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Chapter 1: Hope

The Woodstock Nation, as the young counter-culture has been called, receives its information largely from underground radio stations, from television, and from the cinema. And since English teachers agree that we learn to communicate by imitation . . . why not ask the student to express himself in the way he is most often communicated to? By the time he reaches college composition class, he has already learned the language and the techniques of visual communication. Therefore, an alternative to written composition classes . . . is obviously the filmmaking class. (Richard Williamson, 1971, "The Uses for Filmmaking as English Composition")

Professor Bond introduced the workshop by stating that he found the first twenty years of CCCC boring, though he had attended faithfully and had wanted to enjoy the meetings. Now he feels that a workshop on film promises that we are on the threshold of something big and important and different. (Martha Heasley Cox, 1969, Recorder, *CCCC Workshop Reports*)

We research a question, hoping to support our hunches, the graspy sense of value we attach to our work. Often, we struggle. Sometimes, we find leads that trace a coherent line through vibratory invention fields. Sometimes, we find that someone has been there before, not in a vague whispery way, but in a way that says, "I've always been after what you are now about." In this latter scenario, one might be disappointed, move on to new ideas, seeking the hot young thing that will leave its shiny mark. Alternatively, in this "been there" scenario, we might also find that the earlier gesture was—while charmingly affect-laden and hopeful—somewhat less than ideally complete in its rhetorical validity, less than fully supported but nonetheless worthy of publication because of its passion and hope and desire. Emergent sublime. I find that much early Composition scholarship reads in this way, but I don't deride this tendency. Instead, this early passion, underwriting so many arguments about film in Composition is fairly enchanting, and in its tacit rhetorical attunement and interdisciplinary vision, this early work is also highly rational. *Cruel Auteursism* wants to honor these earlier hopes by integrating works from affect, rhetoric, film, and both historical and contemporary "film-composition" scholars. The latter, through their willingness to take up their cameras and

begin making films as scholarship, have begun the work of fulfilling the earlier hopes of those contemplating the roles of film in writing classrooms and highlighting their shimmering rhetorical promises. The “fulfillment” takes place in Composition classrooms and in digital scholarship that is often best (in my arguably biased view) performed “live.” As for the promises of early film-composition’s rhetorical articulation, I’ll gesture toward elaborating and in many ways providing the validity of many early arguments with a variety of contemporary sources that support the hopeful claims they’ve made. That is to say, I am attempting to create a sense of the ambient scenes surrounding the emergence of film-composition, scenes that are more clearly coming into view via scholarly works that now appear to support earlier claims. To be sure, there is much work to be done in order to fully capture the fine-grained detail of these scenes. The film version will perhaps provide a more fitting venue for the fuller drama, while this book seeks to create a sense of the affective contours shaping film-composition.

Today, we’re making films in composition classrooms. Composing with playful joy and passion, we craft rhetorically sophisticated works that radiate far beyond the contours of an 8.5 x 11-inch page (or screen approximation of the same). Beyond watching, or drawing from content to generate topics, and practice summary writing, or highlighting cultural rhetorics for analysis and critical intervention (all good moves), we’re making films. I’ve been making films as my primary form of scholarship since around 2004 (publications surfacing in 2008, unspooling into the present). As I have conceptualized, shot, and edited my films and their contextualizing webtexts, I have been writing this book. I’ve been writing with a view toward capturing “How We Have Talked About Film in Composition,” interested in illuminating obvious rhetorical trends, mapping developments in the field and in culture at large, and hoping to discover support for what I had been finding in my DIY digital filmmaking activities, that filmmaking is powerful, affectively charged, and critically revitalizing rhetorical training. This is a bold claim, and I hope you will indulge me as I tell you what you already know about film-composition.

“Film-composition” is a term I’ve been using throughout my filmmaking career in academia. It attempts to capture an area within Composition, an area of appreciable momentum and an area that is both generating films and rethinking the construction of “things” and “thinginess” toward (re)animation of the critical value of production, of making—a paper, a book, a collage, a craft beer, a working computer, a film. The book’s title suggests evolution “toward” film-composition. This “toward” illuminates a historical tradition and an emergent area of scholarly inquiry (the forces of which sufficiently hint at a cinematic turn). That is to say, this, “toward” hovers dynamically, moving in both directions—back, toward the history I’m tracing, and for-

ward, toward increasing work in film production in writing classrooms. Both moves make clear the breadth of what it means to study writing and those theories and practices that are central to our always evolving, persistently dynamic field, within which film-composition shines ever more brightly. *Cruel Auteursism* projects film-composition across a timeline of scholarship, theory, and practice.

Though film-composition is illuminating a great deal of rhetorical work in our field, we need to continue rolling with the question of this term in order to render it effectively. With “film-composition,” I describe filmmaking itself as valid rhetorical work for Composition. The hyphenated term recalls Robert Connor’s (1997) linkage of “Composition” and “Rhetoric,” (see *Composition-Rhetoric: Backgrounds, Theory, and Pedagogy*). Among many laudable desires for advancing the field and its work, Connors’ gesture wanted to infuse college and university-level writing instruction (Composition) with an appreciably sophisticated historical body of knowledge that might elevate the work of Composition and its academic profile. So promoted, the field could evolve with a more rigorous disciplinary history and coherent identity as it took up the linkage and its implied emphasis on rhetorical knowledge and skill rather than merely imitation, forms, and repetition of normative ideas associated with the prevailing academic climate. And while Connors subordinated “Rhetoric” to “Composition,” “film-composition” playfully nods to the production of films (“film composition” as “the making of”) rather than worrying a precisely appropriate order throughout the process of generating new hierarchies with our defining terms.

As you might imagine, film-composition moves beyond simple awareness of Composition’s continuing emergence as a field devoted to more than conventional academic writing.⁸ I emphasize the “more than” because film-composition⁹ plainly enjoys its association with the notion of composing that emerges from an aesthetic sensibility rendered in the context of a particular *métier* (in this case, film), or, as is increasingly common, as an interdisciplinary assemblage mediated by rhetorical and other theoretical discourses and practices. “Rhetoric” is not absent from nor is it subordinated to the conceptualization of film-composition (for Composition as a field today is

8 For a brief sampling of film-composition scholars working with an extra-academic, multimodal perspective, see some of the works of Jonathon Alexander, Dan Anderson, Geoffrey Carter, Sarah J. Arroyo & Bahareh Alaei, Alexandra Hidalgo, bonnie lenore kyburz, Robert Lestón, Jacqueline Rhodes, Jody Shipka, and Todd Taylor.

9 You may wonder why I do not capitalize “film-composition,” especially given its association with Connor’s validating and thus capital-worthy term. First, I am no fan of capital letters, but more importantly, I see film-composition not as an entire field but as a subspecialty or series of potential practices within Composition.

clearly mediated by a primary concern for rhetorical knowledge and skill¹⁰), but in referencing the larger field from within which *Cruel Auteurism* traces the emergence of film-composition, I will abbreviate to “Composition,” in the long tradition of remixing our terms (and to feature the notion of production inherent in “composition”).

