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SCHOLARS IN THE HISTORY OF RHETORIC & COMPOSITION

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Peitho

The Journal of the Coalition of Feminist Scholars in
the History of Rhetoric & Composition

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Editor's Welcome

Jen Wingard

I want to welcome you to *Peitho* 19.2 Spring/Summer 2017. I feel that this issue presents an exceptional cross-section of current feminist scholarship, and demonstrates the varied scholarly foci engaging feminist rhetoricians today.

From the first essay by Charlotte Hogg "What's (Not) in a Name" which empirically analyzes the terms used to classify feminist rhetorical work, to the last essay by Kristen Gay, "Ethical Dilemmas and Digital Subcultures," which pushes feminist rhetoricians to rethink the silencing of pro-ana conversations within the context of feminist agency, each essay in this issue interrogates the political stakes of what it means to engage in the work of feminist rhetoric. Pamela VanHaitsma and Steph Ceraso ask us to consider horizontal mentoring as a means of insuring professional success; Amy Ferdinandt Stolley reminds us of the need to listen across difference through her analysis of Catherine McAuley's 19th Century writings; both Megan Brewer and Melissa Nivens re-read lady's home-centered texts as sites of rhetorical intervention into gendered discourse; and Kimberly D. Thompson explores the queer place-making possibilities in the manga *The Rose of Versailles*.

Each article in 19.2 either implicitly or explicitly forwards feminist historiography or rhetorical practice by drawing from a strong lineage of feminist scholarship to read contemporary or historical texts in new ways. That may seem like a description for what all strong scholarship *should* do: draw on existing frameworks to understand something in a novel way, and that indeed may be what good scholarship does. But good *feminist* scholarship doesn't merely cite the old in order to argue the new. Instead, it brings the historical into conversation with our current political and scholarly moment, to continue to build from those who have paved the way with their insight.

Each of these articles moves feminist rhetorical studies forward by conversing with those who have written before. And it is those exchanges that make this issue so vibrant. I hope you enjoy it too.

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Coalition of Feminist Scholars in the History of Rhetoric & Composition

What's (Not) in a Name: Considerations and Consequences of the Field's Nomenclature

Charlotte Hogg

Abstract: *This article shows how the labels commonly associated with the field—women's rhetorics and feminist rhetorics—can be as problematic as they are productive, revealing tensions that undermine our goals of capaciousness. An analysis of naming discussions in scholarship and a survey of our naming practices via titles of journal articles, conference papers, and courses show how our nomenclature can sometimes occlude certain values and assumptions the field seeks to convey. The author suggests that the moniker “women's and gendered rhetorics” and better situating our work to each other and various publics can work to alleviate these issues.*

Keywords: *feminist rhetorics, women's rhetorics, women's and gendered rhetorics, nomenclature*

By naming something, one actively carves out a space for it to occupy, a space defined by what one values in the phenomenon and by how it appears to be like or unlike other parts of one's world view.

--Cherryl Armstrong and Sherry Fontaine

When I was in graduate school in the late 1990s, the field of women's rhetorics/feminist rhetorics was burgeoning, and I had the opportunity to take Joy Ritchie's graduate course in 1998 as she and Kate Ronald were collaborating on *Available Means: An Anthology of Women's Rhetoric(s)*, their enduring collection of women's rhetorical primary sources from Aspasia to Steinem. The course was entitled *The Rhetoric of Women Writers*; years later, as an assistant professor, I named a new graduate seminar *Women's Rhetorics* without, truth be told, giving the title much thought. But since first teaching the course in 2004, I've mulled over the title much more, thanks to smart graduate students who inevitably question why some texts we read call the field “feminist rhetorics” and others call it “women's rhetorics” and what difference it makes. Of course, as rhetoricians, we know it makes a difference because rhetorical studies is about analyzing the freight language can hold, and yet, surprisingly,

despite grappling mightily as we frame terms we use in our theories and methodologies, there is a notable absence of discussion as to the consequences of transferring these terms into monikers for the field.¹

As the field takes stock after coming into its own in the past quarter century, understanding the consequences for inadequately addressing our nomenclature allows us to more consciously signal to various audiences—including ourselves—our purpose(s) as we move ahead.² Reflexivity and clarification as to what and whom we represent, even if that clarification expresses multiplicity, feels particularly pressing given the conversations within composition and rhetoric about how we represent rhetoric and writing to various publics—ourselves, our institutions, our students, our communities, and (social) media. Coupled with a vigorous feminist ethic to speak not only to insular discourse communities but to foster and enact activist practices, it's important that our moniker should account for—and further invite—engagement with multiple audiences. In this piece, I demonstrate how the labels most commonly associated with the field—women's rhetorics and feminist rhetorics—can be as problematic as they are productive and reveal tensions that can undermine our goals of capaciousness. I then survey our naming practices by what terms we use through book mentions in Google's Ngram Viewer as well as titles for journal articles, conference papers, and courses to view the signals sent to various audiences. Finally, I suggest possibilities for more consciously and accurately representing the field in offering an alternate moniker of "women's and gendered rhetorics."

1 I consider women's rhetorics or feminist rhetorical studies a field rather than a sub-field as 1) most scholarship within this area references it as a field (see Buchanan and Ryan, Enoch and Fishman, Myers, Ronald, Royster and Kirsch, and more), and 2) publications in the past five years that focus on looking backward and forward to "take stock" of women's/feminist rhetorical studies suggest and reference a field coming into its own. Of course, right away we get into a thorny issue of naming again: does this mean women's/feminist rhetoric would have its own category in a JIL? Does that mean it is not a part of the larger umbrella of rhetoric and composition? No to both, but it does have its own body of scholarship, journals, conference, etc., and other defining markers of an area of study. That said, I would contend that even if others argue that it is a subfield of rhetorical studies, whether a field or sub-field, there is broad consensus that it is an area with its own defining features, and thus my arguments about naming still fully apply.

2 The field's move to take stock can be seen in the publication and response to recent texts such as *Walking and Talking: Feminist Rhetorics; Feminist Rhetorical Practices: New Horizons for Rhetoric, Composition, and Literacy Studies; Feminist Challenges or Feminist Rhetorics?: Locations, Scholarship, Discourse; and Landmark Essays on Rhetoric and Feminism (1973-2000)* and anticipation of what is ahead (i.e.: *Peitho's* Special 25th Anniversary Issue).

The Significance of Naming

There is little consistency in what we call the field. In Lisa Ede's keynote address at the 2012 Texas Federation Symposium, "Women and Rhetoric: Looking Backward/Looking Forward," she used descriptors such as "feminist rhetoric," "research on women and rhetoric," or "women's rhetorical practices" throughout. Elizabeth Fleitz, in the 25th anniversary issue of *Peitho*, refers to both "feminist rhetorical scholarship" and "scholars of women's rhetorics" within one page. Ede's and Fleitz's moves are typical across the field's scholarship, but *acknowledgement* of such varied descriptors is quite rare. Perhaps the most overt reference to what we actually call ourselves is literally a footnote by Kate Ronald in "Feminist Perspectives on the History of Rhetoric," a situating piece glossing intersections of feminisms and rhetorics:

But before I've even gotten to my third page, I realize I already have some new rhetorical problems. Do I call this new field "women's rhetoric?" Or "feminist rhetoric?" Do I use the plural rhetorics—to indicate the expansive diversity of women writers and to avoid the elitist homogenizing tendencies of defining any field?...I've made each of these choices at various times, sometimes using all six options in the course of a 20-minute talk. (149)

While multiple names could signal a gesture to embrace malleability, such qualifiers aren't given when invoking a *field* name, and there has been surprisingly little discussion about the basic act of labels as a marker of our field until quite recently. Such an absence is striking. Star Medzerian Vanguri points out in *Rhetorics of Names and Naming* that the oversight of rhetorical studies engaging with naming is surprising given that names are, as we know, more than labels but "symbolic inscriptions of meaning" (1).³ After all, as Cheryl Armstrong and Sherry Fontaine elucidate in their article about naming: "Just as an individual carves out a piece of reality for herself through the act of naming, shaving off those parts which she does not deem valuable, a group (or the individual who represents it) takes on the ability to exclude or include, burden or empower other individuals by the act of naming them" (9). Further, the act of naming, these authors suggest, brings with it a phenomenon of permanence:

The characteristics inherent in naming—its variability and its false promise of permanence, its way of narrowing down our perceptions become for us, as social beings, the problems of marking our social and political territory....And so, in the academy, the names we choose, which selectively highlight what is valuable to our social or political

³ Recent discussions on the WPA-Listserv in addition to *Rhetorics of Names and Naming* signal increasing attention rhetoricians are paying to the import of nomenclature.

group, are understood to represent the true nature of what we have named. (8)

The politics of naming is both relevant and rhetorical and only further vexed as the field is known and refers to itself by various labels.

It could be argued that because of the way the field expanded quickly alongside/within/apart from rhetorical studies, a sense of itself as a *field* or sub-field is quite recent and that a focus on nomenclature hasn't kept up with the growth of the field. We aren't alone in experiencing such growing pains. At the 2015 Computers & Writing Conference, Scott Warnock addressed the issue of nomenclature and the ways the label "computers and writing" may no longer best represent the work of a (sub-)field continually undergoing dynamic digital changes. He asks: "What is and what should be happening with the terms we use to describe what we do? Do we need to find new ways—and new terms and thus new concepts—to describe and think about (and communicate to others) what we do?" ("The Problem of Nomenclature"). Neither are issues of naming and nomenclature bound to younger fields undergoing growth and change; Composition and Rhetoric itself has been known by various incarnations within scholarship and publisher categories and institutional programs, curricula, and other markers. Particularly with the emergence of Writing Studies as a term and the rising number of newly-named departments and programs no longer housed under English, scholars have discussed the political and institutional consequences of our chosen monikers (see Armstrong and Fontaine; Hesse; Horner and Lu; Singer, and more).

Within women's and feminist rhetorics, however, the labels we use appear to be the accumulation of theories and methodologies that have created the architecture of our field. As Armstrong and Fontaine argue: "*Once chosen*, a name suggests permanence And when names we use are passed on, or when we integrate existing names into our own language, we assimilate with them what they imply about the nature of the phenomena named" (8, emphasis added). In reviewing scholarship to investigate how we have discussed naming, I returned to texts the field has considered foundational via frequent citation or reference; I also sought texts that acknowledge our nomenclature in any overt way. While there has been hearty critical deliberation of the terms "women," "feminist," and "gender" both theoretically and methodologically, such intellectual grounding was not coupled explicitly with our nomenclature. In short: there was scarcely mention of *choosing* a label for the field that connected to or reverberated from situating those same terms in scholarly conversations. While recent scholarship and moves, as I'll describe, suggest such deliberation occurred in some spaces, these conversations have previously not been shared widely or marked in scholarship.

The “false promise of permanence” created by labels we use does more than simply represent or describe the field: it shapes and guides its trajectory (Armstrong and Fontaine 8). What, then, have been the consequences when terms become default designations as the field’s stature becomes more solidified? What has been assimilated, and what has been ignored by taking on monikers without interrogating them along the way? And more practically: what might our nomenclature signal to scholars wanting to enter the field? What might it mean for how we frame our subjects and ourselves or how we are framed at our institutions and surrounding communities? Strands of scholarship unpacking “women’s” and “feminist” rhetorics have unspooled in ways that, despite the intentions and goals of the field, have left us with terms that can exclude even as they seek to include.

Tracing the Paths of Converging and Diverging Terms

As I examined scholarship focusing on the theories and methodologies grounding and shaping our field’s trajectory today, two overarching paths emerged showing how we have come to the monikers “women’s rhetorics” and “feminist rhetorics.” Tensions have surfaced with these two paths, described recently by Patricia Bizzell and K.J. Rawson in a video conversation in the 25th anniversary issue of *Peitho* that demonstrates the fallout from nomenclature choices that were not transparent. Their dialogue is introduced as one that points to intergenerational tensions about gender identification, and their discussion also reveals that missing history and context with regard to labels and naming have contributed to these tensions (7). Their topic is feminist and transgender rhetorics in the future of the then-named Coalition of Women Scholars in the History of Rhetoric and Composition (CWSHRC), the umbrella organization overseeing *Peitho* and the Feminism(s) and Rhetoric(s) conference.⁴ While my focus is on the field’s scholarship more broadly, the role of the CWSHRC in the making and sustaining of the field is mighty, and Bizzell draws upon this important historical context for their conversation.

⁴ Near the completion of revisions for this article, the Coalition in May 2016 changed their name from Coalition of *Women* Scholars in the History of Rhetoric and Composition to the Coalition of Feminist Scholars in the History of Rhetoric and Composition. This was announced to members via email; the social media announcement on the Facebook group was accompanied by a link to the Bizzell and Rawson conversation in the 25th Anniversary issue of *Peitho*. Coincidentally, my nomination to the Coalition Advisory Board was accepted at about the same time as the name change, and while I then became privy to more context about the name change, given the timing with my revisions, as well as the scope of the piece, which is about the field more broadly than the Coalition, what is relevant to this piece is the name change itself and how it was disseminated publicly to the Coalition.

Rawson asks provocative questions about inclusion and the current state of CWSHRC that display our nomenclature's opacity. He asks for clarification on "[t]he distinction between whether the Coalition was for women scholars working on any topic versus being a Coalition for scholars who were working on women rhetors or feminist rhetorics more broadly" (2). Bizzell's response reveals important historical context:

I mean, the full title of the organization is Coalition of Women Scholars in the History of Rhetoric and Composition, so it was field specific except the field is interdisciplinary so included historians, philosophers, classicists, etc. I think explicitly the word feminist wasn't used with the sense that there were women who were doing work that we were interested in who might not want to call themselves feminists for one reason or another. For example, you may remember, this doesn't seem to be done much anymore, but once upon a time black feminists preferred to call themselves womanists....So, I think there was a sense that the Coalition avoided the word feminist in its founding sort of self-presentation because it was felt that that would be exclusionary of some women. But whether they ever really envisioned men being members, I don't think so. (2-3)

The mission of the CWSHRC, as Bizzell explains (echoed in the documentary with founders and past presidents of the CWSHRC in the same *Peitho* issue), was to create a deliberate space for scholarship about women and by women along with a network of support to do such work and have it recognized, "to kind of convince ourselves and help each other convince them that this work was valuable, it was publishable, it was tenurable, it was promotable."

Rawson explains that by the time he entered the field, "feminist rhetoric" was fully formed and felt "as legitimate and mature as any other part of the field." He follows with, "So, it's just interesting to hear this backstory, which doesn't predate [the field of feminist rhetoric] by that much." Rawson represents the next generation of scholars for whom the history that led to the forming and naming of the Coalition was unknown, leaving questions about the usage of terms. And as transgender studies shifts the framework such that categories of male and female are further destabilized, "What happens, then, to a coalition of women scholars?" Bizzell's response captures the ways that both "women's" and "feminist" rhetorics have likely sought but not been able to fully account for the intended multiplicity and inclusiveness:

Partly what's at issue here is the extent to which the organization wants to define itself as *for women or for feminists....The organization has to decide which way it wants to go at this point, maybe.* And if we

think of feminist work...[] in the sense that Royster and Kirsch [shows book cover] are now talking about it, which is very broadly conceived, then that certainly opens the door to anyone, to any body who wants to be included. But, as I said, if there's a place for, as you put it, a protected space for women, that's something different. So *that's the kind of identity crisis, maybe, that the organization has right now.* [emphasis added]

Bizzell and Rawson's conversation captures the ways our labels do and don't stand for the work of the field and its participants when "women" and "feminist" are approached as two distinct options. I argue that such reduction (women *or* feminists) is the result of not making overt how the extensive, nuanced scholarly conversations about the concepts steering our work drive the basic monikers both within and beyond our scholarly circle. Even when terms like "feminist" and "women" are carefully considered in individual pieces of scholarship, there is a lack of collective, public memory informing audiences to the contexts and motivations for the ways these terms serve as touchstones and monikers for the field. Their conversation points to two paths that can *appear* distinctive, even as they cross or converge and, as many likely feel, are conjoined. "Women's rhetorics" emerged from scholarship committed to securing and sustaining a space particular to women's issues that had been so long neglected, and "feminist rhetorics" developed as an approach and commitment to gendered, rhetorical analysis. Both paths together essentially describe the field, but as I show, the discussions about how these terms as theories and methodologies emerged as the two most well-known labels were not visible, further evidenced by Bizzell sharing in an anniversary issue historical context that wasn't common knowledge in the field's scholarship.

These two paths were predicted a quarter century ago by Susan Jarratt. She wrestles with how to engage conceptually in navigating feminist work in the history of rhetoric in both her 1990 *Pre/Text* piece (anthologized in *Walking and Talking Feminist Rhetorics: Landmark Essays and Controversies*) and in the 1992 *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* special issue on "Feminist Rereadings in the History of Rhetoric." She forecasts what became primary approaches to the field: "If the Western intellectual tradition is not only a product of men, but constituted by masculinity, then transformation comes not only from women finding women authors but also from a gendered rereading of that masculine rhetoric" ("Performing" 2). In describing early scholarship within the context of feminist historiographic methodologies, she articulates that the goal is not only studying women through recovery work but conducting a gendered analysis alongside, against, and with the rhetorical canon, approaches now central

to the field⁵ While these approaches have worked symbiotically, Jarratt's predictions have tracked along the "women's rhetoric" and "feminist rhetoric" paths in ways that can also inhibit research and inclusivity and, as the Rawson and Bizzell conversation indicates, even seem to compete in ways that don't align with the capaciousness we profess as central to our field.

Women's Rhetorics: Whom We Study

Use of the term "women" seems to be, at first glance, a default descriptor originating in the reclamation of contributions by women into the masculinized rhetorical tradition. In short: it reflects who is studied. Yet early on, some openly troubled the term. Jarratt relays the pitfalls of the category of "woman," anticipating the very tensions Bizzell and Rawson share a quarter century later. Citing feminist historians, Jarratt expresses concern with a "separate women's canon," suggesting that this would severely limit feminist engagement with the history of rhetoric and that "we needed not only women's history but gendered readings of male-authored texts," as "gendered analysis, unlike 'women's history,' applies feminist perspectives in periods of history when women's issues or gender had not been taken up in texts authored by women" (21). For her, gender as a category resists women as an *addition* and "shakes up dominant disciplinary concepts" (22). Yet she immediately nuances her point by expressing reservations about divisions and hierarchies between "women's history" and "gender issues" (23). She argues for the "preservation of gender-specific terms to describe historical texts," drawing upon Mary Jacobus to explain an idea familiar to feminist scholars, that "'we need the term 'women's writing' if only to remind us...that the conditions of their (re)production are the economic and educational disadvantages, the sexual and marital organizations of society, which, rather than biology, form the crucial determinants of women's writing" (Jacobus qtd in Jarratt 23). Jarratt's pieces articulate the

5 What Jarratt delineated has borne out, as articulated well by other scholars. According to Jessica Enoch: "Recent surveys of feminist scholarship have correctly assessed that the majority of historiographic work falls into two dynamic categories: (1) histories that recover the work of female rhetors and rhetoricians and (2) histories that reread and revise the rhetorical tradition through the lens of gender theory" (48), as does Rawson: "The feminist rhetorical canon has been guided by two primary methodologies. One is feminist rhetorical recovery of previously ignored or unknown women rhetors. The other is theorizing of women's rhetorics, or what some have called "gendered analysis" which involves developing a rhetorical concept or approach that accounts for rhetors who are excluded from traditional rhetoric" (40). Also see Michaela D.E. Meyer's, "Women Speak(ing): Forty Years of Feminist Contributions to Rhetoric and an Agenda for Feminist Rhetorical Studies," where she argues that, "feminist contributions to rhetoric tend to align with two major methodological approaches—the "writing women in" to rhetorical canons approach and the "challenging rhetorical standards" approach (2).

propulsion of “women’s rhetoric,” bolstered by Bizzell’s look back: while the term “woman” would be narrow and problematic, to lose it risks making invisible the particular challenges women have faced.

In their 2005 introduction to *Rhetorical Women: Roles and Representations*, Hildy Miller and Lillian Bridwell-Bowles settle on the term “woman” but first relay the problematic nature in doing so. In reinforcing issues of intersectionality, they contend that the “single marker” of a term like “woman” can be rendered meaningless (8), as bell hooks explains clearly in an online critique of Sheryl Sandberg’s *Lean In*: “This construction of simple categories (women and men) was long ago challenged by visionary feminist thinkers, particularly individual black women/women of color.” Combined with Butler’s well-known theories of the fluidity of gender, Miller and Bridwell-Bowles also argue that “woman” can range from “meaningless” to “an outdated conceptual relic of second-generation feminism (8). Rawson’s response in his conversation with Bizzell underscores this point, noting that “women’s only spaces have a very odd relationship with transgender folks.”

Nevertheless, despite such serious challenges, Miller and Bridwell-Bowles finally argue for the usage of “woman”; thorny as it might be, it is important as a feminist undertaking to maintain a safe(r) space that was invisible until women and feminists staked a claim (9). Further, in their unpacking of the representational and rhetorical consequences of “woman” is the insistence that a label does and should give form. With the “provisional constant” of woman, they contend, “we can give the [postmodern] ‘view from nowhere’ some perspective and shape” (Bordo qtd. in Miller and Bridwell-Bowles 8). Retaining some grounding is important to connecting with others, particularly given the brevity often demanded by social media.

Thus “women’s rhetorics” as a descriptor accounts for many, but certainly not all of those studied, and can reduce women to a simple identity category that does not account for context, nuance, and intersectionality, particularly when understanding of the term is just implied and assumed. It can also occlude a gendered approach; in my undergraduate women’s rhetorics course, one student had the terrific idea of studying an older, white, Southern, male sports commentator who subverted all assumptions of what a “good ol’ boy” should be. I encouraged the project, but she assumed she couldn’t in a course called Women’s Rhetorics. But, of course, she could. With its noun descriptor, “women’s rhetoric” is lodged in ways that exclude, and does not account for how work is done in the field.

Feminist Rhetorics: How We Study

If “women’s rhetorics” is a broad descriptor of whom we study, albeit not without challenges and exclusions, “feminist rhetorics” appears to be about

how we approach the field. In "Performing Feminisms" Jarratt suggests, "If we all agree to appear under the banners of 'feminism' and 'rhetoric,' our words will attest to the pluralities of those nouns, resulting in not women's history but feminisms' histories" (3). But the assumptions about expansiveness and accessibility lead to questions that, paradoxically, can be limiting, in part because the term "feminist" sends signals both narrow and imprecise with regard to "who/m" rather than the approach. Does the name, for example, necessitate that the researcher or the subject identify as feminist? Further, given the cultural and historical freight that comes with the term "feminist," there are limits, as with "women," as to who is encompassed by the term. So while "feminist rhetorics" attempts to invite malleability and multiplicity, without situating the term, such openness can be obscured.

Communication Studies scholar Bonnie J. Dow tackled such issues in "Feminism, Difference(s), and Rhetorical Studies," addressing the problems that can arise from a lack of clarity within scholarship when pairing feminism and rhetorical criticism. She cites Karlyn Kohrs Campbell's essay on Elizabeth Cady Stanton's "Solitude of Self" as an example:

The feminist resonance of this piece of scholarship comes not from its approach but from its topic and from the author's reputation. Some may label this essay a piece of feminist criticism because it is easily linked to Campbell's feminist motive to call attention to the important rhetorical contributions of women. However, she does not assert this motive in the essay and so the reader must infer it. (106)

She describes what the consequences are when we employ the term feminist without being overtly reflective about our assumptions:

Rhetorical theory and criticism are inherently pluralistic. The same is true for feminism, *although we too seldom acknowledge this in our usage of the term*. There is room for myriad feminist practices in this field, and the purpose of being more specific about our assumptions is not to establish which feminist practice or theory is most legitimate. Rather, when we acknowledge the rich variety of its bases, the feminist knowledge that we create will be more informed, more complete, and more powerful, both within this discipline and outside it. (114, emphasis added)

Dow explicitly points to the lack of transparency about how feminism is utilized by scholars and how this impacts not only our scholarship but conceptions of feminism. Lack of attention to our naming has only exacerbated the issues she raises.

The label “feminist rhetorics” was taken on without explicit definitions until recently.⁶ Influential texts hailed for taking stock of the field after a quarter century—*Walking and Talking Feminist Rhetorics* (2010) and *Feminist Rhetorical Practices* (2012)—each unpack the term.⁷ The robust and lengthy definition of “feminist rhetorics” in the first paragraph of *Walking and Talking* is deliberately expansive and far-reaching to encompass the many ways the term can be used and applied, from a body of scholarship to a political agenda to what drives the term theoretically and methodologically, so that, ultimately, “the rhetorical work of this community of feminist teacher/scholars—in the classroom, at conferences, in publications, through outreach—encourages others to think, believe, and act in ways that promote equal treatment and opportunities for women” (xiii).⁸ But even with an exhaustive definition, “feminist” is used without acknowledgment of any freight, and how the last two decades of scholarship funneled to this definition is not clear.

Jacqueline Jones Royster and Gesa Kirsch in *Feminist Rhetorical Practices* don’t lay out a precise definition for the label feminist rhetorics, though they cite “a field we now name feminist rhetorical studies,” suggestive of the cumulative way it’s been taken on as a moniker (12). The book assesses how the field has developed over nearly three decades of research, delineating four

6 The first definition of the term “feminist rhetorics” I could locate appeared in communication studies in 2007. Meyer’s 2007 piece in *Communication Quarterly* defines the term feminist rhetoric: “a commitment to reflexive analysis and critique of any kind of symbol use that orients people in relation to other people, places, and practices on the basis of gendered realities or gendered cultural assumptions” (3, original emphasis). The purpose of her article is just as its title offers, but I’ve yet to see it referenced much by composition and rhetoric scholars.

7 See reviews in *CCC*, *Composition Studies*, *Enculturation*, *Ethos*, *Peitho*, and more that generally agree that these texts are of great import to the field.

8 Because an explicit definition is so rare, I include Buchanan and Ryan’s in full: “First, feminist rhetorics describes an intellectual project dedicated to *recognizing and revising systems and structures broadly linked to the oppression of women*. Second, it includes a theoretical mandate, namely, exploring the shaping powers of language, gender ideology, and society; the location of subjects within these formations; and the ways these constructs inform the production, circulation, and interpretation of rhetorical texts. Third, it constitutes a practice, a scholarly endeavor capable of transforming the discipline of rhetoric through gender analysis, critique, and reformulation. The feminist practice *entails identifying and examining women rhetors and women’s rhetorics, making claims for their importance and contribution to the discipline and, in so doing, regendering rhetorical histories and traditions*. Fourth, it consists of a body of scholarship recording the field’s intellectual, theoretical, and practical pursuits. Fifth, the term encompasses a community of teacher/scholars with shared interests in the intersections of gender and rhetoric. Sixth, it describes a political agenda directed toward promoting gender equity within the academy and society. In other words, the rhetorical work of this community of feminist teacher/scholars—in the classroom, at conferences, in publications, through outreach—encourages others to think, believe, and act in ways that promote equal treatment and opportunities for women.” (xiii, emphasis added)

methodological strategies and practices demonstrating how “feminist rhetorical practices have shifted the landscape [of rhetorical inquiry in the history of rhetoric]” (13). In describing feminist rhetorical practices, the use of “feminism” is less a narrow descriptor of subject or method than it is an epistemology flexible enough to allow for—and even invite—a range of methodologies, pedagogies, and analyses on a range of subjects that can be a part of the feminist project. Their book serves to generate, rather than limit, inclusive possibilities for research subjects, practices, and methodologies, but the possibilities offered that repeatedly invite expansion and complexity can exceed what is connoted in the term “feminist rhetorics.” Taken as intended, these definitions describe the field well and can shape it going forward but still don’t account for assumptions and baggage that come with feminism. Further, it’s not yet clear how much these definitions are finding their way into scholarship to situate authors’ frameworks, contributing to the lack of context scholars like Rawson describe. A disjuncture can occur between the openness put forth by Royster and Kirsch and a term that could invoke a monolithic notion of feminism.

Thus, our reliance on shorthand with the term feminist breeds insularity of a kind that feminist research seeks to resist, and Dow reminds us to be vigilant about making our assumptions clear. Otherwise, as with the term “women’s rhetorics,” the term “feminist rhetorics” has shortcomings, one of the largest being the implications of what, exactly, the adjective “feminist” in “feminist rhetoric” refers. Who does—and can—undertake this work? Relatedly, does the researcher identify as feminist? Are the methodologies feminist? Do those studied fit into feminist parameters? And if they don’t, might we be inclined to nudge them there? I argue elsewhere that holding too fast to our own feminist proclivities might lead us to consider research subjects as “more feminist” than they would deem themselves and that even conservative women are approached with an eye toward how their acts enact a subtle or surprising feminism.⁹ As Ritchie and Ronald remind us with *Available Means: an Anthology of Women’s Rhetorics*, historically, the impetus for writing was often to secure rights, often leaving feminism and women’s rhetorical practices inextricable, which “might seem to essentialize women’s rhetoric or conflate women’s rhetoric with feminism” (xxii). Given the preponderance of historical research in our field, there can be a propensity for such conflation, but this limits possibilities for contributions to the field and exacerbates assumptions about how the field is comprised.

Of course, naming practices that can be viewed as too narrow may impact who contributes and how we contribute to the field. There is baggage with the term feminism, viewed as exclusive in its middle-class, white trappings

9 See Charlotte Hogg, “Including Conservative Women’s Rhetorics in an ‘Ethics of Hope and Care.’”

against the openness that feminist methodologies presume. Bizzell reminds us that when the Coalition was founded, “feminist” was not a label considered inclusive for some scholars of color. Even among those who embrace “feminism,” there is continual debate on the value of the term in online spaces among “third wave” or “new wave” writers; while there is currently much debate on this front, there are some who find the term tethered to second-wave enterprises. In popular culture there is often talk of whether the term is still productive, influencing or influenced by younger scholars drawn to the field.¹⁰

The insularity from class, race, and age that can be mired in the term also prohibits the ways we can reach multiple audiences such as those who react negatively to the term feminist. Those who identify as feminist differ on how—or even *if*—we should try to reach resistant audiences, but it is a term that has much less traction institutionally, not just in terms of campus spaces but other fields and programs with a strong commitment to feminist endeavors, such as various women’s studies programs (more on this below). There is important discussion to be had within and outside academia as to whether and how to “reclaim” “feminism” amid its challenges, and a part of that conversation should be about how we are read rhetorically outside the covers of journals as we seek to relay our scholarship to multiple publics. While some may bristle at the thought of conversations about branding, given its connotations with the corporatization of higher education, such resistance may mean missing opportunities to connect with students and those outside our field as ambassadors of the work we do. All told, tracing the paths of the labels we most employ, women’s rhetorics and feminist rhetorics, shows significant blind spots about whom and how we research, a point all the more salient when describing—and accounting for—what we do when we must encapsulate our field with brevity among varied audiences.

