degree of technical knowledge and an appropriate audience. This can be a task that you addressed in your oral and/or written instructions assignment. Record audio (your voice) and video (your screen, environment, and/or subject) in a 3-5-minute instructional video. Layer your voice over an instrumental audio file to set an appropriate tone for your instructional video. You may produce this audio yourself or harvest it from a source, which you will cite. Videos should be three to five minutes in length. Recommended tools for this project include Adobe Premiere Pro and Adobe Audition.

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[4] See Peter Elbow's (2006) "The Music of Form: Rethinking Organization in Writing."

> *Musical Listening:*
>
> *How is the rhetoric of each of your audio contributions (narration and instrumental music) likely to affect your audience? Consider the pacing, tone, volume, and pitch of your narration. How is it affected by the volume and tempo, etc. of the instrumental track? Is the instrumental track distracting? Is the musical style of the instrumental track appropriate to the content? You may want to research similar videos.*

Students bring all of their experience experimenting with the affordances of sonic rhetoric alone to multimodal composition, considering both the form and structure of the narration and instrumental track, and the overall form and structure of the multimodal composition. Students do the same for group presentations to their classmates. They must prepare and deliver scripts with their multimodal presentations, then answer questions afterward. Thus, students' presentation speaking skills can be challenged, assessed, shaped and encouraged from two different perspectives.

Conclusion

Musical Listening offers significant theoretical and pedagogical contributions to multimodal rhetorics, sonic rhetorics, and rhetorical listening. As a heuristic, Musical Listening adds to students' existing tool set for approaching and analyzing rhetoric, specifically sonic rhetoric. It offers students a hermeneutical device through which to listen to find meaning in prose, speech, and instrumental music based on the theory of musical expectation. Musical Listening activities go beyond asking students to listen and consider the rhetoric of music. Students analyze and compose with sonic rhetoric both in aural and multimodal compositions. They learn to see themselves as multimodal beings and rhetors. Students and educators as well are challenged to analyze and evaluate their own listening histories in the context of the dramatically conflicting narratives that constitute our divisive political climate[5] and of surrounding rhythms from surrounding cultures.[6] Thus, Musical Listening finds a place in rhetorical listening: it gives students and teachers an opportunity to enact and address cross-cultural conduct.

The story of Musical Listening does not end here. I hope to publish further on this pedagogy, its implications, and its outcomes. In this article I have focused on the traditional notion of music as well as musicality in language. I have also discussed in detail methods and considerations pertaining to multimodality in the classroom with a focus on the integration of music into multimodal compositions. However, Musical Listening invites us to locate in our ambient

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[5] See Kenneth Burke's (2018) *The War of Words*, a volume that is, while posthumously published, eerily relevant to our current dangerously bipartisan political situation, so full of unnecessary divisive rhetoric. Discussions of Musical Listening in the classroom address issues of what Burke calls *selectivity*.

[6] Discussions of Burkean attitude and the need to avoid echo chambers share Ira Shor's (1987) sentiment that the classroom is "a place where knowledge, perception, ideology, and socialization are challenged." For more on see Ira Shor and Paulo Friere (1997).

environments[7] sights, sounds, and kinetic rhetorics, among a garden of other energies that move us and that we use both consciously and unconsciously to invite, enact, and build relationships out of empathy.[8] As I tell my students every semester, *We talk about rhetoric all day in this class. But, this class isn't about rhetoric. This class is about Love.*[9]

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[7] For more on ambient rhetoric and listening for natural and manufactured rhetorics that envelop us and address all of our senses, see Thomas Rickert's *Ambient Rhetoric* (2013).

[8] See Maxi Kupetz (2014) and Brandmeier & McKenna (2020).

[9] We also see this sentiment appear in the work of Friere (1997). See *Pedagogy of the Heart*.

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Slow Looking:
Sitting with the Black Lives Matter Murals of Downtown Raleigh

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Abstract

This project is centered on the Black Lives Matter murals from various artists, creators, and makers and their murals and street art in downtown Raleigh, North Carolina and on the methodology of Slow looking to critically experience the murals. The Slow looking experience equips us with a greater intentionality in sitting with these images, their messages, and the lived realities that they reflect and convey by slowly viewing the entirety of the mural and art. Cogapp's Slow looking is seemingly most traditionally associated with high-brow art museums and pieces, but I want to challenge these associations—while retaining the intentionality of the experience, of sitting with a visual artifact at great length for more immersive experience. But instead of passively observing these visuals, how can we draw upon these image-experiences to pay attention to what and how we are seeing, thinking, and feeling? How do these images surprise, shock, challenge, ignite you? Simultaneously, I want to grapple with my own positionality as a white woman, educator, and student in relation to these murals and their messages.

[Enter the Website](#)

Note: The images included are all from Raleigh, North Carolina that I took over the summer of 2020 and the winter of 2021.

Making, inventing, and creating is not exclusive to engineers or artists—nor has it ever been. But most traditionally, the innovative and noteworthy projects are associated with disciplines that fall beyond the confines of the humanities. The humanities, on the other hand, is associated with paper—producing papers and books, studying print-based media and literature, and teaching and learning through paper-centric means. And at the same time, newer and more unique terms are being coined to reflect the unconventional and nontraditional methods and strategies that blur the boundaries of disciplines: that which would have been understood as work of designers and inventors is now being adopted by those studying English.

Tharp and Tharp offer discursive design in *Discursive Design: Critical, Speculative, and Alternative Things*, exploring how "[discursive design] is a catalyst for reflection" (2018, p. 103)

that "engages with ideas, arguments, counterarguments, and questions so as to meaningfully contribute to a topic or debate of sociocultural relevance" (p. 76).

Alternatively, Garnet Hertz wrote "What is Critical Making?" (2016) to explore a different, yet entirely similar, concept and methodology that relies on making that prioritizes intentionality, critical thinking and analysis, and the opportunity to learn through experimentation and doing. Tharp and Tharp, focusing on discursive design, offer rich clarity on the landscape of this production-based field, whereas Hertz offers similar value in exploring critical making. Together, these terms provide a valuable framework for understanding and contextualizing the methods that illuminate the role of design and creation with more humanities-oriented work. But, these are firmly academic terms that carry institutional politics and territorial associations—attempting to carve out space in the world of research.