As I have looked back into the history of scholarship on film in Composition, I have seen that many of the works falling under my improvised “How We Have Talked About . . .” heading seem to articulate through affectively charged rhetorics of desire (and the attendant affects of hope, fear, and pleasure). This did not surprise me, given my own love of film, filmmaking, and the heightened rhetorical sensitivities that are activated in processes of spectation and production. My findings were additionally unsurprising because as a “film person” I am inclined to think through desire, along with the powerfully resonant works of Gilles Deleuze (1983, 1985), who has so famously shaped film theory, cinematic rhetorics, computers and writing, digital humanities, digital rhetorics, discourses on multimodality, and postmodern Composition. Naturally, teacher-scholars in English departments have long been invested in narrative structure, which has at its heart an investment in character motivation (desire), a conceptual frame uptaken widely and persistently by rhetorical theorist extraordinaire, Kenneth Burke (1931, 1950). From his earliest writings to his more overt references to “motive” as a titular concept capable of encompassing the drives of rhetorical action, motive enacts via form—“as the psychology of the audience”, or “the creation of appetite in the mind of the author and the adequate satisfying of that appetite” (1950, p. 31), all of which aims at the “arousing and fulfilling of desires” (1950, p. 124). So much desire must necessarily attend so many affects. As far back as I read, the affective intensities obtained. Shimmering to the surface of my readings were memories of critical explorations into affect or “the affective domain” in the history of Composition (then, primarily through Berthoff, 1978, 1982; Brand, 1980, 1985–1986, 1987, 1989; McLeod, 1996, 1980). Though the nomenclature likely has more to do with its roots in Psychology, the oft-quoted “affective domain” was perhaps provisionally meaningful only if constrained to a certain range of conscientious pedagogies and compositional moves. I had long been drawn to thinking about affect; an early dream job in Psychology obtained in my memory, and I was emo before emo, so this did not surprise me. I began to see that this book might do more than provide a historical record of conversations on film in the history of Composition but that instead it might also enable me to theorize my own experientially derived knowledge of the affectively intense power of filmmaking to enhance rhetorical knowledge

10 See the first Learning Objective, “Rhetorical Knowledge,” listed in The National Council of Writing Program Administrator’s Outcomes Statement.

and skill. And, because so many of my contemporaries have been working in film-composition, the book might also afford me space on a timeline with them, locating my own work within an emerging tradition in the field.

Toward articulating the value and meaning of this book's primary title, I note that by exploring the emergence of film-composition with critical attentiveness to affect, I came to recognize that my experience registered as a form of what Lauren Berlant (2011) calls "cruel optimism," a situation that "exists when something you desire is actually an obstacle to your flourishing" (p. 1). The formula goes like this: The work that gains "conventional" rewards (publication, grants, tenure, promotion) is the work that matters, and that work is disproportionately about convention, correctness, surveillance, and normative mapping that forms the very contours of our success. So, my DIY digital filmmaking, while capable of igniting intense and increasingly effective rhetorical velocity¹¹ for my arguments was perhaps also standing in the way of more conventional kinds of academic arrival. My film work's disruptive critical attunements, which had derived from creative indwelling, existed as optimistic attachments even as they denied me traditional success (the R1 job, the Big Gigs, a Full Professorship). Importantly, my work also proffered gratifying forms of transformative success. Within cruel optimism, Berlant explains the potential for such outcomes, noting

the magnetic attraction to cruel optimism. Any object of optimism promises to guarantee the endurance of something, the survival of something, the flourishing of something, and above all, the protection of the desire that made this object or scene powerful enough to have magnetized an attachment to it. (2011, p. 48)

Making films wasn't writing books, and books were what mattered as currency underwriting the normative academic good life. Making films on my own (DIY) was thrilling, instructive, and capable of fulfilling innumerable forms of aesthetic, intellectual, rhetorical, and technical desire, but its role as currency toward my flourishing was incapable of catching up with the normative value of the academic monograph. At the same time, the pleasures of digital filmmaking delimited my primary field of scholarly intention, so I continued making what I hoped were rhetorically and aesthetically interesting films and arguing for their validity. Though we might today value a filmic text on terms equal to those of a conventional academic manuscript . . . no. No, I don't think we are quite there yet, though I am hopeful. Berlant might call my hope "cruel," and I see tremendous value in this conceptualization, for

11 More audiences have seen my films than have ever read my print articles, if access records are to be trusted.

it clearly articulates the stakes in these institutional scenes of the everyday. I am hopeful that this book helps clarify our vision regarding what is at stake when we decide to take on alternative forms of textmaking as our validating academic . . . *no*. No, I don't even see film-composition as "alternative" at this point in our evolution in digital textmaking. And yet, the book is entitled *Cruel Auteurism* with a clear nod to Berlant's clever, somber, circuitously optimistic concept. I simply transpose the term "auteur" for "optimist" as a way of suggesting that within DIY digital filmmaking, driven by a particular creative vision that seems to call for what now seems like foolishly individual control, I discovered the rhetorical affordances of digital media in a way more profound than any other in my history of engagement with the tools. I found voice, pleasure and gratification, audiences and accolades, but maybe most importantly, I found hope. I found that in its transfigured form, my writing—my thoughts and arguments—might find expression, and that I need not remain silent simply because of my discomfort with the constraints of print scholarship as I had experienced it.

Cruel Auteurism is inspired by my experiences as a scholar and practitioner in the field of Composition, and it performs a take on the emergence and state of film-composition as a vital scene for rhetorical inquiry and practice. Eventually forecasting future developments, the work initially extends back in time, to published conversations on film in the classroom by English professors teaching writing prior to the establishment of Composition as a discipline. Early mapping draws from publications of the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE), its readership sufficient to imply an emergent area of study. The history surfaced throughout *Cruel Auteurism* is infused with cross-epochal theories on affect, reaching back to Spinoza's 1677 *Ethics* but more profoundly shaped by Brian Massumi's (2002) conceptualizations on the impact of images and filmic reception as marked by "affective intensities" that are highlighted in current scholarship, most significantly by Joddy Murray (2009), Daniel W. Smith (2007), and Jenny Edbauer (2005). While affect theory helps articulate the history of this emergent area, *Cruel Auteurism* renders partly, or maybe initially through anecdotal elements, as I attempt to situate my claim in experience—mine, and, increasingly that of other film-compositionists working today. To begin, I'll tell you how I became compelled as a filmmaker.

It would be too long a story to describe my early fascination with film, so for a shorthand version, suffice it to say that my early exposure to films on TV made a big impact. I see this now through a rhetorical lens, recognizing how black and white film seemed so magical perhaps because rhetorical effects were somewhat simplistically drawn, but simple in terms of compositional constraints, which often lead to masterful discoveries via rigorous inven-

tion and striving. Later, it was through foreign and independent films that I found a more powerful sense of a calling, as the characters, actors, and stories seemed to vibrate somewhat familiarly but were at the same time just off, just slightly more available for attachment through identification with difference. Still later, as a young graduate student (kinda goth), I was drawn to using film in composition classrooms by hearing that others were doing so. This was around 1990, or so. I was shocked and secretly thrilled (!), but I didn't think it was something I could do; I didn't feel it would be "allowed" because it didn't seem "texty" enough, sufficiently sophisticated, or well-theorized. Only after post-graduate school pedagogical training did I find ways of integrating film that seemed theoretically and rhetorically defensible. Later, in 2004, when I started making digital films, I began to sense that this book might emerge as a way of articulating the logical notion that filmmaking and composition are disposed to share classroom space and time. This is when I began my historical research. My reading in the archives confirmed my suspicion that others had similarly desired this potential. Now, with the affordances of digital tools, we have a thrilling array of composing options, and many are working with digital video in ways that honor the desire for film spectation, analysis, and production as pedagogical activity (Alaei & Arroyo, 2013; Alexander & Rhodes, 2012; Carter, 2008, 2016; Hawk, 2008; Hidalgo, 2014; Kuhn, 2011; Kyburz, 2008, 2010; 2011; Lestón, 2013, 2015). Tracing this history is thus inspired by experience and a disciplinarily shared desire to engage students in the affectively intense and rhetorically complex work of film-composition.