Nomenclature in Circulation

There are spaces where we don’t have the luxury to nuance terms, when a label provides the concise version of who we are both within and outside the field. As I endeavored into this project, I wondered how scholars signal the field’s work in brief and whether title selections would reveal patterns less apparent in scholarship. Here, then, I examine titles to learn what terms are most prevalent in *brief* rendering of our work and whether our shorthand offers patterns that show a clear trend in our naming as well as what it might

10 There has been much discussion on how the term “feminist” has become so problematic in that so few women and men use the term as an identifier. For more on this, see Abigail Rine’s “The Pros and Cons of Abandoning the Word Feminist” and Dave Sheinin, Krissah Thompson, and Soraya Nadia McDonald’s “Betty Friedan to Beyoncé: Today’s Generation Embraces Feminism on Its Own Terms.”

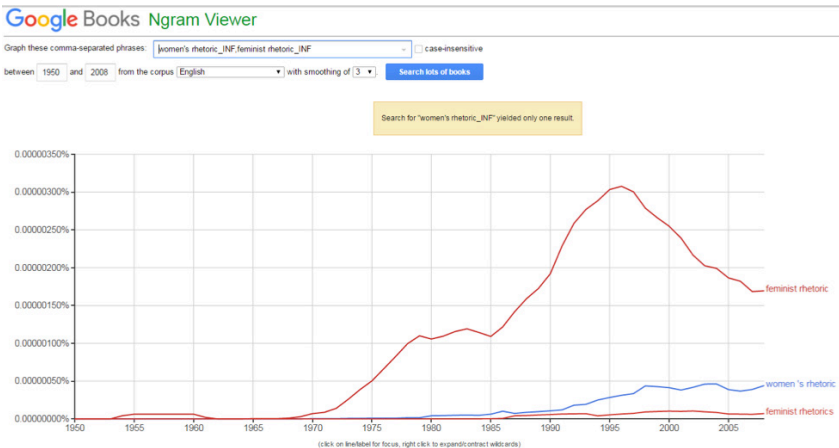
elucidate about how we are read by each other and additional audiences. To do so, I look at four sets of data: 1) uses of the terms in Google Books Ngram Viewer; 2) journal article titles and 3) conference paper titles that indicate how we mark what we do in brief for audiences who may or may not read or attend to better know the content within, as well as 4) course titles that have the potential to reach multiple audiences—students, parents, administrators and staff, and colleagues both within and outside our discipline. My goal here is to be suggestive rather than exhaustive in conducting a scan that includes “distant reading,” what Jessica Enoch and Jean Bessette cite as the “digitally enabled practice of reading thousands (even millions) of books in an instant for the purpose of searching for a term and recognizing discursive patterns and trends in the culled texts” via Google Books Ngram Viewer (642). I seek to replicate—with a much smaller data set—the kind of gleaning found in distant reading by gathering titles within three respected journals in rhetoric and composition—*Rhetoric Review*, *College English*, and *Rhetoric Society Quarterly*—and three national conferences—specifically the Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC), Feminism(s) and Rhetoric(s), and Rhetoric Society of America (RSA) to survey what patterns may emerge with labeling, and finally, I ran a cursory search on course syllabi.¹¹ As the sense of audience shifts for each rhetorical situation, tracing a discernable trend with regard to our nomenclature proves somewhat elusive, though faint patterns do appear.

11 I want to emphasize again that this was admittedly a suggestive examination to look generally for trends with regard to naming. I did not include CCC because, while it certainly publishes rhetorical pieces, its emphasis is more expressly the teaching of writing, whereas *College English* states that it is more generally a professional journal for the college scholar/teacher. I did look at *Peitho* titles but did not include them here since the journal moved to a peer-reviewed journal in 2012 and would be less useful in comparison to the other three journals titles were covered from 1998-2014. Conference programs were studied for the three conferences for a decade: 2004-2014, though both Fem/Rhet and RSA happen biennially, so Fem/Rhet was examined from 2003-2013. I am most grateful to Angela Moore and Angela Sowa who each compiled part of this data set from these journals and conference titles during separate appointments as research assistants. Selection of titles was also admittedly slippery: I asked them to collect titles that appeared to reflect a piece that covered “rhetorical studies of women,” including but not limited to titles that expressly had the words “women,” “feminist,” and “rhetoric.” So if something was about a rhetorical act, it was tallied on the list even without the word “rhetoric,” as with studies of women’s names. There was some subjectivity assessing by titles with regard to conference papers whether a piece was a rhetorical study about a woman or women or with a focus on gender, but I wanted the search to be broader than titles that explicitly stated “women’s rhetoric” or “feminist rhetoric” to reflect the breadth of pieces within the field of women’s/feminist rhetoric (as opposed to, say, literacy studies, pedagogical studies that weren’t expressly rhetorical, etc.). The Fem/Rhet conference was only coded for instances of feminist and women’s terms, not for names or other references to confine the data set.

Google Books Ngram Viewer

I searched on the Google Books Ngram Viewer chart (allowing one to search within the vast Google Books digitized database for terms across a span of time) for usage of “women’s rhetoric” and “feminist rhetoric” (see table 1).¹² I began the search in 1950 since before that date there was no indication of any use of either term. I also added “INF” (inflection search) to the terms to display various grammatical categories of the core terms (rhetorics). Because the data set was much larger for the Ngram Viewer, I did not first start with a broad search of key terms as I did with journal article and conference paper titles. To discern any patterns for particular monikers that may have emerged, I limited to “women’s rhetoric” and “feminist rhetoric” to see what emerged with these particular monikers.

Table 1: Google Books Ngram Viewer Indicating Usage of “Feminist Rhetoric,” “Women’s Rhetoric” and “Feminist Rhetorics”



Source: Google Books Ngram Viewer. Google, 2013. Web. 22 Mar. 2016

This chart indicates more usage of “feminist rhetoric(s)” than “women’s rhetorics,” with the burst in feminist rhetorics occurring in the mid- to late 1990s just as the field was burgeoning. The Viewer shows that while the “feminist rhetoric(s)” line is more dynamic and the women’s rhetorics line more

12 It is not a perfect resource, of course, with Sarah Zhang noting some of its challenges with accuracy in *Wired* magazine.

stable, instances of feminist rhetoric are greater, though the lines move closer to one another in the 2000s.¹³ At its height in 1995, “feminist rhetorics” was used ten times more than “women’s rhetorics,” but in 2008 that disproportion had closed to four times more. Thus, within the pages of our books, usage of “feminist rhetoric” is more prevalent than “women’s rhetoric,” though the gap has narrowed.

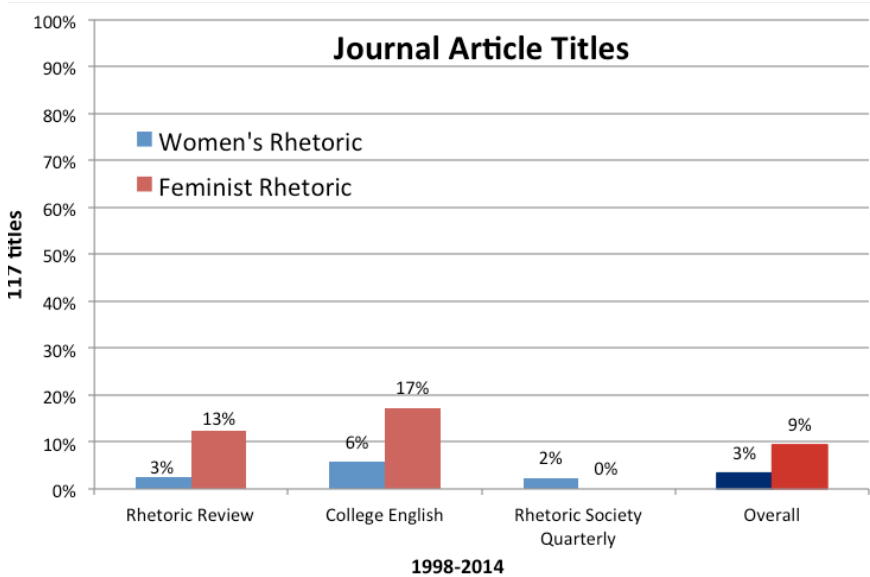
Journal Article Titles

Given that journal article titles signal the scholarly content within its pages for a particular discourse community, these titles reflect the greatest insularity in terms of audience. For this set of data, I first ran the search more broadly before narrowing to the terms “women’s rhetorics” and “feminist rhetorics.” Titles from *Rhetoric Review*, *College English*, and *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* from 1998-2014 were selected that appeared to be on the topic of women’s rhetoric or a gendered, rhetorical analysis—thus, the initial search included terms “women,” “feminist,” “rhetoric” or a woman’s name or gendered identifier indicating that the work contributed to the field in some way whether or not the exact monikers “women’s rhetoric” and “feminist rhetoric” were used.¹⁴ This broader search over the 16-year span revealed 117 titles. Within those 117 titles, I then did a narrower search to compare the number of uses of “feminist rhetoric” and “women’s rhetoric.” “Feminist rhetoric” appeared in just under 10% of the titles, and “women’s rhetoric” just over three percent (see table 2). Thus, out of 117 titles within the initial, broader search, only about 13% used one of those specific labels, suggesting that not one or two monikers are commonplace or standard.

13 As of this writing, the Viewer ends in 2008.

14 I selected the start date of 1998 because this follows the timeline of the Google Ngram Viewer and the watershed moment after *Reclaiming Rhetorica* (1995) and *Rhetoric Retold* (1997) emerged.

Table 2: Journal Article Titles



Coupled with a simple search on CompPile that indicates over twice as many hits (41) for the term “feminist rhetoric” than for “women’s rhetoric,” (16), “feminist rhetoric” as a term was used twice as much as “women’s rhetoric.”¹⁵

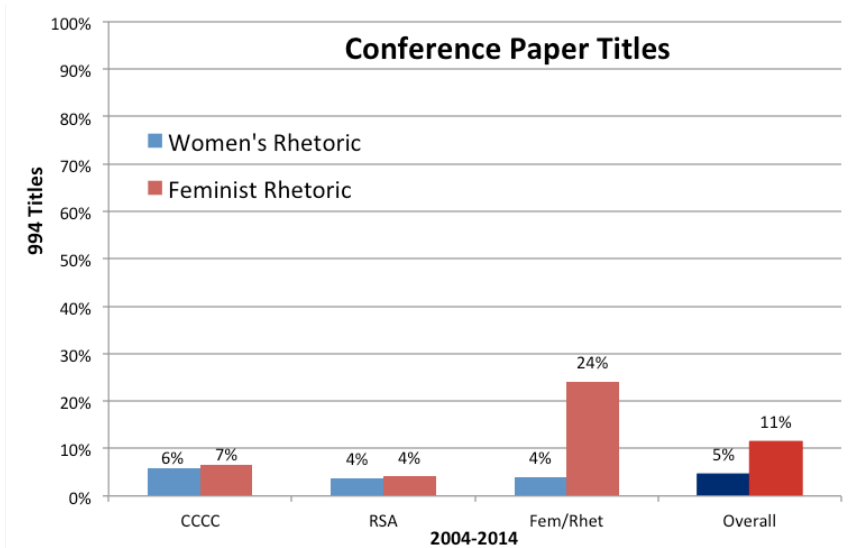
Conference Paper Titles

A tally of conference paper titles—still for a scholarly discourse community but for a potentially broader or more interdisciplinary audience—yields similar results. As with the journal article titles, the initial, broader search flagged conference paper titles indicating “women,” “feminist,” or a woman’s name or gendered issue in the title. The search spanned the decade 2004-2014 with the conferences CCCC, Feminisms and Rhetorics, and Rhetoric Society of America (the latter two being biennial) and revealed just under 1,000 conference paper titles connected to women or feminism and rhetoric in some way. Then, as with the journal article titles, to discern if any patterns emerged with particular field names, I narrowed the search from this broader set, searching for the specific terms “feminist rhetoric” or “women’s rhetoric. The ratio of titles is nearly that of the journal article titles, with “feminist rhetoric” and “women’s

¹⁵ CompPile is, according to their website, “an inventory of publications in writing studies, including post-secondary composition, rhetoric, technical writing, ESL, and discourse analysis.”

rhetoric" remaining at about 10% and 4%, respectively, showing twice the usage for "feminist" than "women." Notably, however, this statistic looks to be due to Feminisms and Rhetorics as an outlier, as the other two conferences had nearly equal usage of "feminist rhetoric" or "women's rhetoric." Fem/Rhet's use of "feminist" over "women" was nearly five to one, which is not surprising given the conference title (see table 3). Here again, the number for "women's rhetoric" and "feminist rhetoric" is less than 15% of the total number of titles that relate to women, feminism, and rhetoric in a traceable way.

Table 3: Conference Paper Titles



The search of titles from journal articles and conference papers indicates that the work being done on issues of women, feminism, gender, and rhetoric is not represented by one or even two consistent labels. The monikers "women's rhetoric" and "feminist rhetoric" together only comprise 13-15% of the total number of titles that relate to women and feminism and rhetoric in some way. The results on the one hand show a capaciousness that resists categorization, but they also indicate a dispersal that belies the collective work of a field.

Course titles

Outside of scholarly conversations and discourse communities, the work we do can be seen on our campuses via our teaching, which reaches an audience of students as well as colleagues, administrators, and parents. Course

titles are perhaps the most visible signal of our teaching, yet aside from context in *Reclaiming Rhetorica* that many contributors to the volume were enrolled in Annette Kolodny's 1987-88 graduate seminar entitled "Women Rhetoricians," I have yet to find sources that describe why course titles are named as they are (Lunsford 4).¹⁶ Like an article or presentation title, course titles ask us to distill our work to its most concise in order to signal its purpose. I wondered whether naming trends were altered by this shift in audience from scholarly to collegiate.

Such syllabus information is not easy to come by, as I quickly found when running a basic search for syllabus titles, in part because I couldn't guarantee I was seeing course titles and not descriptors within syllabi.¹⁷ Searches over a short span of time also greatly varied: a March 2016 simple Google search for ["women's rhetoric" syllabus] yielded 2,250 results, and a search for ["feminist rhetoric" syllabus] listed 2,390 results, but doing the same search in June 2015 yielded much different results, with over 5,000 to women's rhetorics and just over 1,000 to feminist rhetorics. These results, disparate as the two searches are, indicate that "women's rhetoric" is more on par with "feminist rhetoric" than with the Ngram Viewer and title searches. It seems likely that courses titled Women's Rhetoric would align with other Women's Studies or Gender Studies courses within institutions and in our current cultural climate may entice a broader range of students than a course title employing the word "feminist."

As rhetoricians we understand that it matters what we call ourselves: a label prompts assumptions of who we are as well as how others—students, scholars, the larger public—perceive the field. What's less clear is what motivates title choices in spaces that become less insular; are we still speaking to a narrower discourse community or considering broader reverberations? As social media catalogs which celebrities call themselves feminist, online conversations erupt about whether to embrace or ditch the name. Such conversations are—or should be—connected to the work we do in our classrooms and in our scholarship, as they reveal how the gendered issues to which we devote our rhetorical work get played out in mainstream culture, giving a glimpse of what may be brought to the table when students (and sometimes their parents) browse through a campus course catalog, or when an acquaintance asks us what we teach. Our on-the-ground practices may be informed richly by our theories but practically are less nuanced, and whether or how to account for

¹⁶ In general, not just in this field, such pedagogical choices aren't often visible. There are great resources on teaching in this area: see *Teaching Rhetorica*, Enoch and Jack, and others.

¹⁷ Gathering such data was ultimately beyond my scope. While there are some syllabi databases online, such as Open Syllabus Project, they allowed for a search of texts but not titles (and showed almost no results in a search).

that is important to our mission. Have we considered fully how our labels in different contexts reverberate back to our theories or at least how we relay our work to multiple publics?

All told, these “distant readings” across the Ngram Viewer and various titles don’t yield crystallizing results about naming proclivities. A field name, or even the two names I’ve focused on here, do not appear to drive title choices in any widespread way. But the gloss does suggest, not surprisingly, that terms shift slightly depending on the narrowness of the discourse community: the Ngram Viewer and journal article titles were most tilted toward “feminist rhetorics”; save the Fem/Rhet Conference, conference paper titles were more evenly split, as were course titles, suggesting that the broader the audience, “feminist” becomes less assumed to be a given. And even then, the numbers were low, with “women’s rhetorics” and “feminist rhetorics” representing only 13-15% of titles that reference women or feminism in any visible way. More generally, it appears that moniker selections appear individualistic and don’t signal a cohesive attribution to a field name. From mining these various sites where we provide titles as well as scholarship tending to these concepts, it’s unclear whether the absence of a clear trend in naming is due to our insistence on plurality or a fragmentation that comes with a lack of visibility about or reflection on our nomenclature amid the field’s fast growth or a combination of both. An alternative to “women’s” or “feminist” rhetorics that I offer next offers more capaciousness and inclusiveness and may provide greater opportunities to coalesce under an umbrella field name.

Women’s and Gendered Rhetorics as an Overarching Term

Weaving pervasively throughout theoretical and methodological discussions on women and feminism, the concept of gender can bridge the limitations of other terms. As an approach, it may have the most pliability for the reasons Jarratt unfurled back in 1989 discussed above. Bonnie Dow and Julia T. Wood in their introduction to *The SAGE Handbook of Gender and Communication* in fact argue that “attention to the performative character of gender is possibly the best heuristic and most important direction(s) for research and theorizing” (xvii). As an approach, it allows for malleability, disruption, and breadth.

While many in the field have theorized the term itself, little exists about “gendered rhetorics” as a moniker, save K.J. Rawson’s “Queering Feminist Rhetorical Canonization.” He argues that the field of feminist rhetoric has, in an attempt to challenge the masculinist tradition, produced “new canons of feminist rhetorics that become exclusive of people who are not biologically born or identified women,” reinscribing normativity (45). To serve as a

corrective, he offers that in queering the field, “feminist rhetoric might also shift from studying women’s rhetorics to the rhetorics of genders,” due to its capaciousness in “work[ing] from an understanding of gender that insists on the cultural constructions and productions of gender,” comparing the move to women’s studies programs that have renamed themselves “Gender Studies” (49, 46).

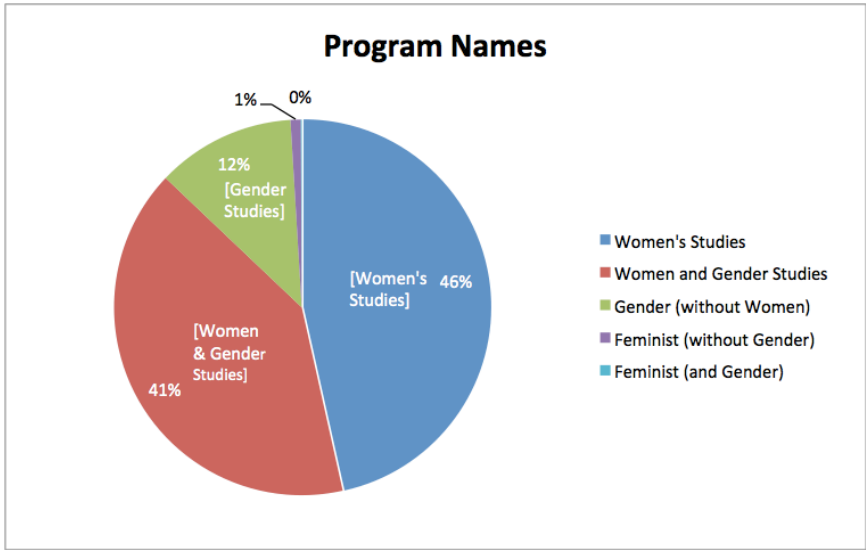
The field of women’s religious history has also taken up similar issues with regard to naming, though they argue for embracing gender while also leaving “women” intact. In the introduction to *The Religious History of American Women*, Catherine Brekus contends that women’s religious historians haven’t paid much mind to “some of the most innovative theoretical work on gender” and have also neglected challenges to the category “woman” (10, 11). While the scholars represented find the categories inextricable, they argue that “a focus on women remains essential”; in essence, Brekus echoes and reinforces the concerns of scholars I’ve cited here that while “women” is problematic, it should remain so the social and economic realities for women aren’t rendered invisible.

The strands of this argument can be seen in the changes in program names for women’s studies programs (see table 4). In doing a tally of 690 programs in the U.S., the program names break down accordingly (rounded to nearest percent):¹⁸

- 46% Women’s Studies (315 programs)
- 40% Women’s and Gender Studies (in some combination) (275 programs)
- 12% Gender Studies (without Women) (81 programs)
- 1% Feminist Studies (without Gender) (6 programs)
- .5 Feminist (and Gender) Studies

18 Program names are displayed on a website clearinghouse listing hyperlinks to U.S. and international women’s studies programs, departments, and research centers assembled by English and Women’s Studies professor Joan Korenman. During the deliberations about the name change for the Women’s Studies program on our campus, I learned about Korenman’s website. For this tally, done in 2015, a spreadsheet was used taking all names and dividing them into the following categories: “Both women and gender”; “Contains women but not gender”; “Contains gender but not women”; “Contains feminist but not gender”; “Contains gender and feminist”; “Other”; and “None.” Because my focus for this article is on the terms “women,” “gender,” and “feminist,” as it relates to the history and trajectory of our field, other terms weren’t designated in the categories (such as “sexuality,” “race,” etc.).

Table 4: Program Names



The data indicates that programs solely named Women’s Studies total under half of all programs in the U.S., with some combination of Women and Gender just behind at forty percent. Gender as a program name comes in third at nearly 12 percent. Notably, only one percent of programs have “feminist” in the title alone or with another descriptor. What I could not know from the information on the website is when program names were decided and, when applicable, changed, but the numbers support Rawson’s point that the term “gender” is significantly represented: over half of all programs, 52%, include “gender” in their title. Yet over 85% of programs still have “women” in their title in some capacity.¹⁹

It may seem an abrupt shift to remove the term “feminist,” given that “feminist rhetorics” has been one of the mainstays as a moniker, though again, it accounts for only about 10% of titles in journal articles and conference papers.

¹⁹ Recently on my own campus, using its twentieth anniversary as a *kairotic* moment, the Women’s Studies program underwent extensive discussion about re-naming. In a conversation with the Provost, Women’s Studies faculty members from a range of disciplines made a convincing case with arguments like Brekus’ that “Women” must be kept in the title alongside the new addition of “Gender.” Ultimately, we voted for the new name change “Women and Gender Studies.” There was hearty discussion about inclusion of the term “Sexuality” in the program title; while the issue is certainly connected to this article, the details are beyond the scope of this piece.

Gender, by comparison, appears in 5% of the journal article titles and 3% of conference paper titles. Further, few titles in the tally of programs just above employ the word “feminist,” a move likely related to the issues of institutional contexts. Because a commitment to activism is vital to feminism, as we are reminded in Buchanan and Ryan’s sixth descriptor of feminist rhetorics, it is crucial to be attentive to our nomenclature beyond our limited academic circles.

I see a turn to “women’s and gendered rhetorics” less as a *replacement* for “feminist rhetorics” than a larger umbrella with which to sponsor the integral and vast contributions of feminism as a lens for the field, but which can also encompass other approaches to gender analysis and women’s rhetorical practices. I agree with Dow and Celeste M. Condit’s argument about “feminist” being a suitable label for projects expressly concerned with gender justice (449). In surveying feminist scholarship, they examine how descriptors in rhetorical scholarship may both convey and cloak broad theoretical and methodological underpinnings of the enterprise. For them, “feminist” is to be used not by default but deliberately:

In our minds, the field of communication has come too far to categorize all research on women, or even gender, as feminist in its orientation. Rather, the moniker of “feminist” is reserved for research that studies communication theories and practices from a perspective that ultimately is oriented toward the achievement of “gender justice,” a goal that takes into account the ways that gender always already intersects with race, ethnicity, sexuality, and class. (449)

In glossing rhetorical research in communication studies, they argue that the “import of feminist rhetorical study goes beyond the evaluation of the efficacy of rhetorical strategies in particular situations and provides insight into how gender and symbol use constitute, challenge, and constrain our identities and possibilities as political actors” (451). For them, the label “feminist” is warranted through certain ideological approaches to and the rendering of research, and it would be inaccurate to conflate research about women with feminist scholarship, a tendency I noted earlier particularly in regard to historical scholarship. The implication appears to be that feminist rhetorics are a part of the larger enterprise that considers women and gender but contain certain features not applicable to or synonymous with other rhetorical endeavors by (and about) women. And with the robust definitions of feminist rhetorics provided by Buchanan and Ryan and Royster and Kirsch, scholars are now better positioned to situate the *how* of feminist rhetorics. Clearly feminist rhetorics are foundational and omnipresent to both approaches to the field stated by Jarratt and echoed many times over: recovery of women’s rhetorical practices invisible in traditional understandings of the rhetorical tradition, and analyzing

rhetorical histories, theories, and practices via gendered analyses. But “women’s and gendered rhetorics” most directly and clearly describes those paths, even as “feminist rhetorics” is the primary vehicle traversing the paths.

The recent name change to the Coalition of Feminist Scholars in the History of Rhetoric and Composition also retains the name feminist while avoiding the conflation of “women’s rhetorics” and “feminist rhetorics” or confusion between the two. While feminism is certainly a descriptor of an approach, or the “how,” as I’ve shown, clearly at times it has also referenced the “who” in muddled ways. Its clear use as an adjective for scholars in the Coalition precisely signals that members identify as feminist, and scholars choose to become members, thus having agency in taking on the descriptor compared to a field name that may or may not fully and accurately represent the work. Again, while the Coalition is just one part of the field, such clarity on the “who” invites greater transparency for researchers to situate themselves as well as their projects within women’s and gendered rhetorics.

Women’s and gendered rhetorics allows for the “what” or “who” *and* the “how.” There are further advantages as well in terms of inclusivity, both within our scholarly community and beyond, efforts central to those in the field. In the 25th Anniversary issue of *Peitho*, Alexandra Hidalgo interviewed six founding members of the Coalition of Women Scholars in the History of Rhetoric and Composition and created a documentary reviewing the Coalition’s beginnings, history, and plans for the future. When asked about the Coalition’s greatest challenges, founding members featured in the film all spoke of two areas to focus attention. The first was greater inclusivity in membership, such as “men who are feminists” (Lunsford qtd. in Hidalgo). Joyce Middleton spoke of the lack of diversity as more of an issue today than during the Coalition’s inception, Kathleen Welch of racism, and Jacqueline Jones-Royster invokes working to convince all that gender, just as race, sexuality, geography, and more are elements of intersectionality that comprise the “human enterprise” (Hidalgo). While issues of diversity must be tackled on a range of fronts, a more elastic moniker with less historical freight may be fruitful. Further inviting an intersectional lens is also key—and should be more greatly encouraged—to women’s and gendered rhetorical work (see Sara Hayden and D. Lynn O’Brien Hallstein for further discussion on how a focus on gender does not negate an intersectional approach). Further, a label such as “women and gendered rhetorics” that includes feminists/feminism but also more obviously signals spaces for studies of, say, masculinity rhetorics or queer rhetorics, provides opportunities for more voices to become involved.

The second challenge named by Coalition founders was more diligence in reaching wider audiences and publics outside academia. These very audiences, I’ve sought to show, may not feel included by our current labels, particularly

when readers are left to make assumptions about what those terms signal. Aligning our field name with related fields and programs can foster interdisciplinary and programmatic connections and possibilities that may be obvious to us but less so to others.

In Closing: (How) to Coalesce?

I began researching what came to be this article out of a search for clarification: how do I answer graduate students who ask why they see two—or more—names for the scholarship and field we study throughout our course? Truth be told, however, I somewhat resist ending this piece by providing one alternative for our moniker, a resistance that comes straight from my training in this field; the scholarship's strong messages for multiplicity and collaboration are always present. Further, and significantly, the field may simply have too many tentacles to be covered by an umbrella term or even the suggestion of a singular identity, let alone the risks for reducing inclusivity or plurality in doing so. Embracing the moniker "women's and gendered rhetorics" does not fix all issues and likely raises new ones that will be brought to bear. Even so, my research into the monikers we use and why has left me more convinced that a lack of clarity and visibility about how the labels that represent our field became established undermines the goals our field has for gender justice.

"Women's and gendered rhetorics" as a term is a possibility meant to reflect our plurality while still allowing us to coalesce, which, of course is not the same as converging or always agreeing. As Cheryl Glenn and Andrea A. Lunsford remind us in "Coalition: A Meditation" (also in the 25th Anniversary issue): "'Coalition' denotes a group of distinct individuals who come together to cooperate in joint action toward a mutual goal (or set of goals)—not forever, but for however long it takes" (11). The recent name change of the Coalition of Women Scholars to the Coalition of Feminist scholars is a key example of such a move. I believe the *act* of the Coalition name change as well as the name itself work well with a move to "women and gendered rhetorics" as a moniker. To coalesce around a more malleable overarching term can help achieve our goals of greater inclusivity in terms of who participates and whom we reach outside academia.

