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More Examinations of Invisible Labor

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More Examinations of Invisible Labor

Essays

Reviews

Composing Reciprocity with Comics
Composing the Labor in Community-University Partnerships

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When we decided to draw comics about our collaborative partnership—between a college composition class and a high school mythology class—we thought our comics would simply be funny to show other people. But when we dove into the iconography of drawing the situations that uplifted and stymied our partnership development, we started to see the potential of using multimodal reflection to strengthen our community-university partnership. Although our student interactions were a success, there were some nuances about the planning and teaching partnership between us instructors that we hadn't explored before deciding to reflect with comics. There were still issues regarding power dynamics, institutional passing, and emotional labor, for example, that we were too timid to talk about in person. Therefore, our co-constructed comics offered a space to examine these issues without pointing to our weaknesses and discuss them in a generous and non-confrontational way. By engaging in that multimodal space, we became more effective community-university partners for each other, our students, and future collaborations. This essay demonstrates how multimodal reflection contributes to reciprocal community-university partnerships. By reflecting on the extensive labor and communication issues inherent in collaborative partnerships through composing comics, we demonstrated the intricate process of composing reciprocity.

We characterize our co-constructed comics as a form of multimodal reflection. As Cedillo & Elston (2017) explain, "multimodal practices not only facilitate communication; they also transmit values and traditions" (p. 7). Our process of multimodal reflection helped us become stronger community-university partners by uncovering our deeper truths and the values that inform them. Comics position communicative tensions at the forefront while allowing us to capitalize on the creative tensions of multimodal composition. This form of reflection is necessary, in particular, due to the myriad tensions inherent in community-university partnerships.

Responding to the inconsistent institutional validation for concerted efforts and labor in community-university partnerships (Boerngen et al., 2018; Kropp et al., 2015; Miller-Young, 2015), this essay makes visible the invisible labor that's needed to remedy the inhospitable practices that under-develop manifestations of reciprocity (Dostilio et al., 2012) and undervalue community expertise. Ranging from the savior complex (Jagla, 2015) to deficit-framing of community partners (Rosenberg, 2017), community-university partnerships struggle to foster collaborative environments for their stakeholders. In order to cultivate hospitable

environments, this essay argues multimodal reflection through composing comics promotes reciprocity. We use reciprocity as defined by Dostilio et al. (2012), which has three orientations: 1) Exchange - "interchange of benefits, resources, or actions"; 2) Influence - "relational connection that is informed by personal social, and environmental contexts"; and 3) Generativity - "transformation of individual ways of knowing and being or of the systems of which the relationship is a part" (pp. 19-20).

Research on reflection in community engagement places the onus of being critical on the students (Prebel, 2016; Scott, 2004). Instead, we argue that practitioner reflection is a preventive approach that keeps practitioners accountable and prepared. Furthermore, our comics speak to multimodal reflection as viable forms of reflection. The juxtaposition of writing in journals and composing comics represents varying insights. Journal writing may be full of streams of consciousness, grammatically incorrect expressions of emotions. Comics, however, are structured. Comics as multimodal reflection are created through creative, distilled synthesis. The play with multimodality influences the ability "to make and negotiate meaning" (Shipka, 2016, p. 251). Limited by the number of panels, the white space, and the icons (McCloud, 1993), composing comics enhances reflection practices because it encourages composers to slow down and "consider the power of their rhetorical productions" (Sealey-Morris, 2015, p. 48). Each panel serves as an intentional point in the narrative, and the rhetorical power of distilling whole experiences into comic panels is a product of rhetorical reflection.

Additionally, as we reflect by composing comics, we construct our community-university partnership identities and "shape [our] own realities" with regards to how we envision reciprocal partnerships to look like (Thomson, 2018, p. 54). With each panel, we actively compose ourselves to be more effective practitioners. Coupling the reflective power of composing comics (Bahl, 2015; Sealey-Morris, 2015; Thomson, 2018) and the overwhelming need for effective practitioner reflection practices, we compose reciprocity by composing comics, and become more informed partners for each other. Underlying our multimodal reflection process, we ask: To what extent do co-constructed practitioner comic reflections promote reciprocity in community-university partnerships?

A Wildcat Writers Partnership

Before introducing the process of composing our rhetorical comics, we should explain our current community-university partnership. We are Wildcat Writers partners, a community writing program out of the Department of English at the University of Arizona. Wildcat Writers pairs university writing composition classrooms with Title I Southern Arizona high school classrooms. Together, we co-designed a curriculum that partners Max's high school students and Charisse's university students for a collaborative project. Our students worked together to explore the visual rhetoric of comics, and to co-construct original comics about a learning experience they had in the past. We had three student interactions:

1. High School Comics Workshop
2. High School Online Peer Review
3. University Gallery Walk

The first student interaction—High School Comics Workshop—consisted of the university class synthesizing two chapters of Scott McCloud's *Understanding Comics* into an interactive presentation about iconography. The interactive presentation was facilitated by university students to high school students. The second student interaction—High School Online Peer Review—consisted of high school students taking what they had learned from the comics workshop and applying that knowledge of iconography and panel to panel transitions (McCloud, 1993) to a peer review of original comics drawn by university students. University students revised their comics based on the high school students' feedback in preparation for the university gallery walk. The third and last event—University Gallery Walk—was the culmination of the collaborative efforts of the past semester and consisted of high school students coming to the university to view and comment on the final products of the university students' original comics. Both students asked each other questions about the comic drawing and revision processes.

We planned this collaboration six months before the first student interaction. Sharing every thought and resource in a shared Google document kept us accountable and prepared for the coming semester. Despite some issues with the student interactions—explained through comics below—we had a fairly successful semester where students relied on each other, exchanged insight on comics, and created something outside of their classroom. Considering the success of the student partnership, we decided to reflect on our own planning and teaching partnership using comics. We chose to reflect with comics after the three main student interactions to grow closer as community-university partners, own up to our partnership strengths and weaknesses, and strengthen our collaborative give and take.

Insider-Outsider Roles as Assets

Our marginalized identities as insiders and outsiders of our respective communities (Collins, 1986) have greatly influenced the way we approach this reflection. Looking specifically at power dynamics between a university instructor and a high school teacher, Charisse (university instructor) is an:

- Insider to university life
- Outsider to public education
- Insider to community-university partnerships (main research specialization)

Looking at Max's (high school teacher) insider and outsider roles, Max is an:

- Outsider to university life
- Insider to public education
- Outsider to community-university partnerships and Wildcat Writers

Additionally, we are both outsiders to teaching visual rhetorics of comics, making the partnership interesting. We contribute in different ways: Max with pedagogy and experience, Charisse with resources and research.

Furthermore, we've confronted the concept of institutional passing (Ahmed, 2017). Max expressed feelings for not passing in the university space, describing "availability of comfort for some bodies may depend on the labor of others, and the burden of concealment" (Ahmed, 2017, p. 123). The labor Max describes speaks to the invisible and extensive emotional labor that community-university practitioners experience when their institutions do not validate their efforts (Correia et al., 2010). While Wildcat Writers is grounded in the community-university partnership, it is still very entrenched in the university. All the professional development events are held at the university and the advisory board consists mostly of university graduate students. Due to the heavy emphasis on the university, Max is more of an outsider in this partnership than Charisse. Therefore, Max harbors a larger burden—and thus performs the necessary invisible and emotional labor—to embody norms of the university. Due to Max's unique positionality as *in* the community, his insights into our partnership are an "asset for community engagement" (Shah, 2020, p. 25), reinforcing our decision to co-author this essay. To confront issues in the partnership, both our voices serve as validated and recognized assets in its development.

Community-University Partnership Comics

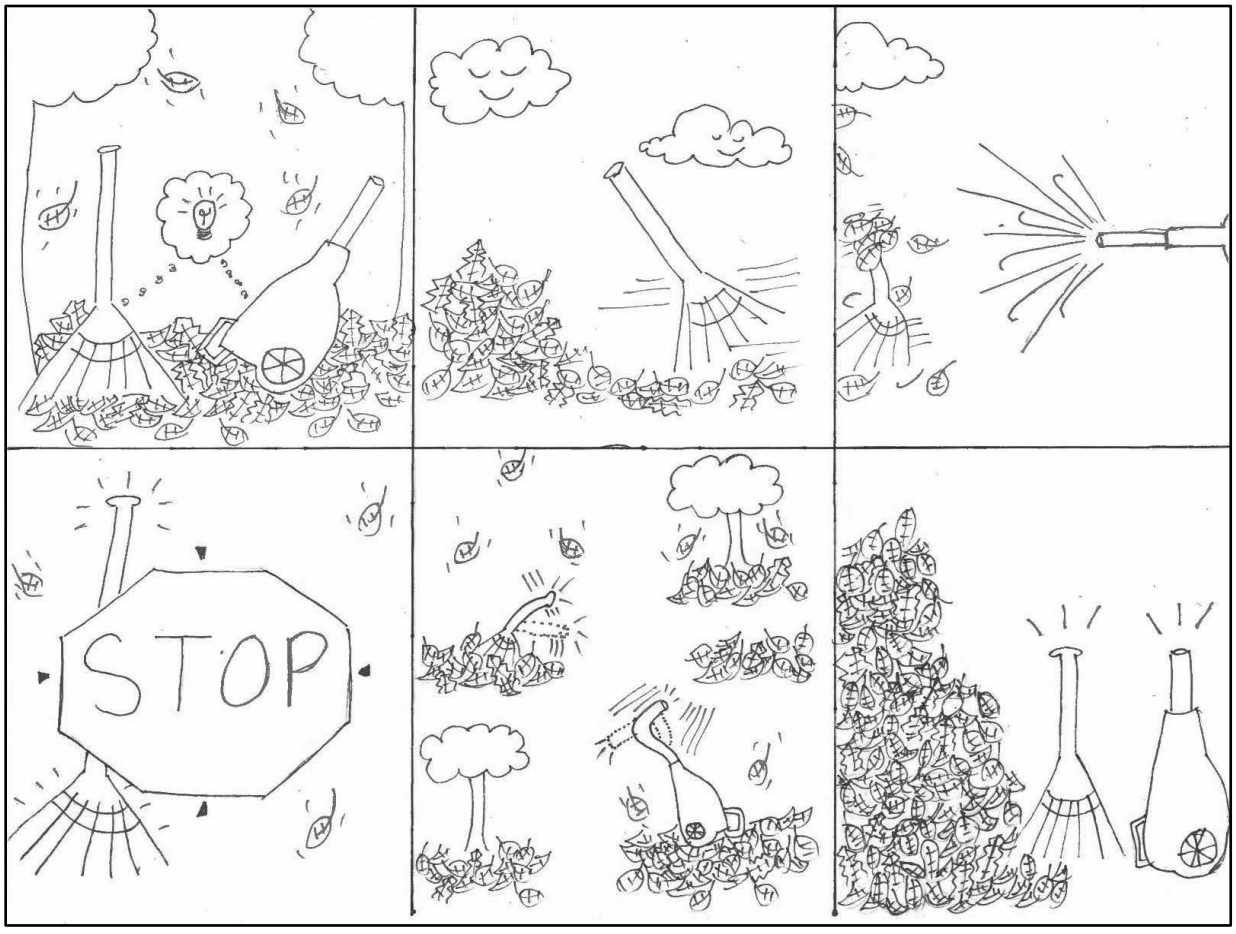
We present a series of comics that illustrate our collaborative analysis of communicative and curricular intentions. We indulge in the genre conventions of comics to disclose our strengths and weaknesses, and reveal how we overcame conflicts through hospitable, fruitful reflection. Moreover, we use both written and comic narrative to demonstrate the complementary, explanatory, and reinforcing effects of multimodal reflection on composing reciprocity. We agreed on the following five restrictions to streamline the composing process:

1. Use only six panels per comic strip that are all the same size to focus more on content than form.
2. Draw animals or inanimate objects to increase universality (McCloud, 1993). Anyone can associate with an animal or an inanimate object because it does not look like any kind of person, thus reflecting many perspectives.
3. Use no color to, again, focus more on content than design.
4. Use a limited amount of words to avoid relying on words to move the story forward. Rather, we could rely on other icons (McCloud, 1993) to move the story forward.
5. Keep the comics simple to demonstrate that anyone can co-create meaning.

Noting the stated restrictions, we decided that each comic would address one communication conflict that occurred in our partnership, and discussed what iconography would be most appropriate to represent each other and the conflict. Charisse served as the primary artist with first and revised drafts. Max served as the primary reviewer, explaining how the iconography could be revised to best represent us. By structuring the composing process this way, we relied on each other for our respective expertise. After a round of peer review and revision, we

discussed the conflict more in depth, highlighting the concepts that may have caused the conflict in the first place (i.e., savior complex, ivory tower intimidation, lack of resources, cultural differences, etc.). Afterward, we planned to avoid similar situations in the future. This process is an example of composing reciprocity through multimodal reflection. Using the definition of reciprocity provided in Dostilio et al. (2012), we *exchanged* ideas of what could be improved in our community-university partnership. Charisse's initial drawing of the comics *influenced* how Max peer reviewed, and Max's feedback *influenced* how Charisse revised. Together, we *generated* a nuanced perspective of our partnership, ultimately refining how we work together. We intended to represent a collaborative meaning making process that benefits us both. The following five comics represent some of the conflicts we encountered. Below each comic, we provide narrative commentary and demonstrate how each comic composes reciprocity (Dostilio et al., 2012).