Every day, people and communities are creating, exploring, and learning by doing—not bound by disciplines or terms or theories. We could read their work as discursive design, critical making, or even mobile networked creativity (de Souza e Silva & Xiong, 2021). This work could align with either term and corresponding framework, yet it is not for the academy.

Briefly, yet importantly, I am white—a white woman. I am a cisgender person—married to a cisgender white person.

I live in Raleigh, North Carolina—a city I love as much as I hope to leave—where I have lived for several years as I attend NC State University. Before that, I lived in rural Eastern North Carolina, where seagulls flocked around Target's parking lot and my high school had weeds and cats living on the roof of our leaky buildings. Before that, I lived in El Paso, Texas—where I could see Juarez, Mexico from my bedroom window, where I often was as I watched *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* and read teen fiction that I was positive could be about my life. Before that, I lived in Rhode Island—where my family did not fit in and our government duplex home sat in water (it was demolished a year later after we left). Before that, North Carolina again—where I had fairy wallpaper in my bedroom and was very worried about snakes in the forest and vampires in my closet. Before that, Delaware. Before that, New York. Before that, Missouri. Before that, Okinawa, Japan.

My family moved often—we were—are—military. My dad, a Marine.

I feel this is important. Raleigh was the first place I chose to live—and the first place I chose to stay in.

To get to school, I drive through downtown Raleigh via New Bern Avenue—which eventually turns into Edenton and that eventually leads to Hillsborough Street, where I lived for three

years. I don't live downtown, but the drive through it makes me feel connected to the places, homes, streets, vendors, and sites.

I like Raleigh's big oak trees that the city hold's funeral-like ceremonies for if they have to be cut down—and I like the green spaces, and how you can avoid parallel parking if you want—or need. I like how the city has seemingly bloomed during my time here—how newer and newer shops pop up, and are able to stay. And I like how the brick buildings are slowly becoming decorated with murals and street art. I like how the sidewalks and the mailboxes and newspaper stands and roads are too. I like how we have murals dedicated to the USA Women's Soccer Team, NC-based music artists, and of pseudo-stairwells.

I like how our city gets really excited for sunflowers that are planted at the North Carolina Museum of Art and at Dorothea Dix Park—and how people flock to these flowers.

I like the nature and the art. It is beautiful. My nana, a first-generation Italian American named Marcella Isabel Garafalo Story, taught me how to paint using watercolor in our backyard when I was in elementary school. We painted a bird house—and she has a scanned and dusty copy of my painting on her refrigerator in upstate New York.

My positionality, my very being, has shaped how I experience this city, this state, and this country.

This past spring and summer the murders of Ahmaud Arbery, George Floyd, and Breonna Taylor by the hands of white supremacy and police brutality led to global protests and demands for equality, reform, and justice.

When demanding for life and justice for those murdered—police struck back. Pepper spray and rubber pellets and arrests and killings.

Buildings demonstrated the wear and cruelty of mass injustice and racism. Plywood boards covered broken glass, windows, doors, walls. A narrative began swirling: *look at the destruction of these rioters.*

But the plywood pieces swiftly became poignant symbols. Within days, the plain boards were painted with messages of solidarity, with calls for change, with declarations of love and pain. These murals arrived quickly and powerfully—seemingly recorrecting the narrative: *look at the destruction of this country; look at the destruction of racism.*

My positionality, my very being, has shaped how I experience these murals—how I photographed them—how I write about them now—and how I have attempted to preserve them.

Their plywood bases were used to preserve glass, or to cover that which was broken till it could be fixed. The plywood was not permanent. The murals, created and crafted and painted quickly, are temporal by design. One artist for the above mural (@Sanchz_919) told me that the mural was a "last minute idea."

My husband was asked to help put up plywood pieces; we had a drill and he knew how to use it. It took several hours—he left to go put up the pieces around dinner time and did not come back till late in the night.

I wondered if the shop he was assisting would add a mural.

He helped take down the boards a few days later.

The murals were mostly created during the Summer of 2020. By the winter, many were gone. I don't know where they went, or who has them.

But I tried to document them all: the fresh boards, the boards that had been painted over and over and over, and the ones that still remained from the summer.

Other individuals did a much better job than me, namely the *Raleigh Magazine* and Luke Keeler.
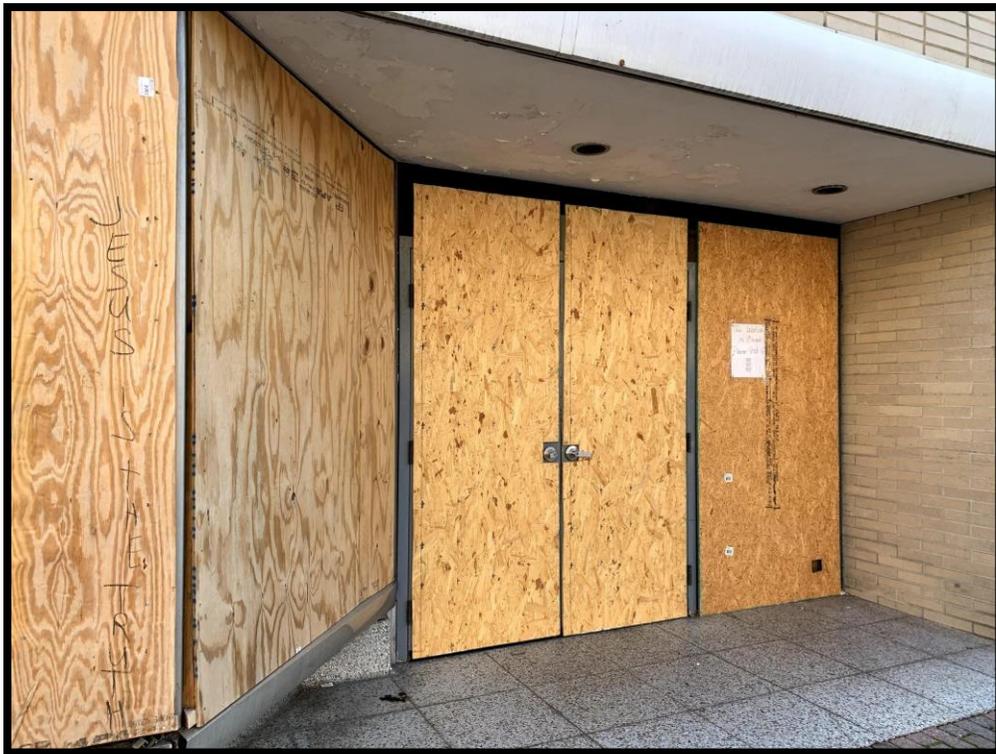
Two artists gave me permission to use my photographs of their murals. I was able to find them on Instagram. I am still trying to identify all the artists and creators involved.