Regardless of what further conversation occurs on the issue of naming—and a hope with this piece is to fuel such discussion—one goal that can be met is for future scholarship to be more overt and explicit in articulating its nomenclature for the field. With recent definitions available and circulating, scholars can clarify how they are positioning their work and the work of the field in the ways Dow and Condit call for. After all, as Armstrong and Fontaine argue, "By naming something, one actively carves out a space for it to occupy, a space defined by what one values...and by how it appears to be like or unlike

other parts of one's world view" (7-8). As our assumptions are shared more overtly, our commitment to multiplicity and expansiveness is more strongly revealed and reinforced.²⁰

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“Making It” in the Academy through Horizontal Mentoring

Pamela VanHaitsma and Steph Ceraso

Abstract: *This essay productively engages the exigencies facing early-career feminist academics by developing and detailing an approach to horizontal mentoring. This approach emerged through our own horizontal mentoring relationship, which we situate in relation to feminist scholarship on mentoring within rhetoric and composition as well as other fields. We share seven specific practices for horizontal mentoring.*

Keywords: *feminist mentors, peer mentoring, horizontal mentoring, professional development*

Early-career feminist scholars confront a range of challenges as we work toward “making it” in the academy. As Karen Kelsky of the popular website *The Professor Is In* notes in her book by the same name, graduate students go on the job market “in an era of Olympics-level competition for today’s almost nonexistent tenure track slots” (*Professor* 25). But even for those who do obtain the positions they desire, the challenges have only just begun. The “academic job search” is so grueling, Kelsky explains, “that even when it is successful, and you get the coveted tenure track position, you cannot stop feeling anxious, inadequate, panicked and insecure” (“Job” n. pag.).¹ The challenges of navigating new academic positions are particularly pronounced for “academics from marginalized backgrounds,” as Eric Anthony Grollman documents in his blog, *Conditionally Accepted*. Conditionally accepted scholars may include those “who are women, of color, lesbian, trans*, bisexual, gay, queer, disabled, working-class or poor, immigrants, fat, religious minorities, and/or single parents” (n. pag.). These academics, in addition to negotiating roles new to all early-career scholars, “are faced daily with the difficult tension between academia’s narrow definition of success and their own politics, identities, needs, happiness, and health” (n. pag.). Seeking out guidance on how to navigate such tensions, early-career scholars find no shortage of published advice. Quite the

1 For further discussion of “emotional labor” and the academic job market in rhetoric and composition, see Sano-Franchini. Guidance on navigating the job market can be found in Kelsky; Hume; Mack, Watson, and Camacho.

contrary, Kelsky and Grollman's sites are incredible resources—and, as this essay moves forward, we will draw from and share a range of other books and articles that offer useful advice.

However, as early-career academics consult this advice, we are confronted doubly with the challenge of wading through a virtual onslaught of potentially overwhelming and sometimes conflicting information. Published guidance is necessarily generalized and, when graduate students and new faculty encounter it in relative isolation, information that was meant to be helpful may simply exacerbate anxieties. Once we have become familiar with the general guidance, the real challenge becomes finding ways to adapt that advice in order to apply it within very specific rhetorical situations. These situations vary based on not only our own positioning, as Grollman details, but also the specificities of our institutions, departments, programs, colleagues, and students.

With the goal of productively engaging the anxieties faced by early-career feminist academics, this essay offers one approach for attempting to navigate these specificities: "horizontal mentoring."² We understand horizontal mentoring, quite simply, as mentoring (the offering of help, guidance, and training) that is carried out within a horizontal rather than hierarchical relationship (between peers, as opposed to a more and less experienced mentor and mentee). For scholars of rhetoric and composition, this concept of horizontal mentoring likely calls to mind other terms, such as "peer mentoring," that circulate in particular ways within our field. Ultimately, we have chosen to use the term "horizontal" in this essay in order to accentuate its distinction from power-laden, vertical mentoring dynamics. When we first developed the horizontal mentoring relationship we describe herein, we were graduate students going on the job market. As we exchanged materials, practiced interviews, and strategized about campus visits, we called ourselves "job market buddies." Because this initial experience with horizontal mentoring was so helpful, we made a conscious decision to continue our collaboration during our early years as assistant professors, at which point we started to think of ourselves as "assistant professor buddies." Whatever term readers prefer, what we offer here is an explicit framework for how to intentionally begin and sustain such mentoring.

Through our experience, we have identified seven specific practices for horizontal mentoring that we share in this essay. These practices include: choosing a horizontal mentor, holding regular Skype sessions, making lists and setting goals, exchanging book project writing, discussing and re-framing the concept of work-life balance, acknowledging and celebrating successes, and developing a network or team of mentors. Before turning to these practices, we situate our culturally and institutionally located account in relation

2 For other discussions of mentoring, see Boice; Eble and Gaillet; Mack, Watson, and Camacho.

to existing feminist scholarship on "making it" in the field of rhetoric and composition.

Locating Feminist Conversations about "Making It"

In sharing our approach to horizontal mentoring, we build on a rich body of rhetoric and composition scholarship about strategies for "making it" as feminist academics. As Michelle Ballif, Diane Davis, and Roxanne Mountford write in *Women's Ways of Making It in Rhetoric and Composition*, the "feminization"³ of rhetoric and composition means that women in our field "face different challenges and issues (if not in kind, certainly in degree) than do other female academics" (1)—particularly with respect to pay, administrative expectations, and tenure and promotion.⁴ With the issues already widely documented, Ballif, Davis, and Mountford focus on "how women have succeeded in spite of these challenges" (3). Their study considers the strategies of scholars that survey respondents deemed "successful." In tenured positions primarily at research-intensive institutions, these are scholars whose names are widely recognized in conjunction with their innovative research and prolific publication records.

In fact, "most of the people who work in the field, according to the definition proposed by Ballif, Davis, and Mountford, have not made it, nor can they," insist Kristin Bivens, Martha McKay Canter, Kirsti Cole, Violet Dutcher, Morgan Gresham, Luisa Rodriguez-Connal, and Eileen Schell. In "Sisyphus Rolls On: Reframing Women's Ways of 'Making It' in Rhetoric and Composition," Bivens et al. ask, "In a field predominantly based in contingent and graduate labor, how can we re-think 'making it' as a more productive and inclusive term?" (n. pag.). For the reasons these scholars identify, the question of how to navigate the challenges of developing an academic career, while simultaneously attending to the multiple shapes such careers might take, is complex in our field. We are faced, on the one hand, with a persistent illusion handed down from prior generations—that anyone with a PhD in rhetoric and composition will be able to find a tenure-track job—and, on the other hand, with a pressing reality—that an increasingly high percentage of undergraduate writing courses are taught by adjunct faculty.

It is crucial in our field, then, that feminist discussions of "making it" leave room for a multiplicity of located experiences while encouraging flexible, adaptive strategies. In outlining our approach to horizontal mentoring, we underscore its adaptability; we see its primary advantage in terms of how those involved in any given horizontal mentoring relationship may use the seven practices we detail in order to reinvent the widely available career advice

3 On the feminization of composition, see Enos; Lauer; Miller.

4 Documentation of these challenges can be found in Enos; Phelps.

for their own situations. That said, because we developed these practices through our experiences with horizontal mentoring, we do write from particular positions. Especially as feminist scholars, we are cognizant of the ethical and political imperative to acknowledge and account for these locations in both cultural and institutional terms (McKee and Porter; Royster; Royster and Kirsch). We are both married women who grew up in rural, largely working class areas of the Rust Belt. Pamela writes as a queer-identified white woman from the northern Lower Peninsula of Michigan; she was a first generation college student. Steph writes as a straight white woman who grew up in western Pennsylvania. The examples we share from our personal experiences are inevitably tied to these cultural locations, but we work to engage a broader range of experiences by drawing on scholarship about mentoring and tenure-track academic life. Especially as two white women, we consider it crucial that our discussion is informed by the writing of scholars of color.⁵

In institutional terms, we are both tenure-track junior faculty at research institutions. Steph is an assistant professor in her first year at the University of Virginia, and she was in her second year at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County (UMBC) when we began to collaborate on this essay. Pamela is in her third year as an assistant professor at Old Dominion University. Again, we work throughout to acknowledge how the examples we share from experience are informed by the expectations we face—and the varied resources available to us—as faculty at universities designated research-intensive. We also want to note that neither of us are tenured. Our status as untenured faculty does impact our writing here, in that we are both relatively cautious about the degree and types of details we share. As such, some readers may desire descriptions of the challenges we have faced that are more vivid than we feel comfortable sharing in print at this time. Still, when it comes to stepping into important feminist conversations about mentoring, we are adamant about not operating according to a “wait until after tenure” mentality. While we find it helpful to hear from feminist scholars who have “made it” in the field, we also want to encourage more exchange among those of us who are in process of “making it”—who are *practicing* at making it—rather than waiting until we reach some mythical point of success. Further, in light of the hateful rhetorics and actions that have escalated as a result of the 2016 presidential election, we believe that it is especially crucial for women and minorities attempting to “make it” to take it upon ourselves to support and sustain each other through strategic mentoring.

That said, we conceive of horizontal mentoring as an accompaniment rather than a replacement for formal mentoring. In our case, as we first developed

5 In addition to the scholars cited throughout the essay, see Dace; Gutiérrez y Muhs, Niemann, González, and Harris; Mack, Watson, and Camacho.

our horizontal mentoring relationship, we worked to model our interactions after the productive mentoring relationships we experienced in graduate school at the University of Pittsburgh. One of our feminist faculty mentors was a real inspiration, as she encouraged graduate students at our institution to form writing groups and other informal support networks, all while modeling feminist principles of mentoring in her interactions with us. Yet, as scholars JaneMaree Maher, Jo Lindsay, Vicki Peel, and Christina Twomey urge, horizontal mentoring may supplement more traditional structures of mentorship by offering "a unique opportunity...for a frank sharing of issues of professional development" (29).

This frank sharing is key because, even in the most ideal of traditional mentoring relationships, power dynamics are real. As Jennifer Sano-Franchini writes in her study of the job market in rhetoric and composition, for instance, graduate students and recent graduates planning to go back on the job market may be hesitant—and understandably so—to openly discuss difficulties with the people on whom they rely for letters of recommendation. As one participant in Sano-Franchini's study explained, "[e]xposing the emotional circumstances of the job market is something that I don't really have a space to do because the people I'm talking to about the job market are largely my professional references" (118). The same can be said not only for those early-career scholars needing references on the job market, but for all scholars aware of how relationships and departmental politics may impact tenure decisions. While we may be fortunate to have excellent mentors from graduate school and/or at our new institutions, there remains a limit to how much many of us feel comfortable sharing with mentors who have such power over our career trajectories.

Moreover, even as discussions with horizontal mentors offer a space in which to strategize about navigating power dynamics, there remain structural inequalities not addressed through individualized mentoring relationships. These structural equalities impact early-career feminist scholars in uneven ways. As Kerry Ann Rockquomore and Tracey Laszloffy explain in *The Black Academic's Guide to Winning Tenure — Without Losing Your Soul*, "While institutional hierarchies leave all junior faculty in a vulnerable position, the difficulty associated with the probationary period is intensified for faculty who occupy a disadvantaged position within one or more of the social hierarchies structured around race, class, gender, sexual orientation, and nationality" (2). Structural inequalities of course require "structural solutions." Thus, as Rockquomore emphasizes elsewhere, "long-term institutional policy changes are important" (vii). But discussions of needed policy changes "too often overlook the health and well-being of individuals who are currently navigating the job market and

tenure track. In other words, current cohorts of graduate students and new faculty members can't wait for the implementation of 10-year diversity plans or the enactment of diversity recommendations issued by strategic planning task forces—much less the eradication of racism, sexism, and homophobia” (vii).⁶ Rockquemore and Laszloffy thus offer in their “guidebook...both a map of the potential minefields and a set of tools to navigate the difficult terrain” (2).

We understand our own account of horizontal mentoring as a complement to the guidance and narratives already collected in Rockquemore and Laszloffy; Ballif, Davis, and Mountford; and Bivens et al. Even as horizontal mentoring cannot resolve structural problems, and while our essay is limited by what we are comfortable sharing at this point in our careers, we invite readers to join with us in having these conversations in multiple ways—to approach us at conferences, to talk with us over a coffee or beer, to chat in convention center hallways and in digital spaces. In discussing these strategies with other feminist scholars thus far, including at the 2015 Feminism(s) and Rhetoric(s) conference, we have felt validated in the potential usefulness of this approach for colleagues who are in different cultural and institutional locations. Our investment here is in how early-career feminist scholars “make it” *together*—in conversation and collaboration with supportive peers—whether as graduate students, adjuncts, lecturers, or junior faculty on the tenure track. Indeed, as we emphasize in our first horizontal mentoring practice, it is key to enact this approach with a peer who knows first-hand the particularities of your own location in the academy.

1. Choosing a Horizontal Mentor

Choosing the *right* peer mentor is crucial to a productive horizontal mentoring collaboration. It is important to choose a person with analogous goals and work habits—someone who is willing to make a real commitment to you and your work.⁷ Because we had worked together in graduate school on various projects and during our job searches, we already had a good sense of each other's working styles and goals before we decided to formalize our mentoring relationship. In other words, we did not simply decide to become peer mentors because we were friends, though that happened to be true in our case as well. Rather, our decision was based on a shared vision of what we wanted to learn and accomplish through our mentoring relationship.

While it is not absolutely necessary, it may be a good idea to choose a mentor who is at the same academic stage. Doing so will enable you to help each other jump through similar hoops, as well as vent, strategize, and get

⁶ Hall makes a similar point.

⁷ For advice on how to find a mentor, see Boice (247-8).

feedback and advice about the challenges you will both face during a particular stage of your academic careers. For example, it has been especially helpful to compare notes about how to navigate our service responsibilities as new assistant professors. Many scholars have noted the overwhelming nature of service responsibilities for new faculty (Connelly and Ghodsee; Rockquemore and Laszloffy; Seltzer). Since neither of us had much experience with the kinds of committee work we were being tasked with, it was reassuring during our first year to talk through these issues with someone who was going through the same thing.

When selecting a horizontal mentor, it is also important to consider the ways we may prefer or need a mentor who shares our cultural location(s). For faculty navigating sexist, racist, classist, and/or homophobic systems and microaggressions within academic life, talking with someone who shares our experiences may offer crucial space for validation and support. As Dwayne A. Mack recounts in *Beginning a Career in Academia: A Guide for Graduate Students of Color*, "mentoring from other academics of color has contributed to my professional development and abilities to deal with microaggressions. For example, some faculty of color served as my liaison to the surrounding community of color" (173). For Mack, this community "contributed to a meaningful off-campus life" that was key to withstanding microaggressions within campus life.⁸ For us, as white women both under the age of 40, it was helpful for our horizontal mentoring relationship to involve a shared, experience-based recognition of the subtly sexist comments sometimes made about our appearances and age, especially in terms of not "looking like a professor."

In other ways, however, the challenges we face differ, and this will likely be the case on at least some accounts for all horizontal mentoring relationships. In these cases, we recommend selecting a horizontal mentor who has previously demonstrated their ability to listen, understand, and act as a supportive ally when you face discrimination or microaggressions, whether due to sexism, racism, ableism, classism, or homophobia. Like many partnered graduate students who go on the job market, for instance, Pamela planned to move with her fiancé. Unlike her engaged colleagues in straight relationships, though, she could not count on her spouse-to-be getting coverage under her insurance plans or other benefits in the state of Virginia in 2014. Though some schools where she interviewed offered domestic benefits regardless of gender, the university where she was offered a tenure-track position did not. So, even after she married her partner in another state, they were preparing to uproot their lives (and, in her spouse's case, leave a good job), all while knowing their relationship would not be recognized legally in their new home. The

⁸ For an intersectional discussion of the toll such microaggressions take, particularly for women of color, see Alexander.

uncertainties and fears surrounding this part of the moving process were incredibly stressful, especially given Pamela's prior experiences of living amidst poverty as a child.

During this period of stress—marked by blatant homophobia built into state law and university policy—it was absolutely necessary to have a horizontal mentor who, even if she did not face the same challenges, could listen, understand, and offer support. While Pamela did not anticipate the above challenges when beginning to work with Steph as “job market buddies,” it was clear from conversations about dating, relationships, and family during the first months of our friendship as graduate students that she was a supportive ally. Her support as a horizontal mentor made a difference in multiple situations—when homophobic responses from family to Pamela's wedding threatened to distract her from interview preparation, when the Pulse shooting was foremost in her mind and heart as we met to discuss summer writing goals, etc. Based on these experiences, we encourage those selecting a horizontal mentor who does not share certain experiences to give careful consideration to the potential mentor's history of meeting your needs for allyship.

In addition to academic stage and cultural location, another factor when choosing a mentor is whether the person works at a different institution. While mentors at your own institution serve important purposes, as Mack writes, “you should also have off campus mentors with no affiliation to your institution” (173). Having a horizontal mentor from another institution is important because an outsider's perspective can be very useful. There will inevitably be times when you cannot or do not feel comfortable asking questions to people in your own department (e.g. early in your career, you may not know yet which colleagues you can trust with the kinds of questions you might want to ask; you may be afraid that you will come across as incompetent or inexperienced). Additionally, the type of institution where you and your potential mentor are employed should be a consideration. In our case, working at places with parallel expectations makes it easier for us to be on the same wavelength when it comes to things like goal setting and feedback. The fact that we both have the goal of publishing a book before going up for tenure, for instance, has motivated us to develop a shared system of practices that enables us to make progress toward that goal—something we will discuss in more detail below.

2. Holding Regular Skype Sessions

A second practice that we find productive is holding regular video conference sessions via Skype. We treat these hour-long sessions as scheduled meetings that we are required to show up to and be prepared for—just like any other “official” work meeting. Scheduling our meetings in advance helps us commit to checking in frequently; it also makes our sessions feel more like

a deliberate part of our work schedules, as opposed to something extra that we have to tack on to our to-do lists during non-working hours.

Each of us prepares an "agenda," or list of topics we want to discuss, to bring to the meetings. Keeping a running list of agenda items between meetings, which usually occur every two weeks, ensures that we each get a chance to get feedback on the issues we feel are most pressing at the time. After doing this for the first few months, we both realized that the simple act of writing these thoughts down as they come to us has a therapeutic effect. Rather than stewing over something until the next meeting comes around, writing down the issue serves as a reassurance that it will get dealt with later. For example, during the second year of her first tenure-track position, Steph applied to (and eventually accepted) another job. At each stage of the application process it was difficult for her to focus on her current job without being in a constant state of stress. Writing down and tabling these concerns to discuss at later meetings helped Steph be more present for her colleagues and students in the midst of a major career change. In other words, because our meetings are a dedicated time to think through problems, we spend less time worrying about things outside of the meetings. It is also important to mention that we purposefully save all of our meeting agendas. Reviewing these at the end of our first and second years has allowed us to identify patterns and see what we are still struggling with, as well as track our growth and progress from the start of our jobs until now.

The discussions during our Skype sessions are often focused on questions about particular research and teaching-related issues, how to navigate our new departmental roles, and how to deal with emotional swings, such as the ups and downs that we have experienced during the process of working on our first books. Based on our agenda notes, it is clear that the most productive sessions have involved talking about our anxieties. The first year of any new job is stressful, and it is normal to have doubts about your abilities, or about belonging in academia (i.e. "imposter syndrome"). As feminist scholar Roxane Gay writes in "Typical First Year Professor," "Most of the time, I feel like the kid who gets to sit at the adult table for the first time at Thanksgiving. I'm not sure which fork to use. My feet can't reach the floor" (28). Rather than keeping all of our worries to ourselves and letting them accumulate, acknowledging and sharing our anxieties during the first year was very productive. Knowing that someone else is having similar doubts or worries amplifies the fact that you are not the only person who feels this way, which is a huge help in coming to terms with the transition from graduate student to faculty member.

However, acknowledging and sharing anxieties is not a magical solution for making them go away. What we have needed to learn is that it takes practice living with the type of anxiety that is an inevitable part of being an academic.

Therefore, we have come up with some strategies to help us work through the stress and worry. The first is pep talks; cheerleading has been essential to our success. One of the biggest differences between being a graduate student and being a faculty member is that, as a grad student (if you are fortunate), you have advisors and professors who are there to encourage you and keep you on track. As a faculty member, no one is watching over your shoulder to make sure your projects are going well, or to give you a confidence boost when you need one. Thus, we decided to take on that role for each other. Simply reminding the other person about what she has accomplished already—about how what she is doing now is nothing she has not been able to do in the past—is extremely affirming.

Another key strategy we use is reframing. When discussing anxieties, there is always the risk that your conversation will spiral into an unproductive freakout session. While we take the time to validate and compare notes about each other's fears and anxieties, we also make sure to reframe them in a more balanced and realistically positive way. For example, at one point we had both agreed to give an unusually large number of invited talks and conference papers in a single semester, which was a major source of stress. We were worried that these talks would take too much time away from our shared main goal: to finish our respective book manuscripts. While it was tempting to see these invitations as "extra work," however, we reframed them as opportunities to tailor our research for different audiences and, in that way, to continue developing the relevance of our book projects for a wider readership. That is, we decided to make these talks work *for us*; we used them to forward our own scholarly agendas and goals by presenting on projects that we were already working on but still refining. In general, we have made a conscious decision to leave room for anxiety in our Skype meetings, but we also make sure that at some point the conversation shifts to a more productive, forward-thinking, can-do mentality. That reframing continues to make a big difference in how we approach stressful situations.

3. Making Lists & Setting Goals

List-making and goal-setting have proven to be indispensable practices for us. In addition to making weekly lists to provide ourselves with a specific work plan, we develop lists for things such as yearly goals for research, teaching, and service; summer/winter break tasks; and 5-year research plans. While list-making has always been an important part of our productivity as individuals, we had never considered sharing these personal documents with anyone else. After reading Donald E. Hall's *The Academic Self*, a book that encourages academics to be self-reflexive and open about their daily habits and practices, we were inspired to treat our private texts just as seriously as the other kinds

of public writing that we do. As part of our horizontal mentoring relationship, then, we decided to make our personal documents available to one another for feedback.

We do not simply create these lists at the beginning of the term and then forget about them. Instead, we upload all of our documents to a shared Dropbox folder for easy access. Then, at various times throughout the year, we conduct a peer review of each other's lists. During these designated peer review sessions, we discuss the progress we have made toward our respective goals and "to-do" items, as well as offer suggestions for revising our lists in an effort to keep each other in check. For example, on several occasions during the past couple years (most often during spring break or over the summer), we were both attempting to do too much in a limited time frame. We ended up drafting overly ambitious lists of research tasks that we wanted to get done "while we had the time." What we came to realize through peer review, however, was that the amount of work we desired to get done was unrealistic. These lists set us up for potential failure (i.e., at the end of the break, we would feel dissatisfied due to all of the remaining un-crossed off list items), and would have left us with no time for rest or self-care during our "breaks." Thus, the peer review process we developed has been crucial because it gives us an opportunity to talk through and adjust our expectations about goal and to-do lists, which ultimately helps us teach each other to design more reasonable, manageable work plans.

In addition to the typical lists focused on research, teaching, and service, there are two other kinds of lists that serve as a way to address the larger questions guiding our mentoring collaboration. These lists are titled: 1) What kind of academics do we want to be? and 2) What kind of lives do we want to live? Creating these lists allows us to reflect on what we would like our ideal careers and lives to look like and develop strategies for enacting those ideals—as best as we can—in our current positions. For example, Steph's initial list indicated that she wanted to be the kind of academic who engages in trans-disciplinary discussions about sound, which is one of her primary research areas. Because there was not an established community of sound scholars actively sharing work at UMBC (where she held her first tenure-track position), she did some research and found out that UMBC's humanities center was accepting proposals for new faculty working groups. Instead of chairing a sound studies faculty working group herself—probably an unwise move at this busy stage of her pre-tenure career—Steph found a colleague who was interested in co-chairing with her. Co-chairing this working group allowed Steph to create and actively shape a community that she wanted to be a part of, as opposed to just accepting that such a community did not exist at her university or deciding to wait until a later stage of her career to pursue her interests. Taking the

initiative to form this group was one of the ways that Steph started working toward the academic identity that she outlined in her list.

Using our lists to think through big questions about our scholarly identities allows us to begin cultivating habits and practices that can help us get closer to our ideal careers and lives—a point to which we will return in our discussion of work-life integration below. As Hall states, “An emphasis on ‘owning’ one’s professional self-identity entails a willingness to articulate one’s values and priorities, a willingness to engage critically and openly one’s sense of what a professor ‘is’ and ‘does’” (10). Swapping and critically engaging with our personal texts has proven helpful for us, though we realize that the list-making and goal-setting practices we describe in this section may seem over-the-top or unnecessary to some readers. In fact, we felt the same way at first and often made fun of ourselves for being so obsessed with lists. Yet, we now understand that these lists play a huge role in our productivity and well-being. While the types of lists that individuals want or need to share for review will obviously vary based on stage of career, institution, and personal values, we do recommend trying some version of this peer mentoring strategy.

4. Exchanging Book Project Writing

Another practice we find advantageous is our book project writing exchange. Especially because we are both at research institutions, finishing our book manuscripts in a timely manner was a priority for us. We began this process by reading and discussing a few books on the subject, including William Germano’s *From Dissertation to Book* and *Getting It Published*. After taking notes on the key strategies outlined in these books, we each set a concrete revision schedule and goals for the first year. This included figuring out what to finish each month, when to collect new sources on a specific topic or chapter, and when to exchange drafts and return feedback to each other. Our structured approach helped us finish developing the first drafts of our manuscripts in that first year. While such a task seemed impossible initially, we committed to this being a priority above all else and stuck to that commitment. Even when we needed to be flexible and adjust deadlines or goals slightly, we did not allow it to get us off track.

One of the major benefits of participating in a formal book project writing exchange is that it has allowed us to get to know each other’s writing very well. Every writer has her quirks, but it can be difficult to notice your own writing issues when you are completely immersed in a big project (like writing a book). In graduate school, we both had dissertation advisors who were able to provide us with feedback that genuinely helped us improve our writing. The effectiveness of their feedback was due, in part, to the fact that they had been reading and responding to our work for years. During the first year of

our book project writing exchange, we developed a similar kind of intimate familiarity with each other's manuscripts. For example, we both helped one another identify writing issues that were holding us back in some way (e.g. Pamela's habit of being unnecessarily concerned with making the sections of every chapter perfectly parallel and balanced; or Steph's habit of glossing over key terms or concepts). This sort of response from a reader who really knows your writing is invaluable and hard to find post-PhD.

One unexpected result of our book project writing exchange that has come about rather organically is that it got us both thinking about our second books. As we were discussing and explaining ideas from our manuscripts, we often asked each other questions or stumbled upon topics that were beyond the scope of our current projects. For instance, Steph was frustrated because she kept trying (and failing) to incorporate a chapter about a particular pedagogical experience into her first book. The experience seemed relevant, but it didn't quite fit within the overarching framework she created. After asking more questions about the significance and complexity of the experience, Pamela prompted Steph to see how this topic might be more productively explored in a second book project. Talking with Steph also helped Pamela formulate plans for the second book. As Pamela worked on a new essay that returned to an earlier archive, but to explore a different set of questions about the same-sex relationships of nineteenth-century teachers, she raised concerns about the essay's place within her overarching research agenda. Mulling over these concerns with Steph, Pamela realized the questions could direct her next archival research for the second book project.

Rather than ignoring these ideas or pushing them aside for later, we capitalized on these moments by brainstorming together and doing some informal writing that was directed toward our next books. This has ended up being a very productive practice for us. As Robert Boice writes in *Advice for New Faculty Members*, working on more than one thing at a time "helps reduce the sameness of writing...and it leads to interplay of ideas and working styles" (155). Working on multiple projects helps to break up the monotony of a singular writing task, and it has enabled us to see possible intersections between our first and second book topics. Additionally, our writing exchange provides a space where we can try out ideas before they are fully formed; it is a space that allows us to plan for and get excited about future projects.

5. Discussing and Re-framing the Concept of Work-Life Balance

A fifth practice we find helpful is actively discussing the concept of work-life balance. Rena Seltzer's *The Coach's Guide for Women Professors* offers many

useful suggestions for women “who aspire to the very difficult combination” of both “a successful career” and “a well-balanced life” (ix). In our experiences reading as well as talking with colleagues in the field, the most widely shared (if not followed) advice for achieving this “difficult combination” is suggested by another of Seltzer’s titles: “To Find Happiness in Academe, Women Should Just Say No.” In Skype discussions and goal-setting, we instead find it helpful to reframe our notions from “work-life balance” to “work-life integration,” from the need to defensively say “no” to possibilities for strategically saying “yes.”

This reframing holds perhaps obvious implications for service. As Rachel Connelly and Kristen Ghodsee explain in *Professor Mommy*, junior scholars are usually urged to say “no” in order to protect our time, because “service officially counts for almost nothing”—at least with respect to tenure and promotion (141). Connelly and Ghodsee acknowledge that service does count, however, in that, “Your colleagues will develop grudges against you if you try to avoid the service you are assigned” or do not “carry your fair share” (and rightly so). Connelly and Ghodsee thus advise saying “no” to “anything beyond what is required” (141). But in shifting our focus to strategically saying “yes,” we find it important to join committees and get involved with initiatives that we want to be associated with, as a way of becoming the sort of scholars we want to be. For Pamela, this has meant developing a dissertation writing habits group in conjunction with PhD students in English, getting involved with interdisciplinary initiatives in support of sexuality studies and LGBTQ students, and serving on a college research committee through which she has learned more about writing effective grant and fellowship applications. Rather than striving to say “no” as much as possible, in other words, you may work on learning how to allocate “yeses,” choosing service activities that will help you to build the scholarly identities and communities that you want to integrate into your life. Indeed, as Boice notes, “well-chosen kinds of service have been observed as useful in replacing the usual helplessness and anomie of new faculty with a sense of self-worth and belonging” (253).

Certainly saying “no” and protecting your time remains important to the professional survival of faculty without tenure—especially women and scholars of color who are often overburdened with expectations for “invisible labor” (Grollman, “Invisible”). The tendency for women to perform more service work than men is widely documented and discussed, especially by feminist scholars (Jaschik). In addition, faculty of color face not only the usual service expectations, but a “cultural taxation”—an added expectation they will “invest their time on campus mentoring students of color, fulfilling the racial and gender quotas on committees and panels, and undoubtedly serving as the institution’s spokesperson for racial issues” (Mack 171). In the case of black faculty in particular, “many begrudgingly realize that, because they are one of few black

faculty on campus, they face disproportionately higher service requests than their colleagues, are overwhelmed by black students seeking a role model, and are expected to 'prove' themselves in ways that their white colleagues are not" (Rockquemore and Laszloffy 3).⁹ Given these expectations facing faculty of color and women, it is imperative to say "no." We do say "no." Pamela said "no," for example, when asked to co-chair a search committee for an advanced assistant or associate hire although she had only been at the institution for two years herself (she said "yes" to serving as a member of the committee). Still, we notice that our own lives feel most integrated, contented, and interesting when we focus our attention on what makes us excited to say "yes."¹⁰

In addition to well-chosen service, we would be remiss not to mention saying "yes" to parenting, which is perhaps the most discussed issue regarding work-life balance among women academics. As untenured faculty, however, this is a particularly risky discussion to have in terms of our personal decisions about whether or not, when, and how to have children. As the authors of *Professor Mommy* remind us, it is important for women to be "careful with appearances when you are pre-tenure," because planned and actual parenting by men and women in a department is often perceived and treated differently based on gendered expectations, even by otherwise progressive colleagues (Connelly and Ghodsee 39).¹¹ Without revealing specific details about our private decisions and plans, however, we do want to acknowledge that motherhood presents real opportunities and challenges for women academics, and thus should absolutely figure into horizontal mentoring conversations. Books like *Professor Mommy* offer useful advice for early-career scholars who hope to enjoy parenting while navigating these challenges. But again, the advice is necessarily general and broad. As such, we want to urge that discussing with a horizontal mentor how to apply and adapt such advice—while developing adaptive, flexible strategies, like we have tried to do throughout this article—is also essential when it comes to questions of parenting.