Comic 1: Implementation Methods Misaligned



Panel 1: *The rake and leaf blower encounter a mess of leaves and hope to clean it.*
Panel 2: *The rake gathers the leaves in a pile.*
Panel 3: *The leaf blower blows the rake's pile of leaves.*
Panel 4: *The rake says, "STOP!" to the leaf blower.*

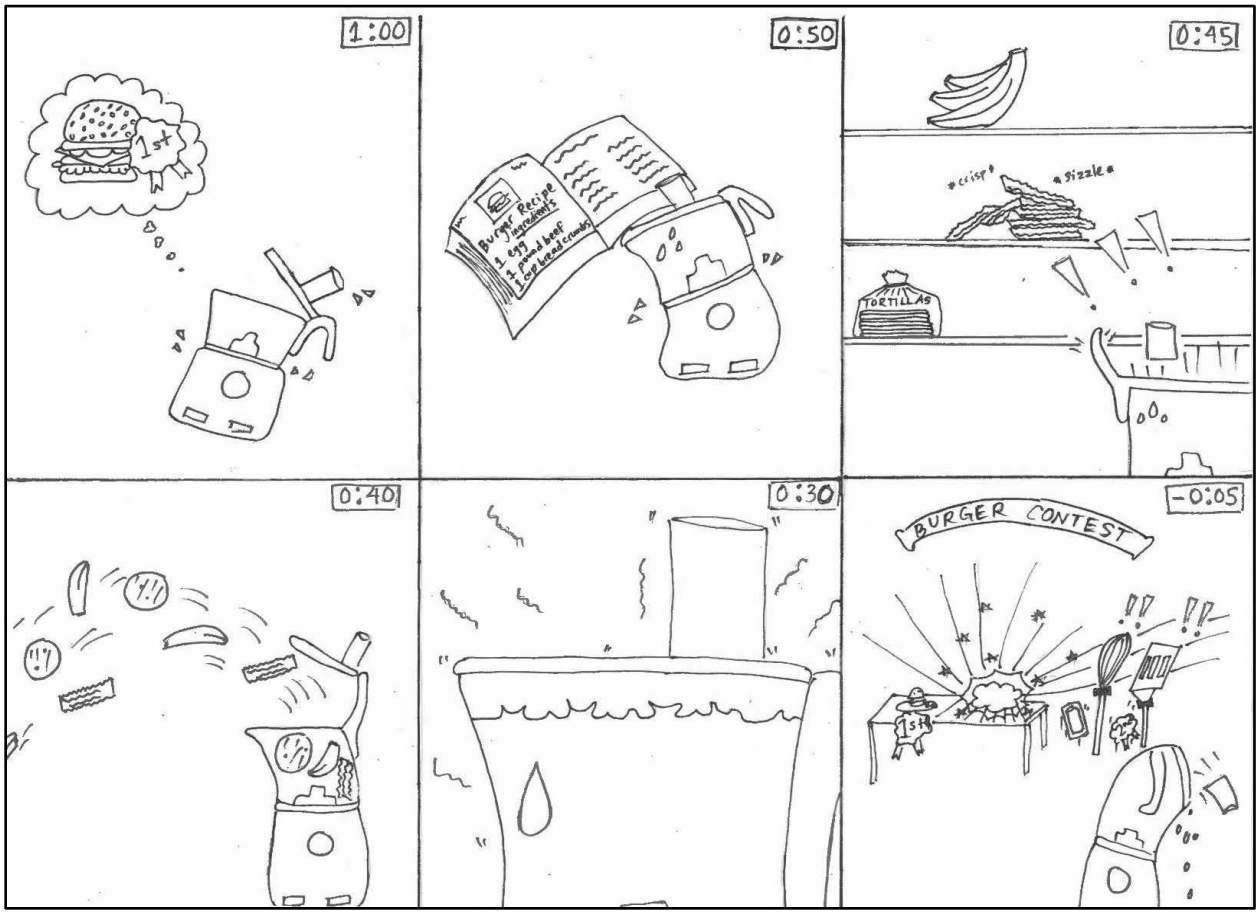
Panel 5: *The rake and leaf blower look at the mess they've made.*
Panel 6: *The partnership leads to all the leaves in one pile.*

Charisse: *My goal for this set of comics is to be relatable to both you and me, both university and community (high school) partner. So we're both the rake and the leaf blower, but at different times. This particular comic is a comment on our peer review fiasco, and communicates the following theme: we identified authentic needs of our respective people, but the implementation was not aligned. I know the peer review wasn't really a fiasco, but the comic is supposed to communicate the varying power dynamics/assumptions we had with the peer review. An initial interpretation is the leaf blower (me) has the "ivory tower-more education" role and assumes she covered a discussion of constructive v. destructive feedback, but did not. A secondary interpretation is the leaf blower (you) assumes his students knows how to peer review (the way I expect) without explicit instruction. Then there's also the offensive remarks and reaction of our students to bring it full circle. Like I said, I like that both of us could relate to both characters. Drawing the comic after the event reinforces our collaborative problem solving to avoid future occurrences.*

Max: *After reading your commentary, the comic makes complete sense. Initially, I thought I was being implicated as a kind of bludgeon in our relationship and took a defensive stance. This is precisely, however, the result of my own issues with the academy and, ultimately, I was perceiving you as the leaf blower. It is very reassuring that you acknowledged how part of the impasse was the ivory tower vs. the mean streets aspects of our relative positions in education. From a rhetorical standpoint, your panels and iconography are smooth and aptly clever. Instead of us "competing" to fulfill each other's roles and inadvertently creating an uneven power dynamic, we should seek to complement and enhance each other's' skills and success in our respective domains. Furthermore, we should not presume that we know each other's perspectives and how we work with our students, but, rather, develop clear procedures based on our initial experiences with the peer review.*

This comic is titled, "Implementation Methods Misaligned" in response to the High School Online Peer Review in which the high school students reviewed the university students' original comics. As explained in the narrative commentary, we agreed on an online peer review, but no expectation of *how* to conduct it was stated clearly. As a result, some high school students were harsher than the university students expected. This resulted in a conflict where university students described high school students as *disrespectful*, and high school students described university students as *too soft*. "Implementation Methods Misaligned" is an example of composing reciprocity (Dostilio et al., 2012) because we *exchanged* knowledge: Charisse drew the initial and revised comic, and Max offered feedback on how to improve the iconography to best reflect our partnership; we *influenced* the construction of the revised comic by reflecting on how our respective students felt about the interaction; and we *generated* lively and productive discussion on the strengths and weaknesses of the partnership, which enabled us to plan proactively to avoid tricky interactions in the future.

Comic 2: Scrambling to Get the "Right" Resources



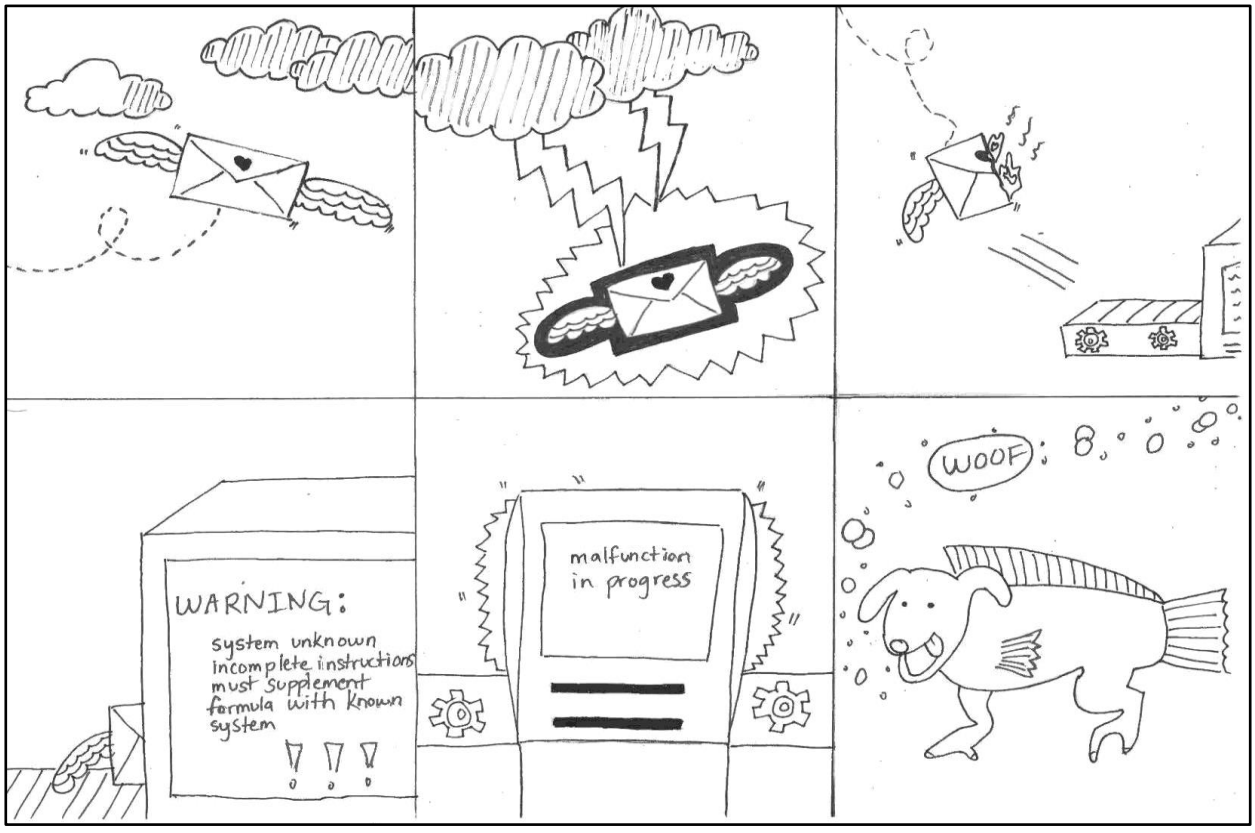
Panel 1: *The food processor hopes to win first place in the burger making contest.*
Panel 2: *The food processor reads a burger recipe from a recipe book.*
Panel 3: *The food processor panics because the ingredients in the pantry do not match the ingredients in the burger recipe.*
Panel 4: *The food processor runs out of time and includes all the ingredients available.*
Panel 5: *The food processor is nervous to see how its burger recipe turns out.*
Panel 6: *The food processor is sad because its burger blew up during the judging.*

Charisse: *This comic represents a scrambling to gather the "right" or appropriate resources before starting and during the semester. Even though I've taught comics in past semesters, I always feel unprepared. I was rushing to find the best YouTube tutorials on visual rhetoric, rushing to teach both comics and public speaking skills for the comics workshop in your classroom, etc. And I think this applies to you, too, especially as a public school teacher. Obviously, this is not to mean our partnership or teaching abilities are terrible. It's more of a comment on the invisible labor we take on and the training and institutional support we don't receive to experiment with different pedagogical strategies.*

Max: *The iconography and panel transitions were easy to follow in this comic. I think that this is a great illustration of how careful plans often have unintended, if not "explosive" results. We tried to think of everything, but some things, like taking for granted that my high school students would be positive with your students in initial phases of the partnership, which lead to some uproar from the college kids. Also, even though everything went according to plan for the most part after that, I was way more stressed and anxious about the partnership and field trip than was appropriate. Ultimately, although last semester was chaotic, in the end things worked out and our collaboration was natural and easy.*

This comic, "Scrambling to Get the 'Right' Resources" reacts to the invisible and emotional labor we took on to plan the most appropriate joint curriculum. We were fairly new to working with communities outside our schools, which heightened the anxiety we felt before and throughout the semester. "Scrambling to Get the 'Right' Resources" is an example of composing reciprocity (Dostilio et al., 2012) because we *exchanged* teaching resources on visual rhetoric including books, PDFs, YouTube videos, and sample comics; we *influenced* each other's pedagogical practices by being counterweights to each other—for example, Charisse tends to be more meticulous, and Max tends to take a more relaxed stance—meaning we balanced each other's strengths and weaknesses by offering advice and quelling fears; and we *generated* an engaging visual rhetoric unit to use again.