Film-composition advances as an area within the larger field, one that invests in broad rhetorical knowledge and skill while vibing insistently with what Kevin Michael DeLuca and Joe Wilferth (2009) identify as the rhetorical nature of the "image-event." DeLuca and Wilferth assert the value of the image-event in the context of studies on visual rhetoric, and so the alignment with my interest in dynamic images such as films may seem, for now, slightly unfocused (I hope to elaborate, going forward). Nevertheless, their conceptual frame colludes with what film-composition wants, to promote a rigorously optimistic trust in "speed, distraction, and glances as immanent concepts, not [necessarily] transcendent categories . . . but modes of orientation, modes of intensities" (2009, para. 13) (foreword), all of which seems procedurally and ideationally resonant with a willful investment in what digital media tools enable for film-composition. So, as with Composition-Rhetoric, the term film-composition is designed similarly to link our longstanding desires to validate working with film in composition classrooms but at the same time to avoid the compulsion to see such work as a "will to tame images with meanings," a project that "rarely captures rhetorical force" (DeLuca & Wilferth, 2009, para. 11). I dare imagine that many early film-compositionists worked

toward the capturement,¹² toward the simple will and ability to bring filmic content into the classroom for exploration (likely through analysis, exclusively). However, today's film-compositionists seem confident about the project of revitalizing our thinking about film in Composition. They advance a more dynamic engagement, one that is inclusive of both analysis and production, activities rendered possible via the affordances of digital media, a generously reframed conceptualization of "composing," and innovative new projects in deconstructing analog film tools for rethinking their purposes and the processes they might serve.

Aligned with the desires of contemporary film-composition, I am shooting for rhetorical force. Thus, *Cruel Auteurism* materializes as a kind of cinematic timeline, as directed by Christopher Nolan. That is to say, the timeline moves in both directions, and my compositional strategy has been about capturing key affective intensities I have both experienced and discovered vicariously through the scholarly works that trace the emergence of film-composition. Motivated by hope, like so many early and contemporary film-compositionists, I want to honor these scholarly works and the rhetorically visionary teacher-scholars who have composed them. Within these scenes, this may mean a kind of direct exposure that seems less-than-ordinarily scripted. The timeline wants to move us, to evade a taming and instead to invite glances at immanent concepts capable of entertaining and revitalizing recognition of our shared desires. If I had to write the script, I might begin in the present:

INT LAB—DAY

Here, in some hip, blisteringly active makerspace, someone is deconstructing an old Rolleiflex, film-compositionists manipulate files on sleek silver timelines, and the

VOICEOVER

(intones)

"Film-composition as right and necessary, in many ways due to the fact of digital filmmaking as ubiquitous 21st century communication" ("the available means of persuasion") (Aristotle, trans. 1924, Bk 1; Ch 2).

END SCENE.

This possibility has by now established itself within Composition, largely due to the New London Group's (NLG), "Multiliteracies" (1996) and the up-

12 I borrow this term, "capturement" from the maniacally devoted filmmaker, Thierry Guetta (aka "Mr. Brainwash"). See the Banksy film *Exit Through the Gift Shop* (2010).

take of that work. The NLG's multiliteracies concept has wanted to move us beyond the "restricted project"—"page-bound, official forms of the national language . . . formalized, monolingual, and rule-governed"—that has conventionally characterized "literacy pedagogy." The NLG wants us moving toward an ongoing negotiation amongst "a multiplicity of discourses" (p. 61), particularly diverse and digitally generated, digitally mediated ones. While James Gee (1996), and the impressive ensemble of digital scholars invested in the work of the NLG helped manifest and shiny up existing literacy pedagogies with which many compositionists were well aware (think "CAI," or "CMC"¹³), Anne Frances Wysocki (1998) was busy reanimating Composition with a desire to design better texts, better assignments, better pedagogies that more closely approximated "the available means of persuasion" in the digital and design-savvy present,¹⁴ and she was not only concerned with pedagogy but with raising the stakes for what might count as academic scholarship and rhetorical pedagogy. Wysocki's "A Bookling Monument" (2002) has obtained canonical status in New Media Studies and within Composition, where, now no longer "New," Digital Media Studies, Digital Rhetorics, and Digital Humanities projects all enjoy the lively camaraderie of a network of teacher-scholars devoted to advancing rhetorical knowledge and skill in ways that register as affective intensities¹⁵ rather than merely as schoolbook exercises. For me, it was Wysocki's (1998) "Monitoring Order: Visual Desire, Organization of Web Pages, and Teaching the Rules of Design" that illuminated the right thinking of my hunches about the value of good design, that it mattered as rhetoric and not "merely" as style or personal inclination. Soon, Wysocki, along with Johndan Johnson-Eilola, Cynthia Selfe, and Geoffrey Sirc (2004) generated a sort of handbook for new media work in Composition, *Writing New Media: Theory and Applications for Expanding the Teaching of Composition*, and something of a subculture began to coalesce with greater momentum; the digital turn mattered in Composition.

So all these things were happening. At the same time, I was taking on my volunteer role with the Sundance Film Festival, screening films for rhetorical analysis in my college writing classrooms, and making films for my personal and professional pleasure and/as inquiry in the context of the buildup to Operation Desert Storm. The digital film I made in that moment (*proposition 1984*, 2004) became my primary form of interaction with news of the war and public discourses of doublespeak and political lies from which I

13 Computer-Assisted Instruction, and Computer-Mediated Communication, respectively. This goes back to Deb Holdstein's early work in the late 1980s.

14 See Gary Hustwit's filmic argument regarding the ubiquitous and culturally powerful nature of design in both *Helvetica* (2007) and *Objectified* (2010).

15 See Massumi, Brian (2002). *Parables for the Virtual: Movement, Affect, Sensation*.

recoiled, silent and heartshakingly angry, the camera and my editing tasks providing me with any sense of a mattering voice at all. Though I screened the film at the 2005 Modern Language Association (MLA) Convention, the 2004 National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) Conference, the 2005 Conference on College Composition and Communication, and at a special campus screening (2005), I may not have shared this work at all, publicly, but for the motivation I'd often felt from certain scholars working in Composition. Years prior to but ideationally sharing a vibratory field with the evolution of my evolving digital practices, I encountered Geoffrey Sirc's (1997) *College Composition and Communication* (CCC) article, "Never Mind the Tagmemics, Where's the Sex Pistols," and it read like a revelation, not only because of my longstanding devotion to the Sex Pistols and the critical edge they brought to my lingering 1980s, Sex Pistols-loving sensibility, but also because of Sirc's seemingly retro approach to thinking about the value of pedagogy and scholarship for an individual writer, value that moved beyond the conventional script regarding "the writing process," world-changing, correctness, and strict documentation formats. There was the seamless sampling of lyrics from The Clash, not quoted or cited but simply integrated into Sirc's clever syntax. I recall reading this and audibly gasping! I immediately (no lie) called the journal's editor, then, Joseph D. Harris, to applaud him for publishing the piece as it was, and he graciously relayed a story of negotiating citation practices in order to accommodate Sirc's creative rhetorical vision ("WE COULD DO THAT?!"). Next, I ran to share "my finding" with my colleague, Duane Roen, then Director of Composition at my institution, Arizona State University. He had been in a meeting with another colleague, but his door was open, so I rushed in, unstoppable, to ask, "HAVE YOU SEEN THIS?!!" Duane was polite but indicated that he'd not yet read the latest issue of the journal, *College Composition and Communication*. Despite the missed affective connection, I knew I'd shared something important. I left feeling as though I MYSELF HAD WRITTEN THE THING, so thrilled to be able to share such pulsatingly thrilling prose with my colleagues, so proud to associate with it at all. Later, controversies over the boundaries of Fair Use in my digital filmmaking career would compel me to recall this anecdote again and again, recirculating its images and affects in ways that seemed to validate the loopy sampling efforts some of us in Composition (especially in film-composition) have felt emboldened to make. At the time, I wasn't thinking about filmmaking, but the learning about rhetorically bold moves to support creative vision began to shimmer brightly in my ongoing practice. Importantly, "Never Mind" at the same time reanimated a general concern for something like "truth" and personal proclivities, a willingness to honor what actually engages us and our students but also invites us to share

the affective intensities that have shaped our own critical dispositions.¹⁶ All of this—affect, emotion, and “authenticity,” even in postmodern Composition (!). I was thrilled and motivated, but my abilities to articulate my shared vision eluded me. That is, I felt I couldn’t work with these contentious ideas in print (Sirc is a wizard; I can’t compete). Years later, DIY filmmaking made much more sense.