9 See also June; Morales-Díaz.

10 We would also like to thank Carolyn Kyler for this useful advice, which she generously shared with Steph in an email exchange about learning when to say "no."

11 As Connelly and Ghodsee explain, "Yes, you may see photos of children in the offices of the junior men in your department, but remember that men get extra credit for being involved parents and are less likely to be viewed as slackers when they rush off to tend to a sick kid during a faculty meeting. As a woman, our society grants you no special recognition or heroic honors for being an involved parent. The important thing is to pay careful attention to the institutional culture of your department. If your colleagues don't talk about their children (or they do not have children to talk about), you should exercise some discretion" (39).

Finally, we use our horizontal mentoring relationship to encourage each other to say “yes” to self-care—to rest, fun, and the important relationships in our lives. While the specifics vary for each of us here, our regular Skype conversations are spaces in which we both support each other’s individual efforts by emphasizing that it is okay to take time for self-care, to not work constantly during waking hours. We remind each other that we work steadily and consistently, and it is equally crucial to take time off on evenings and weekends as much as possible, and to truly enjoy that time, letting go of any guilt associated with not working. While such advice can come across as cliché, we hear it differently when it comes from the mouth of our trusted peer mentor who knows our work habits so well.

6. Acknowledging and Celebrating Successes (Even Small Ones)

Another vital practice involves celebrating our successes, even the small ones. During and often in-between our regular Skype sessions, we always share with each other any good news about our research, teaching, service, and professional development. At key moments, we send each other care packages whether for purposes celebratory or encouraging. At the end of each semester, we reflect again on our goal lists discussed above, this time in order to develop a new list of what we accomplished. Actually writing down each and every accomplishment, and then sharing the long lists with each other, helps us to pause, appreciate, and enjoy what we managed to get done. We underscore the celebratory nature of these end-of-semester meetings with beer toasts (though wine or chocolate would work just as well).

While it perhaps goes without saying that acknowledging and celebrating successes can be inspiring, two other benefits are noteworthy. Celebrating successes is important, first, in order to cultivate resiliency in the face of failures and rejections. As sociologist Crystal Fleming writes, most academics—particularly early in their careers—will face rejections (difficult reviewer comments, grant and fellowship rejections, less-than-ideal responses from presses, etc.). These rejections do not necessarily reflect failings in one’s work. Meritocracy is a myth as much in academia as in the culture at large, Fleming emphasizes. Those who experience discrimination of one type or another are especially at risk for the value of their work going under- or unrecognized. But at the same time, all academics face some rejection: “Wildly ‘successful’ and ordinary academics alike, the folks who benefit from layers of privilege and the ones who have overcome multiple dimensions of disadvantage, usually have one thing in common: Resilience” (n. pag.). This being the case, “Aside

from luck and various forms of privilege, the number one factor in academic success/survival is resilience in the face of rejection and failure."

Fleming underscores how important self-care, discussed above, is to cultivating this resiliency. We also find that celebrating our successes develops resiliency. As our collective list of accomplishments grows on screen and in our minds—and as we develop a sense of pride in the other's work as well as our own—each minor setback or outright rejection becomes a bit easier to weather. In some ways, this is simply a matter of developing the *thick* skin required to persist in a line of work that requires repeated self-exposure and critical evaluation accompanied by the real possibility of rejection. But rather than focusing on thick skin, we like to think of our academic selves as made *supple* through self-care and the celebration of successes, so our metaphoric skins are resilient in their elasticity and flexibility.

Along with cultivating resiliency, a second reason for celebrating small successes encompasses the need for self-promotion of one's scholarly work. Along with the myth of meritocracy, "One of the biggest myths of academia is that you only have to be smart enough and have good ideas to succeed" (Connelly and Ghodsee, "Value" n. pag.). As Connelly and Ghodsee urge, "Nothing could be further from the truth." "For better or worse," they explain, "the marketization of academia and the persistence of 'old boys' clubs' in universities around the world means that who you know is just as important as what you know." Extending and deepening the circles of "who we know" ideally occurs in part through mentoring networks, which we go on to discuss next. In addition to relying on mentors to facilitate connections, however, it is necessary to facilitate them ourselves through self-promotion.

Like many scholars, and especially many women scholars, we feel a bit uncomfortable with the idea of promoting ourselves. But the practice of sharing small successes with each other has helped us find approaches to self-promotion that seem more doable. As we learn of each other's successes, we promote each other—e.g. circulating news via social networking sites about new publications, upcoming talks, awards, etc. And when it comes to those tasks Connelly and Ghodsee associate with self-promotion—sending article offprints, keeping our websites updated, speaking at conferences, giving invited talks, applying for grants—we resort to our pep talks, airing any mixed feelings we have about self-promotion and encouraging each other about its importance. In this way, our celebration of successes is not totally private.

7. Developing a Network or Team

The seventh practice within our approach to horizontal mentoring consists of developing a network or team of mentors. The significance of strong mentors, whether peer-based or more "traditional," is well established (Boice).

What we want to emphasize here is the importance of having multiple mentors of different types (Rodrigo et al.). Along similar lines, writer and composition scholar Lynn Z. Bloom offers a “mosaic” metaphor for mentoring teams. She contemplates how scholars, developing a “do-it-yourself ethos” (89), “can experience the mosaic of mentorship, acquiring the elements of what we need to know and do to survive, even prevail, in professional situations” (87). Reflecting on her own varied experiences with this approach, Bloom concludes that, “The mentoring style—of receiving and giving—that has evolved over the course of my life has to me been far more satisfying than it would have been to model my life after a single person” (97). In another iteration of do-it-yourself mentoring in teams, composition scholars Rochelle Rodrigo, Susan K. Miller-Cochran, Duane Roen, Elaine Jolayemi, Cheri Lemieux Spiegel, and Catrina Mitchum theorize it through the metaphor of the “network.” They specifically recommend building “individualized networks for mentoring and learning that will match [your] own career goals” (n. pag.).

Rodrigo et al. and Bloom’s recommendations for networks and mosaics of multiple mentors address a more pressing exigency in situations where a single mentor is unavailable or unable to speak to specific aspects of your professional goals or other identities. But in our experience, their suggestions are relevant even *with* strong mentors. We are both very fortunate to have our peer mentoring relationship with each other, as well as excellent mentors among our former dissertation chairs and readers and our new senior colleagues. But none of us can rely on just one person for everything in our professional lives. It is important to have different people with different kinds of expertise, experiences, etc., so you can go to the person who is best able to mentor you on a particular issue.

We have found it crucial for our mentoring teams to include people from at least three domains. First, even in the absence of formal mentoring programs, ideally you have mentors at your home institution. Not only will they know the specifics of your department and program, but also you may need people to go to bat for you in your department and other parts of the institution. Second, it is of course important to make contacts in the field (and any subfields or interdisciplinary area studies) more broadly. We can start building these professional networks early on in our careers, especially with the support of our horizontal mentoring relationship. In our Skype sessions, we talk about networking—about how to do it, but in a manner that feels comfortable for us. In this way, in addition to what our collaboration makes possible between us, it also supports our reaching out to others (e.g. at conferences, via Twitter, by email).

Third and finally, our mentoring networks include partners and friends in addition to academics, people who can help with different things, not just

work. For instance, Pamela joined a running group immediately after relocating. This group helped her not only find people to run with, but also learn about what was an entirely new city and region of the country. The group provided friends to talk with about non-work stuff and maintain perspective on life as much bigger than a single job or a career trajectory. Other possibilities here include cultivating mentors within activist networks, specific cultural communities, spiritual groups and religious institutions, etc. Whichever nodes are most important to your own network, we recommend a dispersed model of mentorship so that your horizontal mentoring relationship is supported by a large, diverse, and flexible team.

Conclusion

The above practices have helped us to “make it” in our first two and a half years as new faculty on the tenure track. While we have experienced greater contentment and success than we believe we would have without this mentoring collaboration, we want to emphasize that the purpose of writing this article is not to sell some sort of self-help program for feminist scholars of rhetoric and composition. The horizontal mentoring practices we have outlined are not the only ways to approach mentoring, and they did not solve all of our problems. As previously discussed, many of the challenges facing early-career academics are the result of structural and material forces that individual strategies simply cannot undo. Nor did horizontal mentoring strategies make our worries disappear entirely. We are still working through many of the issues we cite above, and we will need to continue to develop strategies for coping with these and other issues that will inevitably emerge as we advance in our careers.

It is also important to note that horizontal mentoring has its own challenges. For example, one of the characteristics of our mentoring collaboration that we named as an advantage—that we are both at the same academic stage of our careers—can, at times, be a drawback. Though our book project writing exchange has been productive for the most part, we can only offer feedback based on the knowledge and experiences that we have accumulated so far. Thus, the fact that neither of us has written a book before prevents us from providing the kind of insight that a mentor who is further along in her career would be able to. Indeed, we did experience some initial setbacks and slowdowns with our book projects that we were unprepared for. Our relative inexperience has affected other parts of our mentoring relationship as well (e.g. trying to give advice to each other about professional situations that are new to both of us). While there are still major advantages to horizontal mentoring, these problems amplify the importance of developing an extended network of mentors who can help you with the things that your peers cannot.

Another challenge that we encountered during this process is trying to deal with the fact that we sometimes work at different paces. It is much easier to exchange work and set shared goals when we are both on a similar writing schedule, but that is rarely the case. It has been difficult to sync our schedules due to obligations like conferences, talks, grading, etc. Additionally, not everyone writes at the same speed, so there are times when one of us is further along than the other on her book project, or times when we are working on different projects altogether. We have dealt with this challenge by accepting that some of our Skype meetings or feedback sessions focus on just one person rather than involving a mutual exchange. We had one session, for instance, in which one of us was working on a book chapter as planned, while the other had paused progress on the book manuscript for a week or two in order to write an upcoming conference talk.

These are just a few examples of the difficulties we have navigated thus far during our mentoring collaboration. Despite these challenges, however, horizontal mentoring has allowed us to develop productive habits and practices that we will continue to develop and revise as we enter different stages of our careers. Indeed, we want to stress that horizontal mentoring is not only a good idea for new faculty members. Mentoring relationships are crucial at every stage in an academic career, and we hope that readers will find ways to apply the flexible strategies we have offered in this article to their own unique lives and careers.

We also hope that this is not the end of our conversation about horizontal mentoring. When we presented on this topic at the 2015 Feminism(s) & Rhetoric(s) conference in Tempe, Arizona, we were encouraged by the enthusiasm of those who attended our talk. There is clearly a real need for sharing these practices, which is in part what prompted us to write this piece. Yet, as our FemRhet audience suggested, it can be very hard to find the “right” peer mentor on your own. The conversation after our presentation that day convinced us that offering more formal opportunities to learn about and participate in horizontal mentoring would be a valuable resource for many feminist scholars. So we are in the early stages of brainstorming possibilities for a horizontal mentoring event at a future Feminism(s) & Rhetoric(s) conference. Ideally this event would provide a forum to help people find other scholars who are interested in being a mentor, as well as to welcome a broader and more diverse range of voices into the conversation about horizontal mentoring. We are still working out the details (please stay tuned!), but we look forward to joining you all in a conversation about how our horizontal mentoring networks may best support our work.

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An Invitation to Listen: Catherine McAuley, Conversion, and Religious Difference in 19th Century Ireland

Amy Ferdinandt Stolley

Abstract: *Catherine McAuley (1778-1841) founded the Catholic Sisters of Mercy in Dublin following the repeal of the Irish Penal Laws, which had limited Catholics' ability to own land, participate in government, or freely practice their religion. In the post-Penal period, religious debate between Catholics and Protestants aimed to convert others through agonistic debate, usually unsuccessfully. Focusing on McAuley's religious text, Cottage Controversy, and her own biography, this article traces the development of McAuley's rhetoric, arguing that it is both invitational and centered on rhetorical listening, ultimately a more viable rhetorical alternative that fosters mutual understanding and peace.*

Keywords: *history or rhetoric, women's rhetoric, invitational rhetoric, rhetorical listening*

Catherine McAuley (1778-1841) founded Dublin's Mercy Institute in 1827, which later became the Catholic order of the Sisters of Mercy in 1831. A single, Catholic woman, McAuley used the inheritance from a Protestant benefactor to found the institute that educated and provided lodging for Dublin's poor young women and girls. The Institute welcomed women of good character who preferred "conventual life [but who were] prevented [from] embracing it from the nature of property or connections" (Sullivan *Correspondence* 41). In the 14 years between McAuley's founding of the first Institute and her death in 1841, she and the Sisters of Mercy founded 14 institutes in cities around Ireland and England. As the Irish emigrated to America, Australia, and other points around the globe, the Sisters of Mercy followed, establishing orders and serving poor women and children in their new communities by founding schools, hospitals, and other social-service organizations. Although McAuley did not survive to see the rapid growth of the order in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the sisters' memories of her, her sayings, and her principles remained a guiding force for the order, and were transmitted to the institutions and organizations McAuley's successors founded. Today, Sisters of Mercy, the

Mercy International Centre, and others associated with the Sisters of Mercy continue to serve in over 40 countries, focusing specifically on issues of human trafficking, environmental justice, education, and health care.

McAuley established the Sisters of Mercy in a period in Irish history when it was difficult to be a Catholic. Although the penal laws that had been designed to limit Catholics' ability to own property, participate in government, and freely practice their religion were repealed in the last decades of the 1700s, anti-Catholic sentiment remained, making it difficult for Catholics to gain foothold in Irish political, economic, and religious life. The effects of the penal period on Catholics were long lasting; for example, after 85 years under the penal code, only 5% of Irish Catholics owned land in 1780 (Brown, et al 12). These circumstances led some Catholics to convert to Protestantism, making conversion a point of contention in the ongoing debates between Protestants and Catholics. As historians Michael Brown, Charles Ivar McGrath, and Thomas Power note, most often conversion was "reduced to a question of political rather than religious morality" (12). Typically, Catholics converted to Protestantism (rather than the other way around) not for "doctrinal commitment to the Established [Protestant] church" (Ó Conaill 289), but rather for "pursuit or maintenance of social status" (Brown et al 16). However, among the religiously motivated, conversion became a matter of saving souls, as Protestants sought to convert Catholics from "popery," and Catholics aimed to save those eschewing the "one true faith." Arguments between Catholics and Protestants were frequent in public discourse; both sides touted the conversion of others to their religion in newspapers, and personal conversion narratives were published and distributed widely (Brown 240).

According to Charles Benson and Siobhán Fitzpatrick, by 1833, 1,399,488 religious tracts and books were in circulation (141), and the Catholic Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge worked specifically to "publish works which contained 'a clear exposition of the doctrine and discipline of the Roman Catholic Church'" in an effort to convert others (qtd in Benson and Fitzpatrick 142). As a faithful woman publicly practicing a maligned religion, it might stand to reason that McAuley's rhetoric would follow the agonistic, persuasive models that Benson and Fitzpatrick describe. But perhaps because of her disenfranchised position as a Catholic woman in Irish society, or perhaps because her understanding of her religion was action-oriented, McAuley developed a rhetorical strategy that differed from more traditional kinds of conversion rhetoric, instead focusing on conversation, asking questions, and listening in order to build mutual understanding and respect.

Although McAuley was Catholic, and sought sanction from the Catholic church for the Institute's efforts, she originally had no intention of founding a

religious order (Harnett 151). McAuley believed they were too strict, and she rejected the idea of enclosure. Rather than promoting Catholicism, McAuley's primary motivation was to help others who were in desperate need. As one of McAuley's contemporaries, Sister Mary Clare Moore, wrote after McAuley's death, "All [McAuley] designed was that there might be an Establishment where pious ladies might retire for a while to exercise works of charity...in fact a Protestant convent plan" (Sullivan, *Catherine*, 88). To McAuley, it made no sense for religious women to be cloistered and isolated from others; instead, she believed she and her sisters needed to be out in the world, helping those who were materially and spiritually poor or sick so they might "give good example" to members of their community (McAuley, "Spirit of the Institute," 463). McAuley's believed religious piety was best expressed through action; as she is quoted in *Retreat Instructions*, a manual written after McAuley's death for women preparing for joining the Sisters of Mercy, "It is not sufficient that Jesus Christ be formed in us – he must be recognized in our conduct" (Purcell 72).

To understand how McAuley navigated the complex rhetorical landscape of 19th Century Ireland, I offer a rhetorical biography, a reading that aims to use McAuley's biography to interpret the rhetoric displayed in a religious tract McAuley is credited with composing, *Cottage Controversy*. This approach enables the reader to act as "an historian not of cause and effect so much as an intellectual historian [so that] a speech [or text] is viewed not so much as a catalytic agent as it is a document of ideas" (Fisher 104). By documenting ideas found in McAuley's texts alongside her biographical information and "an overview of the times and the issue," a rhetorical biography offers a more complete, contextualized understanding of McAuley, the institution(s) through/with which she worked, her rhetorical strategies, and the interrelatedness of all three (Zarefsky 436). As Fisher predicts, in the end we are left with an analysis that illustrates "the working of the mind of an historical figure, culture, or era" (108) aligning with studies of women's rhetoric that explore the "interrelationships among context, location, and rhetoric...[that] shape women's discursive options, strategies, and choices" (Buchanan and Ryan xviii). In McAuley's case, readers see the formation of a rhetoric that is both invitational (Foss and Griffin) and focused on listening (Ratcliffe), a theologically grounded rhetoric that recognizes the value of the individual and uses action and language to engage others. Although McAuley was keenly aware of and committed to the conversion of souls to the Catholic faith, her rhetoric and the example of her life were invitations to conversation rather than an outright act of persuasion, offering a model of rhetorical acts relevant to contemporary debates about highly-charged issues debated in moral terms.

Catholics among Protestants

McAuley was born into a Catholic family, the daughter of James and Eleanor McGauley,¹ in 1778. Her biographies, which were often written by women affiliated with the Sisters of Mercy, focus on her spiritual formation; however, as a member of a minority religion, her spiritual formation is intrinsically tied to her rhetorical development because she had to develop strategies for engaging with others who automatically dismissed her on the basis of her religion. McAuley did not receive direct religious instruction as a child, and “though she was obviously literate and cultured, [there is] no record of her attending a school for girls” (Sullivan *Path* 22). McAuley’s father was particularly pious, spending his Sundays in charitable work instructing the poor in their neighborhood. According to the first published biography of McAuley, “from [her father] she imbibed that devotion to the poor, that zeal for instructing, that respect for the Catholic faith which continued with her under very adverse circumstances” (Carroll 56). Soon after McAuley’s father died, the family moved in with her uncle, Owen Conway, and his family, who were practicing Catholics. While with the Conways, McAuley was able to “develop and freely practice her faith” (24). However, after her mother died, the Conway family struggled to feed so many mouths, so McAuley and her brother and sister moved in with the Armstrong family, relatives of her mother.

The Armstrongs, unlike the McGauleys and Conways, were Protestants, and the patriarch of the family, William Armstrong, was “intolerant in his assessment of Catholic religious perspectives and ‘superstitions’” (Sullivan *Path* 25). This period in McAuley’s life is often referred to as a trial, as she endured the constant criticism of her religion. McAuley and her siblings, James and Mary, did not have formal religious training during this period; moreover, they “[heard] day after day the usual misrepresentations of [Catholicism’s] rites and passages” without the benefit of alternative viewpoints (Harnett 141). In this environment, James and Mary were easily swayed to anti-Catholic sentiment, but because McAuley was older when she joined the Armstrong household, she was less influenced by Armstrong’s religious beliefs.

McAuley’s time with the Armstrongs is significant to her rhetorical biography. She still considered herself Catholic even though she wasn’t practicing, but she was ill-equipped to participate in debates about religion. When a criticism was leveled against Catholics, “she knew not in what matter to refute it” (Harnett 141) and “she was obliged to be silent, for she could not give reasons

1 The difference in spelling between McAuley’s surname and her parents’ is likely attributed to variant spellings and record-keeping during the period. McAuley’s biographers, and extant records of the time, refer to her younger brother as James Macauley, further indicating that the family did not have a standardized spelling of the name.

for the hope that lingered in her" (Carroll 67). Perhaps because of her gender, but certainly because of her economic dependence on the Armstrongs, McAuley was forced to develop an ability to listen carefully and with tolerance as a young woman. Harnett explains that while living with the Armstrongs, McAuley developed "a sincere regard and affection" for them because of their kind treatment of her and her siblings, so she "read their books, heard their explanation, [and] discussed with them the several points on which they differed" (141). This education in the Protestant faith did not sway McAuley from her religious convictions, but it taught her that good, kind people might have religious views different from her own, a tension that is borne out in a religious tract she is credited with writing, *Cottage Controversy*.

Conversation and Conversion

Sources indicate that McAuley wrote *Cottage Controversy* in 1832, at the request of Sister Mary Vincent Deasy, whom McAuley had appointed to lead the Mercy Institute at Cork (Sullivan *Correspondence* 123).² In the letter attached to the tract, McAuley encouraged Deasy to share the story with her "poor patients, who require something instructive" suggesting that McAuley intended this tract to be read to the Catholic—and Protestant—patients the sisters in Cork nursed (123). Some question about the authorship of *Cottage Controversy* remains, as archivists have not found either the essay or the letter in which McAuley claims authorship of the tract, and as Mary C. Sullivan notes, tracts with similar themes and names like "Cottage Dialogues," "Cottage Conversations," and "Cottage Controversy," the same title McAuley used, were in wide circulation at the time (*Correspondence* 123n). McAuley made a practice of revising existing texts written by other authors for her own purposes as she founded and expanded the Order (see Sullivan "Catherine McAuley's"), so it is possible that the general structure, and perhaps even the plot or characters of the tract, were borrowed. However, the circumstances of *Cottage Controversy's* plot—a Catholic woman who lives peaceably among Protestants, unwavering in her own faith but respectful of her neighbors—so closely parallels McAuley's own biography that it is likely McAuley had a hand in adapting an existing tract for her audience. Moreover, McAuley's eagerness to have her sisters share the document with their patients suggests that the rhetorical strategies and choices demonstrated by the characters in the tract reflect McAuley's own and were worthy of sharing with others.

Cottage Controversy relates six conversations, held over a period of weeks, between Lady P., the Protestant wife of the landowning Lord P, and Margaret Lewis, the Catholic wife of a trusted employee on Lady P.'s estate. Although

2 Although written in 1832, the tract was first published for a wider audience in New York in 1883, decades after McAuley's death.

Lady P. and her husband offered “pretty, convenient” cottages to their house staff rent-free, Lady P. required tenants to attend scripture lessons at the village barn, provided by the village’s Protestant pastor (McAuley *Cottage* 9). If Catholic tenants refused to attend these lectures, Lady P. evicted them from their cottages. Encouraged to stay away by their parish priest, Margaret and her husband refuse to attend the barn meetings, so Lady P. demands to speak with Margaret. This set the stage for the theological and scriptural conversations that would follow over the next several weeks between Margaret and Lady P., “activities rarely attributed to women, particularly during the nineteenth century” (Davis 353).

There is no clear subject or topic for each conversation beyond the question of the women’s religious differences and the central tenets of Catholic doctrine that the Protestant Lady P. found objectionable. In the seemingly organic conversations that move from topic to topic, the women discuss Catholics’ deference to priests as agents of God; their reverence for the Virgin Mary; the use of Latin rather than the vernacular; and the presence of religious statues, images, and icons in Catholic churches and homes. As such, the subject matter of *Cottage Controversy* is not particularly remarkable. Religious pamphlets and tracts debating these issues were in wide circulation after the penal period ended in Ireland, and they “became a favored medium for the promotion of ideas and information” (Benson and Fitzpatrick 139).

A cursory read might suggest that the dialogues between the two female interlocutors resemble classical dialectic. Lady P. raises a critique, to which Margaret responds with questions, logical reasoning, and textual evidence to support her position, such that it would seem the women were attempting to convert each other from their flawed beliefs. Thus, McAuley’s dialogue continues the tradition of Madeline de Scudéry’s *Conversations*, subverting a form that Plato, Cicero, and Augustine employed by positioning women as the interlocutors (Donawerth 23). The classical dialectic, as a form, typically follows more overtly persuasive rhetorics, including conversion rhetoric, which, according to Sonja K. Foss and Cindy L. Griffin “involves the effort to construct arguments or claims so compelling that they cannot be refused—arguments that are appealing to audiences because of their substance and/or presentation” (1993, 5). Citing Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca, Burke, and others, Foss and Griffin explain that conversion rhetoric is one that is “designed to engage audience members, to involve them, and to motivate them to the perspective and/or action intended by the rhetor” using traditional proofs, organizational structure, and language that privileges the speaker over the listener (5).

In post-penal Ireland, when Catholics converted to Protestantism for material rather than religious reasons, it would seem more likely that the character Lady P. would convert Margaret to Protestantism rather than the other way

around. In fact, Lady P. begins their first conversation exclaiming her eagerness to speak with Margaret because “it gives [Lady P.] an opportunity of making explanations that may be useful,” suggesting that she believed she would be able to convert Margaret (18). However, Margaret seems less focused on changing Lady P.’s mind, instead aiming to engage Lady P. in conversation about their differing beliefs. Through the course of the tract, it becomes clear that Margaret does not embrace the typical manner of rhetorical persuasion or conversion. Although Margaret is the primary rhetor in the dialogue, she does not wish to convince Lady P. of the validity of her religious beliefs in an effort to convert her. Rather, Margaret’s rhetorical aim is to come to an understanding with Lady P. that would allow Margaret to continue practicing her religion, remain in her cottage, and avoid the weekly barn meetings. Rather than aiming to convert, Margaret’s goal was to invite discussion and mutual understanding to foster peace in the village.

Margaret’s attempt to engage Lady P. in conversation links her to a tradition in women’s rhetoric that dates back to the Renaissance. In her study of women’s rhetorical tradition, Jane Donawerth points to Renaissance figures such as Madeline de Scudéry and Mary Astell, who, because they were constrained by the parlor or salon, developed a rhetoric that was necessarily rooted in conversation. Scudéry, Donawerth argues, “appropriates rhetoric for women as a means of political power—the right to speak and, so, to influence others” (25). Likewise, Donawerth claims that Astell, an Anglican woman living in England, “enlarges the importance of women’s province by [arguing that] ‘catechizing,’ or private religious instruction through conversation, is more useful than ‘discourses of the pulpit’ for one cannot understand sermons without first achieving ‘clear ideas’ of religion” (37).

Although there is no evidence that McAuley read Scudéry or Astell, conversation became a cornerstone in her own rhetorical biography as well. Unmarried, in her mid-twenties, and still living with the Armstrongs, McAuley was invited to live with William and Catherine Callaghan, friends of the Armstrong family. McAuley accepted their invitation and lived with them for nearly 20 years, becoming a beloved member of the family and caretaker to both as they aged. The Callaghans, like the Armstrongs, were Protestant, although their love for McAuley and their “[tolerance] for the freedom of conscience of others” gave her some latitude (Sullivan *Path* 35). Early in her time with the Callaghans, McAuley believed that she must continue to practice her religion in secret, praying “before a cross formed by the branches of trees...or the cross-shaped panels of the doors” (Harnett 144). Eventually, as McAuley grew in her religious convictions, she sought advice from Rev. Dr. Daniel Murray, who counseled her in religious matters and encouraged her to

practice her religion freely (just as the fictional Margaret's priest advised her). Finally overcoming her fear of angering her benefactors, whom she genuinely loved as parents, McAuley revealed her Catholicism to the Callaghans and was gratified that, despite their disappointment, they "allowed her the same freedom of choice in religion...they would have desired for themselves" (Harnett 143).

As the Callaghans aged, McAuley worried for their salvation, though her love and respect for them kept her from overtly trying to convert them to Catholicism. All the biographical descriptions of McAuley at this time refer to her as genuinely distraught, fearing for the peril McAuley believed the Callaghans would face were they to die Protestant. However, as their health worsened, and perhaps because of how much the Callaghans loved and respected McAuley, she successfully converted both of them before they died. Mary C. Sullivan describes McAuley's conversion of Catherine Callaghan days before her death in 1819 as "*conversations* about the nature of Catholic faith and practices" (*Path* 41, emphasis added). McAuley also converted William Callaghan to Catholicism before his death in 1822. After McAuley confessed her fears to Callaghan about his religion, Sullivan explains that "what ensued was a back-and-forth discussion lasting several days, in the course of which the sick man tried to reassure her of his own peace"; however, Callaghan indicated to McAuley that he was open to further conversation (*Path* 47). In the ensuing days, McAuley and Callaghan continued to discuss the issue, reading books and consulting with Catholic priests, and Callaghan officially converted to Catholicism a day before he died. Sullivan's description suggests that McAuley, rather than finding fault with the Callaghans' Protestant principles or overtly persuading them to convert to Catholicism, used her relationship with them to build common ground on which they could discuss religion and offer their varying perspectives.

An Invitation to Listen

We see similarities between Margaret's/McAuley's rhetorical strategy and Foss and Griffin's theory of invitational rhetoric, which outlines communicative options that differ from traditional suasive strategies. Arguing for a rhetoric "built on the principles of equality, immanent value, and self-determination" (1995, 4), Foss and Griffin introduce the possibility that a rhetoric that aims for understanding rather than overt persuasion to affect change can in fact be an invitation to dialogue and relationship (1995, 5). For Foss and Griffin, invitational rhetoric is fundamentally tied to feminist principles of collaboration, careful listening, and respect for the other, and its ultimate "purpose is to provide the basis for the creation and maintenance of relationships of

equality” such that the rhetor does not aim to exert or gain power over his or her interlocutor (1995, 13). As Jeffrey W. Murray notes, invitational rhetoric is “a rhetoric of disruption, potentially unsettling *in an ethical sense* as a presentation of otherness” (339, emphasis original). As a Catholic amongst Protestants, McAuley (and her fictional Margaret), were in fact othered, but they used their outsider status to disrupt assumptions about their religion and their position in the community.