Comic 3: Miscommunication



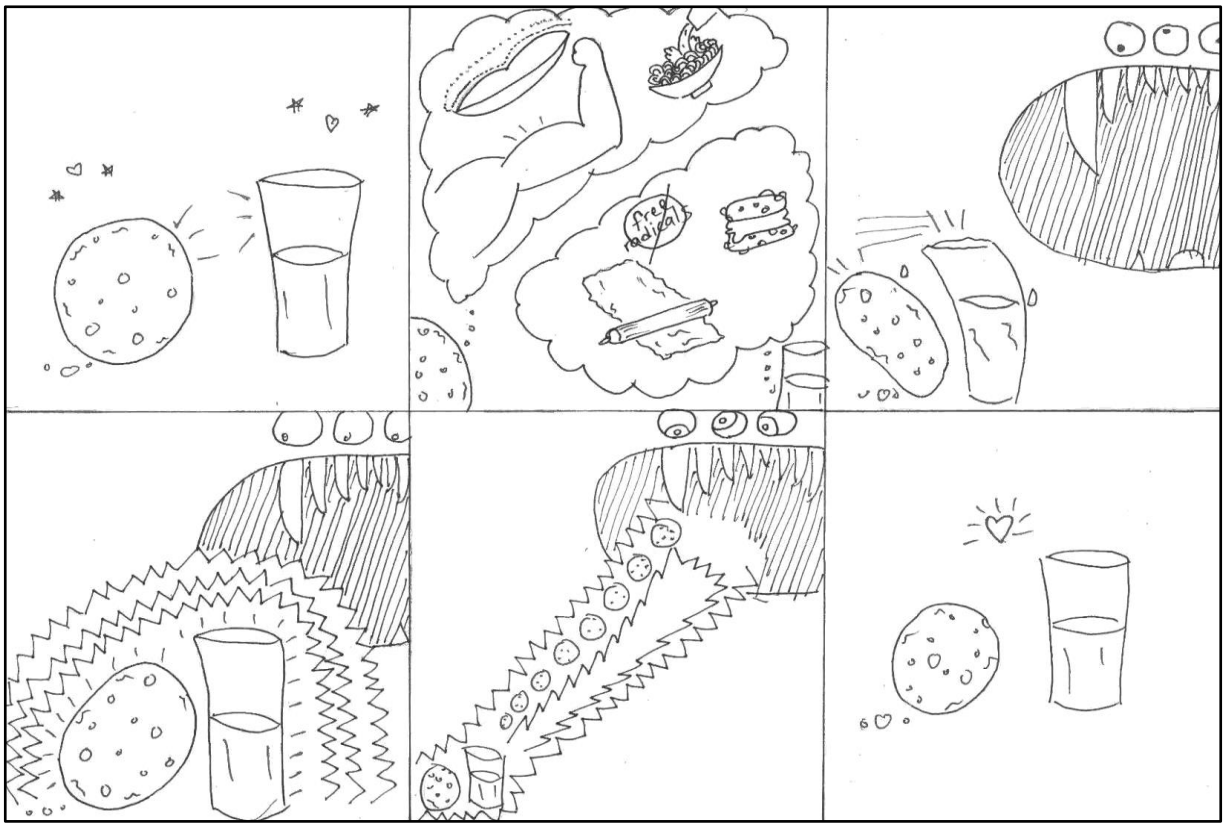
Panel 1: *A letter is being sent to someone.*
Panel 2: *The letter is struck by lightning.*
Panel 3: *Only half of the letter reached the processing center.*
Panel 4: *The processor struggles to process the half message and supplements the incomplete message with another message.*
Panel 5: *The processor works hard to complete the message.*
Panel 6: *The result of the incomplete message processing is a fish-dog-chicken.*

Charisse: *It's about miscommunication. Funnily enough, this was the easiest to draw, probably because I've visualized similarly disastrous results of my miscommunications. Thankfully we vibe well to get over our miscommunication fairly quickly. The message gets cut off from some factor, either through language or external factors or misremembering. And the result is some disaster.*

Max: *Important aspects of our communication sometimes slip through the cracks. It seems like a kind of act of god in your comic (the lightning striking the letter), but it is me, for example, confusing the letter with "junk mail" and mistakenly ignoring or misremembering the communication. The coolest thing about this comic is that it results in the dogfish, which is alarmingly cute and friendly. For me, this represents the oddly functional situation that was born from the miscommunication, how the field trip and student interactions, in the end, gave birth to something that was unique and, oddly, fun (I hope you feel the same).*

"Miscommunication" explains our interactions after the High School Online Peer Review. We handled the reactions of our students poorly and blamed each other. We recovered quickly, thankfully, but that reaction after the incident could have been a negative turning point. "Miscommunication" is an example of composing reciprocity (Dostilio et al., 2012) because we *exchanged* words of blame; we *influenced* the way we recovered from the incident by remembering why we partnered in the first place: we had a solid rapport and many shared interests; and we *generated* a solution to fix the peer review problem for the next semester.

Comic 4: Expertise Assumptions



Panel 1: *The milk and cookie are in awe of each other.*

Panel 2: *The milk thinks of all the benefits that chocolate has, and the cookie thinks of all the benefits that milk has.*

Panel 3: *The milk and cookie encounter a problem.*

Panel 4*: The milk and cookie power up together to face the problem.*

Panel 5: *The milk and cookie use their joint powers to destroy the problem*.

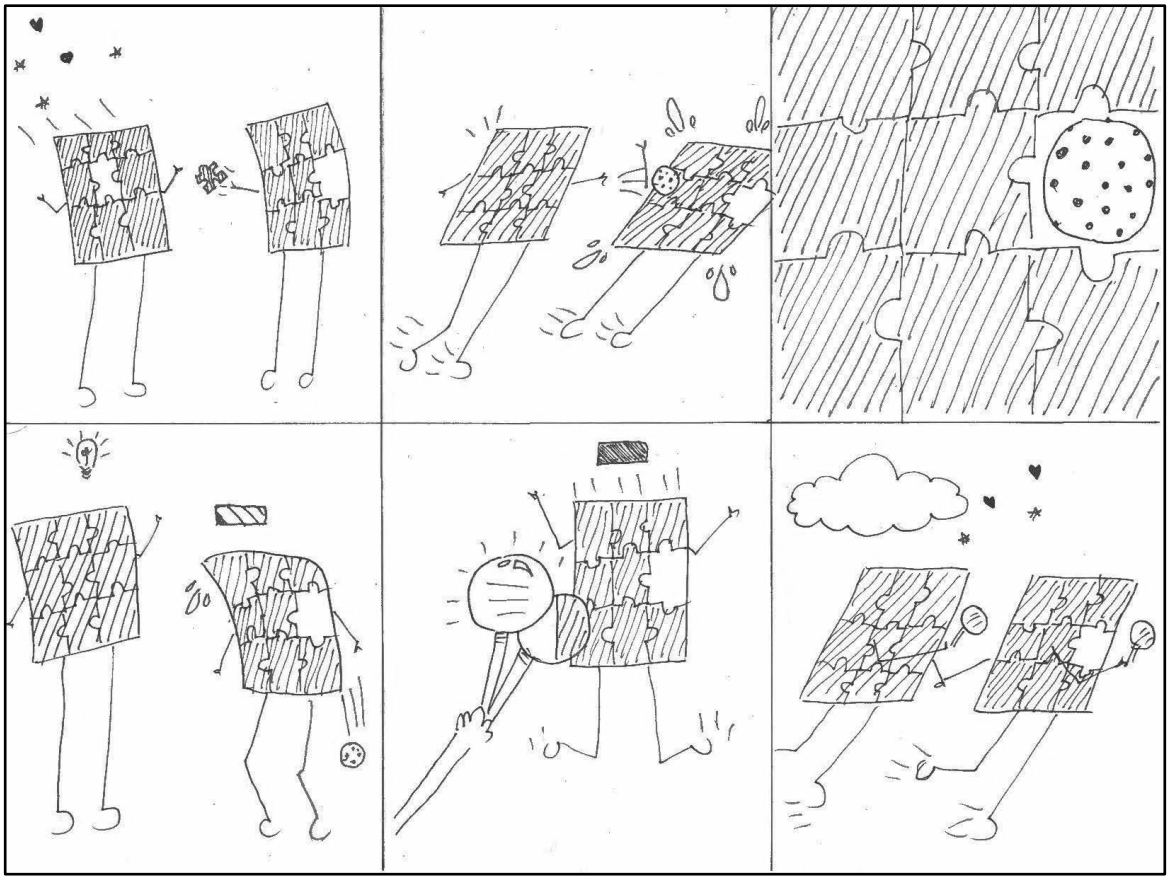
Panel 6: *The milk and cookie are happy they helped each other.*

Charisse: *It represents assumptions about expertise. We both have assumptions about each other regarding our positions and age and whatnot. Assumptions about visual rhetoric expertise and behavior management expertise. While we may think the other can do a better job at some task, together we work really well together to solve problems. Also, there was a discomfort about not wanting to step on each other's toes because we know better. For example, not only do you not assign a lot of writing in your mythology class, you also do not talk about the mechanics of writing (i.e., peer review, revision, drafting, etc.). That posed a challenge to our partnership regarding my obligation to remind you to teach your students about core writing concepts so our classes could collaborate successfully.*

Max: *This is my favorite comic because it illustrates our (successful?) partnership. The monster represents the perceived enormity of our task: to bring our populations together subjectively and physically in order to benefit the community. Interestingly, our ability to work together is the result of the implicit understanding between us—as we puzzle over what we each are able to do and make an effort to retain confidence in one another, when faced with the ultimate challenge, we automatically knew what to do.*

"Expertise Assumptions" explores our initial perceptions of each other. The assumptions made about Max as a high school teacher were his supposed expertise in behavior management, curriculum design, and time management. The assumptions made about Charisse were her comic artistry, institutional resources, and visual rhetoric knowledge. "Expertise Assumptions" is an example of composing reciprocity (Dostilio et al., 2012) because we *exchanged* teaching strategies and resources on comics; we *influenced* how each of us perceived the other's profession; and we *generated* a protocol to avoid making assumptions about each other's work.

Comic 5: Knowledge Exchange



Panel 1: *The right puzzle helps complete the left puzzle with a missing puzzle piece.*
Panel 2: *The left puzzle is appreciative so tries to force a circle piece into the right puzzle.*

Panel 3: *A close-up of the right puzzle shows the circle piece is not the right fit.*
Panel 4: *The left puzzle sees the right puzzle in distress and has an idea.*
Panel 5: *The left puzzle offers magnifying glasses to the right puzzle.*
Panel 6: *The right and left puzzle use the magnifying glasses to search for the right puzzle's missing piece together*.

Charisse: *It's about not being prepared for a knowledge exchange. For example, you might solve a problem I have about behavior management. Then I try to solve one of your problems about...attendance or whatever. But you don't like the solution. It just doesn't fit with your classroom demographic or your teaching style. So instead, we opt to find a solution together, something we can find together.*

Max: *Am I correct that as we try to supply each other with solutions we make presumptions about each others' situations that miss the mark—we need to stop and pay closer attention to the basic differences between our relative academic situations, audiences, and knowledge we bring to the table? Are magnifying glasses we use in the end indicative of how we ultimately stopped, acknowledged the problems, and paid closer attention to what we were doing, especially when it came to the differences between our students?*

"Knowledge Exchange" delves into the confusion of teaching each other's students. Max is a trained high school teacher at a Title I school, and Charisse is a fairly new graduate teaching instructor to mostly White, middle class students. We offered resources to each other, but the implementation of teaching those resources differed based on the learning demographic. "Knowledge Exchange" is an example of composing reciprocity (Dostilio et al., 2012) because we *exchanged* knowledge on how our student demographics differed; we *influenced* our perceptions of those student demographics through stories and class observations; and we *generated* a protocol for ensuring collaborative lesson plans met the needs of each student group and our teaching styles.

Composing Comics as Rhetorical Acts of Composing Reciprocity

Our comics composing was rhetorical on two levels. On the first level, the comics are a form of rhetorical meaning making. The restrictions we imposed on our drawing and revising processes forced us to reflect on our strengths and weaknesses in only six panels. We condensed the narrative of our experiences using the rhetoric of icons by distilling entire experiences and prioritized what was most important to convey. Despite being limited in space, the panel limitation encouraged us to be resourceful with our available tools.

On the second level, our comics are rhetorical because we composed reciprocity. We critiqued the comics over our partnership. That gracious shift repositioned the focus from ourselves to the comics, and we were constructive toward the work rather than destructive to our weaknesses. Dostilio et al. (2012) outlines exchange, influence, and generativity as three

orientations *into* reciprocity. Through each comic draft, review, and revision, we accessed those orientations to achieve reciprocity. We showed the intricacies behind composing reciprocity through multimodal reflection so other practitioners could take on the labor necessary and compose reciprocity in their own partnerships. Moreover, Max expressed a deeper connection to Charisse's perspective of the partnership after viewing initial comic drafts due to the comic representing a carefully thought-out reaction of the partnership. Max learned more about Charisse from reviewing the initial comic drafts than if he had reviewed Charisse's written reflections. After viewing the final revisions, we dissociated from critiquing the comics and connected the conflict in the comics to our real-life experiences. This resulted in bringing us closer as partners, and discovering how our values align for future collaborations. Multimodal reflection is rhetorical on several levels, and accessing those levels could prove fruitful to understanding how reciprocity is achieved.