During the wake of COVID-19, timber costs are going up. I am not sure why, and I won't pretend to understand the economics of all that is involved. But I do know that plywood costs more now.

The bare plywood pieces look naked to me now. Some bare patterns of tie-dye-like knots, ripples of the tree they come from, others look like pressed confetti pieces. Cut in perfect size to fit doors and windows, to fit around doorknobs. They are fashioned in great efficiency.

"Jesus is the truth" is what one board reads. And the printed sourcing of the wood with its manufacturers' information.

The George Floyd & Anti-Racist Street Art archive is striving to preserve these artistic and cultural artifacts, as well as the Save the Boards to Memorialize the Movement organization (twitter: @STB2MTM).

Sasha Costanza-Chock's recently published book, *Design Justice: Community-Led Practices to Build the Worlds We Need* (2020), contains the pointed framing: "This book is about the relationship between design and power" (xvii). Constanza-Chock writes: "everyone designs, but only certain kinds of design work are acknowledged, valorized, remunerated, and credited" (2020, p. 14).

I like art and I like the power of art in commenting on our world in a way that seems more accessible to me than the written word. Words are limited. Art is empowering, inviting, and digestible.

I wanted to know what my school was doing to preserve, celebrate, document, or archive the murals. Nothing.

I was encouraged to take photos myself.

A few weeks before President Biden's inauguration, I went to go take photographs of the remaining murals—frustrated that my university was not doing so.

Only a few remained, but on one corner—older boards were being brought back out to go back up.

These murals carry an important history, as evidenced by their messaging, Yet, this is also emphasized in their materiality—from the boards, the colors, the array of textures from concrete, brick, and wood, and the very temporality of their being. Yet, even after the boards and the murals come down, their messages and significance must be remembered.

In a "journey toward justice," D'Ignazio & Klein write: "Data feminism is about power, about who has it and who doesn't, and about how those differentials of power can be challenged and changed using data" (2020, p. 19). D'Ignazio & Klein write: "Challenging power requires mobilizing data science to push back against existing and unequal power structures and to work toward more just and equitable futures" (p. 53).

Following D'Ignazio & Klein's work with *Data Feminism* (2020), these murals serve as vital artifacts of counterdata that challenge power, oppressive systems, and even what counts as data and as art. Of counterdata, they write: "So, though collecting counterdata and analyzing data to provide proof of oppression remain worthy goals, it is equally important to remain aware of how the subjects of oppression are portrayed" (p. 59). D'Ignazio & Klein also write about deficit narratives: "These narratives reduce a group or culture to its 'problems,' rather

than portraying it with the strengths, creativity, and agency that people from those cultures possess" (p. 58).

Avoiding the mild traffic, I stood in the middle of roads when I could—on sidewalks when I couldn't—to document the remaining murals.

For the first time since the summer, I wasn't driving past them as I infrequently drove to school—focusing on the cars surrounding me, paying attention to streetlights and stop signs, listening to Barbara Streisand, worried about where I would park once I got to where I was heading—worried about how many masks I had packed, and how I could avoid being around as many people as possible.

With [the website](#), I want the slow lookings to offer a similar experience. With COVID-19, it is not as viable an option to walk and visit these murals. To stand before them at great length. All the more, they could disappear at any moment. I was only able to document a few of the many.

But slow looking, the slow panning through the mural, forced slowness. Forced sitting with the murals. Forced you not to drive past them.

It was cold when I took the photos. Very cold—but still mild when compared to real cold climates. But because it was a Carolina cold, few people were outside. A few people sat on benches on Fayetteville Street, but more were driving by—quickly.

As I walked down the street, trying to find murals, I wish I had brought gloves.

I didn't know where the murals still might be, so wandering around seemed the best bet. And downtown Raleigh is small, small enough to walk across.

Many buildings still had plyboard pieces up. But the boards were fresh—without paint and without murals. Construction was being done on a new engineering building and a new bank, and many familiar businesses were closed—permanently or not—because of COVID-19.

Slow looking was developed by Cogapp Labs—where they identify that the application is "A relaxing full-screen immersive experience." Cogapp further expresses: "This relaxing full-screen immersive experience will slowly show your chosen image in detail. It takes a few rejuvenating minutes to complete, best enjoyed without distractions" (n.d.). Slow looking takes an International Image Interoperability Framework (iiif) image, and slowly pans the entirety of the

image, drawing the viewer into a visual artifact in manner that is far different from viewing it on a museum wall. But how can Slow looking give us an opportunity to sit with images and art that was created with temporary materials with messages that carry a long and painful history and remind us how that history and socio-political inequalities are still present and dangerous today?

I wanted digital preservation that simultaneously leans into experiential mediation and learning.

In exploring the capacities, practice, and theory of discursive design, Tharp and Tharp write: "They too cannot solve the unsolvable, but instead of avoiding them altogether or dealing with them superficially, discursive design uses its tools to affect reflection, acknowledging and trying to unpack the complexity as a means of possibly progressing toward a preferred state or at least identifying attributes of what one might look like or not look like" (p. 78).

When President Biden was presented with a gift of a photo of his inauguration, it was stated that it, the photo, represents both technology and history.

I think art does this too. And that these murals in particular do this the most.

In a conversation between Zach Blas and Jacob Gaboury (2016), we see art as protest.

Blas's art, which interrogates and critiques how "invisibility is often an unequally distributed privilege" (p. 156), relies on a compilation of 3D face scans to generate a collective mask that is the "aggregated result of many queer men's faces" (p. 157). Blas emphasizes that the mask speaks to the use of such in different protests and social movements—where masks prevent singular identification while simultaneously asserting group "collective consistency" (p. 157). All the more, Blas identifies that power of masks: "It protects, defends, and enacts transformation; no one ever stays the same after they put a mask on" (p. 160). Through this, Blas emphasizes opacity over anonymity, the former of which Blas argues is more radical (p. 161)—yet both are "a foundation for human existence; it is an anti-identity politics. It's an embrace of what is always transforming, what is always unknown within us" (p. 162). With much governmental and state policy ever-increasingly reliant on facial biometrics, Blas states: "To do away with the face, to escape it, is to break free from the oppressive logic that attempts to control it, define it, and categorize it. Facelessness is a political transformation into what is unknown, unidentified, and opaque. This is something joyful, something to be celebrated" (p. 162). Through this conversation and corresponding art work, we see how art serves as counter data to work against oppressive biases and practices in data collection and dissemination.