One way that Margaret, in particular, offers her otherness for consideration and acceptance from Lady P. is through non-verbal cues, which Foss and Griffin describe as the “clothing individuals wear [and] the places in which and how they live, and in all the symbolic choices rhetors make to reveal their perspectives” (1995, 9). McAuley spends a good deal of time explaining the neat appearance of Margaret and her home as Lady P. arrives at the cottage for their first conversation. Margaret’s cottage “had the hue and glitter of gold,” and the flowers “that adorned the porch were in full beauty” (McAuley *Cottage* 15). Margaret was “dressed even more neatly than usual,” and as Lady P. arrived, she offered “a low curtsy and timid smile” (16). Margaret’s appearance and the beauty of her cottage had an effect on Lady P. whose “love of order and quick sense of the beautiful half unfitted her for the task she had imposed on herself, so that her first words were in praise of a superb geranium, and commendation of the neatness of the cottage” (16). Lady P. was surprised by the beauty of the cottage, contradicting her prejudice against Catholics and her assumption that they were less able homemakers than their Protestant neighbors. While Margaret’s non-verbal cues might have initially distracted Lady P., they also communicated her attention to domestic order, a value she shared with Lady P., which established conditions for a more equal conversation.

In addition to non-verbal cues, Foss and Griffin describe “offering” as another communicative strategy available to invitational rhetors, a technique in which the rhetor shares “a perspective without advocating its support or seeking its acceptance” (1995, 7) with the “goal not of converting others to their positions but of sharing what they know” (8). Throughout *Cottage Controversy*, Margaret shows herself to be well-versed in Catholic doctrine and scripture, and she freely shares this knowledge with Lady P., as in the following example:

Margaret. Oh, my lady! It is through him [her priest] that I am sure of hearing the word of God; for did not God when he made the first bishops and priests say ‘Whosoever heareth you heareth me’?

Lady. It was to the apostles and his own immediate disciples that the Lord spoke thus, not to your bishops and priests.

Margaret. But, my lady, when he sent the apostles and disciples to baptize and teach, did he not promise to remain with them till the end of the world? (18-19)

Here, Margaret uses a shared belief—Jesus’ relationship with his apostles and disciples—to build understanding by offering her interpretation of their religion’s founding documents.

Foss and Griffin explain that another of the key elements of offering in invitational rhetoric is an attempt to give “explanations for the sources of her ideas rather than marshaling evidence to establish their superiority” (1995, 8). Throughout the tract, Margaret refers to scripture as a source of her belief. Early in their conversations, for example, Lady P. questions Catholics’ reliance on priests to interpret the Bible (rather than reading it themselves), and Margaret responds,

Sure it is in the Protestant Bible...how, when our blessed Saviour rose from the dead...the first thing he spoke to [his disciples] about, as if it was more on his mind than anything else ...was to save poor sinners... And he never said a word, my lady, about giving us the Bible, or getting us taught to read it; but he told how our peace was to be made with God, without printing or learning at all. (33-4)

Margaret cites a source she has in common with Lady P—the Bible—to explain the origin for her belief that listening to priests is more important to her own faith than reading and interpreting the Bible herself. Lady P. has a different interpretation, of course, which she shares with Margaret in response, but Margaret’s introduction of source material creates a situation where she and Lady P. can discuss how one text might invite multiple valid interpretations, rather than prove one reading—or one belief—is more correct than the other.

Margaret’s invitational strategies throughout the conversations had an interesting effect. Near the end of the tract, the narrator explains that through the course of the dialogues, Margaret “had no great proofs of her ladyship’s controversial skill, [but] had abundant of her conversational powers” (88). I would argue this is due, in part, to how Margaret shaped the dialogues as conversations rather than arguments. Throughout the six conversations, Margaret asks a variety of questions to clarify beliefs, to understand Lady P.’s biblical interpretation, or to ask for additional information, questions that seek to build a shared understanding between Lady P. and herself about each other’s beliefs so that they might find some tenets of faith—and some source documents—that they have in common. The asking of questions to eliminate hypotheses and foster critical thinking is a typical strategy in classical dialectic; however, Margaret’s purpose for asking questions is different, aiming to build understanding rather than secure Lady P.’s conversion.

Interestingly, Margaret's questions invite Lady P. to ask questions of Margaret. In the first conversation, Margaret asks nine questions compared to the Lady's two, and while Margaret's questions seek to build understanding, Lady P.'s simply seek to identify why Margaret and her husband aren't obeying her rules for tenancy. But as their conversations continue, the Lady asks more and more questions of Margaret. At first, the questions are personal and polite; for example, Lady P. asks about the health of Margaret's sick child (43). However, by the last three conversations, Lady P. is asking more questions than Margaret herself. The nature of Lady P.'s questions change, too. Early in their discussion, after Margaret explains why she goes to confession, Lady P. asks, "Do you really believe all this? Is it merely because the priest tells it to you?" articulating the doubts she has about the source of Margaret's religious belief (32). But in a later conversation, Lady P. asks Margaret how she and her husband can "really believe [you] receive in your sacrament, in a wafer, the real body and soul of Christ?" (49). Although her first question is somewhat combative, Margaret's explanation leads Lady P. to acquiesce some, asking curiously, "And do you feel quite satisfied that you receive Christ's body in your sacrament?" (51). By modeling a genuine kind of inquisitiveness, Margaret invites her interlocutor into the same stance, changing the tenor of the conversation.

Margaret's questioning strategy closely follows Krista Ratcliffe's notion of rhetorical listening, in which the act of asking questions and listening to their answers draws interlocutors into a "stance of openness that a person may choose to assume in relation to any person, text, or culture" (17). The women's openness to each other's questions illustrates their willingness to act as both listener and speaker within the dialogue rather than simply developing retorts to undermine the other's positions.

Although the narrator explains throughout the tract that Margaret remained worried about Lady P.'s final decision about her family's tenancy, the tract ends with no resolution to the controversy that shaped the narrative; instead, the narrator explains, "I do not know if the discussions continued or not: but years after, Thomas and Margaret Lewis still occupied the pretty cottage, though they had never attended the parson's lectures in the village barn" (96). The unresolved ending suggests that Margaret, in fact, achieved her goal—not to convert Lady P., but to come to an understanding that allowed Margaret's family to remain in their cottage.

Invitational Rhetoric and Listening to (and with) Power

Recent critiques of Foss and Griffin's theory have questioned the viability of invitational rhetoric for people—regardless of gender—who are without political or persuasive agency. Nina M. Lozano-Reich and Dana L. Cloud argue that invitational rhetoric, as a theory, “presupposes conditions of economic, political, and social equality between and among interlocutors” (221). Because such conditions rarely exist, they argue that the idea of “invitational civility in situations of conflict . . . potentially [perpetuates] discrimination in the name of peace” (Lozano-Reich and Cloud 224).

Can invitational rhetoric be a meaningful rhetorical strategy when interlocutors hold unequal positions of power or influence, particularly when the rhetor attempting to create understanding is less powerful than her audience? In this context, both McAuley and Margaret would be positioned as the less powerful interlocutor, and as such, one might assume that their rhetorical choices would be limited. McAuley (and by extension, Margaret) seems to have understood that because of her marginalized position as a woman and Catholic, the traditional means of persuasion were not available to her, nor would they have been successful. Instead, she shaped her discourse in ways described by Kathleen Ryan, Nancy Myers, and Rebecca Jones in *Rethinking Ethos*: McAuley used her agency to “interrupt representations of women's ethos, to advocate for [herself] and others in transformative ways, and to relate to others, both powerful and powerless” (emphasis original 3). McAuley interrupted others' perspective of her as a Catholic woman, changing the terms of the dialogue and moving it from a debate with a clear winner and loser to a conversational exchange of ideas that led to mutual understanding and peaceful coexistence.

Part of the reason McAuley's invitational rhetorical strategies were more successful in life and fiction, I would argue, is because they invited more privileged interlocutors into a stance of rhetorical listening. Ratcliffe frames rhetorical listening as a stance that is especially important for those with privilege to embody so as to “[challenge] such unearned privilege and power” (16). In order for more privileged interlocutors to genuinely engage with their partner's invitation to conversation, they had to consciously choose to, as Ratcliffe notes, “stand under” the discourses of others different from them so that they could “transpose a desire for mastery into a self-conscious desire for receptivity” (29). As we see with Margaret, this invitation to receptivity came from her establishing the conditions for open dialogue with Lady P., while for McAuley herself, we see her efforts to serve as an example of openness and understanding as an invitation to listen to her ideas. As a result, the rhetoric at work

in *Cottage Controversy* and in McAuley's own life invited her interlocutors to listen in a way that "engages the moral imagination, prompting moral sensitivity" (Tompkins 61). Although McAuley's real and fictional interlocutors (i.e., the Callaghans, Lady P.) may have had different religious sources for their moral principles, she knew they were individuals motivated to act by their values, and her rhetoric was defined by an invitation to act as an "ethical listening subject" to engage with others who were equally driven by their morals (Beard 19).

For McAuley, the purpose of engaging in these conversations was not to win, and we see her act as an ethical listening subject to build understanding as she oversaw the expansion of the order. She urged others—both her Sisters and her lay neighbors—to embody the humility and kindness she saw in Christ, reminding them, "He must be recognized in our conduct...Ever complying, ever forbearing, ever charitable, ever compassionate to the weakness and frailty of others—by thus imitating his life, we can testify our gratitude for his signal mercy in selecting us to be His spouses" (Purcell 72). McAuley believed that a Sister's primary duty was to "attend to thyself" (McAuley "Spirit" 459), and rather than overtly convincing others to follow God, McAuley urged her colleagues to "devote [their] lives to the accomplishment of [their] own salvation" (458). She urged her sisters to "give good example and to live in sanctity," much as she did with the Callaghans (463). If others were converted by the Sisters' conduct, McAuley viewed that as a happy by-product of their work, but not the ultimate goal.

As the order grew across Ireland and England, McAuley and a few carefully chosen sisters were on hand to lead the Institutes' foundations, and the Sisters recruited local women to join the Order and fulfill its mission in their communities. Harnett explains that women were drawn to join the Sisters of Mercy by McAuley's example. The first woman to join the order, Anna Maria Doyle, felt an "indescribable attraction" to the Mercy House she passed on her daily walks (157). The women who began working at the Institute developed friendships with McAuley, and while called to do "good work," they felt equally inspired by McAuley's actions (158). While McAuley was strict about ensuring that the new Institutes and the sisters who worked there reflected the values and mission of the mother house in Dublin, she recognized that there would be differences in each community. As she wrote to Frances Warde, who established the Institute in Carlow, Ireland, (and would later be the first Sister of Mercy invited to America), "Every place has its own particular ideas and feelings which must be yielded to when possible" (Sullivan *Correspondence* 168).

McAuley's statement demonstrates her commitment to listening to others with sensitivity and kindness, and she advised her Sisters that they must come to know a community intimately—and respectfully—as they built each Institute, adapting their message and their work to best serve the community's

needs. McAuley invited local women to join the Sisters and live communally in work and prayer, but the local women who joined the order also helped the Dublin Sisters better understand the communities they were joining so that they might serve them well. By being good and doing good, McAuley believed that Sisters might be more likely to encourage others to pursue a similar way of life; if Sisters converted others, it was through their own actions and conversations, not through argument.

As we read *Cottage Controversy* alongside McAuley's biography, we see how her religious beliefs, tested by her experience as a Catholic surrounded by Protestants, shaped her rhetoric. While living with the Armstrongs, she was inundated with suasive rhetoric, and though those times were trying, they also seemed to have taught McAuley that agonistic debate may not be an effective means of discussing religion; after all, she lived through years of it and found herself unmoved from her own religious convictions. Moreover, McAuley's ability to develop genuine affection and meaningful personal relationships with Protestants like the Armstrongs and Callaghans helped develop her respect for people of different religious convictions, a belief underscored by her desire to enact Christ's humility and care for everyone. Finally, she learned that the relationships she developed with others might be more convincing than scriptural arguments. In an argument with her Protestant brother, McAuley claimed "that she had no influence beyond that of her example" (Harnett 154). She knew that people listen more carefully to those they esteem highly, so by acting out her religious convictions, she believed she might more successfully draw others to her. McAuley created a larger platform for her ideas through the Sisters of Mercy, but she did not use it to build a public persona or debate the merits of religion in public. Instead, her rhetoric remained personal and conversational, focused on the immediate, unique needs of the person before her.

* * *

I completed the first draft of this article less than a week after the terrorist attacks in Paris in November 2015, and I began its revision shortly after the massacre at Orlando's Pulse nightclub in June 2016. I made my final copy edits less than a month after the executive order banning immigration from seven Muslim-majority countries was signed. Far from abating or moving toward resolution, the questions of religious difference in the United States have intensified and grown more complex as the public debates the nature and merits of one religion or another, one policy over another. Although much is different, one can see parallels between our current moment and 18th Century Ireland, a time when religious differences became political, and neighbors

were at odds with one another, driven apart by personal values and a desire to maintain their ways of life. It stands to reason, then, that we look to history to understand how to navigate these choppy waters with a rhetoric that charts a route to peace. Catherine McAuley and her rhetoric, one that centers on an invitation to listen, might be a meaningful model for us to consider. By building on a foundation of kindness and respect, McAuley created conditions wherein conversations between people of differing opinions and religious values might invite questions that build understanding, empathy, and peaceful co-existence. We need that today, too.

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Practical Genius: Science, Technology, and Useful Knowledge in Godey's Lady's Book

Meaghan Brewer

Abstract: *This article explores the ways in which the popular nineteenth-century periodical Godey's Lady's Book challenges three binaries: the arts (or humanities) versus the sciences, domesticity versus the world of work, and ornamental versus useful knowledge. Through an analysis of articles featuring content from what we today would refer to as the science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) fields, I argue that although the Lady's Book is known primarily for its fashion plates, stories, and how-to guides, its inclusion of detailed, technical information and diagrams of scientific processes and innovations indicates that it meant to initiate women into a discourse about science and technology.*

Keywords: *science, engineering, technology, extracurricular education, literacy sponsors, nineteenth-century America, Godey's Lady's Book, useful knowledge*

In a recent article in *Peitho*, Jordynn Jack examines the gender-coded messages about roles for boys and girls as “future scientists and engineers” contained in scientific toys (n.p.). Whereas toys in the early twentieth century encouraged boys to participate in “pseudo-scientific institutes” and to imagine themselves as future scientists and engineers, similar toys marketed to girls appear only more recently, and, in Jack’s words, the “scientific and technical elements” are “feminized” in order to “limit the disruptive potential of these toys, confining them safely within the pink world girls are used to” (n.p).

Jack’s article calls attention to the fact that despite efforts to include women, science in the twenty-first century is still predominantly seen as male, technical, and insular. Contemporary discussions of the cultural barriers against the entry of women and girls into scientific fields suggest the need not only to interrogate gendered associations with the sciences but also the superficial (but culturally entrenched) barriers between disciplines. This is evident in recent efforts to encourage women and girls to enter STEAM fields, which adds an “a” for arts to the traditional “STEM” acronym, in an attempt

to increase interest among girls in STEM fields through the use of art.¹ Ann Ruggles Gere's et al.'s work on disciplines and disciplinarity, citing work by Paul Prior and Anne Marcovich and Terry Shinn, similarly challenges the bounded and bordered nature of our conceptions of the sciences and of writing in the disciplines ("Interrogating Disciplines/Disciplinarity"). Such scholarship points to the need to continue to blur and cross boundaries, engaging in work that contests assumptions about gender, hierarchy, science, and the arts.

In this article, I explore the ways in which the popular nineteenth-century periodical *Godey's Lady's Book* challenges three such binaric lenses: the arts (or humanities) versus the sciences, domesticity versus the world of work, and ornamental versus useful knowledge. In many cases, these binaries overlay each other, so that the first terms in each of the binaries, "arts," "domesticity," and "ornamental" are associated with each other on one side, while "sciences," "work," and "useful" are on the other. Of course, embedded in all of these binaric lenses are assumptions about men's and women's spheres, in which women are more often associated with domesticity and ornamental knowledge in particular, while men, seen as public creatures, occupy the worlds of science and work.

Recalling Gere et al.'s imperative to investigate "borderland interactions that call upon 'resources belonging to other disciplines,'" this article attempts to locate the places in which simple binaries can no longer function as explanatory devices and to interrogate those spaces between that point to more textured and complex systems of relationships, not only between science and the humanities but between men's and women's work, public and private, and useful and ornamental knowledge ("Interrogating Disciplines/Disciplinarity" 245). Particularly when it comes to women's work in the nineteenth century, exploring the ways in which publications like the *Lady's Book* offered extra-curricular scientific content for women readers, in Nina E. Lerman's words, "demands attention to boundaries and to 'others': to science versus not-science; to technology versus art, or craft, or nurture; to engineering 'knowledge' versus artisanal skill" (42). The articles I examine from the *Lady's Book* are clear evidence of the blurriness of these categories, as they often wed technical knowledge with craft and invite women into discussions about the ways in which technology was changing not only their work in the home, but also public spaces like printing houses, shipyards, marble works, and foundries. They

1 For example, The National Science Foundation recently funded a collaborative project for the University of Alaska at Fairbanks, the University of Alaska Museum of the North, and the University of Washington-Bothell "to bring optics and biology content to art-interested girls through art-infused science experiences" ("Collaborative Research: Project STEAM").

also created openings for women to take interest in topics often associated more with men, including applied sciences like engineering.

In order to investigate the way in which messages about science and useful knowledge were communicated in the nineteenth century, I analyze articles featuring content from what we today would refer to as the science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) fields from *Godey's Lady's Book* in the mid-nineteenth century, focusing particularly on a series called "Everyday Actualities," written by wood engraver Cornelius T. Hinckley. This series answered a perceived desire on the part of women to expand their scientific and industrial knowledge. I focus on the *Lady's Book* because by virtue of its wide readership, it was an influential extracurricular sponsor of literacy during the nineteenth century, as well as a significant force in the popularization of science in nineteenth-century America.² Here, I make reference to Gere's term "composition's extracurriculum," which she defines by pointing to the "need to uncouple composition and schooling . . . to focus on the experiences of writers not always visible to us inside the walls of the academy" ("Kitchen Tables" 79).³ My use of the term "sponsor" invokes the work of Deborah Brandt and gestures towards the way in which the *Lady's Book* acted as an agent that "enable[d], support[ed], taught, and model[ed], as well as recruit[ed], [and] regulate[d]" the literacy of its readership (*Literacy* 19). As editor, Sarah Josepha Hale frequently used the magazine, which Louis A. Godey premiered in Philadelphia in 1830, to advocate women's education, and she clearly meant the *Lady's Book* to serve as a means for its readers, predominantly middle-class to elite white women, to not only participate in this cause but also to continue their education by reading it.⁴

Past research on the *Lady's Book* attests to its influence and wide reach. Although it was not the first women's magazine in America, the *Lady's Book* was the first to become successful nationwide, reaching a circulation of 150,000 by the start of the Civil War, "the highest circulation of any magazine distributed in America," according to Laura McCall (217). It was, as Alexandria Peary

2 Alexandria Peary's article, "Walls with a Word Count: The Textrooms of the Extracurriculum," also uses Brandt's idea of sponsorship to examine the way in which *Godey's Lady's Book* offered women the opportunity to engage in informal writing beyond the classroom.

3 Gere points to the *Lady's Book* as an example of this extracurriculum, referring to the ways in which it offers "considerable advice to writers[.] . . . includes material on the technology of writing[, and] . . . gives attention to the processes of writing" ("Kitchen Tables" 79).

4 Because Hale's influence over the content of the *Lady's Book* was so significant, most studies of the periodical discuss her history and career at length. Although this influence is important to the present article, I do not recapitulate it and instead point readers to studies by Patricia Okker, Nicole Tonkovitch, Alison Piepmeier, and Nina Baym.

notes, “the preeminent journal of its time,” with more subscribers “than the influential Dial” and a publication history that spanned most of the nineteenth century (“Eliza Leslie’s” 224). Because it included articles featuring science and science-related topics from its inception, the *Lady’s Book* offers an interesting glimpse into science and women’s education in nineteenth-century America, as well as into the ways in which technology and industry were presented as part of this education. I argue that although *Godey’s Lady’s Book* is known primarily for its fashion plates, stories, and how-to guides for housewives, its inclusion of scientific content, which contained detailed, technical information and diagrams of scientific processes and technological innovations, indicates that it meant to initiate women into a discourse about technical, scientific information as well, and that it did not see including this content as either superfluous to women’s education or in direct contrast to other more “domestic” or “ornamental” content. Instead, the *Lady’s Book* positioned “useful knowledge” for its readership as containing a wide spectrum of both technical and craft-based, artisanal information, suggesting the fluidity of these categories. My analysis of the “Everyday Actualities” also reveals that it appeared to be inviting women to take part in scientific inquiry not only as a way of learning more about the products in their homes but also to participate in it as patrons and in quasi-professional ways. This contention goes against previous work that has seen women’s contributions to scientific knowledge in publications like the *Lady’s Book* in more narrowly domestic terms.

Science and Domesticity in Scholarship on the *Lady’s Book*

Criticism on *Godey’s Lady’s Book* often focuses on the issue of how strictly it delineated the sphere of knowledge appropriate for women. Early scholarship primarily discussed its role in maintaining the conservative values about women’s role in public discourse. According to these critics, literacy in the *Lady’s Book* was explicitly connected to women’s performance of domestic tasks, like educating children and keeping house. The ideal of Republican Motherhood was based on the assumption that women, as the more moral of the sexes, “exemplified the neoclassic virtues of citizenship” and “integrated [these] political values into her domestic life,” including the education of children (Linda Kerber qtd. in Nicole Tonkovich “Rhetorical Power” 161). Barbara Welter, whose idea of “the cult of true womanhood” influenced scholarship on the *Lady’s Book* for decades, argues that even though the it might have appeared progressive, its articles merely reinforced the four cardinal virtues by which women were to be judged – “piety, purity, submissiveness, and domesticity”

(152). However, recent scholarship challenges both the assumption that publications like the *Lady's Book* merely relegated women to private sphere and the idea that we can so easily categorize women's activities as public or private. McCall contends that a systematic analysis of the women characters shows that "for the majority of women [depicted in *Godey's Lady's Book*] (64.5%), the presence or absence of domestic abilities simply was not discussed" (226). McCall, as well as others like Tonkovitch and Alison Piepmeier, demonstrate that early assumptions about the magazine's depiction of women as private, domestic creatures were overstated.

Although statements by public figures of the time like Catharine Beecher and Sarah Josepha Hale seem to add credence to the notion of separate spheres of action for men and women, as Margaret Nash argues, looking at women's educational opportunities through the lens of these figures' statements produces a skewed view of what women were actually learning and doing. Nash argues that although the "paradigm of 'separate spheres' . . . was present in prescriptive literature . . . many historians agree that the phrase did not reflect the reality of women's experiences, and that the spheres never were all that separate" (*Women's Education* 9). Similarly, Mary Kelley's work "challenges the familiar model that divides the nineteenth century into private and public, feminine and masculine, household and marketplace" (5). In other words, the dichotomies we have used to interpret women's intersections into public discourse, including the circulation of scientific knowledge, have produced oversimplified accounts of women's science education.

Very little scholarship has focused on scientific content in the periodical, and here the assumption that women's literacy in the *Lady's Book* is connected to domesticity (and that this was its way of justifying its usefulness) is also evident. Jan Pilditch, for example, argues that although articles in the *Lady's Book* "did disseminate scientific information" they did so "only insofar as it was useful within the limits of the domestic female sphere" (24). Even Nina Baym, who presents one of the most thorough accounts of scientific content in the *Lady's Book* (and one I reference frequently here), argues that it was "both progressive and conservative," clarifying, "it was progressive because it elevated women's minds and launched them into modernity; it was conservative because it assimilated women to the domestic sphere" (12). This last statement implies, however, that knowledge of science was most "useful" when it connected with women's work at home. Domesticity, in this sense, becomes a space in which women's work gets confined, much like the "pink world" referenced by Jack. Although works by Baym and Pilditch call attention to the *Lady's Book's* scientific content, they also reinforce the assumption that as a women's magazine, its primary goal was delivering ornamental and domestic content, such as the

fashion plates, stories, and articles on needlework and music that are more often the focus of scholarship on the *Lady's Book*.

Baym terms what Hale was advocating as "domestic science," which presumes "that women should learn the sciences in connection with everyday duties" (50). However, as Kim Tolley has argued, the prominence of this domestic science rhetoric belied the widespread teaching of pure science that went on in girls' schools during the first half of the nineteenth century (57). On first glance, some of the articles in the *Lady's Book* appear to reinforce the notion that science is only useful insofar as it connects to women's roles as educators of children. While it is tempting to see any publication associated with Hale in terms of domesticity,⁵ science in the *Lady's Book* often had only a tangential relationship with women's work in the home. Domesticity, embodied by references to objects in women's homes, functions as the articles' *context*, while much of the *content* is dedicated to detailed, technical explorations of the industries and scientific processes involved in producing these items.

Defining Useful and Ornamental Knowledge in *Godey's Lady's Book*

Much of the confusion about the inclusion of scientific and industrial content in the *Lady's Book* arises from anachronistic interpretations of the word "useful" as it is used in the periodical. Understanding this term's relationship with "ornamental" content, as well as with many of the other terms in the binaries I mentioned earlier, including "arts," "domesticity," and "science," provides a clearer picture of the kinds of education intended for its readership. In the nineteenth century, useful and ornamental knowledge were often treated as complementary, rather than opposing terms. This is evident in the title page for each issue of *Godey's Lady's Book*, which follows the periodical title with three descriptors, "Useful, Ornamental, and Instructive,"⁶ all of which point to the fact that, though famous for its fashion plates and stories, the *Lady's Book* intended to instruct women in what it calls the "useful arts" (Hinckley "Bleaching of Calico" 421).

5 Hale was, after all, responsible for popularizing many of the traditions associated with Thanksgiving and was the author of a cook book as well as titles like *Boarding Out: A Tale of Domestic Life and The Good Housekeeper: or, The Way to Live Well and to Be Well While We Live*.

6 References to "useful knowledge" were ubiquitous in nineteenth century America, as they were in the eighteenth when figures like Benjamin Franklin, David Rittenhouse, and Benjamin Rush, founders of organizations for science like Philadelphia's American Philosophical Society and, later, the Franklin Institute, pursued ways of thinking they thought would benefit the new nation.

The term “useful” in the nineteenth century, though referencing pragmatic and vocational ends, was broader in its meaning and connotations than it is today. Donald Scott argues that for nineteenth-century Americans, “almost all knowledge was potentially useful” (801). Lerman contends similarly that both the terms “useful knowledge” and “technology” might refer to “needlework as well as metalwork, spinning as well as mining” (39). As Lerman’s words indicate, the boundaries between what was considered “useful” and “ornamental” were not fixed, and a number of occupations and pastimes might be considered both useful and ornamental. Likewise, Nash contends the term “ornamental” is often misinterpreted. Nash maintains that for many historians, the term “ornamental” “meant a frilly pursuit for women that coded a particular class-based definition of femininity,” when in fact it referenced a number of different subjects for both women and men, some of which were “decidedly vocational” (“A Means” 48).

Understanding these terms in their historical context changes the way we might read much of the content in periodicals like the *Lady’s Book*; articles on art and music, far from merely being frilly or decorative, could be ways of inviting women into careers in these subjects, especially during a time when some women were being educated formally in the fine arts as a way to prepare them for a number of vocations.⁷ Similarly, articles labeled as “useful” might not have immediate, vocational ends or reference production as they would in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. In particular, though past scholarship on the *Lady’s Book* has read its frequent references to useful knowledge in terms of fostering women’s ability to keep house or raise and educate children, this varied, less narrow way of reading the term “useful” opens up other possibilities for how articles in the *Lady’s Book* might have been received and challenges the notion that science education, in particular, was only linked to women’s work in the home.

Brandt’s work on literacy sponsorship also sheds light on this broader, less bounded and static interpretation of the term “useful,” in her argument that while nineteenth century conceptions of literacy would have acknowledged the potential for literacy to mold individuals into the right kind of citizen, they would resist the idea of literacy as production. Literacy in the nineteenth century, according to Brandt, “mattered most for what it supposedly did to people, not for what people supposedly could do with it” (“Drafting” 490). She contends that “the ability to read and write was . . . regarded as a duty to God or democracy,” whereas now it is “a duty to productivity” (*Literacy*

7 See Nash’s “A Means of Honorable Support: Art and Music in Women’s Education in the Mid-Nineteenth Century,” which I reference above, for an extended discussion of career and educational opportunities for women in the fine arts during the nineteenth century.

26).⁸ This is an important consideration in that it involves suspending twentieth and twenty-first century conceptions of literacy as merely a means to an end in order to gain a better perception of the kinds of literacy the *Lady's Book* was sponsoring. In essence, usefulness often seemed to be a way of noting an article or story's potential for educating its reader; what the reader *did* with this education was up to them.

Useful and Ornamental Knowledge in the “Everyday Actualities”

The “Everyday Actualities,” series, according to a brief description featured in *American Periodicals*, “provided a detailed and readable behind-the-scenes look at the manufacturing process of products that would be familiar to the readers of *Godey's* (Susan Williams, Steven Fink, and Jared Gardner 103). The title, “Everyday Actualities,” was meant to draw attention both to the fact that the processes being described were “everyday” and thus had a habitual and common connection to the “everyday” activities of its readership and to the fact that these “actualities” were “from real observation” (Hinckley “Ornamental Ironworks” 7).

Baym describes the series, saying that “Each article described the mechanical processes and connected them to an academic science: chemistry for bleaching; geology for artesian wells; organic chemistry for food preparation; mineralogy for diamonds” (46). The first four articles in the series focus on textile manufacturing, which is linked to chemistry and mechanics, before Hinckley turns to a description of “mechanical operations” involved in large printing houses, such as the one that created *Godey's Lady's Book* (“A Day's Ramble” 307).