Continuing Rhetorical Reflection Practices

Multimodal reflection practices could be used in different spaces and with different partners the same way partners reflect using writing. Composing comics is not for everyone, but we chose comics due to our similar interests and our collaborative student projects. We teach our students how to navigate multimodal genres in response to their multiple intelligences, "difference and communicative diversity," and to a growing technological age (Shipka, 2016, p. 256). Consequently, it is equally important for teachers and practitioners to play with different genres as well. By working outside of our comfort zones and redefining how we approach reflection, we became better researchers and practitioners. We became more critical, engaged, and resourceful.

The purpose of this essay was to demonstrate how our comics were rhetorical acts of composing reciprocity—calling for "linguistic codes to combine, often unexpectedly and in a single composition, to fulfill rhetorical purposes"—and to promote means of reflection beyond written reflection (Jordan, 2015, p. 365). Additionally, we aimed to develop more accounts of instructors as they "learn and develop as teachers" (Leon, 2017, p. 39). By developing successful accounts of practitioners composing reciprocity through multimodal reflection, we shed light on the efforts that reciprocity requires. We hope these accounts inspire institutions to support the labor of cultivating reciprocal community-university partnerships through evaluations, funding, and resources. Our goal is to continue creating knowledge with community and university partners to further de-center traditional means of meaning making, and to further bridge the community and university.

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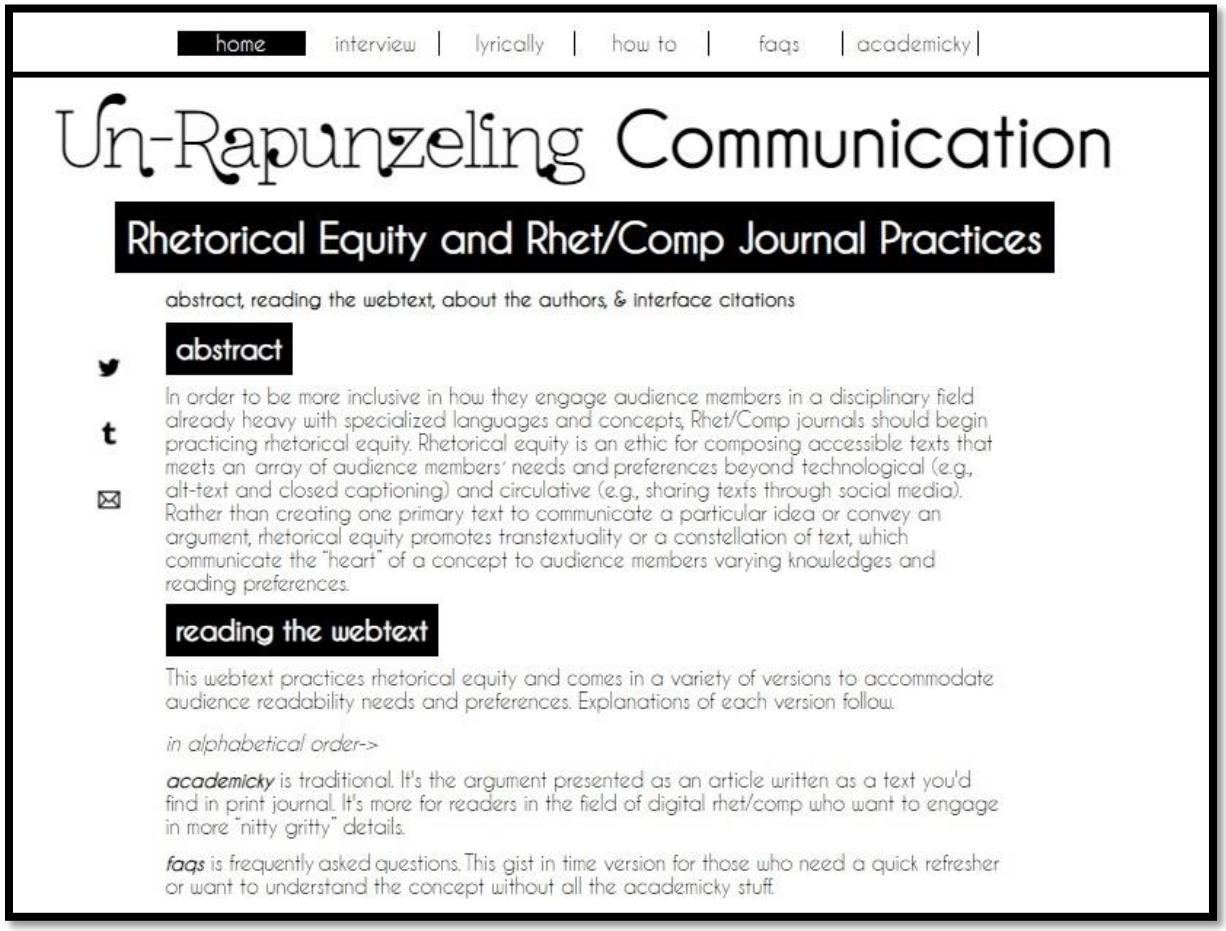
Maxwell Irving (He/Him) has been instructing social sciences courses at the college level since 2003 and is also a full-time teacher at Tucson High Magnet School and part-time instructor at Pima Community College. He specialized in cultural anthropology when he received his MA in Religious Studies from the University of Colorado at Boulder in 2006. At Tucson High, he works with the Institute of Culturally Responsive Education to make his course relevant to students' cultural and ethnic identities.

Un-Rapunzeling Communication: Rhetorical Equity and Rhet/Comp Journal Practices

Paul Muhlhauser and Tara Salvati



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#Triggered
The Invisible Labor of Traumatized Doctoral Students

Jesse Rice-Evans (she/her/hers)
Andréa Stella (she/her/hers)

Content notes: *institutional ableism, complex trauma, childhood trauma, psychiatric illness/disability, anti-fatness, substance misuse*

In 2017, I diagnosed my co-author with complex post-traumatic stress disorder (cPTSD). Everything pointed to this framework: her childhood being raised by psychiatrically disabled parents, including her father's rapid-onset bipolar disorder when she was eight years old and his subsequent estrangement and death; her mother's pernicious hoarding and developmental issues; her family's right-wing conspiracy theories about immigrants that have targeted her partner and their children; and her family's eviction from their upper-class lifestyle following her father's extended mental health crises. Everything fit, and simple PTSD wasn't quite explaining the devastating impact of her experiences on her day-to-day mood fluctuations, difficulties in her romantic relationships, and her history of substance misuse. I wanted to help her find a frame that she could make sense of, that could augment her long-standing therapy and self-care practices.

Not long after this, I continued reading about cPTSD and its emergence, inception, and impact and it hit me that this too fit my experiences: my own non-relationship with my manipulative alcoholic father, and growing up under his constant surveillance and emotional abuse, followed by similar patterns in my own personal and romantic relationships. My mother's bizarre belief that "keeping our family together" was best for me and for her, an essentially single parent to a neurodiverse and highly intellectual autodidact child (me), was actively harmful to both of us, which she couldn't face at the time. My father's drinking was out of control for over 10 years, from ages 8-18, and I have been indelibly marked by his abuse, as has my mother. I was left to guess at his emotional state at every moment, knowing that the slightest refusal in my body language, speech, and "attitude" would send him into a towering rage that lasted long into each night, his screams of insult and harm flung at my mother echoing up the stairs into my bedroom, behind a door that didn't lock.

My co-author and I have emerged from our worlds with scars: many metaphorical and literal, and have made choices that placed us back into comfortable dynamics of abuse and manipulation, co-dependence and isolation. For both of us, complementary and alternative medicine have been salves for our untreated wounds: acupuncture, somatic therapies, osteopathy, and various witchy practices of intention-setting, Tarot, spell-casting, and working

with crystals have helped us take back some of the agency that was stripped from us long ago and create stable senses of ourselves and each other. When we first met in 2016, we learned this about each other slowly, each hesitant to reveal too much weirdness at once, so used to being belittled and disregarded by men, misunderstood by women. As I write this now, in August 2020, we are more fully ourselves largely due to each other and our ongoing encouragement and support through the lifelong project of healing from trauma done to us in many forms. We are healing and we share this work with our students in our teaching work.

Image 1: *A candid photo of a small white girl-child with white-blond hair wearing a denim jumper over a patterned purple long-sleeved shirt. Jesse is dancing with someone just out of frame in the foreground. In the background, her mother, mother, a thin white woman, wears a party hat, a teal shirtdress, and a pale pink cardigan. She is leaning against a doorframe, unsmiling. Behind her stands Jesse's father in a black button-down shirt with his hands in his pockets, also unsmiling.*

My co-author and I have emerged from our worlds with scars: many metaphorical and literal, and have made choices that placed us back into comfortable dynamics of abuse and manipulation, co-dependence and isolation. For both of us, complementary and alternative medicine have been salves for our untreated wounds: acupuncture, somatic therapies, osteopathy, and various witchy practices of intention-setting, Tarot, spell-casting, and working with crystals have helped us take back some of the agency that was stripped from us long ago and create stable senses of ourselves and each other. When we first met in 2016, we learned this about each other slowly, each hesitant to reveal too much weirdness at once, so used to being belittled and disregarded by men, misunderstood by women. As I write this now, in August 2020, we are more fully ourselves largely due to each other and our ongoing encouragement and support through the lifelong project of healing from trauma done to us in many forms. We are healing and we share this work with our students in our teaching work.

I started our doctoral program in 2017, and I was immediately struck by the heavy alienation of being the most working-class person in my cohort; I was white, along with 15 others, and 2 international students from China rounded out the select group of 20 incoming students. Two white-passing people of color identified themselves later, and there seemed to be no other disabled people, one fat woman, and a smattering of cisgender LGBQ white students entering with me. To orientation, I wore a mini skirt (it was August in New York City), 4-inch platform sandals, a light top and a blazer, already self-conscious about my cheap clothes in a room full of folks fresh out of undergrad at various private schools across the country. As always, I walked with my sparkly lavender cane, and wore noise-canceling headphones until politesse demanded I remove them.

This was my first experience in my doctoral program, and it established a set of implicit rules that I have remembered in every interaction with my "peers" since: class trauma will be an everyday part of this experience; ableism will occur nonstop; fatphobic remarks will hush when I stand too close to the others, but my queerness is a common ground. Unfortunately, I am not just queer; I am a fat white crip femme anarchist from North Carolina working to dismantle white supremacy and ableism inside higher education. My work did not begin or end in graduate school, but my work has proven intimidating and even hostile to many faculty and students, and doctoral study is just another institutional hellscape that I just have to push through, my labor and my value remaining invisible—out of a desire to survive.

I am acquainted with invisibility: my chronic illnesses are all invisible unless you know what to look for: hyperextended knees and elbows, heat packs and herbal balms slapped between my shoulders and at the top joints of my arms, my foldable cane that I no longer hide, my rollator stashed at home under my apartment building staircase. Medical institutions react about how you'd expect to clinical invisibility: it's not there; you're faking; it's psychosomatic. I've lost count of the imaging and blood work that all comes back clean, aside from a smidge of T-spine scoliosis that allows me semi-regular epidural injections in my spine that provide negligible relief. I fail every test, or I pass: whichever one has no diagnostic significance.

Image 2: *A full-body mirror selfie of author Jesse Rice-Evans, a fat white femme, in a gray blazer, black jeans, round tortoiseshell sunglasses, pink slip-on shoes, holding her lavender cane at an angle. She is wearing a Pokémon-printed scarf and carrying a canvas shoulder bag.*

I get dressed up before medical appointments to be taken seriously in my fat femme body. Whiteness and the clout of my looming PhD give me much more power in these interactions than many of my friends are granted, but usually I am ignored, brushed off, chided for my "ob*sity" and released. Now in every medical appointment, my blood pressure is high. Nurses deny they have a bigger cuff to accommodate my fat arm, and when I insist, blood rushes to my head in rage at their derision. Now I include medical trauma on my growing list of triggers, and I do my best to prepare: klonopin, water, deep breaths, a nicotine vape, and a snack afterwards.

Some part of me knew the gaslighting I experience in medical settings would roll over to my doctoral program. But I wasn't prepared for the degree and severity, the sheer ongoingness of this trauma. Part of me wants to list them here, but my co-author and I have agreed to step in to handle each other's triggering content in our writing, so I will leave much of that labor to her, perhaps for another time. This agreement to collaboratively care for one another through trauma and the invisible pain of a long-term traumatized state keeps us surviving, slogging through many of our days when triggers pour over us in every meeting, every email.