And as Blas draws great emphasis to the transformative power of masks and masking, I wonder how the buildings, businesses, and storefronts were perhaps masked: do these pieces perform the same protecting, defending, and transformation as the masks that Blas explores? And simultaneously, are the murals themselves masks? Covering and transforming the plywood barriers into artifacts displaying, illustrating human existence, a collective demand for protection and betterment. A transformation from barrier to protest.

There are great tensions in my role here. My positionality has inherently led to me crafting a product that reflects these parts and facets of my being -- reflecting that which Donna Haraway calls *situated knowledge* (1988).

The murals relay the multifaceted messaging of the community—they serve as a tangible display of hurt, frustration, anger, and love. While constructed as impermanent objects, they are incredibly vital artifacts. Art as protest. Art calls for justice and betterment. Art by the people.

In "Community Data as Collective Care," Feldman claims: "Designers should empower community members to determine what public good means for themselves by putting tools directly into their hands to increase autonomy" and "When communities have the power to measure, or to collect data themselves, they can deepen their understanding of their own experiences, advocate for themselves, and manifest their ideals of public good." Here, I situated the murals as community-centered and generated data.

This project directly deals with the critical issues of systemic racism in our community and in our country. The murals that illuminate the important message that Black Lives Matter are important cultural artifacts that deserve great attention, care, and consideration. Because higher education institutes in our area, namely NC State, have chosen not to recognize, celebrate, preserve, or draw attention to these murals and what they stand for—I hope that this project will serve as a call to action for our university system, but also demonstrate the breadth and power of the public.

Last time I was downtown, the barricades around the Capitol building were still there. I drive by them most as they run along Edenton and Hillsborough Street. Metal gates run around the entirety of the grassy square, and you can see where the Confederate Memorial was removed as a piece of tarp covers the earth.

An update: the barricades have been taken down. For the time being.

Usually, there are no gates. But they were there for months—preventing the public from accessing the grounds—from walking the grassy area and standing near the building that is meant to serve them—from dancing on the earth that once held a memorial of hate.

This contrasts the murals in every possible way. The metal gating is more permanent—harder, colder. A barrier. A sign of inaccessibility, a sign of who can enter and who cannot. A barrier of "protection" for the government: a bubble barrier. Ironic that the government is enacting this display of needed protection, when Black Americans and People of Color are dying at the hands of the government and their action, or lack thereof.

In "Can Art Change the World? Inside the Debate Raging Over Black Lives Matter Murals," Mark Wilson writes: "[the Black Lives Matter Murals] undeniably capture a historic moment. But they also raise thorny questions about whether public art can be a catalyst for change—or merely a

distraction" (2020). As Wilson focuses on the DC road mural that has been identified as a display of gentrified performativity, Wilson simultaneously offers the historical context of this artistic genre—tracing it back to Diego Rivera, José Clemente Orozco, David Alfaro Siqueiros who utilized the medium to display history. Wilson notes that "murals stuck around as an American art form, spurred on by local communities, and especially Latino and Black artists, throughout the 20th century." Thus, the murals serve as an opportunity to reclaim: to reclaim space, history, and community identity.

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Between Intervals:
A Soundscape for All Us Monsters

Kelsey Virginia Dufresne, North Carolina State University

Between Intervals: A Soundscape for all Us Mo…

Click to listen on Soundcloud

***All sounds in the project are opensource.

The thinking of this project comes from two influences from the 2018 symposium on Sound, Rhetoric, and Writing that was hosted at Middle Tennessee State University. The first is a basic tenet that came from Steve Katz, one of the founding explorers of the relationship between rhetoric and music. Katz brought his audience back to question the notion of indeterminate knowledge. Katz posed the following question: How do you leave indeterminate knowledge indeterminate? How do you investigate an object without ruining the delight of that object?

For Katz, one of the difficulties is that we are always in language, and if we want to understand a thing, we may easily go too far by using words to name that thing or we may not find words that are capable of expressing that thing, or even if we can express it, it may not be communicated to another, as the meaning that accompanies words often get re-inscribed into the vocabulary of the listener. For those familiar, this is similar to the classic sophistic triple dilemma, or trilemma, as the Sophist Gorgias of Leontini expressed it just a few millennia ago in 427 BCE. The trilemma is a set of three theses that Gorgias forwarded and that served Gorgias well during his lifetime. Many sophists had reputations for being able to speak eloquently and persuasively on any topic. But Gorgias was known to be able to speak on any topic and then following his oration, turn around and speak even more persuasively on what was known as the *dissoi logoi*, that is, the opposite case. The first part of the trilemma is simply, Nothing exists. Those two words in that order, if you ponder them a while, might give you a headache, and I don't want to give anyone a headache, so I'm not going to get into any of the proofs Gorgias invented for this thesis. I will say that in many ways his proofs foretell the kinds of debates

between the rationalists like Leibniz and the empiricists like Hume you heard about in your undergrad philosophy classes.

Nothing exists. The second part is: Even if something exists, it can't be known. And lastly, even if it could be known, it can't be communicated.

It was this trilemma, I think, that Steve Katz was getting at in our symposium on Rhetoric and Sound, to remind us that language is immensely fallible, so when we try to explain indeterminate knowledge, we, somehow, make it determinate. We name it. We black-box it. We nail it down. We make meaning. We communicate. We categorize it. We turn it into something it's not. It's not so much a commonplace to *say* we're always in language anymore, but even back in the days when we did say it, that didn't mean all that much to a dancer, a painter, or a chef. We may be in it but we're never limited by it. A gentler language might make us feel our thoughts differently. Or maybe we could start speaking with birdsong, crashing waves, and violins.

The second influence came from a talk given by Damon Krukowski (2018) who was working from his book *The New Analogue.* Krukowski's talk, for me, resonated with a single message between the essential difference between the analogue and the digital. Isn't it great that we don't get the snap-crackle-pop from phonographs anymore? Isn't it great that all of that noise is gone? Isn't it great that after 22 minutes there's no need to get up, walk across the room and flip the record? To borrow terms from cybernetics and electrical engineering, the digital represents pure signal with virtually no noise.