Table 1 below gives a sense of the topics covered by the articles, including some of the scientific and industry-specific terms used in each article. All of the articles, except for a few at the end of the series, feature detailed engravings by Hinckley, many of them systems diagrams used to aid his descriptions of the mechanical processes taking place at the factories he presents. In fact, Hinckley's occupation as an engraver is perhaps why Hale selected him to author the series, rather than picking a woman author.

8 Brandt sees attitudes towards literacy as changing with World War II, arguing that “Literacy was irrevocably transformed from a nineteenth-century moral imperative into a twentieth-century production imperative transformed from an attribute of a ‘good’ individual into an individual ‘good,’ a resource or raw material vital to national security and global competition” (“Drafting U.S. Literacy” 485). This change in the public's rationale for mass literacy had significant consequences, because it changed literacy “into something extractable, something measurable, something rentable, and thereby something worthy of rational investment” (485).

Table 1: Description of Articles in the “Everyday Actualities” Series^{9,10}

Series No.	Date	Abbreviated Title	Science	Scientific and Industry-Specific Terms	Systems Diagrams	Images of Machinery	Page Length
1	Jun. 1852	Bleaching of Calico	chemistry	bucking, souring, chemicking	2	3	5.5
2	Jul. 1852	Calico-Printing	mechanics	cylinder, mill, lint doctor	2	3	5
3	Aug. 1852	Calico-Printing (Cont.)	chemistry	dunging, fugitive colors	2	4	5
4	Sept. 1852	Calico-Printing (Cont.)	mechanics	cylindering, patent finish, falling lap	0	4	4
5	Oct. 1852	Mechanical Dept. of the 'Lady's Book'	mechanics	pie, galley, footsticks	0	5	8.5

9 In the nineteenth century, many of the divisions between the sciences did not exist, or didn't exist in the same way they do today, making it sometimes difficult to assign a specific scientific category to each of the articles. For example, fields that we might today refer to separately as “applied mechanics,” or “mechanical engineering” might have been grouped together, perhaps referred to as the “mechanic arts.” In categorizing the “Everyday Actualities,” I used the category of “mechanics,” a term Hinckley uses often, to refer to articles that discuss the motion of machinery but which I would not categorize as pure physics. I use the term engineering to refer to articles that specifically discuss engines.

10 Hinckley divided the article on “Calico-Printing” into three installments so that he could first focus on the “mechanical portion” of the process before turning, in the second installment, to the “chemical portion” (9). In the third of the “Calico-Printing” articles, Hinckley returns primarily to a discussion of mechanical processes in his description of calendering.

6	Nov. 1852	Bookbindery of Lippincott, Grambo, & Co.	mechanics	vellum, fools- cap folio	4	5	10
7	Jan. 1853	Spring Garden Marble Works	geology, engineer- ing	poggio, lizzi, regulator	0	5	10
8	Mar. 1853	Manufacture of Gas and Gas-Fixtures	chemistry, physics	condens- ing, retorts, governor	0	4	7
9	Apr. 1853	Dyeing	chemistry	purpurum, buccinum, alum	0	4	5.5
10	May 1853	Manufacture of Bristles	mechanics	hair-pencil, dressing, set-dusters, trepanned	0	1	4
11	Jul. 1853	Ornamental Ironworks	mineralogy	stack, clinker, flask, breast	0	3	11.5
12	Oct. 1853	Artesian Wells	geology	strata, Jura limestone, bétoir	3	0	8
13	Nov. 1853	Artesian Wells (Cont.)	mchanics, geology	auger, aper- ture, solder	10	1	5.5
14	Dec. 1853	Enamel and Enamelling	chemistry, mechanics	vitreous, galli- pot, shoulder, firing	0	1	5.5

15	Jan. 1854	Dolce Campana Attachment Piano-Fortes	mechan- ics, engi- neering	horse power, sound- ing-board, bottoms	0	7	8.5
16	Feb. 1854	Dolce Campana Attachment Piano-Fortes (Concl.)	mechanics	lock-board, shellacked, crescendo	0	3	6.5
17	Mar. 1854	Manufacture of Paper	botany, engineer- ing	papyrus, chiffoniers, bucking keirs,	2	2	8.5
18	Apr. 1854	Manufacture of Artificial Flowers	botany	irons, calyxes, bracts	0	0	5.5
19	May 1854	Painting on Velvet	botany	full-green, azure	1	0	2.5
20	Jun. 1854	Preservation of Food	organic chemistry	pairs of ele- ments, binary compounds, putrefaction	1	0	7
21	Jul. 1854	Day at the Ship-Yard	naval engi- neering	mould-loft, spinning oa- kum, trenails	0	0	8.5
22	A u g . 1854	Second Day at the Ship-Yard	naval engi- neering	knees, part- ners, coam- ings, carlings	0	0	9
23	Sep. 1854	Lapidary Work	mineralogy	slitting-mill, carnelian, gim-peg	7	0	8.5

24	Oct. 1854	Diamond and its Uses	mineralogy	kuara, brilliant, culasse, girdle	8	0	9.5
25	Nov. 1854	Silk-worms	zoology	floss, coccon, aurelia	0	0	2
26	Dec. 1854	Manufacture of Buttons	mechanics	blank, shanks, fly-press	0	2	3.5

Hale and Hinckley framed the “Everyday Actualities” series using the rhetoric of useful knowledge from its inception. Announcing the series in the June 1852 issue, Hale says, “We continue, in this number, our series of *useful* articles,” which she describes further as “beautifully illustrated” and “sure . . . [to] please all our readers” (“Godey’s Arm-Chair” 518, emphasis mine). Although Hinckley uses the terms “useful” and “practical” throughout the series, he is vague in describing exactly how they are useful to readers of the *Lady’s Book*. However, a brief passage in an article on shipbuilding offers a clue as to how he is imagining the benefits of these articles for readers:

If the reader has expected to become a verifiable ship-builder by the perusal of this sketch, he will doubtless be disappointed; but, if it merely conveys to him some idea of the vastness, the variety, and the ingenuity of the operations involved in the construction of a ship, free from the embarrassment of the technical details necessary in a scientific treatise, the proposed object will have been attained.” (“A Second Day at the Ship-Yard’ 57)

In the passage, Hinckley is careful to frame the article not as a professional discourse or a “scientific treatise” but rather as a popular science publication. The usefulness of the article lies not in that it is a technical manual or that it has the immediate result of enabling someone to build a ship or enter a career in shipbuilding. Rather, usefulness is connected to readers’ self-cultivation and its resultant benefits for society. In reading about these shipyards, they can appreciate the advances made in science and technology and how these advances benefit humanity. It is notable in this passage that the male pronoun is used to describe the reader, even though the *Lady’s Book* is primarily a women’s publication. This could be a nod to the fact that the subject matter of this particular article, ship-building, was largely a male profession, although, as Helen Doe has established, at least in nineteenth-century Britain a number of women were involved in this industry as owners, entrepreneurs

and even ship-builders. More probably, the use of the pronoun establishes a wider readership for the article, including both women and men.

Indeed, in a number of the “Everyday Actualities” the most immediate goals seem to be making readers appreciators or even patrons of science and industry. In this sense, science education in the *Lady’s Book* has a nationalistic impulse in that it forwarded it as a necessary step towards America’s technological and scientific progress during the mid-century in which periodicals were depicting American scientific progress as beginning to come apace of advances in Europe.¹¹ As Tolley says (specifically referencing geography), nineteenth-century promoters of women’s science education believed it could “instill habits of good citizenship, develop national pride, and create public support for surveys or scientific expeditions” (14). These goals, in Tolley’s words, bound together reasons of “utility, nationalism, and self-improvement” (14). Hinckley repeatedly emphasizes the benefits derived from scientific research in his articles, portraying, for example, calico printing as an “art” that is “of great importance to the world” (5, emphasis mine). (“Bleaching of Calico” 421; “Calico Printing” 5). Rather than tying the subjects of these articles to women’s work at home, Hinckley’s words indicate that what is contained within the articles might be of interest to anyone, giving the series a broader importance.

Technical Language in “Everyday Actualities”

Although in the passage cited earlier from the “Ship-Yard” article, Hinckley contends that his articles are free of “the embarrassment of the technical details,” the articles in the series contained a great deal of detailed, technical information. As literacy research has demonstrated, exposure to such language is a crucial means by which initiates into a new discourse become socialized so that they are able to practice its ways of knowing and patterns of language use. Shirley Brice Heath discusses, for example, how fifth grade children in a community in the Carolinas during the 1970s made lists of scientific terms, engaged in scientific methods, and talked about “ways of obtaining and verifying information” (319-320). David Bartholomae argues for the importance of college students being able to participate in the discourses of the university by “learn[ing] to speak our language . . . and try[ing] on the peculiar ways of knowing, selecting, evaluating, reporting, concluding and arguing” (134). Further, Teresa Thonney, citing Robyn Woodward-Kron, points to the ways

11 For example, an 1860 article titled “American Engineering” in *Scientific American* points the fact that the United States no longer has to depend on Europe for the manufacture of tools for working with wood and iron, saying that the United States “will soon shoot further ahead” in both the manufacture of tools and the “superior and rapid construction of machinery” that is dependent on these tools (307).

in which academics use technical language to “denote . . . [their] membership” in their community (356). Although Hinckley specifically characterizes the “Everyday Actualities” as different from publications for science specialists, he invites readers of the *Lady’s Book* into a discourse about science in at least three specific ways: by modeling scientific inquiry in his emphasis on “practical observation,” or empiricism; by using technical, industry-specific terms in the descriptions of the industrial and mechanical processes he observes; and by including illustrations of machinery and diagrams illustrating how this machinery worked (“A Day’s Ramble” 307).

Hinckley frequently draws attention to the close observations he made while touring the factories, using words like “inspect” (“Ornamental Ironworks” 7) and “practical observation” (“A Day’s Ramble” 307) and documenting what he observed in painstaking detail. The following is his description of “casting” at the Ornamental Ironworks of Robert Wood:

While the moulder is employed in his branch, the charger is engaged in getting the *cupola* or melting-pot in working order. The cupola is an upright cylinder, about twelve feet high and thirty-eight inches in diameter, and lined with five inches of fire-brick all around. A certain amount of sand is put in the bottom of this cylinder to keep the iron from running out, and upon the top of this a quantity of wood and coal, after which pig-iron broken in pieces, and also the imperfect castings of the day before. After a certain amount of space is thus filled, coal is again put in, and upon the top of that, iron. At the bottom of the cylinder is an opening called the *breast*. (8)

Hinckley’s description of casting, which continues for another column and a half, calls attention to close observation as a necessary part of scientific research, thus connecting readers to scientific ways of gathering data and understanding the world.

As the above passage indicates, one of the most striking aspects of the “Everyday Actualities” is the level of detail Hinckley gives in his descriptions of the scientific and mechanical processes he witnesses in the factories he tours. Hinckley describes the method for “making a saturated solution of chloride of lime” by including a diagram of a “stone chamber” (“Bleaching of Calico” 422). Detailing the chemical reactions taking place, Hinckley explains,

The chlorine is obtained from common salt – chloride of sodium – by the action of black oxide of manganese and sulphuric acid. About ten hundred weight of salt are mixed with from ten to fourteen hundred weight of manganese, and the introduced, by an aperture at c, into a large leaden vessel of a nearly globular form” (422).

Hinckley's descriptions of chemical processes were similar to the kinds contained in a number of textbooks used in science courses for women's academies in the nineteenth century. These texts, according to Tolley, "omitted symbols, formulae, and calculations, and conveyed principles of chemistry through description and demonstration" (66). Still, as Tolley points out, women's textbooks at the time "were no more elementary in content than . . . texts used in male academies" (67). Following Hinckley's descriptions would have taken a great deal of attention, and he assumes a readership that would be interested and intelligent enough to do so.

As Table 1 on pages 11-12 illustrates, all of the "Everyday Actualities" include a number of industry-specific terms, which, as in the example above, Hinckley italicizes and defines as they arise in his descriptions. The articles gave women the chance to expand their literacy by engaging in other discourse communities and taking on their jargon, which would have been essential for readers of the *Lady's Book* to feel like members of the scientific community. Hinckley's detailed descriptions, which included measurements and definitions, invited readers into both a scientific and ideological discourse and encouraged them to engage in similar observations in order to satisfy their curiosity.¹²

Hinckley further develops women's scientific knowledge by tying his descriptions to diagrams of the instruments used in the factory in order to concretize readers' understanding of these complex processes. An article on "The Manufacture of Paper," for instance, includes images of two engines used to wash wood pulp and process it into paper (see Figure 1). Hinckley describes the mechanisms by which the engines work, saying,

The cylinder C is firmly fixed to the spindle s, which extends across the engine, and is put in motion by the pinion, which engages other wheels set in motion by water or steam-power. The cylinder is of wood, but is furnished with a number of teeth or cutters attached to its surface parallel with its axis, and projecting about an inch from it. Immediately below the cylinder is a block of wood B, also furnished with cutters, so that when the cylinder revolves its teeth pass very near those of the block, the distance between them being regulated by elevating or depressing the bearings //, on which the next of the spindle s s are supported. (52).

Hinckley's description of the engines continues for another column (or half-page), making reference to the letters in the diagram to explain the movements

¹² For example, Hinckley concludes the first installment of "Everyday Actualities," on the bleaching of calico, by including a "Bleaching Experiment for Our Readers" (426).

of the engines. The detailed attention to how these engines work is typical of articles in the series. Forty-two percent of the articles in the series contain figures accompanied by descriptions that refer to labeled parts of the apparatuses being described and 65% contain images of machinery (see Table 1). Following the descriptions would have required some experience with reading diagrams. As in the other articles, the descriptions include specialized terms that would contribute to readers' knowledge of science.

Although ostensibly, articles in the series were attempts to educate housewives about the products already in their homes, the articles themselves contain few references to domesticity or to the link between the scientific content being discussed and women's everyday lives. Instead, articles on science and science-related fields in the *Lady's Book* often used domesticity as their *context* but departed markedly from domesticity in terms of their *content*. This distinction, which I borrow from Tolley's discussion of domestic science, is important because while an article on calico printing might imply that women might be interested in this subject as someone who has purchased or sewn with calico prints, the content often connected only loosely to knowledge women would need to raise children or keep a home, if it did at all.¹³

Most of the "Everyday Actualities" launch right into descriptions of the history of particular scientific or manufacturing process being described and contain no apologia explaining why this information might be of interest to women readers. Other science articles in the *Lady's Book* are framed by a connection to something in women's homes or to a conversation between a mother and daughter (the context), but then include scientific information as their content. For instance, an article titled "Polytechnics: A Conversation" in the October 1861 issue is framed as a conversation (presumably at home) between a girl named Jane and her mother. Jane asks her mother to define "polytechnics," proclaiming, "I heard brother employing it today, and I think he said it came from two Greek words" (E.C.J. 352).¹⁴ However, what follows in the passage is essentially a discourse in which mother persuades daughter of the importance of careers in science and engineering, complete with an invitation at the end to visit Pennsylvania Polytechnic College, indicating the potential for Jane to further her education by touring the college and participating

13 Tolley makes the same point when discussing this "so-called domestic science" in relationship to some of the popular textbooks for children at the time, like Almira Hart Lincoln Phelps' 1834 *Chemistry for Beginners* and Richard C. Parker's 1850 *Juvenile Philosophy: or Philosophy in Familiar Conversations* (58).

14 The format of the conversation as a way for instructing children in science was popular at the time. Jane Marcet's *Conversations on Chemistry* also uses dialogue as a mode for instruction. For a discussion of how the format of dialogue relates to the "polite culture" of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, see Bahar, Saba. "Jane Marcet and the Limits to Public Science."

in public lectures and demonstrations (352). In this case, the setting of the article is a domestic scene in which a mother is educating her daughter, but the content of the article points to interests beyond the home.

In the "Everyday Actualities," domesticity seems largely to be functioning as metalinguistic strategy to connect scientific information to products and settings already familiar to women. Women readers of these articles are asked to step outside of their roles at home and become observers of products and processes from the viewpoint of science. In this sense, they are entering into what Heath describes as a "two-way manipulation of knowledge" (321). On the one hand, they can gather new terms from the scientific community and use them as a vocabulary for understanding products and processes both within their homes and in public spaces like artesian wells and shipyards. On the other, domestic knowhow acts as a "fund of knowledge," which Luis Moll et al. refer to as "historically accumulated and culturally developed bodies of knowledge and skills essential for household or individual functioning or well-being," that authorizes them to enter the realm of science (133). Seen from this angle, the implicit references to domesticity in these articles are not attempts to limit women's scientific contributions to the domestic sphere but rather function as "cultural and cognitive resources" for women readers to contextualize the scientific and technical information being presented (Moll et al. 134). Domesticity in these articles functions quite differently from the "pink world" referenced by Jack, instead moving towards enabling women to create what Jack calls "heteroglossic identities" that enable women to take interest in both science and domesticity ("Princess Engineers and Young Inventors" n.p.). Rather than being a space of confinement, domesticity is elevated and connected to science.

Readers today might also interpret religious references within articles on science as evidence of a more conservative or cautious approach to science in the periodical. However, the idea that religion and science were at odds during this time, is, according to Tolley "anachronistic . . . because science was not in conflict with natural theology in the early nineteenth century" (26). Hyman Kuritz concurs that "The notion that science and religion were at war in nineteenth-century America has been thoroughly discredited" (270, footnote). In addition, although Hale sometimes referenced religion in her discussions of science in the "Editor's Table" or "Godey's Arm-Chair" articles, religious references in the "Everyday Actualities" series were rare. In the only one I was able to find, Hinckley links a scientific fact, that iron ore "is often found in immediate connection with the coal and limestone flux required for its reduction" to an assertion that the juxtaposition of these elements was somehow done purposefully for the benefit of mankind ("Ornamental Ironworks" 5). This mention

is brief, however, and does not detract from the technical, scientific information presented in the article.

The Mechanical and the Artistic: Science and Craft Knowledge in the “Everyday Actualities”

Although one of the primary purposes of the “Everyday Actualities” was to educate readers of the *Lady’s Book* in science, the articles didn’t just discuss scientific content, and the science included was, itself, not bounded or purely technical in ways it might be presented today. Instead, for Hinckley, there was an art to science, and science itself was an art. Hinckley emphasizes this throughout the series by repeatedly referencing science’s connections to other subjects, history in particular. Especially at the beginning of many of the articles, Hinckley traces processes being described to previous discoveries before characterizing the ways in which they have evolved based on newer discoveries. For example, in his first article on “Artesian Wells,” he talks about how the term “Artesian Well” comes from research conducted in the French province of Artois on means of discovering subterranean water, before tracing knowledge of these wells and the processes for extracting water to Italy and the “ancients” (295). Passages like this imply that even discussions of recent innovations have historical precedent and that history is important in understanding contemporary scientific advances.

Hinckley further unites science and the humanities by blurring boundaries between humans and technology and between aesthetic, craft knowledge and mechanical skill, reflecting, as Lerman argues, that many of the products and processes falling under the nineteenth-century “rubric of technology” connected to artisanal culture (40). Marcovich and Shinn similarly point out that the “economic expansion that called for enhanced technology . . . [acted] as a spur to both craft and more advanced and formal forms of learning” (37).¹⁵ As Table 2 indicates, the words Hinckley used throughout the series emphasized the connection between useful and ornamental knowledge, as well as science (or technology) and the arts.

15 As Marcovich and Shinn also point out, as many of the applied sciences, like engineering began to open schools in the latter half of the nineteenth century, knowledge in these fields became increasingly technical, utilitarian, insular and professionalized, marking a turn away from the craft-based, artisanal culture that Hinckley seems bent on emphasizing in the “Everyday Actualities” (43-44).

Table 2: Combined References to Useful and Ornamental Knowledge in “Everyday Actualities”

Series No.	Date	Title	References to Useful and Ornamental Knowledge
1	Jun. 1852	Bleaching of Calico	“useful arts” (421)
2	Jul. 1852	Calico-Printing	“mechanic arts” (5)
8	Mar. 1853	Manufacture of Gas and Gas-Fixtures	“beautiful and useful” (198) “art and science” (198) “its presence ornamental as well as useful” (199) “mechanical and artistic operation” (199)
12	Oct. 1853	Artesian Wells	“The formation of Artesian wells in our own day depends on the <i>practical</i> application of the <i>science</i> of Geology to the <i>Useful Arts</i> ” (47, emphasis mine)
14	Dec. 1853	Enamel and Enameling	“An enamel is a vitreous substance used for painting on glass, porcelain, &c., and for covering metals with various kinds of <i>useful</i> and <i>ornamental</i> work” (47, emphasis mine)
19	May 1854	Painting on Velvet	“Papers on <i>ornamental</i> work are exceedingly <i>useful</i> ” (393, emphasis mine)
20	Jun. 1854	Preservation of Food	“it has been improved by . . . chemical discovery and the diffusion of chemical knowledge among persons engaged in the <i>useful arts</i> ” (487, emphasis mine)

Articles in the series acquainting readers with new technological advances, such as the steam-press and roller-printing of fabric, reflect nineteenth-century Americans’ obsession with technology. Scientific lectures at mechanics’ institutes, lyceums, and newly opened polytechnic schools acquainted both men and women with the newest technical innovations. As Tolley points out, “Since the eighteenth century, the American, British, and European public, male and female, enjoyed demonstrations of experiments with magnetism, electricity, and steam” (60). The fact that many of the “Everyday Actualities”

series end with an invitation to the reader to tour the factory or public works being described points to this engrained cultural association between technology, entertainment, and personal cultivation.

Hinckley advocated industrialization and touted the importance and benefits of innovation in the "Everyday Actualities." In the first article in the series, Hinckley describes the "old manner" of bleaching calico, muslin, and cotton in terms of inefficiency:

It required several months' exposure to air, light, and moisture, before the goods were bleached. . . . This process, it will be observed, occupied much time and trouble, and it was in a matter of serious moment to obviate it in some degree. ("Bleaching of Calico" 421)

In the second article in the "Calico Series," Hinckley calls attention to the "invention of cylinder, or roller-printing" as "the greatest achievement that has been made in the art, producing results which are truly extraordinary; a length of calico equal to one mile can, by this method, be printed off with four different colors in one hour, and more accurately and with better effect than block-printing by hand" ("Calico Printing" 7). In both articles, Hinckley attests to the time saved by new machinery as well as the resultant quality of the goods, casting industry in a positive light for an audience of women who were consuming these products. Indeed, as Baym argues, Hale believed that "Even women who worked as mill operatives or domestic servants were better off . . . than they had been in earlier times, for they now worked with such contrivances as mechanical looms, sewing machines, reliable cooking stoves, and spigot faucets" (38). Hale (via Hinckley) thus wanted to emphasize industrialization as progress rather than exploitation and to connect the processes involved in industrial machinery explicitly to women.

The desire to frame industry and innovation in a positive light also makes sense in that, as a mass circulating magazine, the success of the *Lady's Book* depended on technology like the steamroller press that enabled cheap and efficient reproduction of printed text. Hinckley directly states this in "A Day's Ramble" contending, "The advantages of stereotyping for the advancement of literature are incalculable. It makes knowledge cheap, by giving publishers the power of issuing any number of editions of a work without the expense of resetting the types" (307). For Hinckley, the ability to produce cheap literature becomes important for the advancement of mass literacy rather than a capitalist abuse of power. In the context of the *Lady's Book*, the invention of the steamroller press is connected explicitly to opportunities for women to expand their knowledge of science and industry.

The defense of industrialization present throughout the *Lady's Book* reflects a debate that was bubbling to the surface and that itself prompted a

closer consideration of literacy and the lower class. Only two years later, in September of 1854, *North and South*, Elizabeth Gaskell's revealing critique of industrialization in England, was released in serial form, and in April of 1855, Herman Melville's "The Paradise of Bachelors and the Tartarus of Maids," which demonstrated the exploitative conditions of industrialization, appeared in *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*. As Hinckley's words indicate, industrialization was tied in important ways to the ability to read and write; in both England and America, the opening of factories also heralded attempts at efficiently spreading literacy. As Robert Pattison notes in *On Literacy*, "Business and government have much to gain and little to lose from a working class trained to understand written instructions and published notices, and at the same time this skill recommends itself to workers themselves as an accomplishment necessary for economic survival" (151). However, the works of Gaskell, Melville, and, later, John Ruskin also criticized the spread of what Pattison terms "mechanical literacy" because of the rapidity with which it was spread and the ways in which it trained workers not to appreciate literature but to understand factory notices and mechanically obey their dictates (152).

In the "Everyday Actualities," Hinckley's implicit argument seems to be that scientific, mechanical, and industrial processes can also be seen as human, aesthetic, and artistic. He explains the process of "distribution," which involves the compositors returning the types to their cases, as a "most beautiful process," contending that "probably no act which is *partly mental and partly mechanical* offers a more remarkable example of the dexterity to be acquired by long practice" ("A Day's Ramble" 309, emphasis mine). Throughout the series, Hinckley calls attention to the fact that, though efficient, these workers are performing actions that require "care and nicety" as well ("Marble Works" 7). By uncovering the art and beauty in industry, and highlighting the actions of workers as careful and dexterous as well as efficient, Hinckley makes the case that knowledge of these operations and aesthetic knowledge are related, subverting the distinction between the literacy needed to work in a factory and literacy for personal cultivation.

Hinckley's article on the printing of *Godey's Lady's Book* is particularly interesting when read in the context of the ongoing debate about the effects of industrialization. By describing the process by which the *Lady's Book*, one carrier of literacy, was produced, Hinckley links literacy to print culture in a way that undermines critiques of industry as dehumanizing. In the fifth installment in the series, Hinckley explicitly connects "capital," "labor," and "mechanical" operations to the literacy product enjoyed by the reader (307). He reinforces the process and its physical connection to the reader, saying that the article will "trace" the magazine's "progress through the various departments of their extensive establishment until a copy of a finished number of the 'Lady's Book'

is placed in their hands" (307-8). Hinckley is not specific about why readers might be interested in this information, and, indeed, his vagueness points, as I have been arguing, to the broadness of subjects that would be deemed useful for his women readers. He immediately establishes the article as a response to an audience eager for knowledge of print culture, framing the description as an expansion of readers' literacy.

The valorization of labor and craft present in other installments of "Everyday Actualities," is made explicit in "A Day's Ramble." Hinckley explicates the activity of the "compositor in picking up types" as "a matter of much surprise to strangers in the art" because "the boxes holding the types are not labeled" (308). The explanation Hinckley gives is that if the compositors were to look at the boxes they would actually be less efficient than they are when they use touch to feel their way to the correct box: the compositor must use his eyes instead to read the handwriting of the author while he searches for type-boxes (308). Hinckley alternates wonderment over the mechanical efficiency of the laborers and a reference to their work as a craft requiring aesthetic skill. Far from industrialization turning people into machines, Hinckley instead suggests the artistry and humanity inherent in machinery.

Hinckley's descriptions are more striking when compared to Melville's fictionalized account of Devil's Dungeon paper mill in New England in "The Paradise of Bachelors and the Tartarus of Maids," published two years later. The narrator's characterization of the factory is one devoid of humanity:

Not a syllable was breathed. Nothing was heard but the low, steady, overruling hum of the iron animals. The human voice was banished from the spot. Machinery – that vaunted slave of humanity – here stood menially served by human beings, who served mutely and cringingly as the slave serves the Sultan. The girls did not so much seem accessory wheels to the general machinery as mere cogs to the wheels. (88)

Instead of the "fair assistants" at Messrs. Collins who prompt Hinckley to remark, "We cannot say whether the attraction is in the beautiful working of the machinery, or in the faces of the bevy of industrious working girls who attend there" (311), Melville's narrator remarks on the "rows of blank-looking girls with blank, white folders in their blank hands all blankly folding blank paper" (88). In short, the beautiful, living, printed word so carefully crafted at Messrs. Collins becomes in Melville a blank, an erasure of both art and humanity.

Hinckley's descriptions of women workers throughout the series reflect Hale's larger efforts to draw attention to opportunities for women to support their families outside of the home. Piepmeier argues that the *Lady's Book's* position on industrialization reflects Hale's own bodily identification with print

culture. As one of these laboring women, she, in Piepmeier's words, refuses to be "excessively victimized" by print culture "like the shreds of cotton that constitute the paper itself" (186). Of course, one could argue that as an editor, Hale occupied a much different position from the women laborers at Messrs. Collins, but Hale, Hinckley, and Godey's frequent references to the women who worked for the magazine, many of whom hand painted the fashion plates that appeared monthly, suggests that Hale, as a working woman, did identify with these workers.

The *Lady's Book's* advocacy of women workers is reflected in six of the twenty-six "Everyday Actualities," which include descriptions and images of women working in factories. These illustrations are another way in which the *Lady's Book* depicted women in public spaces, demonstrating the fluidity of notions of public and private and showing how scientific and ornamental skill could be used in jobs outside of the home. In the final of the "Everyday Actualities" series, "The Manufacture of Buttons," Hinckley includes two images of women working in button factories and emphasizes that much of this work is done not only "by female hands" but that certain jobs are "the business of women" and are "performed with skill and celerity" (49, 50). The article on "A Day's Ramble" has two engraved images depicting women working the new steam-powered printing presses (see Figure 2 for one of the images).

Hale also uses her December 1854 "Editor's Table" to draw attention to the presence of women in other printing offices and in particular to encourage and support women who wanted to become typesetters. Referring to the Drexel Job-Printing Office in Philadelphia, she states, "If you are sincere, reader, in your profession of good wishes for the necessities of the feebler sex, you will take some pains to throw patronage into the only printing establishment which has ever dared to attempt so bold an innovation" (553). Here she advertises the *Lady's Book* as one of the publications on the forefronts of documenting advances in women's employments and issues a call for women to support each other as workers.

Given that working women are referenced in the "Everyday Actualities" series and that they appear in a number of the illustrations Hinckley engraved to accompany his articles, it appears that the *Lady's Book* was advocating roles for women in science-related fields, giving these articles a more concrete, vocational aim. In the passages cited above, Hale and Hinckley seem to be asking women to offer patronage to efforts to expand opportunities for women's

employment, as well as suggesting paths for women in need of supporting themselves and their families.¹⁶

Conclusion: Beyond “Everyday Actualities”

Although the series “Everyday Actualities” lasted for only two and a half years, the editors of the *Lady’s Book* continued to include content that commented upon the important contributions of science, engineering, and industry until the magazine folded at the end of the nineteenth century. It’s unclear why the series was so short-lived, especially given Hale’s commitment to including scientific content in the periodical. It could be because Hinckley couldn’t continue to author it anymore and Hale was unable to find a replacement who could create high quality engravings to accompany the text. This possibility is supported by the fact that toward the end of the series, a few of the articles, including two on “Boardman & Gray’s Dolce Campana Attachment Piano Fortes,” an article on “Painting on Velvet” and “Rearing and Management of Silk-Worms” don’t contain Hinckley’s by-line. The “Velvet” and “Silk-Worms” articles also are much shorter, and the illustrations not as detailed.¹⁷ In any case, the “Everyday Actualities” document a period in history in which women’s education in science was routine and science and industry still connected to artisanal culture.