Image 3: *Photo of Jesse and Andréa in Andréa's small Harlem apartment. Jesse, a fat white femme, sits at a table underneath large sunny windows in a green skirt, black graphic t-shirt, and pale blue hair. Her hand is up in a peace sign and she is making a goofy face. Andréa, a thin white Jewish long-haired butch, sits to the right with her legs crossed, holding her first child in her arms. She is wearing jeans and a black sweater and her brown hair is up in a low bun. On the right-hand wall, bookshelves are mounted and covered in books and a viney plant hangs from the tallest shelf. A wooden crib is visible in the middleground of the photo.*

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Gaslighting first entered my life at a young age, though I couldn't have named it at the time. As a young adult, I entered what would become another abusive relationship with an immature man bent on beating me down to lift himself up. He insisted I was lying, it had not happened the way I claimed, and I knew this was false; but after the 30th time being told my memories aren't real, I began to question myself: *what had I actually done? Why couldn't I remember the awful things he said I did? Why couldn't I remember saying yes?* This felt strangely familiar: my father's instability gave him permission to grasp at the same framework: *that isn't what I said* became proof of my own attempts at manipulation and rewriting history.

The first slivers of my undiagnosed neurocognitive illness emerged from this: my slippery memory feeling familiar, like how I'd rewritten my experiences with my father, calling him "difficult" and myself "difficult" when really he was *abuser* and I was *victim*. I have rewritten so many things, it's impossible to know what is real and what I remember as real and to

acknowledge the impossible synchronicity and truth to both versions. Once it made sense to look at what I had done, what I was told I had done, and hold them up to compare the two, each simulacrum was too slick and instead I dropped them to the earth and they shattered irreparably. This is difficult to face even now, the erased histories and abandoned relationships that I simply forgot existed, rendered invisible, and moved on from. If I kept moving, I felt I could move with the inertia; if it disappeared from my mind, it never mattered.

I now begin each semester with a disclaimer to my undergraduate students: *I have an undiagnosed neurocognitive illness that, along with my complex PTSD, affects my memory. I will likely repeat myself, and please bear with me and let me know if you've already heard whatever I am now saying before.* Repetition has a strange effect in my classroom: with it comes an insistent focus on clarity. We repeat until everything makes sense, which I first thought was just for me, for my own sense of movement through a course. Instead, students came to me and *thanked* me, my *brain*, for my dedication to repeating everything: explanations, definitions, deadlines, questions, assignments, policies. Somehow, while I felt I could barely make anything make sense, I was making more sense than ever. Students submitted brilliant assignments on topics I had completely forgotten about from weeks past, cited papers I knew I loved but forgot I had recommended. The stuff my own mind made invisible came roaring back in glorious pedagogical thrills.

I don't mean to downplay the seriousness of my neurological illnesses—whatever they are, they are huge and often overwhelming. But to see surprises emerging all around me reassured me that my brain, despite constant messages of its ineptitude from authority figures, was perhaps *a better teacher* without a thick fog of memory, flashes of my life's worst moments flooding in during commutes and writing workshops. Even my traumatic nightmares had cooled off, replaced by implacable darkness and quiet. Ongoing therapy and even disclosure had loosened the band of panic around my head at all times, and I had been convinced that self-care wasn't necessary work for my professional life. Experiencing this confluence of relief, clarity, and erasure brought some sense of confidence into my academic work. My ongoing reflection on the relationship between my bodymind and my pedagogy and praxis still hovers invisibly over my continuing work as an educator now teaching primarily faculty, with whom I do not disclose much of anything about my own bodymind. Despite the reach of my reflections on my own teaching and scholarship, my writing on these topics remains unpublished, invisible.

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Of course, the nature of psychiatric illness and disability is its invisibility: only when symptoms spill over into unsafe surveillance settings do these behaviors and moods actually publicly mark a bodymind as *mentally ill*, or *unstable*. While I have been privileged to avoid hospitalization for my psychiatric disabilities, this invisibility is the double edge of (privately) identifying with disability and (publicly) actually *claiming* disability. M. Remi Yergeau and Margaret Price write thoroughly around "masking" neurodiverse manners of speech and behaviors as to avoid the derision and harm that can emerge from disclosure, while Stephanie L. Kerschbaum, Laura T. Eisenman, and James M. Jones's 2017 edited collection *Negotiating Disability: Disclosure and*

Higher Education collates many narratives of disclosure in academia, to varying degrees of alienation. The double edge is this: disclose and face increased surveillance, policing, and marginalization; attempt to "pass" and face emotional and psychic exhaustion from constantly performing a more functional, neurotypical—and false—version of yourself. Either way, the labor that goes into this decision-making remains invisible, as does the theoretical, rhetorical, and analytical work that remains ongoing throughout psychiatrically disabled individuals' relationships to institutions. Ultimately, disclosure is *supposed to* function as a gateway to access—within administrators' approval of what is considered "reasonable" and "unreasonable accommodations," per the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). In practice, disclosure often marks already marginalized academics at all levels as dysfunctional and combative as we fight to have our needs seriously considered by authority figures lacking training in disability justice praxis, as defined by Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha and Mia Mingus, among many others.

In my field of composition and rhetoric, sense-making is prized as a primary goal of rhetorical work; indeed, rhetoric is often explicated as argument or persuasion based on central rhetorical tenets of pathos, ethos, and logos—common terms in first-year writing classrooms when teaching the "argument essay." Both logos and ethos emphasize the importance of logical reasoning and building credibility through *appropriate* citation and research, again underscoring the central role of "sense," or reason, in writing studies more broadly. Margaret Price's *Mad at School: Rhetorics of Mental Disability and Academic Life* unpacks these themes in relationship to psychiatric illness and the loss of the supposedly-innate function of reason in writing, communication, and rhetoric studies. This privileging of reason, intellect, and Cartesian body-mind duality is rife in academia; even my dissertation, which is intended to be a larger-scale reflection of my academic work, is viewed as "experimental" due to its engagement with embodiment and trauma and pain. If I'm too triggered to write from logos, how can I argue anything at all?

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I could continue listing aspects of my experience as a sick and disabled graduate student, but this piece would never end. Even now, in the era of distance education, I am asked incessantly to submit paperwork through administrators who have harassed and dehumanized me for asking for help; even now, panic simmers around losing my dissertation chair, who left my school due to anti-Black policies and other racist practices, and my trauma around disclosing the topics of my work to faculty in my department; even now I am asked to explain and justify basic access pedagogy practices to my peers and I must respectfully, always, decline these unpaid requests. For two years now, I have tracked the hours of my unpaid labor in service to my department, my graduate school, and while I am not ready to publish those numbers quite yet, I can assure you that the demand for my invisibilized labor, labor done through ongoing trauma, debilitating chronic pain and illness, my three academic jobs, and labor done on top of mandatory femme self-care practices, is immense and unrelenting.

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Navigating my invisibilized labor against my formal, department-approved work is insidious and ongoing, and I want to be clear how large the scale of institutional gaslighting is in higher education. Accommodations are denied because they're not "reasonable" enough, access needs can't be met because they don't exist under university interpretations of ADA mandates, I can reserve an ergonomic chair for my classes, but when it vanishes every week, I am told that is "not possible," negating my own agency to experience the same harm, the same disregard, again and again.

The harm does not stop at what happens to my spine and hips after two hours in a hard plastic seminar chair; the harm cuts into my subjectivity, my rhetoricity. After so long in pain and so many requests to mitigate the pain, after so many denials, I have begun to say it aloud: *they treat me like I'm a problem. I know I am not wanted*. For a fierce advocate and writer like me, this admission is evidence that the constant grinding down of my personhood has been relentless. I share an article I am revising with my mother and she calls to say "[she is] sorry [I] have to deal with **so much**." But I have been able always to find an advocate, someone I share enough with who can see enough of themselves in me to experience empathy and speak on my behalf. "Not this time," I tell her. My only advocates are two of my peers, and myself when trauma hasn't drained me of my will.

This is it: the invisible labor that I must trudge through like sludge, my cane and my heavy bag and the subway stairs and hard plastic chairs and overhead lights and in-person meetings during a pandemic and the paperwork I have never been told about and the administrator who hates me messaging the whole department that she is sure that I will be destroyed. Which of these has already happened and which of these emerged in my trauma-colored dreams? I think I know, but trauma both distills the invisible into something real and erases the bearer's memories: the fuzzy edges around what I have said before combatting what I felt so profoundly that I flooded my body with words like water. Trauma does this to protect, but the effect is the same: the slow erosion of my own reality: *what had I actually done?*

For higher education, trauma hasn't even entered the equation. I can spell out my triggers in detail and told that they don't qualify as ADA accommodations. Of course, I am not asking for an accommodation; I am asking for my basic needs to be met so that I may focus on my work instead of spending each class period triggered to the point of dissociation, running into the hall to vape and cry. If my triggers won't be respected, I am unable to fall in line and complete my work. My work is now self-care in desperation, hiding my ongoing tears and rage, losing my rhetoricity, my humanity, one violation at a time.

I feel *wrong* all. of. the. time. I have acted *wrong*, I've spoken out of turn, I've taken a risk I shouldn't have, I've offended, I haven't followed the simple rules. And this *wrongness* is that I, me as a person, is actually *wrong*. I shouldn't be in whatever space I'm in, with whoever I'm with, because I will in some way soil/ruin wherever I am with my presence alone.

In my body, my *wrongness* manifests as a quickening in my chest, almost like stomach butterflies but higher and more frantic that get stuck right below my throat turning my face flush. The *wrongness* comes when I'm scared I'll be found out. I'm not afraid that I'll be found out to be an imposter or fraud; I am afraid that someone will see that every day I build an operating principle from scratch. For me, there's shame in not having a clear and defined path, something I can claim as my modus operandi. This divergence from *normal* is a nod to my past that I am always trying to sprint from.

The *wrongness* turns on high in academic situations where I'm being observed or watched. What if I'm found out? What if this observer (who is not in my field and technically just a colleague) tells the department what I'm doing in my classroom? The funny thing is, what I'm *doing* is practicing a radically accessible and transparent pedagogy that these observers who have no formal pedagogical training don't understand regardless of whether or not I feel *wrong*.

My *wrongness* comes from cPTSD and a few other undiagnosed psychiatric disorders that make navigating academia brutal. But this *wrongness* also informs the way I teach because I staunchly refuse to ask anything of my students that I can't do myself. My co-author and I end up being the trailblazers of our English Department but it comes at the cost of putting our whole selves far far out on the line to demand that we can provide access solutions to our students (including hybrid and online teaching **years** before there was a pandemic). We are frontrunners and outsiders, which takes a toll especially when one of us is visibly disabled and both of us are visibly queer as fuck.

I'll use our least marginalized identity as an example (our queerness): We decided to build a First Year Writing Composition course around queer identity and multimodal composition because it's our lived experience and there was nothing like it being offered in our English Department. After the unpaid labor of constructing an entire course proposal with an extensive syllabus and reading list that took a couple of months to create, we were told by one of the governing bodies at our institution that the topic of queerness was not acceptable and that students wouldn't be interested in taking it. Our course that was initially accepted, was the only First Year Writing section to be canceled a few weeks before the fall semester—we were told the reason was "low enrollment" only later to find out that both sections had waitlists. Instantly, a space that we fought for and created as two queer femmes collapsed on itself, and we were explicitly told there was no room for us.

My *wrongness* flooded in along with my need to fight and burn it all down. But that reaction was only a thinly veiled mask over the deeper feeling: we were shut out and there was no recourse, no one to go to, no way to have our course reinstated. It felt unsafe to push the topic any further, and that sense of deflation/rejection was added to the pile. Or maybe it was another chunk cut out of who we are. Either way, it left a scar that left me apprehensive to try and summit our next battle, because there's always a next battle.

Image 4: *A selfie of the authors, Andréa and Jesse, in a sunny Taco Bell parking lot. They have recently escaped a composition studies conference and looked drained. Andréa holds the camera and is wearing a pale-blue button-down, her brown hair in a low bun. Jesse is wearing a black and white floral tank, pink round sunglasses, her torso and left arm at a jaunty angle. They are both scowling slightly.*

Vulnerability is the currency of our emotional labor. We once made the deliberate choice to *keep up appearances*, but the toll of that performance is no longer sustainable. Vulnerability has been a powerful component of our classrooms and our students are remarkably understanding. The danger with vulnerability is that it is still seen as weakness or unprofessionalism by the credentializing institutions that we work within. We're told we're too loud, that our "work is too intensely personal to lead to scholarly contribution," we're not polished enough. For me, this creates a constant tension between how I conduct myself in these spaces and how I *should* conduct myself in these spaces if I want to play into respectability politics. And this leads to exhaustion, to questioning whether or not I belong in these unwelcome spaces.

Trigger warnings are just the beginning: a bunch of white men get on the elevator and shove me into the corner, my cane kicked more than once as they chatter; I wait for a full elevator

and get brushed aside by ableds every day, but I am in the "radical leftist" space of higher education and I am never more self-conscious about the space my body takes up: fat, genderqueer, femme, just emerged from working-class; hypervisible and invisibilized. No wonder no one can consider my trauma in graduate school, as they're already terrified of my body itself.

This month (September 2020) marks 14 months since I passed my comprehensive exams for my PhD, and every instant of communication between me and my department since has been me begging for someone to take seriously the fact that, since my advisor left my college system due to systemic anti-Blackness (and wrote about it publicly), I don't have any faculty who work in my field to chair my dissertation. This leaves me desperate, cornered, every request for help soaked with desperation.