Cut just so, these various related texts and their conceptual orbits eventually emboldened me (and many others) to take on new forms of composing, even forms that might not have been ideally valuable in a conventional academic sense. Still, film-composition registers unevenly. My film projects seem to rate on a love-it-or-hate-it scale, with seemingly little room for serious reflective contemplation, which has been a somewhat desirable state of affairs, not because I don’t want to matter but because of my desire to generate (or value emergent) DeLuca and Wilferth’s “modes of intensities” (foreword), and there is little regulating these sorts of events. This indeterminacy animates the extremes, lighting up the critical potential and rhetorical edginess of film-composition. Perhaps because of the vibratory sense of potential in this work, film-composition both as scholarship and pedagogy promises affective intensity that may not happen in scenes of conventional composition. In a hopeful light, my work in film-composition both emboldens and delights me, and I hope that it aids you similarly in your projects. And while my personal story of engagement with high profile publications that have encouraged me may be useful, most academic projects need to demonstrate also that they are more than simple¹⁷ home movies; they must emerge as feature-length documentaries (i.e., have a long and complex history). So, with a promising kind of hope, I imagine that, just as I have been, you too will be fascinated to know that film-composition has been decades in production.

Earlier calls for film-composition emerged in the pages of *English Journal*, where Peter Dart (1968) proclaimed that

Teachers are encouraged to use films in their classes. Films, they are told, should be used to provide vicarious experiences, to provide focal points for discussion, and to provide compar-

16 Throughout my filmmaking career, I have found that one of the primary concerns from audiences is about copyright. As a strong advocate for rhetorical strategic uptake via Fair Use, I often find a way of answering and redirecting to explore a film’s content. Sometimes, we run out of time. Sometimes, I say simply that, “That’s a matter of Fair Use, and I agree that we need to study the law but also to argue effectively for our rhetorical purposes.”

17 In a 1973 issue of *Cinéma Pratique*, Jean Luc Godard reveals his desire to turn from the political to the personal. Godard implies, however, that the political obtains, arguing that “the true political film” would be, in essence, “a family film” (as quoted in Brody, 2008, p. 368).

isons of media and communication. But the film's most effective and profitable use is probably its most neglected function: students need to produce their own films. (p. 96)

And then there is Richard Williamson's (1971) "The Case for Filmmaking as English Composition," which is the article I would have liked to write, as a first, a heartfreakingly joyful and liberatory move capable of inspiring Composition teachers to move on, to accept that "the available means of persuasion" do not begin and end with words. But I'm not the first. Williamson is not the first. Even Dart is not the first. In fact, we have been talking about film in our various iterations of academic instruction (i.e., Composition) since at least 1911. Through his detailed archival research, Ben Wetherbee (2011) traces these conversations to the birth of the National Council of Teachers of English. Using a 1987 NCTE-commissioned report, Dale Adams notes that film in English department course work had long been a staple due to the relationship between film's form and content, and its narrative structuration, which made it an easy fit for departments devoted to studies in "narrative literature":

By 1911, when the [NCTE] was formed, the motion picture, both as an art and an industry, was already recognized as a medium of tremendous sociological, educational, and artistic possibilities. As such, motion pictures [,] primarily because of their affinity with other narrative literature, came under the varying degrees of purview of teachers of English and [have] remained so until the present time. (as quoted in Wetherbee, 2011, p. 8)

Wetherbee's careful emplotment continues by noting what may seem like an obvious trend, in hindsight—the subordination of film production to film analysis. Wetherbee characterizes the nature of these hermeneutic practices by noting their primary attentiveness to reading for literary value as well as for moral training: "The earliest years of film studies (1911–1920), saw English departments employing films as stimulants for student writing, but subordinating both films and student compositions to the study of 'legitimate' literature" (Wetherbee, 2011, p. 8). Adams explains that "[w]here film study was given any positive artistic consideration, it was done by energetic but maverick teachers of English" ("Historical," p. 4). Wetherbee notes that consideration of film in secondary English curricula swelled in '20s and '30s, though chiefly motivated by a concern that film was, according to Adams, "having negative effects on students." Thus, moving pictures found their way into the classroom, ironically, in order to "keep children from attending movies and to raise standards in film appreciation" (Adams, "Historical" 4-5). An enterprise known as The Payne Fund, which between 1929 and 1932 sponsored this mor-

alizing inquiry into the effects of cinema on youths, sought, like Hugh Blair a century and half before it, to cultivate good taste (Wetherbee, 2011, p. 8).

As noted, Wetherbee's work valiantly takes on the attempt to trace "A Rhetoric of Film" that might tease out various rhetorical approaches to considering film within the field. Our projects thus seem to emerge from a shared hope. In my own reading, I have sought to discover discussions of film for its pedagogical roles. If I am honest, I have specifically attempted to find arguments invested in identifying the sort of rhetorical value I associate with film-composition. So whereas the early history will yield mostly hopeful (and some fearful—see chapter 2) discussion on film in *Composition*, the discussions center primarily upon film as it is used to explore narrative structure, and, later, as it is used to examine complex cultural content ("issues"). For my part, I want to share what DIY filmmaking has taught me and like-minded film-compositionists. I want to articulate some of the ways I see this emergent area of study happening across a timeline of my own emergence as a teacher-scholar who promotes film production as rhetorical pedagogy and scholarship. And this means that the story finds room to unspool within the interdisciplinary multiplex, *Composition*.

My foraging begins with a work from 1939, when, J. Hooper Wise published "A Comprehensive Freshman English Course in Operation" in *English Journal* (volume 28, issue 6). In it, Wise describes the University of Florida's Freshman English course, where lectures featured work on both writing and, importantly, listening skills via "[c]onversation, . . . stage plays, music, all radio programs, and, in part, TV programs and motion picture productions" (1939, p. 131). Wise also lists the course objectives, which are guided by several assumptions that have currency in today's *Composition*, including the by-now common sense notion that teaching well involves working not only with ideas and texts that teachers consider to be "ideal" but also by integrating material that fascinates students.¹⁸ For example, among UF's central assumptions for their FYC course is this: "ideas are of prime importance, and teaching the communication arts is fruitless when attempted apart from ideas meaningful to the student" (Wise, 1939, p. 131). A related assumption is as follows: "the communication arts are so closely inter-related that progress in one makes progress in each of the others surer and easier—in fact, that they operate in a complementary manner" (Wise, 1939, p. 131). While we might have to forgive

18 It will be impossible to place into a note the number of scholars who argue for pedagogies that engage students by encouraging them to write from what they like, enjoy, or know. A small sampling includes: Peter Elbow, 1973; Ellen Cushman, Jenny Edbauer, Krista Fleckenstein, Jeff Rice, Geoffrey Sirc, 2002; Kurt Spellmeyer, John Trimbur, Victor Vitanza, and many, many more.