Examining nineteenth-century articles on science like the “Everyday Actualities” reveals the extent to which current constructs of science have been represented as separate from humanistic, artistic endeavors. Gere et al. note this in their reference to a STEM-field faculty member’s statement that though his students had to learn to master disciplinary knowledge, their writing is still “writing as a human being” (“Interrogating Disciplines/Disciplinarity” 251). Despite research done by scholars in the rhetoric of science, stereotypes of science writing as purely technical or fact-based persist. A close look at the ways in which the “Everyday Actualities” sponsored women’s extra-curricular science education and gave them access to specialized, technical knowledge while still emphasizing its connections to domesticity and the arts demonstrates that the terms in the binaries I introduced at the beginning of this article cannot be so simply delimited. By projecting simplified accounts

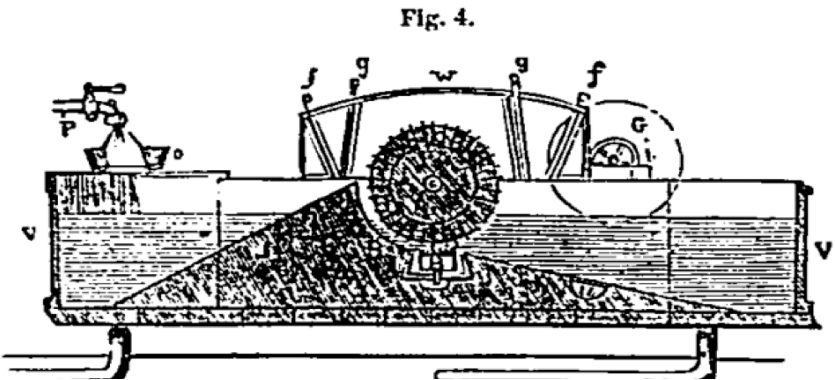
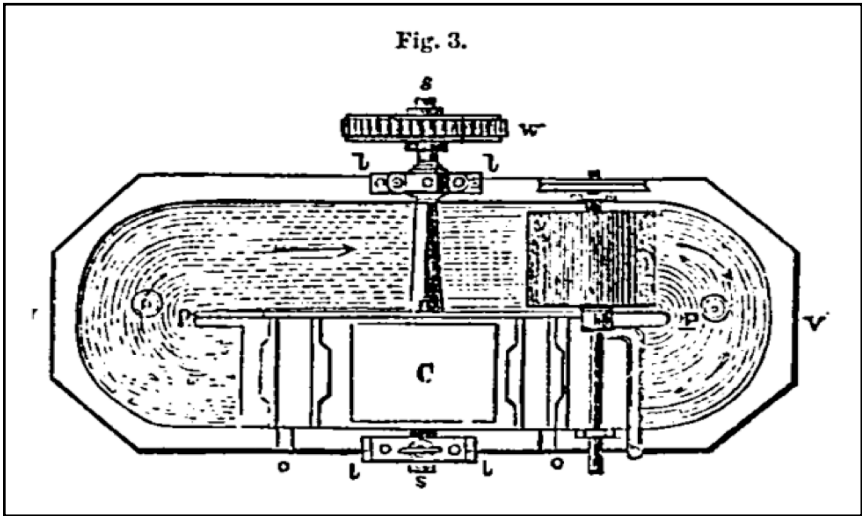
¹⁶ Although the *Lady’s Book* had a high subscription cost, Tonkovitch argues that women from all positions of society must have read the periodical, “since *Godey’s* was often loaned among neighbors, available on the center table of boardinghouses and women’s schools, or shared among a group of people who owned a single subscription” (*Domesticity* 60).

¹⁷ Hinckley retired in 1857, but he did occasionally write for the *Lady’s Book* after this date, authoring, for example, an article titled “The Art of Engraving” in the August 1859 issue (Hamilton 147).

of science onto the past, we not only skew our view of women's education in the nineteenth century but also for the future of women's science education.

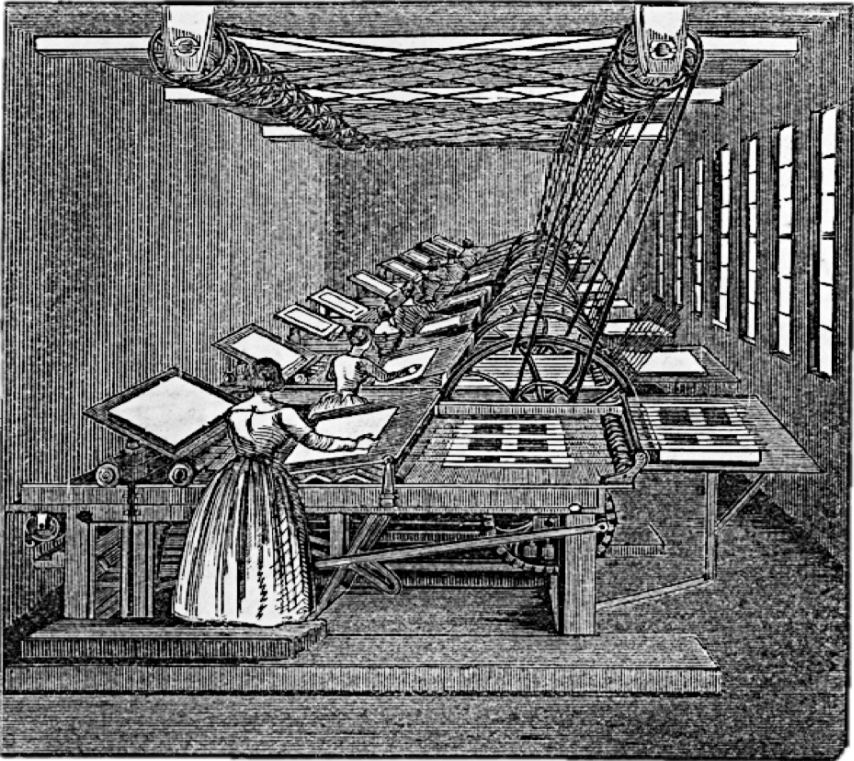
In arguing for the complexity of science-related material in the *Lady's Book*, I don't mean to suggest that the periodical was revolutionary or that Hale (or Hinckley) was some kind of proto-feminist. In the first place, scholars like Tolley contend that science education for young women, and particularly among elites, was common at the time, suggesting that the science articles in the *Lady's Book* were far from subversive. In addition, as Patricia Okker, Piepmeier, and Tonkovich have argued, Hale often used the rhetoric of separate spheres strategically, and she campaigned for the use of gendered terms, like her own favored term "editress" as "a means of acknowledging women's presence in the occupations" (Tonkovitch "Rhetorical Power" 172). However, to note Hale's rhetoric as conservative or to overextend the rubric of separate spheres is to misinterpret Hale, Hinckley, and the magazine's cultural work, especially since Hale often used this essentialism not to imprison women in the home but rather to elevate domestic and care-taking work so that it had the same status as other careers. Piepmeier argues Hale's "life and work are not legible through the binaric lenses of the public and private spheres nor the notions of victimization or agency" (182). As I have argued throughout this essay, the danger of using these "binaric" lenses extends to our differentiation of the arts and the sciences, domesticity and the world of work, and useful and ornamental knowledge as well.

Figure 1: Images of two engines used to wash wood pulp and process it into paper



Hinckley, Cornelius T. "Everyday Actualities.--NO. XVII. The Manufacture of Paper." *Godey's Lady's Book*, Mar. 1854: 199. This image originally appeared as part of ProQuest's American Periodicals Series product. Reprinted with permission from digital images produced by ProQuest LLC. www.proquest.com

Figure 2: Women working the new steam-powered printing presses at Messrs Collins, the press that printed *Godey's Lady's Book*



Hinckley, Cornelius T. "Illustration 5 - No Title," *Godey's Lady's Book*, Oct. 1852: 306. This image originally appeared as part of ProQuest's American Periodicals Series product. Reprinted with permission from digital images produced by ProQuest LLC. www.proquest.com

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Farm to Table: The Home Management House as Rhetorical Space for Rural Women

Melissa Nivens

Abstract: *This paper explores a university archival collection of documents and student exams from the long closed Home Economics Department of Texas A&M University-Commerce. Through the use of departmental records and final exam student essays from the 1930s and 1940s, the project argues that home management house residency created a unique rhetorical space for rural women as they pursued higher education, professional opportunities, and class mobility.*

Keywords: *women, home economics, archives, Texas, education, rhetorical space*

In their book, *Feminist Rhetorical Practices*, Jacqueline Royster and Gesa Kirsch assert that “academic women’s voices, visions, and experiences have not been fully heard, represented, or taken into account in writing the history of academic institutions or in imagining their future” (5). As I read *Professor Mayo’s College: A History of East Texas State University*, I found Royster and Kirsch’s statement to be true. In a quite thorough text about the history of my alma mater, now named Texas A&M University-Commerce, the voices of women are few, and their experiences are often diminished to “Sadie Hawkins Day” (Reynolds 128) or “panty-raids” (131). The book does mention the university’s home economics department, but it is only referenced a few times within the 210-page book. Most of those references are in regard to building booms on the campus and how the home economics department benefited from new facilities. One photo caption remembers the department as a space that taught “home management to co-eds, most of whom expected to be wives and mothers” (71). A final mention of home economics explains that the department was simply eliminated altogether in 1989 due to budget cuts (190). Surely the public memory of the rural women who attended East Texas State (ET) and their educational experiences during the mid-twentieth century should not be reduced to quick lines about facilities or social engagements. Surely a more substantial story should be recovered.

On a spring afternoon in 2011, I discovered that story. Boxes housed on the fourth floor of Gee Library at Texas A&M University-Commerce contain

long forgotten archives revealing the extraordinary stories of ordinary rural Northeast Texas women who studied home economics at ET. These women of the home economics department had names and faces and voices. Their experiences have been preserved in scrapbooks, student records, and final exams, rhetorical artifacts that reveal East Texas State's home economics department—more specifically its home management house—as a space where young women practiced a new set of domestic skills and exercised a new confidence in a way that could not have occurred anywhere else. Illuminating the lived experiences and rhetorical agency of these women contributes to larger efforts, for example those of Shannon Carter and Kelly Dent, who consider how “[l]ocal literacy scenes like [Northeast Texas] have much to teach us about the ways that historically marginalized rhetors garner rhetorical agency” (152). The local home economics department records reveal that the home management house at ET was much more than just a place where women – that is white women, at least until 1964 when East Texas State University finally desegregated – learned to cook and clean. Instead, the home management house at East Texas State served as a rhetorical space for women in Northeast Texas by providing a place for young rural women to assert newfound authority as homemakers and teachers that would afford them the opportunity for a modern middle class home or a career of their own. This residency would provide the space for rhetorical agency necessary to move from the rural farms of East Texas to the middle class tables of the future.

Defining Home Economics

While “historians largely dismissed home economics as little more than a conspiracy to keep women in the kitchen,” scholarship now reveals how the work of early home economists paved the way for women in the academy, the laboratory, the boardroom, and the home (Stage, “Introduction” 1). Since the discipline of home economics’ beginning, a debate has existed over what to call the field because the work of the home involves such a broad spectrum of skills including food preparation and sanitation, child development and rearing, and sewing and textiles. At the field’s inception, the name needed to encompass the large field while elevating the status of homemaking. In 1899, at the first of the Lake Placid conferences¹ (1899-1907), selecting a name was important business. Scientist and home economics pioneer Ellen Richards preferred the name *domestic science* because she wanted to elevate the work

1 “In 1899,...the founders of home economics met at Lake Placid to launch a formal home economics movement. The record of their conference demonstrates that the last thing they had in mind was to keep women in the kitchen, a charge that has been leveled at home economics by generations of feminist critics” (Stage, “Ellen Richards” 19).

of the home and promote the ordinary kitchen to a sophisticated laboratory. She possessed “a passion for science, a commitment to furthering women’s education and careers, and a belief in the home as source for social change” (Stage, “Ellen Richards” 20). Her tenacity helped to bring home economics to the forefront while creating a modern landscape for new literacies and vocations for women. Others wanted to highlight the area of the field that involved sewing and textiles with a name like *household arts*; however, this title seemed to eliminate such important homemaking elements like nutrition and child development and reduced the field to simply beautifying the home. Another potential name was *domestic economy*, which seemed to “focus on the housewife and her problems, particularly the ‘servant problem’” (Stage, “Introduction” 5). Eventually the Lake Placid group settled upon home economics as a compromise (Stage, “Introduction” 6). This name seems to encompass all areas of interest including science, arts, and economy.

Today the field, still struggling with its identity, has again reinvented itself into the likes of Human Ecology, as it is called at Cornell University, or Human Sciences as it is called at Oklahoma State University. Further, American high schools now teach courses under the umbrella of Family and Consumer Science (FCS) rather than the standard and familiar ‘home ec.’ No longer are high school students members of Future Homemakers of America (FHA); now boys and girls alike join an organization called Family, Career, and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA) – if their school even still has room for a Family and Consumer Science curriculum. Over one hundred years later, even though the home and family are arguably the most important of social institutions, home economics still struggles to elevate the workings of the home and to validate its place within educational and professional spheres. The ET home economics archives reveal the close relationship between local concerns and national trends.

Localizing Home Economics

East Texas Normal College, founded by William Mayo, began operation in November of 1889 in Cooper, Texas (Reynolds and Conrad 3). Just a few years later in 1894, the college building burned to the ground, but Mayo was not discouraged. He chose to rebuild and move the college 15 miles southwest to Commerce, Texas (4). Professor Mayo certainly embodied his school’s motto, “Ceaseless industry, Fearless investigation, Unfettered thought,” as he himself taught Latin, Greek, German, civics, history, and pedagogy (6). Mayo “was long remembered after his death for providing educational opportunities to thousands of ambitious rural students who would have otherwise been unable to attend college because of limited funds or inadequate previous schooling” (Gold 114). Mayo was so dedicated to serving the population of rural East

Texas that he provided a flexible schedule for students from farming families and began the second term of the school year “about the end of cotton picking season” (11). Rural young girls and boys alike were expected to work in the cotton fields from an early age, so this accommodation was certainly necessary as records reveal that on into the 1930s “[i]n Texas where white families were predominate in cotton, 75% of all children aged six to sixteen counted as laborers” (Temple 156). Even though Mayo’s students came from the surrounding rural areas, many of them having received their primary schooling in country one-room schools, Mayo encouraged a rigorous curriculum (8) and believed in learning through doing (10). Therefore, home economics was a natural addition to the course offerings as new presidents succeeded Mayo and maintained his early visions for the college.

The home economics department first opened on the East Texas State campus “in 1917 just after the Mayo School became a state institution” (“Development” 1). This timing is not surprising since it coincides with nationwide federal funding for vocational programs that became available in the early twentieth century. In 1914, the signing of the Smith-Lever Act supported the improvement of rural American life through the Department of Agriculture, and the Smith-Hughes Act of 1917 created a clear purpose for collegiate home economics departments: to train home economics teachers for the primary and secondary schools (Stage, “Introduction” 9). Texas historian Walter L. Buenger notes that after the United States entered World War I, “women’s roles in public affairs increased” (174) as they overwhelmingly opposed Jim Ferguson in the Texas Governor’s race of 1918, in part because of his position on education. Buenger writes, “Perhaps education mattered more to women for reasons other than filling their traditional roles of nurturing the next generation...wartime conditions opened new opportunities for women, but taking advantage of those new opportunities required education” (178). East Texas State offered a space for that educational opportunity as it maintained its historic reputation as a “normal” school (Reynolds and Conrad 72). David Gold notes in his text, *Rhetoric at the Margins*:

Mayo’s institution also served a constituency long overlooked in histories of rhetorical education: white rural students, both male and female, of modest economic means. For these students, normal schools served a similar function as private liberal arts colleges did for African American students, providing them with a means of socio-economic advancement and community pride. (115)

This emphasis on training teachers and social mobility was especially evident for the farm girls of Northeast Texas as they enrolled at East Texas in hopes of earning teaching certificates.

Certainly the women of Northeast Texas began to feel the national movement of educational opportunities in the field of home economics—even if those expanded opportunities did limit women to the domestic sphere of the home and by extension the classroom. For better or worse, these federal acts of the early twentieth century created legitimate educational and professional opportunities for women everywhere – even in rural Northeast Texas—while clearly reinforcing gender stereotypes. Even so, Royster and Kirsch remind us that “stories matter” (3), so the stories of these students should be recovered and added to the public memory of women’s education and to the rhetorical history of rural Northeast Texas.

Texas, like much of the United States, enjoyed economic growth during the 1920s. The Texas Historical Association claims, “If electrical power was the basic regional builder in the Southeast, petroleum assumed that role in the Southwest – Texas, Oklahoma, Arkansas, and Louisiana. Oil diversified the region’s economy, which was previously based on agriculture and timber (Brown). In fact, this oil boom “channeled billions of dollars into public education in Texas” (Brown). Still, state appropriated funds did not necessarily keep up with both the broad curriculum expansions and the dramatic enrollment increases of ET during the 1920s (Reynolds and Conrad 64). Then, of course, Texas faced near economic ruin after the stock market crash of 1929 and the resulting Great Depression.

Even with the country in economic crisis, by the mid-1930s East Texas State housed an established home economics department. The early curriculum included courses for students who had no home economics training in high school along with classes in “sewing, cooking, millinery, laundry, and house-wifery” (“Development” 1). Not until the 1935-36 school year did the East Texas State home economics “department [meet] full requirements for vocational home economics” (“Development” 1). Those requirements included a student teaching program at Commerce High School, a nursery school, and “a new home management house, ready for occupancy in the summer of 1936” (“Development” 1) (see fig. 1). The home economics students could not be more pleased with the completion of this new practice home. In fact, one student, Mae², writes:

On September 22, 1936, I entered the new Home Management House. I said new because only two groups had lived in the house before. I was so glad to think that all girls who came to ET desiring to get a Vocational Home Economics Certificate could now do so...I had dreamed of just such a house as we now have. So dreams do come true. (Mae 1)

2 All references to students’ names are pseudonyms.

For this vocational certificate that Mae mentions, students were required to live together for up to nine weeks in a campus home that was considered a laboratory by its students and professors. On those college campuses, including East Texas State, the home management house was considered “the most important laboratory for the teaching of Home Economics on the college level” (“Presentation Booklet” 3). While living in the house, each woman fulfilled specific roles like cook or housekeeper or hostess in an effort to transfer the skills she had learned in the classroom to a real home setting. At the end of the semester, East Texas State students were given a list of questions for their final exam. Reflective responses to these questions from sixteen women between the years of 1936 and 1953 serve as student writing samples for this article (see fig. 2 & 3). These essays preserve both engaging memories of the women living and working with one another and earnest attempts at academic writing.



Fig. 1. Home Management House Photo. Presentation Booklet. 18 Jan 1944. Home Economics Collection. Special Collections Gee Library (Box 4, Folder 4). Texas A&M University-Commerce, Commerce, TX.

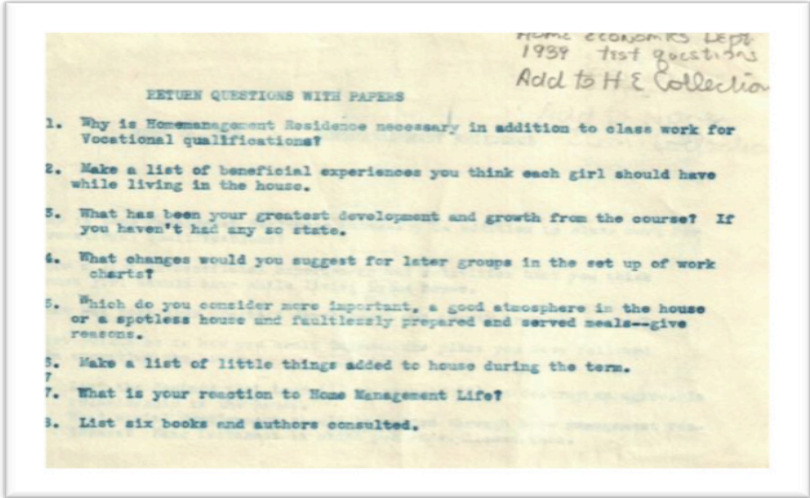


Fig. 2. Home Economics 326 Exam Questions. 1939. Home Economics Collection. Special Collections Gee Library (Box 4, Folder 9). Texas A&M University-Commerce, Commerce, TX.

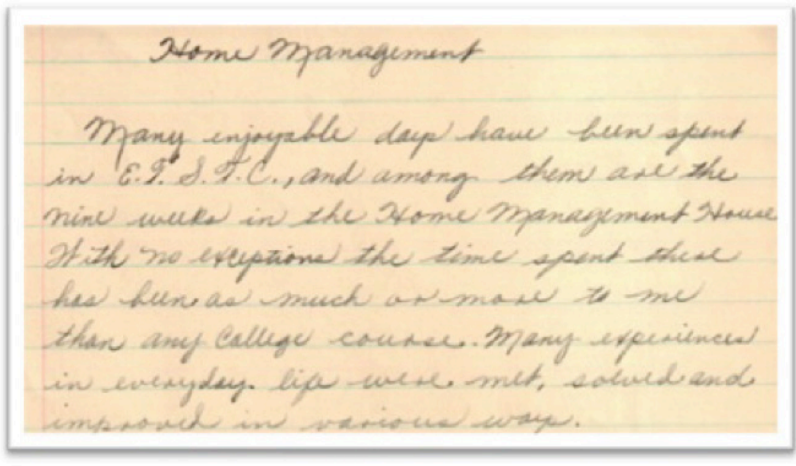


Fig. 3. Handwritten Exam Sample. Ruth. Student Essay. 1937. Home Economics Collection. Special Collections Gee Library (Box 4, Folder 9). Texas A&M University-Commerce, Commerce, TX.

Defining the Space

Not until the turn of the century and beyond did women begin to have more educational and professional opportunities thanks in part to women like Ellen Richards. As the first female graduate of MIT and the founder of the home economics field, Richards saw the elevation of the home as women's way in to academia and professional space. She sought to recast the space of the home and kitchen beyond the labor of housework and create a space of scientific advancement and important innovation. Richards's work changed the language surrounding the domestic sphere (Stage, "Ellen Richards" 19). In 1911 she wrote, "Housekeeping has too often been drudgery, monotonous and wearisome, something to be endured. The merchant, the business man, the manufacturer, as well as the engineer, have been *stimulated* by the new problems of our time" (Richards 19). Richards encouraged women to seize the modernization of the home and become not just homemakers but engineers and scientists within the home.

Nan Johnson reminds her readers in *Gender and Rhetorical Space in American Life: 1866-1910* that until the years following the Civil War, the art of rhetoric was reserved for white men. She says:

Ministers learned to preach, lawyers learned to argue, politicians learned how to persuade the masses, and white, middle-class, young men acquired the rhetorical habits of speech and writing that marked their status as those who would surely make everything happen, and women learned little to nothing about any of it. (3)

Therefore, the establishment of home economics education allowed women to create a space where they could earn the same sort of specialized rhetorical authority as their male counterparts. Homemakers learned how to manage an efficient home.

In "On Gender and Rhetorical Space," Roxanne Mountford defines rhetorical space as a literal space – not just a metaphorical one. She claims:

'Rhetorical space' can be made a more useful concept for rhetoricians, however, if we apply it more narrowly to the effect of physical spaces on communicative event. I am thinking here of rooms, lecterns, auditoriums, platforms, confession booths...classrooms, all of which are interpreted by participants through social expectations, but which also have material dimensions that affect what we do there. (42)

The home and especially the kitchen have long been considered a part of the woman's place and the domestic sphere. However, the home management house space, as part of a collegiate home economics program, was something more. The house at East Texas State created a physical space where women

established authority and confidence in managing a home. Not only were women able to manage the daily functions of the home, but also they were given the opportunity to manage people since the residents held particular roles and fulfilled specific duties.

One student, Elaine, defines home management “as the planning, and the guiding or directing of the use of human and material resources” (5). Gertie expresses this sentiment even more plainly in her exam when she writes, “You learn to give orders and to take them” (1). A course in home management set in a classroom would not provide such opportunities because the teacher would still hold the authority. In a traditional classroom space, students would passively receive instruction from the professor rather than actually engage in the theories and employ the skills as they could within the walls of an actual home. Without the physical space of the home, students would not have a place to put their skills into practice on a daily basis. Gwen realizes the value in living in the home management house when she writes, “In the Home Management House we put what we have learned to a practical application, so it will not just be something learned in a book, but something which may be used...we also acquire a feeling of self-confidence not otherwise gained” (1). Even though the house did not provide a pulpit or lectern where students specifically performed a “communicative event” as Mountford defines rhetorical space, only the home management house could provide a physical space for developing a new rhetorical agency as an authority on the home.

As home economics education programs expanded across the country, the previously private space of the home manifested into a new public physical space of the home management house where women learned to practice the sophisticated work of homemaking. More and more the “[h]ousehold economics put the husband in the wings as an invisible source of income and moved the wife to center stage with new roles as budget analyst, sanitary engineer, and dietician...” (McArthur 34). When the home economics students of East Texas State reflect on purchasing groceries, planning meals, and solving problems, they reveal that such proficiency was the goal of home management house residency. Certainly, Richards’s influence remained as home management houses were used as practical laboratory spaces and became a part of home economics education around the country. The development of home economics departments and home management houses, while often criticized for reinforcing gender stereotypes or limiting women to the domestic sphere, still intended to fulfill Richards’s original goal of elevating the work of the home and creating a space of specialized authority.

A careful examination of the rhetorical artifacts these Northeast Texas women left behind can help us to understand what the home management house was and who occupied that space, and why that space still matters to

the public memory of women's education – even though the residents' voices were ignored or forgotten for many years. In October of 2015, Jessica Enoch discussed the home as rhetorical space in her Feminism(s) and Rhetoric(s) conference presentation, "Home/Work: Feminist Historiographies for Today's Working Mother." In that talk, Enoch defined *spatial rhetorics* as:

...the multiple and multimodal ways through which spaces gain meaning. They are the varied material, imagistic, embodied, displayed, and discursive understandings of what a space is and what it should be. Spatial rhetorics account for the actions that do or should take place within a space, and they designate, through these various modes, the people who should occupy them.

When the home management house is imagined through Enoch's lens, we must consider the items in the home, the women who lived there, the expectations of the students, and the self-perception of its residents. The rhetorical artifacts left behind by the home management house residents at ET allow us to do just that.

The women who lived in the home management house in Commerce, Texas, are a part of a specific community. Since I can no longer interview these women who majored in home economics during the 1930s and 40s or observe their activity within a particular space, "[t]he best that archival historians can do in terms of dialogue," writes Kelly Ritter, "is a reading of written products left behind, products both public and private, never meant to be viewed by non-community members" (467). This process allows for "recording and reporting without the community's express permission, exposing not only artifacts but also the real human experiences hidden behind those artifacts" (Ritter 467). The home economics archival collection at Texas A&M University – Commerce contains both private documents – like the final exams – and public documents – like the department's own historical narrative and its faculty presentation booklet of 1944. Together these artifacts allow readers to re-imagine the home management house at East Texas State as an important rhetorical space for rural women during a specific moment in history.

Recovering the Local

Within the walls of ET's home management house, students asserted a new authority. Martha says that within the home management house location, "the girl is given the power or privilege of selecting menus, foods, preparation of foods, entertaining, directing her helpers in her assignment. She certainly shows the standards she sets in her work" (1). A classroom space would not provide such an empowering experience. Within the classroom, scheduling menus or budgeting for groceries would be hypothetical. Within

the house, students prepared for real meals that would be served to real residents and teachers. "Up until the time we moved to the Home Management House," Betty remembers, "our training had come from the classroom and laboratory, but we soon realized there was more to running a house than we knew, because now we had to prove ourselves" ("Presentation Booklet" 14). As Minnie simply states, "I have learned to do by doing" (3). Ultimately, Sue sums up the purpose of the house when she claims, "We should go beyond the organization and direction of household processes and think of the happiness and welfare of our family group. We always want to make the family environment happier, more refreshing, and satisfying to each member of the family group. Harmony is one of the essentials of a good home" (7). Therefore, living with one another in the house gave women perhaps their first opportunity to manage a household through practicing everything from budgeting the finances to arranging flowers.

Only the space within the walls of the house could provide the insight and experiences that these students describe by giving them a new sense of authority and community within the field of home economics. In the "Presentation Booklet," Katherine perfectly illustrates this newfound authority and community when she shares her personal experience as cook. She writes:

Each cook is responsible for one guest meal each time she is cook. If you will pardon the personal reference, I decided to cook a turkey dinner for twelve people and [Sandy] decided to join me as co-hostess. My mother said I couldn't do it and the day before, after picking "pin-feathers" all afternoon, I was ready to agree, but with the help of everyone in the house, we served the dinner with [Sandy] carving the turkey. ("Presentation Booklet" 10)

Undoubtedly, Katherine's turkey dinner accomplishment could have happened only in the home management house. The home management house created a rhetorical space that even her own home under the guidance of her mother would not provide. Katherine's reflection perfectly illustrates Enoch's definition of *spatial rhetorics*. Katherine reveals the kind of actions that took place in the space and confirms the type of person who should occupy that space which establishes how the space gains special meaning. Even though Katherine's mother did not believe Katherine was ready to entertain guests with such a big undertaking, the home management house created a safe space to experience risk in order to increase confidence and exercise new authority.