Take, for example, the difference between an analogue clock and a digital one. The digital tells you exactly what time it is, but the analogue clock tells you all the times that it is not and asks that you locate the time it is in relation to all these other times. From the viewpoint of the digital designer, the analogue communicates information that is not desired, so that information is trimmed away as noise. Noise, then, is information that is being communicated that is unwanted. Krukowski expanded this basic concept to other comparisons between the analogue and the digital. In Google Maps or Waze, you do not have find your location, as the program does this for you. The digital eliminates the whole of the map and locates you into its center. You do not move through the terrain, but rather the map moves as you move. From this perspective, you have not traveled, even if you've gone from one continent to another. You are always in the center. Analogue technologies, whether they are maps, clocks, or phonographs provide you with a spectrum of noise and leave it up to you to locate the signal or the meaning.

When we are purely in the digital, what has been cut out from experience is significant. In 1969, a DJ named Russ Gibb in Dearborn, Michigan got a phone call from a student at Eastern Michigan University who asked if Paul McCartney had died. The student explained that when you played "Revolution 9" from the Beatles *White Album* backwards, you'd get the message that Paul was dead. After getting the call, Gibb played the track backwards for the audience (McCollum, 2019)). If you've heard this track, you'll know that it's pretty weird playing it forward to begin with. The track was inspired by the technique known as *musique concrète*, an avant-garde style of sound collage that has many diverse definitions, but that in the hands of

the Beatles was really a celebration of noise. The DJ played the album backwards for his radio audience, stirring up the rumors of Paul's death ever further. I searched and searched my Spotify interface, and for the life of me, can't find the "play in reverse" feature. Luckily, I do have a turntable and *The White Album*. I'll let you try it out for yourself.

In both Katz's and Krukowski's talks, I heard them both say, "you have to look to the noise." It's not in the signal that the thing is being said. In rhetoric, there's an idea that goes back to the sophists—*Kairos.* To understand kairos means to understand the ancient way of understanding logos. Logos is all of discourse, and it's not just linguistic discourse. It's also the discourse of the world. The sound of the wind expresses a part of the cosmological logos. The color of a flower is a part of the world's expression. In this ancient, Pythagorean-type of way, kairos means tapping into a *moment* of the logos, which is but the tiniest sliver of the continuous cosmological music of the world. It's not what's said but everything that hasn't been said. It's for this reason that Gorgias could speak on any matter so well, or so he said, because he tuned in to this larger logos.

Chance encounters, chance information, chance people, chance influences from those things you did not expect to encounter. Sometimes I feel like we're tapping into what has historically been the noise and is now becoming the music—as underrepresented groups continue to fight and scratch to be heard. But I recently read a story on BoingBoing that a Japanese designer has just created something they call Wear Space for workers at Panasonic. These are, essentially, horse blinders that are made for people who work in communal offices to keep them from being distracted. You wrap these devices around your head to eliminate your peripheral vision, so your eyes can take in no more than the area surrounding your computer screen (Blazenhoff, 2019).

Through the use of sound, we are not trapped into pure signal. I would argue that composing with digital sound in academic environments helps sustain two critical objectives: it helps sustain a quality of mystery, uncertainty, and affect in whatever the object of study. Second, in so doing it opens ourselves to the lost art of listening---and listening, especially, to those voices that have been historically considered noise. And, to this end, there is no better exemplar than Mary Shelley's monster, the embodiment of that thing that should not be. This soundscape is a modest attempt to help us become attuned to the intervals between the signals, the parts of the map were not traveling in, the times we're not living in, the words we're not saying, to the noise and the monster in all of us.

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American Indian and Indigenous Rhetorics:
A Digital Annotated Bibliography

Kimberly G. Wieser, Antoinette Bridgers-Smith, Derek Bartholomew, Davina Caddell, Brian Daffron, Taylor Ellis, Matt Kliewer, Haeyoung Lee, Elisabeth Murphy, Allison Nepomnick, Jessica Nichols-Ruedy, Brenna O'Hara, Kelli Pyron-Alvarez, Tatiana Rosillo, Stephanie Salyer, Kristen Wheaton, Aaron Whitestar, Jacob Witt, and Jordan P. Woodward, University of Oklahoma

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This partially annotated bibliography of resources on American Indian and Indigenous rhetorics is a work in progress. New entries and annotations for existing entries are accepted for review by the editor on an ongoing basis via the entry submission form and annotation submission form. Author bios are available here.

The items on listed on this bibliography are inclusive of those written by American Indian, Indigenous, and non-Native scholars. Some of these sources focus on the use of Euro-American rhetorics by Indigenous rhetors. Increasingly, over the years, the discipline has given preference to Indigenous perspectives and writing that examines Native American and/or Indigenous rhetorics that arise out of the cultures themselves.

The space that nurtured the proliferation of scholarship on American Indian and Indigenous rhetorics in the past twenty-five years is the American Indian Caucus of the College Conference on Composition and Communication/National Conference of Teachers of English (CCCC/NCTE). This caucus was founded by Malea Powell and Scott Lyons in 1997 as the Caucus for American Indian Scholars and Scholarship. Despite the shortening of the name, the group has always been and intends to be inclusive of American Indian, Indigenous, and non-Native scholars who do work in American Indian and Indigenous Rhetorics. From its inception to around twenty years later, Malea Powell, Resa Crane Bizzaro, and Joyce Rain Anderson served as co-chairs. Today, Andrea Riley-Mukavetz, Lisa King, and Kimberly Wieser–editor of this bibliography–serve as co-chairs of this organization. Work by caucus members is highlighted in the bibliography below in red.