UF for the assumptions they make about causality,¹⁹ many of us also realize that Composition, especially when viewed as Composition-Rhetoric, has always been an interdisciplinary endeavor. As well, we recognize that when students are interested in what they are writing, they seem to perform more joyfully and effectively. Finally, we might usefully take note of the ways in which Wise's informed but generally unsupported claims shape a loose but hopeful rationality that begins to radiate the rhetorical scenes within which film discourses emerge in Composition.

Cruel Auteurism begins to identify and examine various discourses mediating, remediating, animating, and revitalizing our notions of film in Composition. Several guiding questions animate my inquiry and shape the story I am seeking to tell. How have we talked about film? How have our discourses promoted, discouraged, tested out, and authoritatively endorsed or rejected various uses of film in Composition? What sorts of discourse seem more or less effective at creating validity for our studies in film within our broader field(s) of interest? What is the nature of film discourses in Composition, and how can those interested in film make use of these discourses?

As we have talked about, explored, used, and produced film in Composition; we have been creating webs of discourse that provide access to ways of thinking about film and/as textuality today. It seems especially important to think about film in this moment, as digital media practices evolve into prominent²⁰ areas of scholarly inquiry and as coursework in film becomes more common in Composition classrooms. Clearly, this recasting of film in Composition may help us rethink composing writing instruction in what Douglas Kellner (1994) calls a "media culture" (a term that by now need not render as a quote, but as I am tracing discourses sufficient to theorize a history, they remain). And, as "the future of text" is in question—Todd Taylor (2005) has called film "the end of Composition"—such a review of our history with film seems capable of providing us with discourses of hope, those that make available various kinds of pedagogical, rhetorical, and theoretical possibility for the increasingly diverse literacy scenes in which we live, work, and play. *Multipass*.²¹

19 . . . or not. Consider Julie Thompson Klein's work on interdisciplinarity, or N. Katherine Hayles' "matrix" of interdisciplinary influence that enables work in one area to resonate with others that are enmeshed in the matrix via a particular paradigm or cultural moment.

20 As of an earlier draft of a revision of this chapter (in 2009), consider the rapid rise of Digital Humanities conversation at the MLA. For a listing of the number of Digital Humanities (DH) sessions at The 2009 Annual Convention of the Modern Language Association, or MLA 2009, see Mark Sample's Sample Reality [entry](#). For a discussion of the DH as "next big thing" see William Pannapacker's Chronicle column, entitled "[MLA and The Digital Humanities](#)." For a detailed synthesis of information on DH and especially social networking, see George H. Williams' [ProfHacker](#) posts,

21 See *The Fifth Element*. And be sure to read Byron Hawk's (2003) rhetorical treatment

Cruel Auteurism is arranged according to prominent concepts that I have discovered in the process of analyzing film discourses found primarily in two academic journals with very wide National Council of Teachers of English readership, *College Composition and Communication*, and *College English*. Taken together, these two journals enjoy circulation wide enough to support the claim that the film discourses within them rise to the level of operational discourses in Composition. Within my work, I hope to enable these discourses to articulate their vibratory power via the terms I have ascribed to them, *hope*, *fear*, *desire I*, *desire II*, and *pleasure*. I use these concepts to give shape to this work. I look at early discourses that render as tentative questions,²² as resistance, as theories of desire (*desire*), as acceptable pedagogy, and as forms of critical pleasure. This work only begins to script how we have talked about and are currently discussing, using, and producing films. However, by creating a conceptual schema that accounts for our historical and present engagements with film, we may begin to get a sense of coherence for film work in Composition. I begin with references to the faint “hopes” of early film-compositionists, “faint” because they are rendered without much concern for the value of conventional academic evidence or even very careful theoretical frames. I intend to boost the production value of these early attempts even as I consume them on their own terms.

I begin with “hope” because early Composition scholarship is marked rhetorically by affective registers of hope. These hopeful pleas articulate shared desires for workable pedagogy. They come from writing teachers who seem to be well aware of the quaintly suspicious nature of their claims (I refer to these early authors as “writing teachers” because these earliest discourses emerge from English department writing teachers who may or may not identify as “compositionists”). Many early claims for film work in Composition reflect a quiet approach, and in this silence, the arguments render as tentative, under-theorized, and not well supported by any form of factual evidence. Nevertheless, they unspool freely, mediated by a sanguine disposition, an uncertain longing writing the hope that whispers its intensely seductive nature even in the crisp, clean light of its rhetorically shaky status and potential to screen as less-than-ideally “academic.” Addressing this gap in the seriousness of hope, I turn to contemporary affect theorists, who articulate the experience of hope in empathetic and quasi-poetic fashion. My use of the term “hope” is mediated first by contemporary affect theorist Lauren Berlant (2011) and her categorization of hope as a “cluster of promises” (p. 93), a concept echoed by Seigworth

of the film, “Hyper rhetoric and the Inventive Spectator: Remotivating The Fifth Element” in Blakesley’s collection, *Terministic Screens*.

22 For an example of a “tentative question” via discourse analysis, see Wise’s “in part”, emphasized, above.

and Gregg's (2010) characterization of desiring, emergent "bloom-spaces," which they explain as

excess, as autonomous, as impersonal, as the ineffable, as the ongoingness of process, as pedagogico-aesthetic, as virtual, as shareable (mimetic), as sticky, as collective, as contingency, as threshold or conversion point, as immanence of potential (futura), as the open, as a vibrant incoherence that circulates above zones of cliché and convention, as a gathering place of accumulative dispositions. (p. 9)

The earliest bloom-spaces of film-composition I found of particular value are located within the writing of J. Hooper Wise (1939), whose piece gets at one of the central concerns among film-compositionists working in Composition today. Wise helps us worry the analysis/production dichotomy even as his work surfaces early suggestions regarding the value of teaching toward the critical consumption of cultural texts that is assisted by studies in "motion picture productions" (1939, p. 132). Wise was apparently hopeful about the nature of lectures offered by the University of Florida's 1939 course in "Freshman English." Wise intrigues with his interest in both rhetorical listening and the value of film for teaching this critical skill. While it is true that he begins by stating that the value of the lecture itself is "to engender in the student the ability to listen" (1939, p. 132), which might feel like an invitation to reify crusty pedagogical conventions and an emphasis on analysis, he goes on to imagine "listening" as "the complement of speaking," (1939, p. 132) and in this way Wise generates a gentile synthesis rather than the conventional schism between hermeneutic and generative pedagogical practices. Contemporary film-compositionists and other digital media scholars working Composition have been wearing away at this faded distinction for quite some time (Arroyo, Ball, Carter, Deluca & Wilferth, Kuhn, kyburz, Lestón, Vitanza, and more).