When I already am convinced that I don't belong—three years of harassment, gaslighting, and refusal have underscored my place in doctoral study—the continuous trauma of denial of access, of my basic needs as a young scholar, only results in more of the low-grade panic that has marked my graduate school experience. My only respite is the access intimacy of co-writing, group texting, and tweeting with other academics worn down from the same treatment. Academia's failure to interrogate not only the professional harm, but the emotional harm of long-term institutional betrayal and harassment, is a failure to theorize intellectual space that embraces the embodied. Body-mind duality is still a sharp edge, a razor-edged gate between chronically traumatized scholars and a promised end to betrayal by the structures we rely on to survive.

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On 'Crip Doulas,' Invisible Labor, and Surviving Academia while Disabled

Adam Hubrig, Sam Houston State University

> *"Crip mentorship/coaching/modeling at its best is 'disability doulaship.' [. . .] I am thankful for every person who has trusted me with the honor of supporting them through their journey and those who have supported me through the same. My survival and resilience has depended on it."*
>
> *—Stacey Milbern (qtd. in Piepzna-Samarasinha)*

I've recently moved to Texas, and I'm on my way to the emergency room because my remaining bits of intestine have quit working, again. In a small group chat with 4 other disabled scholars, I express my own fears about working with a new doctor, share my frustration with pain management, and ask how I might handle this situation with my new department chair and a new institution.

My disabled friends are incredibly supportive, understanding chronic illness and the need for what seems like a never-ending cycle of surgery and recovery and surgery and recovery. They also offer material support, asking if they can send me care packages or cash to help with medical costs.

In this particular chat group and in many similar interactions with disabled friends and colleagues, we do our best to make due: we support each other and are supported. We hold space to listen when one of us needs to vent. We offer advice on how to navigate the ableist spaces of academia as disabled people. We give our emotional and material support to one another in whatever ways we can. While I enjoy doing this work, it is *work*. I write about this work inspired by Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarsinha, who theorizes *care work,* the work that disabled and sick people do to support each other, work done disproportionately by queer disabled femmes of color. The survival of many disabled people trying to survive academia--and my own survival--depends on this labor continuing against a backdrop of institutional ableist structures. The most meaningful work I've done in academia has been to do this labor for others. We give advice on how to navigate ableist systems as disabled people. We affirm each other's disabled identities.

In conversation with Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarsinha, Stacey Milbern describes the role of the "crip doula." Milbern describes how this work disproportionately falls do disabled people of color, and goes on to describe the process by which disabled people welcome other disabled

people into disability. Milbern says "the transition itself, of becoming disabled or moving along the ability spectrum, is frequently invisibilized, to the point that these changes do not even have a name" (qtd in Piepzna-Samarasinha, 2018, p. 240). Often, in conversations with other disabled students and faculty, this work—this labor of affirming disabled identity, of reminding each other that we *are more than* the sum of our damn CV lines and--despite what our institutions may be telling us at times—what our bodyminds are going through are real and legitimate.

Because academia is a capitalistic, neoliberal enterprise, bent on extracting as much labor as it can from us with minimal investment in us. As Carmen Kynard argues—along with a reminder to not confuse the *job* and the *work*— "neoliberalism does not love anyone, not even its white citizenry" (2020, p. 19). Disabled people are frequently reduced to cost analysis of our access needs (Hubrig and Osorio, 2020, p. 88), and Academia deftly gaslights us about these exploitative practices, and would like us to believe that it's on us when we can't meet whichever ableist demand being made. This is only compounded for multiply-marginalized disabled people whose bodies "have been rendered immobile under the weight of discourse and inaccessible spaces" (Jackson) by the white supremacist, heteropatriarchal institutional bullshit our institutions were built on.

This gaslighting is harmful: I've noticed a pattern in conversations, recently. It goes something like this: a colleague confides in me—I'm a person who is very publicly disabled—that they experience a certain disability. I'm going to be vague here to protect people's confidentiality, but maybe they are struggling with depression or anxiety, or have POTS, or are dyslexic, or a million other disabled embodied experiences. They then add, *but I'm not disabled.* Because disabled people are pressured to do so much to conceal our disabilities—even, sometimes, from ourselves—it can be hard to claim disabled identity. I find, in these conversations, that reaffirming disability and welcoming others into disabled identity is often important work. These conversations are often difficult. But sometimes people are looking for a person they recognize as disabled to tell them their disabled embodied experiences matter, that they count. Affirming disabled experiences, affirming disabled identity is care work.

And it's that care work that builds disability communities: as Piepzna-Samarsinha said in conversation with Milbern about crip doulaing, "naming disability as a space we can be born into, not alone but supported and welcomed by other disabled people [. . .] that changes not only the entire way both individuals can experiences disability but the ways disability communities can be formed" (241). While so much discourse on disability in higher education is about how we *accommodate* disability, I'm more excited and energized about the conversations about creating disability community, about *affirming* disabled identity. I'm excited about this labor of crip doulaing as a celebration of disabled community.

I try to be attentive to the gendered, racial dynamics of this labor. Piepzna-Samarasinha draws frequent attention throughout *Care Work: Dreaming Disability Justice* to the ways in which care work is frequently expected from femmes, and particularly queer disabled femmes of color (see especially their essay "A Modest Proposal for a Fair Trade Emotional Economy"). As a white,

nonbinary, masculine-coded, queer, disabled person, it's important to maintain awareness of the amount of care work I'm asking for, and my own willingness to do care work for others. Attending to these dynamics is central to interrogating how—even within disability spaces—white supremacist, heteropatriarchal crap still gets centered.

In some ways, this is a love letter to those who do this labor—not just in my circle, not just in academia, but everywhere. It's also a love letter for those I have the honor of doing this labor for and who do this labor for me. I am grateful for disability community where and when we can create it, even if some of these coalitions and communities are short lived or if we check in once a semester or once a year or even less frequently. Of course, this community is imperfect and has its own problems just like any other, but I couldn't survive without it. The care work of affirming each other's disabled embodied experiences amid the ableist, racist, capitalist, and hetero-patriarchal systems is vital, and being in community with you is often the most joyful part of this work. I love you.

But it's also an indictment: Care work for disabled people is some of the most meaningful work I do as a scholar. It's some of the most meaningful labor I do as a human. Yet, in the bureaucratic calculus of annual reviews and other ways in which labor is quantified, understood by my institution, and rewarded, this work is rendered invisible. These systems are designed to push marginalized people out, as Christina Cedillo (2018) notes, "Within academic spaces, institutionalized communication permits some to enter privileged spaces at the expense of those who are pushed out." Confronting ableism means recognizing the devalued labor that makes disabled folks' survival possible.

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Performing My Latina Body in White Academia

White Supremacy, the Wolf in Ally's Clothing

Bernardita M. Yunis Varas, University of Colorado Boulder

"Nothing is more vulnerable
than the words in our mouth
because nothing has more power."
—Daisy Hernandez, *A Cup of Water Under My Bed,* xii

We meet at the office of the Cisneros Hispanic Leadership Institute.

I still cringe every time I see or have to say the name.

We walk to lunch a block down and sit down to discuss how my performance was that summer. I taught the writing part of the 3-week pre-college program. I had 16 students I met with three times a week to work on their writing, prep their essays for college applications, and talk about being Latinx in 2017 in the United States.

"You need to not be so chummy with your students," she started.

We are preparing them for the real world.

"How could you not edit her speech for the graduation?!"

I didn't want to change her voice. Of 16 students, 10 had voted for her to represent them at the graduation. I had already changed "the Caucasians"—yeah, she was sassy—to "those that continue to oppress people of color."

"No, we need to be heavy handed with the edits. We need to teach them."

We need to teach them how to pass for white, she means.

***

I want to tell you my story.

Speaking of this isn't easy. I was raised to be proper, to be civil, to not complain. I feel the sting of judgment as I prepare to write this, with a voice inside me saying, "Don't complain. Who wants to hire someone who makes trouble and whines? No one. Stop it. Be grateful. You're

trying to have a good job. You should be grateful. *Como te vas a poner a reclamar?* You're going to screw up your chances in the future if you air out all these ungrateful complaints."

And yet…

I have learned I have to. If I don't speak, if we don't claim the problems with the systems that keep Black and brown women laboring to the benefit of others but not ourselves, then the system continues, and we never get our due. I must write this. Because this is how I claim my space. Because this is how I claim my *value*. I *know* I am worth more than this. And that is what scares you. That I know this, and therefore, will ask more of you.

* * *

Through this essay, I use performative writing to claim a space for Latinxs and women of color. Performance is where marginal voices get to claim a space in academia. Specifically, I am using this opportunity to write a performative piece that shows the extra labor Latinxs scholars and professors often are forced to engage in to be considered worthwhile in the academy, and how we are encouraged to enforce these demands on our own students of color.

Complicating further the already fraught and overexerted space we exist in is the narrative of how even within "our" communities of immigrants and allies, there are folks who buy into white supremacist ideals and demand white-supremacist-espousing pedagogy and behaviors from us. When we already must work harder than our white counterparts to be valued, how much harder does our labor become when fellow Others in the academy push us out with critiques, expectations, and demands that dehumanize and diminish us and our experiences?

With this performative writing piece, I explore narratives of experience as an adjunct professor at a Primarily White Institution (PWI) where I was asked to labor specifically to educate white folks on how to work and understand black, brown, and immigrant folks, where I was invited to take on extra labor—without getting any benefits—where one of these positions brought me to work with Latinxs students under the supervision of a Spanish-immigrant white woman who attempted to squash my ability to connect with students for the sake of maintaining whiteness as the standard.

As my story shows, our labor is often sought after as women of color in the academy because we can provide mentorship, service, teaching, and other duties that call for "diversity and inclusion" so desperately need. Our bodies within spaces of academia serve purposes that maintain the status quo, leaving us powerless and yet useful for this machine. What this labor doesn't consider is the challenges and extra toll this takes on us as graduate students, professors, and more. Writing this piece creates more space for our communities to see ourselves, to bring voice to the challenges we face in hushed tones and build strength to survive hidden in bathroom stalls and office corners with tear-filled eyes and frustrated rage. It participates in efforts to build community and foster conversations with Latinxs and other women of color on issues of labor (emotional, physical, mental, intellectual), solidarity building, and on navigating policy imposed against both our physical bodies and bodies of knowledge.

Transgressions in Performative Writing

Engaging with what scholars like Frederick C. Corey and D. Soyini Madison tell us, there is power in the personal narrative and in getting to tell our stories. Given that specifically, these moments I reflect on here are stories of the silencing, Othering, and exoticizing I experienced in my labor as a Latina in a PWI, using this academic space to speak these experiences, with critical reflections on their larger significance, is my way to claim power and space in a white-dominated environment. I want to do the work that Gloria Anzaldúa describes of women of color who write to survive: "I write to record what others erase when I speak, to rewrite the stories others have miswritten about me, about you" (1987, p. 169). Now, here, I feel I must write this essay because, while this PWI gave me chances to grow and develop as an instructor, these narratives evidence the ways in which the white space tried to erase me, rewrite me, change, and diminish me.

Coming from a rhetoric-focused master's program, performance studies seemed, like Bernadette Calafell describes, an "intoxicating" pleasure-giving lover (2013b, p. 431). It is a space that allows me to exist in my fullness, honors that, celebrates that, encourages it, and needs it to be fed. As Della Pollock writes, "performative writing is an important, dangerous, and difficult intervention into routine representations of social/performative life" (1998, p. 75). Through these studies of performance, I have understood the importance and need for performative writing not only in the field of rhetoric, but as a transgressive force engendered by and filled with possibility. In fact, from reading and studying performance, I have come to understand that this performative intervention in rhetoric is vital to keep rhetoric relevant and having continued value in communication. After all, "Performance enriches rhetoric through embodied purpose, heartfelt empathy, and symbolic action while rhetoric politicizes performance through contested assumptions, discursive power, and critical publicity" (Madison, 1999, p. 111). One must exist with the other for both to continue to function powerfully and transformatively. Performance is then a site of possibility that has transgressive power in the academy and in society at large.

Anne Harris and Stacy Holman Jones note that "writing is an act of performance" (2016, p. 2). What Harris and Holman Jones highlight here is that writing itself is an "embodied and spatial practice" (p. 2). This helps us to understand how performance exists in the intersection and interaction between the writer, the audience, and the performative act/written text. It is there that change can happen. Something happens in the act of performance—in the act of me writing this essay—that makes us feel something and changes our own experiences. In fact, even the preparation for writing this has been an embodied, almost-painful experience. Researching and remembering takes a toll as I prepare to relive the moments that hurt me.