Some of these sources fall under the further category of Indigenous cultural rhetorics, a set of practices in the field grounded in Indigenous concepts of relationality. Cultural Rhetorics values the ability of story to constellate multiple knowledge sources and to be inclusive of Indigenous knowledge and/or other culturally-specific knowledges, not simply academic, whitestream knowledge. It emphasizes the positionality of the speaker within a network of relationships/constellations who draws on knowledge from those networks in producing new

discourse. More information on cultural rhetorics is available in Our Story Begins Here: Constellating Cultural Rhetorics, collaboratively written by Malea Powell, Daisy Levy, Andrea Riley-Mukavetz, Marilee Brooks-Gillies, Maria Novotny and Jennifer Fisch-Ferguson of the Cultural Rhetorics Lab, a joint effort by scholars from four academic institutions. Additional information is available on the FAQ page for *Constellations: A Cultural Rhetorics Publishing Space*, the journal that came out of the Cultural Rhetorics Consortium, where much rich work across the rhetorics of diverse cultures is published, grounded in this methodology and praxis. *Constellations* was founded by Powell along with fellow Michigan State professor Alexandra Hidalgo. Hidalgo continues to serves as Editor-in-Chief.

A brief history on the background of American Indian and Indigenous rhetorical studies written by Dr. Wieser is upcoming, planned as a chapter in a book on American Indian rhetorics co-edited by Wieser with Powell, Riley-Mukavetz, and King.

Access the Bibliography site

Book Review: *Lynching: Violence, Rhetoric, and American Identity*

by Ersula J. Ore
University Press of Mississippi, 2019

At the heart of Ersula Ore's *Lynching: Violence, Rhetoric, and American Identity* is the powerful argument that lynching in America functions rhetorically as a violent performance of white identity, a communal, multimodal, and shared affirmation of that white identity's civic supremacy, and a terroristic vehicle for policing the boundaries of American citizenship as "for whites only." Ore demonstrates that these dynamics are not relegated to a "long ago history" committed by "persons unknown" subsequently erased by modern racial progress. Rather Ore shows how lynching's rhetoric persists in the ongoing, extralegal killing of Black people by white or whiteness-performing citizens; Trayvon Martin's killing being one of the most high-profile and along with Mike Brown's killing catalytic for our current era. Despite the fact that such killings when enacted are extralegal or extrajudicial, Ore shows how—like Reconstruction era lynchings—the state frequently validates them after the fact, rendering them functionally "legal" by way of jury acquittals or refusals to prosecute. This is one of the many ways via her analysis of the material rhetorical practices surrounding historical lynchings that Ore links the modern killing of Black people by citizens and state actors to the historical practice of lynching particularly at its most violent in the late 19th to mid-20th centuries.

Ore's argument is devastating given how precisely she is able to illustrate the detailed resonance between, as in her key example, Zimmerman's killing of Trayvon Martin in 2012 and Roy Bryant's and J. W. Milam's lynching of Emmitt Till in 1955. In the wake of Zimmerman's acquittal by a nearly all-white jury, commentators and even high-profile celebrities like Oprah, Harry Belafonte, and Angela Bassett made the connection between Martin and Till which in turn prompted sharp, indignant responses from many—often white—commentators. Critics vociferously insisted the Martin case was different because Zimmerman was seeking to protect life and property in his quasi-official capacity as neighborhood watch captain. Reading lynching rhetorically, from its origins in Charles Lynch's extrajudicial court during the American Revolution in conjunction with the development of the American Constitutional order, Ore reveals the inanity of such critics' apologetics. Surveilling, policing, and stalking under the auspices of protecting (white) life and property always in some form or fashion preceded lynching as an act of rhetorical disidentification with the Black individual—the "division" that Burke noted was the corollary of his concept of identification. Ore illustrates how attempts to narrow the definition of lynching such that functionally it could only ever refer to past (however unfortunate) events was an unoriginal argument, made from the outset by those resisting the fierce, righteous advocacy of anti-lynching activists. Given Senator Rand Paul's recent (2020) filibuster of the hate crime legislation named for Emmett Till because he believed its definition

of lynching would include "altercations resulting in a cut, abrasion, bruise, or any other injury no matter how temporary," Ore's work shows with searing precision why this history is a "past not yet passed."

Additionally, Ore establishes the way "symbolic" lynching most notably of effigies of Senator and then (two-term) President Barack Obama, performs the same core function as their historical counterparts— marking white citizenship and representative leadership as "whites-only" spaces. They are no less menacing, functionally epideictic, and thus socially pedagogical (per Ore's argument in chapter 2) for being "symbolic." Obama's successor is absent from and unnamed in Ore's book, but her silence constructs, I would propose, an enthymeme, with an unspoken premise—that the context that gave the symbolic lynching of Obama meaning also gave rise to the political and very material attempts to dismantle his legacy in the subsequent administration.

While the bulk of Ore's work involves showing how American society, its laws, and its discourse sets the stage for lynching-as-white-identity-maintenance, she also demonstrates how anti-lynching activists engaged then and now in unflinching and multimodal ways with the material reality of lynching and the artifacts that circulated around these killings.

In chapter 2, Ore also shows how activist individuals and communities across the nation resisted the argument for white supremacy made in the act of lynching. Activists countered political cartoons that reinforced "black beast" imagery with their own artistic renditions of lynching photographs, changes made that rhetorically highlighted truths embedded in the original photographs. Activists highlighted the hypocrisy inherent in claiming America as a democracy that respected the rule of law and hard work by highlighting the chaos and torture edited out of the supposed calm, stately ethos of lynching photographs that circulated among white folks as part of their racial identity maintenance. Recounting the horrific details of Mamie Till-Mobley's well-known decision to defy state officials in insisting that Emmett Till's casket be opened, Ore demonstrates that this act—making his mutilated body publicly visible—was itself a profound, material and public counter-rhetoric to the purportedly ordered, legally sanctioned "decency" of the white majority and state officials.

In chapter 3 Ore traces this critical-democratic impulse to the collection of lynching photographs entitled "Without Sanctuary: Lynching Photographs in America." This collection, installed and shown at sites around the nation, was revised to include explanatory placards that helped name and frame the lives of lynching victims. The installation also often asked visitors to engage with what they saw by responding to the images and artifacts, to draw conclusions and connections to the present in their own words. Soundscapes helped stage the collection as a somber and sober memorial, inviting participants' reflection on the connection between lynching as a violent, extralegal act that belied America's purported democratic ideals. Ore emphasizes how memorial services, communal acts of remembrance and mourning, accompanied the installation at some sites and served to shift the public rhetorical memory from American disidentification with Black life to a somber rhetorical identification with and affirmation of that life's place in the American democratic project. Ore also highlights how

moving the installation to different cities highlights the rhetorics of space and place—each city and state having its own history of lynching, segregation, and oppression. Ore points out early on that white citizens often deliberately conducted lynchings in the public square or near courthouses as a way to legitimate them legally and socially. "Without Sanctuary's" spatial dimensions, the fact that the installation moved from city to city, calls each space and place to account for that city's or region's place in America's violent racial history. This renders the work a direct confrontation to the historical acts of lynching themselves. It also clarifies the historical connection to modern day acts of state-sanctioned racial violence by state actors (e.g., police officers) and extralegal killings often still sanctioned after the fact (e.g., Zimmerman's acquittal).