Wise was surely limited in his articulated vision (note the emphasis on the lecture), but it is noteworthy that as he thought about the relationships between the value of listening and the act of conventionally privileged speaking (as pedagogical ends), he did so by intimating a point that many filmmakers have famously argued, that *sound matters*. This immense claim finds early expression within film discourses in Composition, yet it is rendered without access to much evidence or the rhetorical flourishes of grounded affect theory. Framed today, Wise might have introduced the value of rhetorical listening via famed sound editor Walter Murch and sound theorist Michel Chion. For Murch, and Chion, sound matters a lot. For Murch, its power equates to our first experience of a fusion between "I" and "(m)other," clearly a momentous occasion in the evolution of our rhetorical knowledge and skill as well as for

our attentiveness to an other, an audience, and a vehicle for sharing hopes and desires and other affective intensities:

We begin to hear before we are born, four and a half months after conception. From then on, we develop in a continuous and luxurious bath of sounds: the song of our mother's voice, the swash of her breathing, the trumpeting of her intestines, the timpaní of her heart. Throughout the second four-and-a-half months, Sound rules as solitary Queen of our senses: the close and liquid world of uterine darkness makes Sight and Smell impossible; Taste monochromatic, and Touch a dim and generalized hint of what is to come. Birth brings with it the sudden and simultaneous ignition of the other four senses, and an intense competition for the throne that Sound claimed as hers. The most notable pretender is the darting and insistent Sight, who dubs himself King as if the throne has been standing vacant waiting for him. Ever discreet, Sound pulls a veil of oblivion across her reign and withdraws to the shadows, keeping a watchful eye on the braggart Sight. If she gives up her throne, it is doubtful that she gives up her crown. (as quoted in Chion, 1994, p. vii-viii)

For hopeful, early film-compositionists, Sound provided a means of theorizing the value of film for writing pedagogies and a range of associated rhetorical skills. Among these early film-compositionists are many digital humanists, digital rhetoricians, and technorhetoricians currently enjoying wide audiences and support (Steph Ceraso, Eric Detweiler, Brian Harmon, Byron Hawk, and David Rieder, to name only a few). These contemporary teacher-scholars seem to know what Wise intuited, that an emphasis on listening is critical to pedagogy. Wise explains that “[c]onversation, lectures, stage plays, music, all radio programs, and, in part, TV and motion picture productions are transmitted through the ear” (1939, p. 132). The ear! Not the eye?? Yes. (Murch would be pleased). As Wise explains his version of listening as critical work, he never uses the term “rhetorical” or “critical listening,” yet he moves in that direction when he asserts that

A poor and untrained listener is hampered in modern society and may even become a menace by acting on the half truth or by being prayed upon by emotionally toned propaganda. A sign of maturity is the ability to listen actively and accurately. (1939, p. 132)

So, for Wise, writing pedagogy possesses potential to teach critical listening,

but one might also imagine that he intends—with his concern that a poorly trained student become a “menace”—that we are also teaching rhetorical skills in production (presumably, the “menace” acts, producing rhetorically sloppy, inflammatory or otherwise hateful text/actions). Here too, it is useful to read from within Wise’s prose, to discern his understanding of pedagogy’s role and its primary value as associated with ostensibly unproblematic media: “[c]onversation, lectures, stage plays, [and] all radio programs,” (1939, p. 132) which was for so long just fine with English Studies. Note that Wise assigns the power of “TV and motion picture productions” to the realm of the “in part” (1939, p. 132), which hints that while Wise seems sure of the urgency of his claims, he is nevertheless aware of the secondary or potentially suspicious nature of film as pedagogy in English classrooms of his time. Perhaps it was merely about *The New*, but I suspect that Wise (and others thinking along these lines in the late 1930s) was both intrigued by and worried over the affective intensities of the (then) new media. And, given his concern for critical listening, I imagine that Wise worried the stimulating potential of “synchresis, the forging of an immediate and necessary relationship between something one sees and something one hears” (Chion, 1994, p. 5). That is to say, highly mediated texts, grinding out several tracks at once (not merely words, not merely sound, not merely image) seemed perhaps overfull of meaning, controversy, and provocative value. Notably, in *Composition today*, we amp up such affects. We are currently invested in grounding rhetorical theories,²³ productive theories on affect,²⁴ and (new) media theories and pedagogies that consider film as a primary form of cultural currency, both outside the academy and within.²⁵ Having dispensed with the minimalist philosophies of current-traditionalism and embraced postmodern pluralism, uncertainty, and ambiguity, along with posthumanist cyborg sensibilities and digitally mediated identities, *Composition* no longer fears but desires the critical, experiential, problematic, and sensual multimodal.

Like Wise, hoping and suspecting value in film-composition, Herbert Weisinger (1948) “plead[s]” for us to see that it is up to English to provide serious study in film (p. 270). It is not difficult to read Wise and Weisinger’s pleas as emblematic of what contemporary affect theorist Lauren Berlant (2011) calls “cruel optimism,” . . .

the force that moves you out of yourself and into the world in order to bring closer the satisfying something that you can-

23 See *The Usual Suspects in Composition: from Aristotle to Burke*.

24 See Brand, Edbauer, Fleckenstein, Jarratt, Massumi, McLeod, and Worsham, to name only a few.

25 See David Blakesley, Karen Foss, . . .

not generate on your own but sense in the wake of a person, a way of life, an object, project, concept, or scene. (pp. 1-2)

Wise was especially attracted to taking up film work in English classrooms and he worried the culturally underprepared “menace.” His attachments to culturally and rhetorically powerful modes, along with his belief in the moral obligations of the professoriate seem to have motivated his desire, yet he was in many ways unable to act, constrained by the hopeful yet unsupported desire to participate in film analysis as pedagogy (production was unthinkable, at the time).

Weisinger’s emphatic “plead” is both enchanting and urgent. Weisinger worried that the sorts of exciting film work he might have enjoyed teaching would be taken up by others “less qualified,” and he claimed that it was the “social responsibility” of the English teacher to begin teaching film “as an art” (1948, p. 270). Again, here, cruel optimism in the form of hope that English professors might use film for casting, analyzing, possibly guiding and maybe even very hopefully disrupting “the ambiance of the classic public sphere,” where normative politics may be “cast as a feedback loop” beyond which new methods and forms may emerge. Perhaps Weisinger imagined his social responsibility as “radical in the traditional sense, taking up the position of the interfering intellectual, the counterconceptual aesthetic activist reorganizing the senses along with common sense” (Berlant, 2011, p. 249). Likely, this was not the case, though it is possible and points to merely one example of cruel optimism that will appear in this book.

So although there is a hopeful and possibly critical urgency in Weisinger’s “plea,” we also find that the classic “English” privileging of hermeneutic practice is used to support the cause. In fact, instead of simply arguing that it is the English teacher’s job to teach a certain kind of text for its artistic merits, Weisinger’s arrangement belies his suspicions regarding the less-than-nuanced nature of his claims. He argues via negation, assuring that he will “refrain from using the specious argument that, if we will not do the job, someone less qualified will, nor shall I even say that it is our social responsibility to do so (though I honestly think it is)” (1948, p. 270). No arrogantly detached academic, he (some might refer to him as a rhetorician invested in civic participation? a sophist?!). Instead, Weisinger poses as the high-minded but humble (“I honestly think”) academic, perhaps tilting his chin ever-so-slightly-skyward as he insists, “I base my appeal on the grounds that the study of the motion picture is on an aesthetic plane equal to that of the study of literature” (1948, p. 270). Weisinger offers no initial evidence in support of this claim (although later in the piece, he catalogs a list of references). Rather, he refers to films as “significant art form[s],” and offers his opinion-rendered-

as-truth when he suggests “I believe, in fact” (n.b., belief does not equal fact) that film’s emergent value places it on track to “equal, within its own aesthetic terms, of course, the artistic achievement of the Greek drama and the Elizabethan theatre” (1948, p. 271). So Weisinger’s attachments to the texts of high culture and his pedagogical hopes for morality instruction converge in the form of his opinions and beliefs, along with a brief nod to a supporting argument, the latter in the form of reference to a book entitled *Film and Theatre*, by “Professor Allardyce Nicoll” (1948, p. 271) (note the identifying title, which we no longer include as a way of conferring authority). He sought—for himself and his students—to travel intellectually “in the wake of a person, a way of life, an object, project, concept, or scene,” (Berlant, 2011, pp. 1-2) namely, on the whispery trails of affective intensity vectoring outward from visceral encounters with Great Literary Texts and Theater.