Similarly, Ronald Pelias writes, "Performative writing features lived experience, telling, iconic moments that call forth complexities of human life. With lived experience, there is no separation between mind and body, objective and subjective, cognitive and affective… Performative writing attempts to keep the complexities of human experience intact, to place the ache back in the scholars' abstractions" (2005, p. 418). It is, thus, the embodiment and connection of lived experience and meaning-making through body knowledge that exist in

performative writing. And I feel this ache even as I dig back into the recesses of my memory—and my email inbox—to relive and retrieve the memories and moments of my work with this program and my work at this PWI. However, this process of reflection and reflexivity, while painful, is fruitful. I am working to contextualize my story to larger significance as we think of power and brown bodies in academic spaces.

This is the power I find in performative writing: the value given and abstracted from the body. In fact, this connection to the body is how "Performative writing often evokes identification and empathic responses. It creates a space where others might see themselves" (p. 419). Indeed, these moments of identification (and disidentifications that José Esteban Muñoz writes about), are constitutive of life-giving possibilities for the Othered. This methodology for theory-making through performance studies in rhetoric honors our lived experiences and sees the body as a receptacle of that experience. As a rhetorical methodology—or one that challenges and expands traditional rhetorical methods—performance is life-giving because it creates a space for me to exist. It creates a space where my lived experience has meaning beyond just mere occurrences of everyday life. They become more than *just*.

Performance, thus, gives me the opportunity to create a space that allows "me to safely oscillate between my two worlds" (Abdi, 2014, p. 16). This allows us to ""embrace the Otherness in myself," which has made me long for stories of other marginalized bodies that have been silenced and forced to live on the hyphens of their dueling identities" (Calafell, 2013a, p. 7, qtd. in Abdi 16). In fact, this is why writing these moments is vital for my own survival—in my reading of others, I have found myself. In my writing, I hope to create spaces for other Others to find themselves. Like Muñoz tells us, through performance of disidentifications, we are recycling stereotypes lobbed against us "as powerful and seductive sites of self-creation" (1999, p. 4). It is in this opportunity for Otherness that a huge part of the value of performance exists because it creates a space for and invites more representation and possibility for marginalized bodies to exist in. Ultimately, I find that narrative "is a literary form ideal for lives governed by silence," which leads to performance's transgressive power (Corey, 1998, p. 249).

So, despite my anxieties and hesitations, I know I must write this essay. I hear how Anzaldúa urges us on: "the future depends on the breaking down of paradigms, it depends on the straddling of two or more cultures," a place I understand and exist in constantly (1987, p. 80). This performative writing methodology asks that we be reflective and be willing to take risks. In fact, Dwight Conquergood calls for "a politics of the body deeply in action with Others" (Madison, 2007, p. 826; see also Conquergood, 2003a, and Conquergood, 2003b). In telling this story, I feel the fear and anxiety of revealing my true feelings about these experiences, of calling out oppression even in ally and supposedly brown-inclusive spaces. Hence, performative writing can be "an important, dangerous, and difficult intervention into routine representations of social/performative life" (Pollock, 1998, p. 75). These claims of the value and importance of performative writing provide further reasoning for the value and need for this piece to be performative and self-reflexive as I tell these stories of my experiences as a professional in white academia.

Madison writes that "co-performative witnessing is to live in and spend time in the borderlands of contested identities" (2007, p. 828). So, I must situate myself here because I believe I must participate in this decolonial project of defixing the master narratives by giving space to the Othered, the marginalized, the non-colonial, non-white. I want my story to shift the locus of power to the voices most often labeled strange. By doing this, and by my own practice participating in this decolonial project by writing my own performative writing and even by my very existence, we are shifting and decolonizing the work of rhetoric and oppressive structures.

Frameworks & Contextualization of Narratives

As noted for this work, I am engaging with work by Bernadette Calafell, D. Soyini Madison, Carmen R. Lugo-Lugo, Bryant K. Alexander, Della Pollock, Shadee Abdi, Haneen Ghabra and others as they work to name, understand, and challenge the ways in which faculty of color are mistreated, marginalized, tokenized, and limited in their roles as teachers and scholars. These scholars developed tools I can now use to further challenge the voices of white supremacy and patriarchy that dominate the limited opportunities and negative welcome I receive in certain spaces. Work from Alexander and Calafell in particular speaks to the ways in which traditional, white academic spaces and norms silence the stories and lives of people of color. In telling my stories working with the "Hispanic" leadership program, I can situate myself in this place where my loud, Latina, "chummy" character did not fit with the white standards the leadership of the program wanted to espouse. I can speak to what Alexander describes:

> We all exist between the lines of our narrated lives, the stories we tell and the stories that are told about us. We all exist between the lines, the unsaid thoughts in the other's description. We also read between the lines, adding our hopes to the unspoken dreams and the dailiness of our shared existence. I approach ethnographic, autobiographic and autoethnographic research as a way of reading between the lines of my own lived experience and the experiences of cultural familiars-to come to a critical understanding of self and other and those places where we intersect and overlap (1999, p. 310).

And I invite you to join me in this process. The scholarship of these authors provides me with methodologies I use here for sharing my own stories of my experiences in academia and how I find myself "between the lines of [my] narrated [life]" (p. 310).

Through this writing, I tell of my own pedagogy to challenge the standards that white and white-passing faculty buy into by liberating these stories from the confines of civility and propriety. In so doing, I follow Tracey Patton's example of using these methodologies to look at the "inferential sexism and racism endemic to U.S. higher education" since these are just as dangerous as overt sexism and racism because of their subtlety (2004, pp. 60, 81). In fact, Patton makes the claim that civility is used to disguise this racism, squash difference, and silence Others. While we may be monstered in academia, I tell my students to embrace the Othered monstrosity of their/our identities (Calafell, 2015). Embracing that is itself a transgressive acceptance that breaks with the colonial mind-control efforts of whiteness in academia.

As Calafell argues, white academic spaces often make women of color into monstrosities. Our affect, our supposed-wild, exotic nature, must be "tamed" to exist here because our "presence

in this space is conditional" (p. 19). So, writing this personal narrative is my act of resistance. And this is "what performative writing offers that more traditional forms of scholarly writing do not" (Pelias, 2005, p. 417). In using my privileged access to this education to write this performative piece on the impacts of the labor demands of academia on my Latina body, I am challenging the expectation that I am here complete a degree and teach and fulfill an expendable capitalist goal. We do not simply exist to become a "prostitute, a servant, and a customer service representative" as is often the case for Latinas in higher education (Lugo-Lugo, 2012, pp. 40-41). Carmen Lugo-Lugo tackles these moments of microaggressions and exaggerated expectations by analyzing the three elements that operate in these circumstances: being a woman of color, teaching subjects some do not value, and teaching at a time when universities are viewed as corporate entities providing a service. These three elements come together to set up the troubling expectation that women in academia, and specifically Latinas, are expected to do certain things, and seen as expendable in other ways. So, instead of allowing myself to be used and be expendable, I am using this space to call out the damaging expectations put on women of color in academia and transgress them with this narrative.

You will not get away with this abuse of my multiple identities
without being called to task on it. It is overdue.

My aim for this piece is to illuminate the voices of these "monsters," "prostitutes," "servants," and "customer service representatives" in order to make space for our real lived experiences, to demonstrate how these demands imprint upon our bodies, and to show how we transgress them by creating systems of solidarity. Allowing Alexander and Warren's (2002) work to inform my own praxis of performative writing, this writing process gives me a place to engage this narrative performance to make sense of my own experiences in institutional spaces that aim for diversity and inclusion, and yet continue to fail the bodies of color. Calafell's "Mentoring and Love: An Open Letter" (2007) is particularly instructive because, in her letter, she processes the expectations put on her as a woman of color in the academy, and the ways in which her pedagogical, mentoring methods disrupt these expectations and empower her experiences and her students. Furthermore, this letter gives me language for experiences I lived that I write about in this project, giving me further context in which to situate them as moments of silencing and limiting of me as a Latina whose affect is often thought inappropriate or too much.

To tell this story and situate it in broader social, cultural, as well as performance studies contexts, I narrate moments of my professional academic career as an adjunct at a PWI in Washington, D.C., interspersed with connections to critical theoretical frameworks that allow for further meaning-making. The key moment I narrate here focus on my experiences working for a Hispanic leadership program at a PWI and the feedback I received from the white Spanish woman who directs the program and supervised my work. The telling of these stories in the broader context of the monster-making of Latinas in the academy, the limiting roles provided to POC, and continual silencing and Otherizing that occurs will dually participate in efforts of decolonizing the academy and creating space for my own academic and pedagogical work that is not as white-passing as my skin-tone.

A Latina Surviving in Academia: When Your Kin Don't Have Your Back

Let me take you back to the start. I began this essay with a moment. In 2017, I taught the writing part of a pre-college program for a "Hispanic" leadership institute at the PWI I worked in. I had trouble with the name of the program, but early on, I didn't want to take on that battle.

Do they realize that "Hispanic" was imposed on us by the federal government as they tried to categorize us into an Other they could understand?

This term is not preferred by most of us and it is erasure in action.

It is painful.

The term was problematic and has been for decades. In fact, as many note, "The Hispanic othered-self is, through its implicit homogenization, a denial of the diversity of national, linguistic, social, historical, cultural, gendered, racial, political, and religious experiences of at least 25 million people" (Oboler, 1992, p. 22). It is common knowledge that the insult "spic" is derived from "Hispanic," which only makes sense when we consider that "the term Hispanic can have the effect of denying [people] their sense of self" (p. 22). In fact, as Alfred Yankauer wrote back in 1987, "[w]hat distinguishes the "Hispanics" is that they are lumped together as a single group without even the dignity of being assigned to a country of origin" (p. 15).

We are more than this.

But I was an adjunct. Someone was excited to have me working with them. They invited me to teach the writing part of this pre-college program. It sounded both easy and fun and would supply me some of the necessary extra income I would need during the summer. I wasn't going to take on the battle of challenging the name of the institute because of its messed-up, racist history. At least it was a space that was giving brown, immigrant, DACA students opportunities they wouldn't have if this program didn't exist.

So, we take what we get and are grateful, verdad?

Que le vamos a hacer.

It's our immigrant story.

It's the brownness in our bodies, however invisible.

We learn to make do.

We learn to be grateful for opportunities, even though opportunities are

shaded in oppressive, racist colors of generosity and benevolence.

That summer, we began preparing for the 3-week program. We met a few times to plan out the lessons alongside the activities they had scheduled for the students. I shared my lesson plans with the Director, the Spanish immigrant who led the program for the college students and the pre-college program. I was excited to work with her, a fellow immigrant, heavily accented, somewhat-neurotic. But something felt strange with her. We have those vibes. We have those feelings. We just know. And then…

We read through my materials for the lessons, looking over the readings I've selected: "Introductions and Who are Latinxs?"

✓ *Revisit group and teacher introductions*

✓ *Discuss Latinx representations and our own voz/voice*

✓ *Review aim of writing part of the Caminos Al Futuro program.*

✓ *Review homework instructions for Friday's 1st Workshop session*

"Ugh, I won't use that term."

"Which one?"

"Latinx. Que ridiculo. I just hate those silly, academic fads," she says to me and the gay, Latino man coordinating the summer program with her.

In my head, I'm boiling. A FAD?!

Identities are not fads!

What is wrong *with this woman?*

I wondered, at first. But it also landed so quickly. Deeply, in my bones, I understood. They may want it to call it "folks of older generations" and "more traditional people," but I see it clearly. Whiteness is preferred by the colonizer. Whiteness, as Ghabra defines it, is the "system of power that privileges performances of Western civility through a White/Anglo-Saxon learning" (2018, p. 3). This definition is particularly useful because it speaks to the "racial superiority" that whiteness espouses, such as "favoring philosophies and performances of both the white people and those who re-perform and re-secure it adequately" (p. 3). Whiteness, as in not the Other. This whiteness that this supervisor performed, re-performed, and attempted to re-secure with her feedback to me and my work. The civil. The proper. The one that fits.

It was a small, tiny moment, this one. Still, I wondered what my fellow young, Latinx person thought when he heard her dismiss it. Maybe he didn't even care. Maybe he didn't believe in the reclaiming and transgressive power of the Latinx.

But I did.

I think I knew in that moment. However, a job is a job and I needed it. So, we forged on. We planned the summer course. I taught. She gave me her instructions and expectations—teach, ask them to vote on a representative to speak at graduation, get them to draft personal statements, and so on.

Then, graduation day arrived. Earlier in the week, the student the class selected—one of the two DACA students in the program—emailed me her draft of her speech. It pained me to edit it, but I knew by now that the Director would want things a certain way. While I loved the sassiness of her words—a reclamation of power taken from us—, I knew that these words could not be said as they were written. Trained in my work at the Writing Center and with my own research and experience working with multilingual writers, I knew that my imperative was not to take away her voice (see Severino, 2009). I hated doing it, but I did it. I edited out "the Caucasians" and replaced it with those who oppress us. The message was there. Her point was left clear. I violated her righteous sass so the Director would not lose it over this powerful detail. I hated the negotiation, but I tried to find a middle ground. It did not do much good.

"Did you even edit this?!"

"How could you not look at this?!

"We were editing at 6am today!"

"She can't say that!"