While every word of Ore's book is compelling and useful for all kinds of rhetorical scholarship, most important for readers of *JOMR* likely will be her focus on the rhetorical multimodality circulating prior to, amidst, and after a lynching both by those who sought to justify the act and those who sought to resist it. Ore's Lynching is a must-read for scholars and students studying rhetorics of public memory, visual rhetorics in socio-cultural identify formation or disidentification, spatial rhetorics, and the materiality of publics and counter-publics. Ore's work opens up several lines of inquiry that might follow from her analysis. For example, in chapter 3 she discusses Wendy Wolter's criticism of "Without Sanctuary" that the installation simply "reproduces 'rather than interrupts'" (p. 97) the original dynamics of lynching and the relationship between the victims and those who observe them, contextualized (or not) as the event may be. Ore concedes that disruption of the violent white supremacist rhetoric inherent in lynching in any given situation is not guaranteed or inevitable. Nevertheless, if lynching functions rhetorically now as it did then with some modification, as Ore argues, then we will need collectively to find a way through both the historical memory and our present situation.

As the multimodality by which public rhetorics and public memory of lynching and violence against Black people expands to include the visual, aural, and spatial boundlessness afforded by social media networks, these questions have only intensified. Should we share videos like that of George Floyd's death bravely filmed by then 17-year-old, Darnella Frazier and circulated endlessly online? Is watching it on Twitter an act of bearing witness or identification? Or is it—per Wolter's critique of "Without Sanctuary" and Ore concedes is possible—a prurient reenactment of the central epideictic work of white supremacy? What available means stand at the ready to aid us in centering the question of universal democratic inclusion while disrupting white supremacy's concern with due process, empathy, and the inscrutability of intentions asymmetrically applied to those who *take* Black life and never *those lives taken*? In *Lynching*, Ore has given us rhetorical tools well suited for conducting this work—tools for recognizing the deeply networked rhetorical materiality of lynching-as-civics-lesson. A more traditional rhetorical analysis of the blatantly bad faith logos of today's white supremacist political discourse may not be able to withstand such a confrontation. But Ore's argument that lynching is essentially about who counts and whose lives matter in America coupled with her focus on the material and multimodal social, political, and cultural microphysics that create, shape, and reinforce that confrontation from generation to generation provides scholars, activists, and engaged, everyday people a way forward. This is an absolute must read.

By way of conclusion, it is appropriate to note as Ore herself does in the intensely personal preface "Death Wish" and postscript "Caught Up" the extraordinary amount of affective labor a work like *Lynching* requires. This is an affective labor specific and unique to any scholar from marginalized communities both doing the work of analyzing these phenomena with the rigor and seriousness that academia demands while also having to live under the specter of the very things they study. It is infuriating and embarrassing that this work still needs to be done at all by Dr. Ore or anyone for that matter, that this history—in no way until now secret—is still effaced, sublimated, and excused in the service of protecting white supremacy. It should not be this goddamned hard to affirm and embrace Black Lives into the American body politic. And yet here we are. Rhetoric and writing studies scholars as well as technical and professional communication scholars would do well to engage this work while also refusing to normalize what it demands of those who produce it.

—Beau Pihlaja, Texas Tech University

Series Review: The Chair *and the Myth of the Anti-Racist Superhero*
A. Peet & A. J. Wyman (Creators); T. Romary & H. Shaukat (Producers)

"The Chair" depicts the kind of stodgy English literature program that made me drop the English major when I was an undergraduate. Ji-Yoon Kim (Sandra Oh) is the new chair, and she plans to shake things up. But she has been handed a ticking time bomb, and she knows it. And as she puts it, *they wanted to make sure a woman was holding it when it explodes.*

"The Chair," like "Dear White People," offers a snapshot of a PWI (predominantly white institution) in the Black Lives Matter era. The old white men of Pembroke (a fictional small-liberal-arts college) are aging out, but they're still in charge. If we accept the show's parameters (predominantly-white cast) and limitations (zero representation of adjunct instructors), and read it through the lens of mid-career, tenure-track professors of color, then bluntly, this is the future we are being set up for. To become The Chair is to Arrive. And like that introductory scene where Ji-Yoon steps into her new Chair's office and falls off her office chair, these positions sell a false bill of goods that anyone can actually single-handedly change structural racism and sexism.

What kind of "arrival" is this? And are the sacrifices worth it?

For me, this question manifests most poignantly with the other women of color in the show: Kim's daughter Ju-Hee (Everly Carganilla), coworker Yaz (Nana Mensah), and teaching assistant Lila (Mallory Lowe).

Ji-Yoon's home life is a struggle. She and her daughter, Ju-Hee (who prefers Ju-Ju)—adopted and (it is suggested) of Oaxacan descent—butt heads. Neither feels understood—linguistically, culturally, or personally. A babysitter quits moments after arriving because the house has "no boundaries." Ji-Yoon's father helps with caregiving but is also overwhelmed, and speaks only Korean in defiance (a foil to the English literary world that his daughter inhabits the rest of the day).

In scene after scene, Ji-Yoon leaves Ju-Ju in a rush. Ju-Ju runs away from home. Ju-Ju runs onto campus to find her mother. This part is heartbreaking—the sacrifices to be a single parent and the strained relationship with your child that results—particularly as Ji-Yoon is tasked with coddling the immature egos of her fully-grown colleagues all day.

Ji-Yoon sacrificed a romantic relationship for her job (her fiancé moved to Ann Arbor and met someone else). A tension throughout the show is that we know she is asking herself whether it

was worth it to stay at Pembroke rather than take a non-tenure-track job with a high teaching load so she could follow her fiancé—a position that many academic couples are put in as they fight to stay in the same city, or even region. Because Ji-Yoon stayed at Pembroke, she has to make it worth it.