The argument continues to evolve in its name-dropping manner, Weisinger persistently posturing with his urgent beliefs and “I think[s]” (1948, pp. 270, 271, 275) and linking film to “Greek drama and the Elizabethan theatre” (“re”) (1948, p. 271). A sign of the times, as Wetherbee’s history makes clear, literary study trumped all. Thus, while Weisinger seems convinced of the value of film—“the motion picture is the most distinctive form of expression of the culture of the twentieth century on quite valid technological, aesthetic, and ideological grounds” (1948, p. 271) his assertions on the value of film are rendered so hopefully as to seem, at times, desperate or irrational. Absent arguments on the rhetorical and pedagogical value of film that extend beyond association, Weisinger’s argument instead relies far more on his established ethos than upon a missing (because as-yet-undertheorized) logos. To be sure, Weisinger’s argument eventually offers meaningful references to support his claims. Notably, however, his references are all charmingly and—as if cast as THE PROFESSOR by Wes Anderson himself—glowingly revealed: “The finest Russian directors; . . . a number of notable books . . . the learning of a great art historian” [Panofsky] (1948, p. 271). These rhetorical flourishes are valuable tools for understanding the emergent struggle of film discourses in Composition. They reveal the (cruel) hopes and suspicions (the latter, regarding just how much sweetening, flattery, or posturing an audience requires) of writing teachers situated in English departments who wanted to invite film analysis but were a.) not film experts, and b.) not much invested in emphasizing rhetorical production via film-composition.

Today, no longer so clearly grasping for disciplinary status (thereby routinely defaulting to analysis and imitation), but instead as Composition embraces its interdisciplinary nature and privileges production, we see potential to register arguments in support of film-composition through a variety of theoretical discourses. Today’s film-composition is more readily supported through theories

on affect, composition, design, film, and rhetoric. And through both conventional and digital media publications, we seem less clearly beholden to flattery and more obviously able and willing to share—via informal (social networking, microblogging) venues—our experiences in film-composition, many converging on the value of critical making and doing.²⁶ Tracing these shifts in affect and rhetoric may seem to be merely nostalgic, but they represent an emergent series of discourses and practices, and I have found pleasure and hope—perhaps in their humanizing intimacy—in spending time with them. It is my hope that we may at times benefit from exploring these earlier iterations of film-composition as we move more confidently ahead with our contemporary version(s).

Sharing vibratory space with my own project (I humbly submit) is one of the boldest and most clearly articulated visions for the value of unconventional, non-discursive, multimodal work like film-composition, *Nondiscursive Rhetoric: Image and Affect in Multimodal Composition*. Here, Joddy Murray (2009) brilliantly reconsiders the value of affect for Composition, arguing that “it is even more important than ever for writers/composers to become aware of the affective domain: both its history in rhetoric and its place in the everyday classroom” (p. 83). Murray evolves a careful and critical synthesis of affect studies in Composition, reviewing earlier scholarship from the field (notably, Alice Brand and Susan McLeod) in ways that help us to more fully engage in interdisciplinary scholarship that explores cognition and affect. We have often been timid in our approaches to such scholarship. Murray notes the works of Brand and McLeod as exemplary models of our neglect:

Brand and McLeod’s theories were largely ignored because they seemed to be investigating areas of composition deemed irrelevant or otherwise hostile to a social-epistemic, post-modern conception of writing. Such a reaction was due invariably to the fact that any mention of the emotions evoked several binaries: intellect/emotion, cognitive/noncognitive, rationality/irrationality, mind/brain, mind/body, individual/social, et cetera. Any conversation in the field on the emotions was seen as a return to favoring the individual over the social or cultural, and though the work attempted at times to refute such charges, research on the affective domain continued to be branded as “expressivist,” leaving much of the work done by Brand and McLeod underappreciated. (2009, p. 87)

Against the trend to see affect work in binary opposition to rationality, Murray’s work is perhaps the most progressive in asserting that not only

26 See Clemson’s Program in Rhetoric, Communication, and Information Design; the University of Texas at Austin’s Digital Writing and Research Lab, for only two of many examples.

does affect matter for composing and especially for multimodal composing but that it marks a sophisticated and highly evolved form of rational thought. Murray's promising aims are especially intuitive and resonate powerfully with established arguments that routinely mediate affect studies. For Murray, we may presently find it substantially relevant to accept that "the non-discursive in general and image in particular most directly carries meaning through its connection to our emotions and the affective" (2009, p. 83), and this quickly resonates for me with Brian Massumi's (2002) well-known assertion (gleaned from studies in psychology) regarding "the primacy of the affective in image reception" (24).²⁷ Murray insists that, "other fields (such as neuroscience and philosophy) have come to similar conclusions," that we might with greater confidence draw from a grounded understanding of the "far-reaching consequence of image to cognition" (2009, p. 83). Murray is sure to note prior attempts at evolving such a grounded understanding, but he is presently most invested in exploring "new research being done in fields such as neuroscience and psychology [that] have made it possible to see to what extent emotions and feelings inform our images" (2009, p. 83). He concludes therefore that we must attend to such convergences in ways that will "reinvigorate the debate on emotion in composition primarily because image cannot function without emotion and composing cannot function without image" (2009, p. 83). Even more elementally, Murray insists, we must "investigate how the debate between reason and emotion and between body and mind inform the way our field has largely overlooked these connections in the past" because "this connection between emotions and image offers yet another justification for the importance and power of non-discursive text in our composing and inventing processes and theories" (2009, p. 83).

The contemporary "Neural Turn" seems capable of moving us as Murray desires. Brett Ingram lights up a sense of the "connection" to which Murray alludes, and though indeterminacy prevails, Ingram curates a vision of the neural turn that incorporates ancient rhetorics, through twentieth century philosophy, rhetoric, and, as I see it, multimodality, and film-composition. Especially hopeful is the staging of this vision, for Ingram projects a sense of value for states of being, states of mind—conditions we might seek, rather than overdetermined practices and rules we might enact in our hopes for creative intellectual projects. Ingram argues that in *Phaedrus*, Plato's worries over how rhetoric might "incite unruly behavior" (see DJT, 2016) "promote[d] the ethical use of rhetoric," through his invention of "a tripartite ontological narrative that separated the mind, body, and soul," urging "his students to

27 Don't worry. I will be taking up the worries over the validity of Massumi's free-flowing affect concept in the "fear" chapter.

suppress their physical desires with rigorous mental discipline for the betterment of their souls” (2013, p. 6). This hopeful move carried into twentieth century philosophy and its central debates, many of which return in the present moment through affect theory and “new materialisms” that attend to the body and the mind. These conceptual provocations flicker ongoingly into various rhetorical studies, composition theory, and for our purposes, as central concerns of multimodality and film-composition. The hopes associated with thinking affect, experience, and information processing shape many discourses on film-composition. The neural turn highlights the complexity of how we process information:

While cognitive and corporeal knowledge may arrive to us via different orders of experience, in neurological terms, they are born and nurtured by the same physiological processes and systems. (Ingram, 2013, p. 12)

As such, the neural turn will shimmer into and out of focus in *Cruel Auteursism*, more notably in chapter 4, *desire, (II)*, and in chapter 5, *pleasure*. Thinking the plasticity of brain processing and embodiment as conditions of being that incite potentially trance-like states of receptivity and performativity, we find a contemporary maker, a fleshly being with rhetorical insight and hopes for complexly ongoing intake, uptake, remix, and performance-based beingness. In an of-the-moment reference to zombie culture and hopeful makers remixing their relationship to things, consumerism, consumption, and being, Ingram cleverly explains:

Indeed, evacuating the Cartesian ghost from the machine does not turn the human into a mindless computer made of flesh, an amoral and self-serving zombie, or any other metaphorical expression of sublimated existential dread. We may instead think of the mind-as-matter as raw material fashioned into a work of art by the cooperative, intertwined hands of nature, society, and the self. (2013, p. 8)

Similarly rebooting our disciplinary disposition to streamlined clarity, Murray’s argument confidently remixes several contentious theories that have circulated, often unsuccessfully, in *Composition*. His logical alignment of rational thinking, emotion, affect, and image work echoes work that has in the recent past animated many Digital Media arguments in *Composition* (Edbauer on affective intensities and pleasure; kyburz on the pleasures of DIY filmmaking and “image-pleasure”; Shipka on multimodality and engagement; Wysocki on design pleasure—to name only a few). Most successful is the work Murray does to compel us to see that

[v]aluing the non-discursive necessitates valuing the emotions and intuitive reasoning because the two are interconnected. Image, as a vessel full of relationships, carries with it the emotional import that belongs to our understanding of that same image: the two complete each other. Without the emotional connection, there cannot be a full and appropriate understanding of the images we encounter, and this has everything to do with the way we generate text in the first place. (2009, p. 83-84)

Not only does Murray's work recover a detailed history of affect work in Composition, but it imbues our understanding of that history with a sense of how current theories and their interdisciplinary uptake in Composition further validate these earlier assertions regarding the valuable roles of affect and emotion—especially for production.

My experience of this history recalls a story of conflict regarding distinctions between affect and emotion (Jarratt, 2003; Massumi, 2002; Metzger, 2004; Worsham, 1988) because of a concern to create a productive distance between the weighty and complicated domain of emotion and the seemingly more clinical nature of studying affect. David Metzger (2004) briefly summarizes this troubled reading by considering Susan Jarratt's (2003) "Rhetoric in Crisis: The View From Here," and while Jarratt's piece never uses the term "affect" or "emotion," Metzger infers a rhetorical sensitivity to certain institutional trends in Jarratt's reference to the alleged "crisis" in which rhetoric purportedly finds itself and toward which a 2003 issue of *Enculturation*, "Rhetoric/Composition: Intersections/Impasses/Differends," devoted its bandwidth. In particular, Metzger sees Jarratt intimating a "possible distinction between feelings and emotions," which has it that "emotions tell us and others what to do; feelings do not" (Metzger, 2004). Metzger's critical reading surfaces the potential to see that we are not so much given to marginalizing feelings but, taking Jarratt's comment about "unproductive breast-beating" (Metzger, 2004) to task, we are perhaps invested in distinguishing "the unproductivity of some feelings" (Metzger, 2004). Surely, we can read with Metzger here, agreeing easily with the potential for "some feelings" to register as "unproductive," but I appreciate his attention to further movement within these fine lines. He explains:

My concern is not that unproductivity has been shown the door; rather, by assuming that unproductivity is bad, we may have scripted an under-theorized distinction between feelings and emotions as the difference between good (aka productive) emotions/feelings and bad (aka unproductive) emotions/feelings. (Metzger, 2004). [sic]

The narrative uptake of these delineations reveals an important but problematic set of categories. As Metzger explains, “And what is that difference, again? Simply put, feelings are unproductive; emotions are productive” (Metzger, 2004). Metzger does not go on to categorize feelings or emotion with regard to affect, and these sorts of projects have historically comprised a good deal of rhetorical scholarship that may be of value to Composition and especially film-composition. The value I see involves potential for creating useful distinctions that further our academic discourses and pedagogies and advancing disciplinary status (which matters not only in terms of the political but also in terms of how our knowledge is valued). Nevertheless, I persistently find myself resisting the polarizing nature of the narrative, particularly given our awareness of the materiality of rhetoric that has feelings and emotions converging through an always already flow of rhetorical being and what Thomas Rickert (2013) award-winningly lauds as rhetorical attunement²⁸ and both Davis and Edbauer laud as a productive and generous rhetoricity.

Much earlier. My early desires to engage with affect, through the work of Ann Berthoff (1982), Alice Brand (1985–1986), Lil Brannon (1985), and Sondra Perl (1980), were somewhat muted by admonitions to give that complicated territory wide berth; thus, I was pleased to see such matters taken up again in recent years. Today, with Murray’s careful history and its powerful claims, along with a growing number of serious academic explorations into the value of affect for composing as well as for teaching writing, I see no reason to guide anyone away from studies in affect, particularly if such studies coincide with image work and various forms of multimodal composing. Neither does Murray, and the results of his studies are not shy. No tentative Wise moves, no “in part” hoping, absent distinctively rational support for his assertions, Murray argues that while affect work in Composition has been careful to avoid the (false) dichotomy between feelings and emotion vs. reason and rationality, we are presently poised to proclaim and practice an understanding of a different set of relations. That is to say, for Murray, we may now argue that “because of the way the brain functions through image,” we no longer need cast rationality as separate from densely affective image work but see instead that “reason, critical thinking, and rational discourse are also affective” (2009, p. 84) (emphasis in original). Not “in part,” but non-discursive rhetorics as wholly appropriate for our rhetorical work and pedagogical efforts.

Murray’s impressive efforts to reanimate Composition with rational discourses on affect and non-discursive symbolization resonate with my own desires to advance Composition as, as Connors would have had it, rhetorically grounded. However, rather than seeing “rhetorically grounded” as monomod-

28 See Thomas Rickert’s (2013) *Ambient Rhetoric: Attunements of Rhetorical Being*, which won The 2014 CCCC Outstanding Book Award.

al and free from “messy” affect (another narrative), I have for years now been resistant to such formulations. Even within social networking venues, which might seem to exist exclusively as venues for non-discursive, affect-laden, and extra-academic play, we find admonitions to skew toward the unemotional, toward the ostensibly disaffected rational, which in many of these venues = just play “nice” . . . just “be happy” (irony alert). So whereas “playing” in Twitter or Facebook has been non-discursive fun, at times, the limitations still seem to default to the older dichotomy against which Murray and others work (feelings vs. rationality). In recent years, the emphasis has been on discouraging any negative associations with our work, our institutions, our professional hopes and perhaps disappointments, our sense of “what’s happening” and the like. Ostensibly, silencing one’s affective association to our work is more “professional,” more “rational,” which is actually quite irrational if you ask me, or at least achingly counterintuitive. Pulling a cruelly optimistic Weisinger here, it seems to me that film-composition affords me play even as I register complex affective associations to my work, the nature and status of my work, in particular, and institutional life, in general. Situated as critical scholarship and not bound by the venue associations with frivolity afforded many digital texts circulating via social media, film-composition enables me to transgress rhetorical conventions (i.e., cope) even as the work is itself rhetorically grounded, guided by keen considerations of purpose, audience, and the integration of multiple appropriate (“my beat is correct”²⁹) modes of articulation. Perhaps film-composition may build on the work of Wise, Weisinger, myself, Murray, and others who want to ensure cultural and rhetorical power, and the infusion of affective intensity in our work even as we hope to clear the set for more rigorously integrative performances that move ourselves, our student filmmakers and the audiences for whom we strategically overspill. We may hope.

29 See Beck. (2005). “Hell Yes.” *Guero*. Written by Beck Hansen and The Dust Brothers. Performers Beck Hansen, The Dust Brothers, Christina Ricci. Interscope.