Every admonition cut little slits into my warrior shield.

Am I in middle school again? Did I fuck up?

Am I getting detention—wait, fired?

Fuck.

Are they still going to pay me?

Will she tell other faculty in the university?

Are people going to not want to hire me?

Wait, is she even right?

No! I wasn't going to take away her voice. She received a mandate from her peers, and it was not my place to take that away!

"But the donors…"

"We are here to educate them. To prepare them for the real world."

"I expected a heavy hand. You should've done more"

Patton's (2004) analysis of the use of civility across campuses is useful here as well because it helps to see these conversations with my supervisor, and the way in which she called for civility, to train students to pass and learn how to "be in the real world," in her words. I believe these words and actions fit what Patton describes as the endemic inferential sexism and racism that exists in higher education.

It's ironic, really. One of my biggest lessons with the silencing powers of whiteness came from a white Spaniard. A "friendly" reminder that we can't forget they were our colonizers. They may speak my languages, they may live immigrant lives, and carry accents on their tongues, but they are not my kin. They uphold white supremacy. They ARE white supremacy. They believe they hold the right, the truth, the good. We are the loud, the brown, the bad, the unshapely, the out of place, the exotic monsters, and we must be tamed.

She wanted me to shift. She did not want me to relate to students as equals, making "homeplace" to survive in academic spaces that are racist and continue to Other us as WOC in these fields (hooks, 1994). No. While director of this program, her job was to create white-robots out of brown bodies. She didn't see her role as support, but a whitening.

That is not how I see my job. In line with Calafell's descriptions of mentorship in academia, my work is about survival and care. And love. My work fits more with Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* and *Pedagogy of Hope*. As Freire writes, this is "written in rage and love, without which there is no hope. It is meant as a defense of tolerance…and radicalness" (2014, p. 4). In their same vein, work of others like Holly Hungerford-Kresser and Amy Vetter (2012), and Gloria Kersey-Matusiak (2004) support the importance of that faculty of color can have for students of color, especially in these PWIs. This is why Calafell's work to me is so life-giving. It speaks to the importance that faculty of color, and WOC specifically, can have for students of color. She highlights how important these relationships between faculty and students of color are for both parties, and how they are built and guided by an ethics of love. In fact, "love is very necessary," she writes (Calafell 2007, p. 436). Calafell's letter to her student in "Mentoring and Love" gives me language for the experiences I have lived that I reflect on in this project. It gives me further context in which to situate my stories as moments of silencing and limiting of me as a Latina whose affect is considered inappropriate or too much.

"Don't be so chummy with your students," she said to me.

Her words are burned into my heart.

She tried to diminish me.

But I am not letting her.

In the spirit of Muñoz, I am recycling her attacks to my pedagogical philosophy and burning them into my heart as points of pride. You will not diminish me. You will not shame me into

hating my affect because you cannot handle or understand it. I *know* my students see it, receive it, and need it. They respond in kind and feel seen in ways they haven't. Your critique will not break me into submission. Instead, I will rise with pride to meet my students where they are and use my pedagogy as my weapon to fight your white supremacy.

Conclusion

The telling of these stories in the broader context of the monster-making of Latinas that Calafell discussed in *Monstrosity, Performance, and Race in Contemporary Culture* (2015). It also engages in naming the limiting roles provided to BIPoC that Lugo-Lugo writes about in *Presumed Incompetent: The Intersections of Race and Class for Women in Academia* (2012) This testimonio challenges the continual silencing and Otherizing that occurs in academia while dually participating in efforts to decolonize the academy and create space for my own academic and pedagogical work that is not as white-passing as my skin-tone.

By speaking, by writing, by owning these truths of my experiences, I claim my space. The space that was not given to me then. By calling out universities and their capitalist, corporate tendencies of extracting labor from people, and naming the real, physical, financial damage that this creates in us, I challenge calls for civility and invite the truths of black and brown bodies to be centered. I was raised not to cause a fuss or make trouble. But now, I see the damage that not making this fuss has caused. And so, I speak. And I write. And I call to task the whiteness that surrounds and suffocates us, attempting to erase and destroy us.

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Book Review

Rhetorical Crossover: The Black Presence in White Culture

Burrows, C. D. (2020). *Rhetorical crossover: The Black presence in white culture*. University of Pittsburgh Press.

Although teacher-scholars in rhetoric and composition have done much to push against systemic racism in US society, racism remains a serious problem in the discipline. Citing problems such as conflation of race and whitewashing that further marginalize Black students, scholars like Vershawn Ashanti Young (2016), Jacqueline Jones Royster and Jean C. Williams (1999), and Staci Perryman-Clark and Collin Craig (2016) argue for teachers, scholars, and allies to position Blackness at the center of scholarship and pedagogy in the field in order to address the systemic and structural racism in US schools. Evoking April Baker-Bell's work on Black linguistic justice (2020), the NCTE/CCCC Black Caucus issued a list of pedagogical demands set against institutionally racist and oppressive practices (2020). In the education system, Black people are confronted with pedagogical versions of the Black cultural literacy as they negotiate racist constraints.

Cedric D. Burrows, building upon important work and research by scholars of color in rhetoric and composition, uses his *Rhetorical Crossover: The Black Presence in White Culture* to advocate for "audience" and "revision" of Black rhetorical presence in the white mainstream as antiracist strategies (Young; Inoue; Royster) that center Blackness in higher education and beyond (52-53; 70). According to Burrows, Black rhetorical presence is a reality where Black people's rhetorical and cultural practices and experiences are foregrounded and displayed in different modes (18). Burrows examines how Black rhetorical presence, rooted in African American culture, interacts with and challenges whiteness in western culture. He names the movement of Black rhetorical presence into white mainstream as "Rhetorical Crossover" (19). He argues that when Black rhetorical presence "crosses over" into white culture, it is subjected to a Eurocentric lens, thereby becoming whitewashed. Burrows asserts that this whitening/whitewashing process subjects the unique cultural features of Black rhetoric to alteration and erasure. Nevertheless, through the concept of rhetorical crossover, he demonstrates the uniqueness of Black rhetorical tradition in a dominant white culture to promote social change and survivance. The reality of Black people's negotiation of the complexities and constraints established by systemic racism provides a contextual framework for understanding "rhetorical crossover" (22). Basically, this book illustrates strategies of survivance as grounded in Black epistemologies; African Americans produce knowledge and achieve agency in response to racism (Perryman-Clark & Craig 8-9). Using Black people's experiences of rhetorical crossover in the media, popular culture, and textbooks, Burrows offers an insightful framework for antiracist

pedagogues and the African American community with which to challenge the whitewashing of Black rhetorical presence when it crosses over into spaces occupied by white audiences.

Throughout the book, Burrows presents the everyday intricacies and complexities of the narratives and realities constructed by both African American and white communities whenever Black culture interacts with white culture. He does this by foregrounding the discussion of each chapter with personal and cultural stories that inform his purpose to challenge racist institutions and dehumanizing narratives (xii, 139). For example, he uses textual threads to uncover the whitewashing of Martin Luther King Jr.'s texts and proposes how such texts can be taught to highlight their "knowledge of multiple rhetorical dimensions" (65). Burrows uses Afrocentric theories to ground his conceptualization of "Black rhetorical crossover" with the aim of giving credit to the pivotal role that Black rhetorical traditions play in US rhetorical traditions. What makes this book so intriguing is Burrows' ability to highlight how the dominant narrative seeks to erase the dignity of Black people while showing how Black people have been pushing back and transforming racist narratives to reclaim their humanity and identity (xii). Burrows coins important concepts, such as "cultroscripting," to examine the rhetorical crossover of Blackness into the white mainstream.

In chapter one, the author uses the case of Dinah Washington, an African American singer who was arguably "the Queen of Blues" (23), to illustrate how Black people engage in a five-stage rhetorical crossover. These stages include learning the rhetorical features of the Black community, gradually developing a desire for a larger community including the white community, achieving success but becoming altered through "whitescripting" and "whitescaping," and losing mainstream popularity while attempting to maintain popularity in the home community. "Whitescripting" refers to the phenomenon of altering African American discourse to "fit" into white discourse (21,45), while "whitescaping" is centering whiteness in the visual reality of African Americans (20, 71). Burrows asserts that white culture only accepts certain forms of Blackness that can be whitewashed.

Chapter two examines how the African American community adopts the concept of "cultroscripting" to respond to the whitescripting of Black rhetorical presence. Burrows' term, "cultroscripting," refers to the phenomenon of decentering whiteness and centering all cultures while acknowledging their influences and values (45, 55). Through illustrations, Burrows raises serious concerns about how textbooks are whitewashed and how composition teachers, especially white teachers, employ problematic practices and frameworks to teach texts produced by African Americans. Extending the concept of listening, Burrows takes up Royster's argument in "History in the Spaces Left: African American Presence and Narratives in Composition Studies" that people who enjoy privileged positions need to acknowledge "the historical and cultural underpinnings'' of Black people's work and to apply listening strategies to address Black rhetorical presence in white mainstream (68-71). By cultivating antiracist responses, cultroscripting helps in this work by reinforcing antiracist and social change approaches, for example, as explored in *Black Perspectives in Writing Program Administration: From the Margins to the Center*, edited by Staci Perryman-Clark and Collin Craig (2019).

In chapter three, Burrows examines how white and Black communities use whitescaping and Afroscaping, respectively, to create visual realities of Black presence in American society. Whitescaping constructs a "visual reality" which presents Black people as mono-dimensional and dependent on White people; this construction allows white people to "remain sympathetic" even though Black people are victims of racism and police brutality (71). To deconstruct whitescaping, Black people engage in Afroscaping. For Burrows, Afroscaping is creating visual reality of African Americans and reinforcing the historical relevance of the visual with the aim of promoting harmony (71, 97). Afroscaping allows Black people to construct a multidimensional African American reality which strengthens community and emphasizes historical influences guiding even today's pro-Black movements (Burrows 71). By analyzing African American movies, he discusses how cultroscripting and Afroscaping help Black people respond to whitewashing and construct a reality where they "control their own identities" (97). This chapter interrogates some underlying flaws in racist tropes such as "Angry Black Person" (80).

Burrows uses chapter four to examine the whitesplaining of Black people in relation to socio-political and socio-economic issues. To help his audience have a better understanding, he uses stories from his lived experiences to illustrate how the mainstream equates Blackness with incompetence and victimization (99). In response, African Americans adopt the concept of Afroplaining with the aim of regaining their voice and agency to speak for themselves, reaffirm their humanity and identity, and reclaim their centered position in American history (99-100). Burrows defines Afroplaining as the phenomenon of Black rhetorical presence challenging systemic and institutionalized racism. This chapter will surely prove relevant to scholars who are personally familiar with the social injustices meted out to marginalized people.

In the concluding chapter, the author builds upon W.E.B. Du Bois' concept of "double consciousness" to explain how African Americans pay the "Black tax" to become successful as they cross over into the white mainstream. Burrows walks the reader through the many different characteristics of paying "Black tax," which include presenting an acceptable form of Blackness to the white world, appreciating the generosity of white society for allowing Black people into its institutions, and taking on the labor of solving racism and discrimination (131-139). Burrows breaks down each characteristic by again offering examples from his lived experiences. This approach makes his book interactive and relational.

In this book, Burrows explicitly demonstrates how Black people employ knowledge rooted in Afrocentric theories to negotiate whitewashing of their Black rhetorical presence in the everyday world. Personal stories and cultural narratives create room for a much-needed framework to explore marginalized rhetorical presence, Black community literacy, and resistant rhetoric for the purpose of "collective empowerment and social change" (Shimabukuro 21). Burrows uses storying as a methodology to illustrate subversive strategies that teacher-scholars of color and their allies can engage in with their scholarship and teaching within racist institutions and beyond.

Though this book seems to be concentrated more in rhetoric and composition, it can also serve as a valuable resource for educators, scholars and activists on antiracist work, scholarship, and pedagogical practices beyond academia. Furthermore, this book challenges white institutions to learn about African Americans and their rhetorical presence with the aim of decolonizing themselves and decentering the deep-rooted racist ideologies that drive institutions. This book has major implications for African American rhetorics and rhetorics of marginalized cultures more broadly. Burrows' call to action for educators reflects the proactive stance of the NCTE/CCCC Black Caucus leadership who calls on us to break the silence regarding racism in US classrooms and society and recall Blackness and Black rhetorical presence from the margins.

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The *Journal of Multimodal Rhetorics*

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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.

For alphabetic texts, two versions should be submitted, one that includes your name and institutional affiliation, the second with all identifying information removed. Please use .doc or .docx files. For videos, podcasts, and webtexts, please remove as much identifying information as possible.

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 or gif. 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.

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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.

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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.

Distributions (Digital Data Collections)

Content may take the form of a textual compilation, a song or video playlist, social media "storytelling," or any other multimodal assemblage. Each collection should be curated around a central theme and advance an argument of social, political, or cultural importance in a para-rhetorical manner. For example, the Black Lives Matter Playlist on Spotify.

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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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