The person who could be her closest ally at work is Yaz, an American literature specialist who is up for tenure. Yaz, the only Black woman in the department, is the one person who calls out the fact that Ji-Yoon placates the old white men in charge and sells out Yaz in the process. In the era of Lorgia García-Peña and Nikole Hannah-Jones' highly publicized tenure cases and the dismal underrepresentation of Black women in tenure-track jobs, students know they will need to back up Yaz. Elliott Rentz (Bob Balaban) is tasked with chairing Yaz's tenure case, but he looks down on her creative pedagogies and critical readings of classic texts.

Yaz's classroom offers a rare example of multimodal pedagogy in popular culture; students sing, laugh, and applaud, bringing *Moby Dick* to life through their bodies, melodies and compositions. Rentz's suspicion of this pedagogy echoes empty but common accusations that multimodality is shallow "infotainment" that does not encourage deep engagement with texts (and reminded me of a paper I got back from an English professor as an undergraduate that accused me of "turning a Shakespeare play into an episode of *The West Wing*"). To her credit, Ji-Yoon backs up this multimodal approach to literary pedagogy.

But white academia's structural divide-and-conquer strategy among women of color manifests again in Ji-Yoon's relationship to Lila, a Teaching Assistant. Ji-Yoon urges Lila not to talk to the press about a department scandal because it would make the department look bad. The media explosion that follows makes it clear that in addition to the old white men, the women of color in positions of power need to be held accountable too. By this point, the role of the chair has started to write Ji-Yoon's actions rather than the other way around.

These contradictions remind us that diversifying leadership, in and of itself, is never enough. As Ji-Yoon's own crash-and-burn, alongside the larger racial justice movement and the students at Pembroke show us, nothing will shift without a movement backing it. In the department in which I work, our European-literature-heavy curriculum did not change until the campus Latinx Student Alliance went public with their demands, with a small group of faculty allies inside the department, widely-circulated media reporting, and petition signatures. The department fell squarely in the eyes of the campus, larger university system, and public—particularly the contradiction of an HSI (Hispanic-Serving Institution) with such a British-literature-heavy English curriculum. And in Fall 2021, we began teaching our revised curriculum, which centers Black and Latinx literatures, research and writing, and an introduction to the major titled "Unsettling English Studies."

I took no pleasure in watching Ji-Yoon crash and burn. It was painful. I took no pleasure in seeing an Asian woman cast in the longstanding state-sanctioned role of "racial wedge" between Black and white people, or seeing Ji-Yoon's exhaustion in the face of the extractive relationships with white male colleagues.

Was it necessary to narratively sacrifice a woman of color at the altar of the chairship to reveal the contradictions of academia?

I have watched brilliant people crash, burn, or compromise in the name of single handedly changing structural racism. If there is a core strength of this series, for me it is revealing the empty bourgeois promise of anti-racist work outside the context of collective organization and strategy. While Yaz was alienated from her colleagues by virtue of structural anti-Blackness, Ji-Yoon assumed the "anti-racist superhero" persona, at least in part, out of a genuine belief that she could change things by herself. Ji-Yoon's story reminds us that in the context of an academic department and campus faced with budget cuts, dwindling enrollments, and reliance on Trustee support and funding, this kind of solo anti-racist work risks becoming reduced to an argument to upper management, who will sell you out because that is their job, and put you in a position to sell out your colleagues.

In my imagination, the hope for the future of the Pembroke English department is not (as early episodes might suggest) a love affair between Ji-Yoon and her scattered, irresponsible colleague, Bill. The hope lies in Ji-Yoon taking accountability for her actions towards Yaz and joining Yaz as a force in the department, in conversation with the student organizations that backed up Yaz and held Ji-Yoon accountable. And it lies in Yaz's classroom—a rare life-giving space on an otherwise traditional white college campus—a space that, had I encountered it as an undergraduate, may have led me to major in English after all.

— Vani Kannan, Lehman College, CUNY

The *Journal of Multimodal Rhetorics*

Submissions Guidelines

Following the lead of other journals like *Kairos* and *Present Tense*, all submissions should follow APA style for in-text citations and references with the sole exception of critics' names that appear in the body of the essay. Full names should be provided the first time they are referenced. All work should be emailed to journalofmultimodalrhetorics@gmail.com.

Because *JOMR* aims to advance scholarly collaboration, community, and respect, we are no longer practicing anonymous review. For alphabetic texts, please send a .doc or .docx file that includes your name and institutional affiliation--no PDFs, please. Similarly, there is no need to remove identifying information on videos, podcasts, and webtexts.

Once your work has been accepted for publication, please provide a short author's biography (no more than 100 words) and a picture of the author(s) as a .jpeg. If you would prefer to not use a picture of yourself, please send a Creative Commons image or a personally-authored one of your choice.

JOMR is usually published twice a year, in Spring and Fall, but occasionally, we also publish a third issue in Summer.

Discussions (Essays)

Essays should range between 3,000-7,000 words excluding references and endnotes. Longer works will be considered, but please keep in mind that online presentation doesn't lend itself well to overly long works. If you would like to submit an essay as a series over several issues, please contact the lead editor. Authors should ensure that hyperlinks are current as of submission. Video essays and podcasts should be between 10-20 minutes and include captions (videos) and transcriptions. Webtexts must be hosted by the author.

Dialogues (Interviews)

Interviews can be submitted as podcasts, videos, or verbal transcripts. They may include one-on-one conversations with scholars, teachers, critics, or artists, or they may be roundtable-style discussions.

Demonstrations (Artistic Displays)

Artistic displays can take any number of forms to showcase original compositions including but are not limited to photography, paintings, songs, and slideshows. Composers use these media to tell stories, compose "arguments," or draw attention to issues of vital political and cultural significance in ways that standard essays cannot.

Reviews

JOMR welcomes reviews of books or other texts that are no older than two years. If you are interested in reviewing older texts, please see our guidelines for the Re-Views section. Reviews should be between 1,000-1,500 words.

Re-Views

This section is dedicated to revisiting older essays, books, or other media whose influence continues to resonate within current scholarship. These works can focus on multimodal theory specifically, or they may be works that speak to cultural practices that engage multimodality. Submissions should encourage readers to consider the material in a new light or explain its ongoing significance to rhetorical studies. If you are unsure about submitting to this section, please email the editor at journalofmultimodalrhetorics@gmail.com with any questions or concerns, or directly at cvcedillo@gmail.com.

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