Many of the home economics students wanted to learn skills to use in their own homes as well as to use in their classrooms as they worked outside of the home as professional teachers and extension agents. Especially in

Northeast Texas where many of the students came from rural backgrounds and farm homes, the women hoped to establish careers and middle class homes for themselves. Over and over the students write about the value of cooperation and working together. Maggie says:

It was easy to work in the Home Management House because of the spirit there. This was also a learning experience, because we will be able to see how this feeling can be carried to the classroom. If we can create this spirit in the girls we work with we will be able to show them what cooperation can mean in any type of work they have to do. (1)

Not only did students learn to cooperate with one another, but also several share the importance of learning how to use new, electric appliances like a vacuum cleaner, a washing machine, or an iron – all items that would be considered markers of a modern middle class home (see fig. 4 and 5). By the 1930s and 1940s home economics education meant far more than teaching farm wives about sanitation and safe food preservation. It meant preparing for a career along with creating an efficient home, entertaining guests, and performing duties of the middle class home with poise and grace. The space within the walls of the home management house provided just this sort of location to perfect these skills.



Fig. 4. Student and Washing Machine Photo. Presentation Booklet. 18 Jan 1944. Home Economics Collection. Special Collections Gee Library (Box 4, Folder 4). Texas A&M University-Commerce, Commerce, TX.



Fig. 5. Student and Vacuum Cleaner Photo. Presentation Booklet. 18 Jan 1944. Home Economics Collection. Special Collections Gee Library (Box 4, Folder 4). Texas A&M University-Commerce, Commerce, TX.

In *Creating Consumers*, Carolyn Goldstein says, "Teaching women about their social responsibilities as consumers gradually emerged as the defining framework of home economics instruction in most college programs" (38). The frequent mention of budgeting and entertaining confirms this consumer curriculum at ET. "Early home economists recognized," Goldstein suggests, "that all American homes were not changing in lockstep with one another and that working-class families still made many of the goods at home that middle-class and elite women could afford to buy...early home economics educators adjusted their focus depending on the class of women they intended to instruct" (38). By the 1930s and 1940s home economics education for rural East Texas women included creating a consumer's home rather than a producer's home. Marilyn says, "I think most of the girls learned a great deal by purchasing groceries, because they hadn't done this too much previously" (4). Cora best illustrates this desired move from producer to consumer in her exam section entitled, "Old Home vs. the New Home." She writes:

The old home was the workshop. The new home is the sanctuary. Or at least that is what the new home should be in the heart of each member of the family. Physical and material influences are chiefly responsible for this changed feeling about the home. Very little labor is done in the home of today giving way to ease and enjoyment of living rather than drudgery and unattractiveness. The home of today

is a beautiful, well arranged place where each member of the family should spend his happiest hours. (4)

Without question, ET students like Marilyn and Cora were beginning to see themselves as smart consumers and modern homemakers who desired comfortable and attractive middle-class homes. The home management house space, beyond the traditional classroom space, helped students visualize themselves as taking charge of a modern middle class home.

Certainly, as illustrated by the “Home Management House Duties” list, students were expected to complete daily tasks like laundering the linens and mopping the kitchen. However, that list also includes polishing silver, setting tables, directing conversation, and arranging flowers – tasks potentially beyond the experiences of farm girls from East Texas. Jane verifies this assumption in her exam when she says, “Usually the girls who come into the home management house have not entertained to a great scale and from the duty of entertaining to doing the week’s laundry is taught” (2). N. Beth Bailey, author of *Meal Planning and Table Service* (a textbook listed on both Claire’s and Myrtle’s exams), assumes that, “The housewife in every home, no matter how simple that home may be, wishes to have the appointments of her table correct” (3). She goes on to say that, “This [text]book is intended for the home of that large number of women who have no maid, or at best, but one maid” (7). This statement suggests that home economics courses educated women – especially white women—in the expectations of a middle class home. Even homes without maids, the text claims, should practice customs of the finest modern households. On the mention of maids, as Gertie describes the duties of the housekeeper in the home management house, she writes in her exam, “[the role of housekeeper] gives one the opportunity to both give and receive orders...It gives the hostess a chance to learn how to give orders to servants...because [the hostess] must be able to give clear directions” (2). Again, this observation suggests that upon finishing school the women will serve as managers of a home or classroom where they must give directions to either servants or students, further reinforcing the authority that the home management space provides.

Beyond managing the daily chores of the home, the hostess must also be fluent in entertainment etiquette as evidenced by another passage in Bailey’s textbook: “The hostess is always ‘the head of the table.’ It is her duty to guide the conversation into safe channels and to be watchful of the comfort of her guests” (12). Indeed the women of the home management house were taught similar lessons as Jane claims learning “how to be a better conversationalist” was one of the most personally valuable experiences during her stay at the house (2). Polished behavior was expected whether there were guests in the home or not. Bailey reminds her readers, “In the ideal family life, table service,

table manners, and table conversation should be essentially the same, whether there is company or whether there is just the family group" (Bailey 13-14). Bailey's text goes on to describe these household practices in chapters with titles like, "The Art of Entertaining and Being Entertained," "The Rules of Table Service," "Principles of Menu Making," and "How to Serve Food Attractively" (5). Simply put, at first glance it may seem that the home economics students were simply learning how to complete household chores efficiently, but in fact they were learning how to exemplify a modern homemaker through trying on the persona of middle class consumer and professional educator. The experience built confidence in the students and offered them an opportunity to explore a new rhetorical agency as they wrote with assurance about the value of their experiences within the space of the home management house.

Questioning the Limits

While the students at ET express appreciation and enjoyment of their time in the home management house, it is hard to ignore the conclusion that such an educational space both liberated and limited women during this era. The pursuit of higher education in home economics provided women with professional opportunities, but those opportunities were limited to those spaces considered within the domestic sphere – the home and by extension the classroom. Many viewed the practice houses not as spaces that would afford professional opportunities but only as spaces for women to "play house" or "train[...] for marriage" (Elias 44). A dual discourse was certainly present. Home economics departments wanted their students to be able to perform household duties as well as participate in academic study and maintain personal interests. Megan J. Elias observes:

The ideal homemaker, then, was one who not only managed all household work well but also could work constructively with others and, perhaps most interestingly, make time for her own individual pursuits – her studies. The lessons that such experiences taught young women were strikingly at odds with traditional notions of married life. (47)

Essentially, home economics education did much to further women's educational and professional opportunities while simultaneously reinforcing traditional gender roles. While some will believe that home economics intentionally worked against women's advancement and equality, Elias contends that these early home economists "may simply have been unable to look at gender roles as alterable, much as their personal and professional lives challenged them to do so on a daily basis" (49). Undoubtedly, the women of ET believed

the space of the home management house afforded them opportunities that would not be available anywhere else.

Also, as mentioned previously, these rhetorical artifacts are recovered from a time before East Texas State was desegregated. The 1930s and 40s were a time when African Americans could work as domestics or groundskeepers at the college, but could not attend classes. Clearly, the experiences preserved in these archival documents are not a reflection of all women's experiences during this historical moment. The essays supply a relatively small sample of only a handful of white, rural women's educational experiences. Certainly the mention of servants in both the textbooks and student writings complicates my argument, and with further research could create a rich commentary on race in mid-twentieth century America. Race in East Texas during this era deserves much further attention and study than this particular article provides.

Even with this artifact recovery project's clear limitations, "the local matters" (Carter and Conrad 101). Within a presentation booklet dated January 18, 1944, the home management advisor at ET defends the home management house residence experience when she writes:

Home Economics in its growth has long since passed the cooking, sewing, and house cleaning stage and is now a job requiring study and the use of more knowledge than any other profession...The Home stands paramount in the American way of life. Home Economics is doing its share to keep it there by bringing knowledge of many sciences together for better living...Home management deals with the administering of a home wisely so that the members will be happy and can take a desirable place in the life of the community. It offers an opportunity for the development of human relationships, group work, growth in personality and ability and skill in the use of material resources...(2)

Undoubtedly, the home is considered a gendered space where women of the past were allowed managerial authority and expert status within the confines of the home or classroom. The home economics movement that began with Ellen Richards in 1899 climaxed just as the women of Northeast Texas quoted within this presentation were seeking higher education at East Texas State Teachers College. Rural women from places like Bonham, Greenville, Sulphur Springs, Honey Grove, and Winnsboro, who time after time write on their applications that they were "reared on a farm" and cite experience in "car[ing] for chickens," prove that the home management house in Commerce, Texas, created a physical rhetorical space where women asserted new authority and expertise in homemaking and forging careers as they moved from the farms of rural East Texas to the tables of middle class America.

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The Cross-Cultural Power of Yuri: Riyoko Ikeda's Queer Rhetorics of Place-Making in *The Rose of Versailles*

Kimberly D. Thompson

Abstract: *This article analyzes the first four episodes of the adapted Japanese animation of Riyoko Ikeda's The Rose of Versailles to illustrate the value of examining queer rhetorical practices of place-making in transnational texts. Set in the late eighteenth century, The Rose of Versailles provides viewers a glimpse of the French Revolution through the main character Lady Oscar, the gender-bending bodyguard and advisor of Marie Antoinette. By queering place and space, Ikeda develops an alternative narrative of eighteenth century France that illuminates queer possibilities of being.*

Keywords: *queer and feminist place and space, queer and feminist place-making, queer and feminist rhetorics, Japanese animation and manga, Riyoko Ikeda, The Rose of Versailles, French Revolution, Yuri texts, Shōjo texts, transnational texts.*

Riyoko Ikeda's manga *The Rose of Versailles* has, since its first publication in April 1972, captivated Eastern and Western audiences with its adventurous main character, Lady Oscar, a gender-bending (female to male) French guard who exudes masculinity. Set in the late eighteenth century, the manga tells the story of Lady Oscar, who, although born a woman, performs as a man, donning masculine clothing, engaging in fist and sword fights, participating in several romantic relationships and friendships, and dying at the storming of the Bastille fighting for her beliefs. Reflecting its popularity since its publication, *The Rose of Versailles* is currently 14th on the list of all-time best-selling shōjo manga, having sold a grand total of 15 million volumes worldwide (Napier 92 and "Learn French"). In addition, *The Rose of Versailles'* adaptation as a screenplay for the Takarazuka (an all-female Japanese acting troupe) was extremely successful. First performed in 1974, the adapted screenplay continues to be performed today with thousands of Japanese women loyally attending and watching the play. In 2011, the Takarazuka brought in revenue of 25.7 billion yen, thanks in part to the continuous performance of *The Rose*

of *Versailles* ("Takarazuka"). Finally, to celebrate Ikeda's prolific influence in shaping Japanese manga and animation, Right Stuff!, a US Japanese animation and manga publisher, released in 2013 the adapted animation of *The Rose of Versailles* for the first time in North America, and in 2016, Udon Entertainment, another US Japanese animation and manga publisher, published a press release on their website stating their intention in publishing an English version of the manga ("The Rose" and "New Title").

Although *The Rose of Versailles* is often identified in popular and scholarly sources as a shōjo manga, or a manga intended for a young, female audience, the manga can also be classified as a "Yuri" manga. Yuri (meaning "lily" in Japanese) texts—short stories, manga, animation, and poems—explore sexual and non-sexual relationships between women. Yuri texts such as *The Rose of Versailles* provide fantastical worlds for young readers to explore queer female subjectivities. With the advancement of various technologies, the circulation of Yuri texts has gone global. Readers and viewers can access Yuri texts on the internet and can read and view them on multiple devices, making these texts cross-cultural and transnational forces that shape both Eastern and Western perspectives of gender and sexuality.

As a result, feminist rhetoricians have much to gain in examining Yuri texts. A Yuri text, such as *The Rose of Versailles*, can be a site where feminist rhetoricians move beyond the "elite, white, male, European-based habits and measures" that serve as what Jacqueline Royster and Gesa Kirsch call the "boundaries of locally defined assumptions, values, and expectations regarding how rhetorical performance is constituted and valued" (112). Feminist scholars can push against these boundaries by illuminating the efforts of manga artists to challenge dominant ideologies of gender and sexuality and valuing their works by including them in feminist rhetorical canons.

Most importantly, valuing the rhetorical efforts of manga artists who explore gender and sexuality also validates and makes visible LGBTQ lives that use such works to socially and culturally survive. To provide but one example of the implications of examining Yuri rhetorical works in feminist rhetorical studies, I here discuss the first four episodes of the adapted animation of Ikeda's *The Rose of Versailles* as venues for queer rhetorical practices of place-making. To provide readers a better understanding of the theoretical perspectives that underpin my analysis of *The Rose of Versailles*, I first offer an interdisciplinary review of traditional and contemporary notions of place. At the end of the analysis, I consider the social and political possibilities of examining rhetorical texts like *The Rose of Versailles* in feminist rhetorical studies.

Conceptual and Theoretical Perspectives of Place

Aristotle's notion of place, which he examines in *Physics*, still shapes the way individuals think about the concept of place. Aristotle defines place as "the innermost motionless boundary of what contains." He then uses several examples, such as a vessel in water, to explain this definition:

Just, in fact, as the vessel is transportable place, so place is a non-portable vessel. So when what is within a thing which is moved, is moved and changes its place, as a boat on a river, what contains plays the part of a vessel rather than that of place. Place on the other hand is rather what is motionless: so it is rather the whole river that is place, because as a whole it is motionless. (Aristotle)

Many philosophers, theorists, and scientists have since challenged Aristotle's perspective of a motionless place. Today, many scholars think of place as being pliable, encompassing multiple trajectories, multiplicities, and interactions (Massey, *For Space*, 59). Yet, one only has to look at the most popular dictionaries, such as *Merriam-Webster*, *Cambridge*, and *Oxford*, to see that Aristotle's motionless place still informs common understandings of place as a static location or an inanimate container. *Merriam-Webster* defines "place" as a "specific area or region of the world" and/or "building, part of a building, or area that is used for shelter" and *Oxford* considers "place" to be a "particular position or point in space." The common, dictionary definitions of place shape the way larger publics think of place and (re)circulate these definitions in larger rhetorical arenas.

In her reconsideration of Aristotle's notion of place, however, Gayle Salamon suggests that place is closely connected to the relation of intelligible things: "Contrary to the hope that place will be sufficient to give things a solid anchor in existence, we find that place is reckoned only through relation. The place of things, and thus the 'thing' of place, is only found through other things" (134). An individual can only identify and recognize a place through its relation to other kinds of socially and materially intelligible things, for example, objects and subjects (bodies). Not all social and material things are intelligible to all or even most individuals, however. For example, bodies that blur or break regulatory norms of gender and sexuality are often not socially intelligible. To Salamon, these kinds of bodies cannot produce place because their lack of intelligibility prevents it (139). Bodies that are intelligible in a location can shape space because they expand into space and saturate space (Ahmed 11).

In contrast, bodies that are not intelligible in a place cannot take up space because they lack social, cultural, and political power to influence space and cannot be read in terms of the same social, cultural, and political power. Doreen Massey calls this connection between power and "space power"

geometry—the connective hierarchy of social groups across space-time (*Space, Place, and Gender*, 149). Some social groups, because of their social, political, and cultural positions, have power to change space and time, whereas other social groups are “effectively imprisoned by it” (Massey, *Space, Place, and Gender*, 149). Since there is a privileging of normative sexualities and genders in the West, bodies that break these norms do not have social power to make, shape, and change spaces. As a result, individuals, especially queer individuals, might find that they cannot orientate (extend, take up, and saturate space) in a place to be intelligible to others. Without locations where they can extend into various kinds of spaces, queer beings become cultural, social, material, and geographical castaways, drifting in and out of places where they are unrecognizable and invisible to the things in those locations.

Places can also prevent the extension or visibility of certain bodies and lives because those places cannot be separated from the histories that have shaped them. Ahmed illustrates this connection between histories and places through an analysis of “home” as a place: “homes are effects of the histories of arrival” (9). An individual arriving to a home makes the home a place by extending and saturating the space. The repeated (and possibly different) histories of coming home also shape the place of “home.” Places remember, as Halberstam notes, in that a place not only contains memories but is the product of those memories (*The Queer Art of Failure*, 65). Additionally, memories further reinforce the making of a place by repetitive performances in a place, for example, the culinary practices in a kitchen (Halberstam, *The Queer Art of Failure*, 65). Such performances become a way of producing a history about a place. In other words, knowingly or unknowingly, bodies, through certain kinds of repeated performances in a place, produce a history of that place.

The histories produced in certain places can also determine the kinds of things bodies can do (take up space or not take up space) in a place. Especially in the West, history, according to Michel Foucault, categorizes, arranges, and distributes knowledge to make sense of things, and through this epistemology, “beings emerge into their precarious, glittering existence,” or bodies can very well not emerge at all (219). As Foucault has explored in many of his texts, from the confessional to the panopticon, Western civilization desires to put things (objects and subjects) in order and in their place. The arrangement of certain things can make some things more transparent or apparent than others. In fact, the arrangement of knowledges, bodies, and objects can be used to alienate, isolate, and discriminate against various different kinds of bodies. To Ralph Cintrón, one of the main purposes of Western order and arrangement is to separate the West from non-Western cultures:

Unconsciousness eventually becomes associated with those cultures that do not leave a record of themselves, while consciousness becomes associated with high culture, particularly Western civilization and its ability to create a historical record by which the present becomes consciously aware of its relationship to the past. (33)

While Cintrón discusses recording and documenting from a larger systematic perspective (West vs. Other), the West also has no qualms in othering its own inhabitants: queers, transgender people, intersex people, women, people of color, people with disabilities, sick people, and the elderly. One only has to look at the privileging of certain kinds of histories and the lack of different kinds of histories regarding various kinds of communities in the West.

Not all hope is lost though for unintelligible beings. Just as much as there are devices to keep beings in order and in place, there are also devices that produce other kinds of orders and places. Such devices, for example, shape and make queer orientations. Ahmed defines and explains the implications of queer orientations:

Queer orientations are those that put within reach bodies that have been made unreachable by the lines of conventional genealogy. Queer orientations might be those that don't line up, which by seeing the world "slantwise" allow other objects to come into view. (107)

In the interest of supporting such orientations, queer rhetorical devices can be employed to help individuals move in the world slantwise. To produce queer orientations and make queer space, queer individuals engage in rhetorical practices of queer place-making. These are, according to Halberstam, "place-making practices within postmodernism in which queer people engage" to oppose dominant ideologies of heterosexuality, family, and reproduction (*In A Queer Place*, 1, 6). Queer place-making practices come in a variety of forms, but all of them rely upon the participation of members in queer counterpublics. As Michael Warner notes, a queer counterpublic not only "represents the interests" of its queer members but also produces "new worlds of culture and social relations in which gender and sexuality can be lived" (57). One way to create alternative social worlds and relations is through the production and circulation of different kinds of bodily practices, discursive practices, and visual practices. Ikeda's *Rose of Versailles* provides an excellent example of this kind of production and circulation.

Queer Places and Spaces in Japan

A lack of discursive and visual queer spaces for Japanese females to explore gender and sexuality was, in fact, the catalyst that led to not only Ikeda's publication of *The Rose of Versailles* but the publication of other manga (mostly

written and illustrated by women) in the 1970s. While some mediums and writers during the Meiji era (1868-1912) and Taisho era (1912-1926) provided alternative spaces for women to explore sexuality, many of these spaces and mediums disappeared because of changing social and political ideologies that shaped various public spheres during the early period of the Showa era (1926-1989). In the Showa era, Japan shifted across the political spectrum, moving from a democratic nation to a totalitarian nation, where the government censored any communicative texts, especially women's journals and magazines of gender and sexuality, that challenged the political system explicitly or implicitly (Robertson, "The Politics," 426). Additionally, the government further reinforced old policies (most produced before or during the Meiji period) and produced new policies that limited and constricted economic, political, and social possibilities for Japanese women. Even though the majority of these policies have since been repealed or are not enforced in Japan's current political system, many still shape the economic, political, and social realities for Japanese women (see, for example, Wantanabe's discussion of the Japanese notion of motherhood). As a consequence of these policies, male artists dominated the manga industry up until the 1970s, with most of them producing manga for male (shōnen) and female (shōjo) audiences (Ito 471). This climate did not mean that women were completely absent from the production of manga, however. In the 1960s, readers began to read manga written and illustrated by Japanese women (Ito 470). Aimed towards a shōjo audience, female manga artists explored girls growing up under harsh circumstances, fighting challenges, and obtaining happiness (Toku 23). Yet in spite of the manga being "for women, by women, and about women," the narratives in such manga did not (re)explore alternative genders and sexualities like its predecessors in the Meiji and Taisho era (Ogi 784). As a result of the marginalizing social context before the 1970s, feminist and queer audiences, manga artists, and illustrators desired texts and sites that provided feminist and queer social spaces to explore current and past social, political, and historical issues. Manga, such as Ikeda's *The Rose of Versailles*, became rhetorical arenas for feminist and queer individuals to challenge and contest past and present social and political power structures.

The Rose of Versailles: Synopsis

The Rose of Versailles creates queer rhetorical places that challenge traditional histories of the French Revolution and that enable queer viewers to reorient and extend their bodies into fantastical visual spaces of eighteenth-century France. Before exploring some of the specific strategies Ikeda uses to accomplish this, a brief summary of *The Rose of Versailles* is in order. The text challenges many social, political, and historical concerns through the

main character Lady Oscar during a time of upheaval in eighteenth century France. In 1755, Oscar François de Jarjayes, anatomically a woman, is born into a royal military family. Her father, Count Jarjayes, decides to raise Oscar as a man to continue the military lineage. At 14 years old, Lady Oscar becomes Commander of the Royal Guard, an esteemed position in which she becomes Marie Antoinette's bodyguard. Her anatomical sex is no secret to the royal family and courtiers. In many ways Oscar's androgyny reflects the extravagance and the lavishness of the court. Female and male courtiers erotically view her as an exotic being. Oscar explores many types of relationships with women and men, but she ultimately falls in love with her companion since childhood, André Grandier. As she becomes more acquainted with the royal family, Oscar begins to question the growing excess and decadence of the royal court, which later leads her to forsake the royal family. She and her men join the revolutionaries, taking part in the storming of the Bastille where she dies.

Queer Place-Making in the Palace of Versailles

The first (and most dominant) place where queer-place making activities take place is at the Palace of Versailles. While the characters move among several different settings in the animation, they often congregate at the Palace of Versailles. Originally built during the seventeenth century by King Louis XIV and later extended by subsequent monarchs, the Palace of



Fig. 1 Hallway in the Palace of Versailles (Ikeda)

Versailles was the political center for the royal family and courtiers. The adapted animation of *The Rose of Versailles* realistically portrays the palace's massive halls, ballrooms, bedrooms, and expansive gardens (Fig. 1). Even the animation illustrates the opulent furniture and décor of the time period with highly detailed realism. In deploying this kind of detail, Ikeda follows a trend among manga artists, who often pay particular attention to small details, creating meticulous and realistic environments (McCloud 216).

While the Palace of Versailles is realistically depicted in all of its splendor and glory, the characters (or bodies) within the palace appear in fantastical

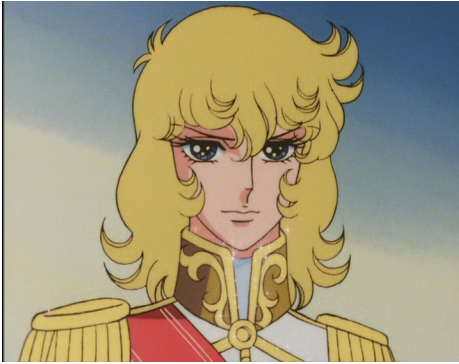


Fig. 2 Young Lady Oscar (Ikeda)

forms, thus producing a queer orientation. Ikeda contrasts the realism of the Palace of Versailles with fantastical shōjo bodies. Although most Western and Eastern audiences think of the term shōjo as one that categorizes and defines a particular genre, the term shōjo originally meant something entirely different: a “not-quite-female” female (Robertson, “The Politics,” 426). Originating during the Meiji pe-

riod, the term shaped the discursive and visual practices of early manga artists and illustrators in depicting the female body. Hiromi Dollase speculates on the meaning of this illustrative tradition:

Big and unrealistic eyes look only at dreams. A slim body is not made for reproduction. A small mouth is not for consuming food. The girl's bodies do not need to have realistic functions: Shōjo are created only to be admired and gazed at by girls. They are so unrealistic that their nationality is blurred; they exist just as Shōjo. (733)

Lady Oscar and Marie Antoinette's bodies follow the shōjo bodily tradition of being “not quite” female. Both are slender, lacking hips, breasts, and voluptuous lips, and have massive and starry eyes (Fig. 2). In fact, at times, Lady Oscar appears gaunt which only further accentuates her androgyny and masculinity (Fig. 3). Drawing on Lingis, Deleuze, and Foucault, theorists who explore the body as inscriptive surface, Elizabeth Grosz points out that the incisions or markings of the body do not create a map of the body; instead, the body itself becomes the map (139). What coordinates, in thinking of Aristotle's perspective of place, does a bodily map tell its geographers or travelers? A bodily map, according to Grosz, indicates a “subject's social, sexual, familial,



Fig. 3 Lady Oscar's Androgynous Body (Ikeda)

marital, economic position or identity within a social hierarchy" (140). In other words, physical and non-physical markings on bodies can be *read*. Markings (or perhaps the lack of markings) tell individuals who are gazing at these bodies how to engage and interact not only with marked bodies but also how to interact and engage in the space around those marked bodies. Grosz uses the example of tattoos to explain how this reading occurs. In certain cultural spaces, such as some Polynesian cultures, tattoos can represent particular social positions and can not only tell the individuals who bear those tattoos to perform in certain ways but can also cue others to interact with those marked individuals in certain ways. In a similar way, the stylized, marked bodies of Lady Oscar and Marie Antoinette help viewers navigate towards, as Ahmed calls it, a "queer moment," where the "world no longer appears 'the right way up' (65). Lady Oscar and Marie Antoinette's bodies are not Western or Eastern. They are *shōjo*: the not-quite-female human being. They are queer. Their bodies become coordinates to help readers reach a queer moment and a queer place.

At the same time that viewers read the queer markings of Lady Oscar's body, they experience her performance of masculinity as an anatomical woman, a performance that further queers the Palace of Versailles. When entering the Palace of Versailles in episode three ("Sparks Fly at Versailles"), three female courtiers comment to each other that Oscar is "dashing," "stunning," "cold," and "irresistible." Tall, slender, muscular, and agile, the handsome, blonde-haired Oscar makes female courtiers swoon with ecstasy and eroticism. One even makes the comment: "If only she were a man..." (Fig. 4). Lady Oscar is quite the masculine fellow. Oscar walks, talks, and presents herself with an air of confidence and cockiness (at times Oscar's cockiness gets the best of her). In thinking about the theoretical implications of Butler's notion of performativity and its connection to place and space, Minelle Mahtani points out that "instead of thinking about space and place as pre-existing sites that occur," Butler's notion of performativity suggests that bodily performances can (re) produce and shape places and spaces (68). Bodies produce and shape places



Fig. 4 Female courtiers gazing upon Lady Oscar (Ikeda)

only she were a man... I'd never leave her alone!" (Fig. 4). Lady Oscar is quite the masculine fellow. Oscar walks, talks, and presents herself with an air of confidence and cockiness (at times Oscar's cockiness gets the best of her). In thinking about the theoretical implications of Butler's notion of performativity and its connection to place and space, Minelle Mahtani points out that "instead of thinking about space and place as pre-existing sites that occur," Butler's notion of performativity suggests that bodily performances can (re) produce and shape places and spaces (68). Bodies produce and shape places

and spaces not only through their shapes and sizes but also through their performances and practices (McDowell 34). As Lady Oscar performs masculinity within the palace, she disrupts the realistic illustration of the palace, thus producing a queer place that allows queer viewers a way to extend into space.

Oscar's performance also engages another queer place-making rhetorical practice: the production of gender dysphoria—a disruptive mode of traveling to a queer place as a result of the body and the mind not aligning to one particular gender. Although Salamon explores gender dysphoria when thinking through the lived experiences of trans individuals, Salamon's notion of gender dysphoria is useful when unpacking the ways in which Oscar's performance shapes the (dis)orientations of viewers. She defines "gender dysphoria" as a sense of identity that brings forth feelings of alienness and otherness, feelings that shape certain kinds of trajectories (Salamon 93). A trajectory can be defined as a path an object (or subject) takes when moving, physically and mentally, through space and time. Trajectories, or lines, according to Ahmed, can "function as forms of 'alignment,' or as ways of being in line with others" (15). As such, trajectories and lines can produce pressure upon individuals to follow certain lines over other lines (Ahmed 17). Although there are many different kinds of lines and trajectories, a line or trajectory that everyone feels, perhaps some more than others, is a line of "straightness" (Ahmed 16). Ahmed notes that lines and trajectories, for example, a line of straightness, emerge or come into view through the repeated performances of individuals who have followed those trajectories before:

Lines are both created by being followed and are followed by being created. The lines that direct us, as lines of thought as well as lines of motion, are in this way performative: they depend on the repetition of norms and conventions, of routes and paths taken, but they are also created as an effect of this repetition. (16)

To put it in the words of Butler, "one does not 'do' one's gender alone" (*Undoing Gender*, 1). The previous passengers of the line of which one is on shapes the gender, or genders, and sexuality, or sexualities, one performs and practices in one's life. Oscar's repetitive masculine acts and gestures, "a stylized repetition of acts," in juxtaposition with Oscar's contrasting anatomical body brings into view a line or trajectory of gender disorientation, a path that has emerged through the repetition of other real life or fantastical figures (Butler, *Gender Trouble*, 191). If viewers continue to follow Oscar by continuing to watch the animation, they are pressured into following the path that Oscar lays out for them. Viewers, therefore, may begin to experience gender dysphoria that could be liberating and exciting for some viewers and distressing and upsetting for other viewers. Oscar provides a trajectory (or passage) for audiences

among genders that, according to Butler, are “not reducible to the normative insistence on one or two” (*Undoing Gender*, 43). Oscar brings into view a trajectory to a queer place.

The animation of *The Rose of Versailles* also uses variations in lighting—lightness and darkness—to create queer locations within spaces in *The Rose of Versailles* but most especially at, around, and inside the Palace of Versailles.



Fig. 5 Sparkling Lights on Ceiling of Palace (Ikeda)

Dazzling and sparkling lights surround certain objects and beings, for example, flowers, chandeliers, and fountains (Fig. 5). These sparkling lights also surround certain characters such as Oscar and Marie Antoinette when they enter certain scenes or feel certain emotions. In contrast, antagonists, such as Madame du Barry, mistress of Louis XV, and

Duke Orleans, the cousin of Louis XVI, are surrounded by ominous and dark shadows and magical and ethereal lightening when angered by their failed attempts to take the throne. While the dazzling and sparkling displays may seem hyper-fantastical and excessive (a person does not physically sparkle or dazzle when entering a room although a person may in a figurative sense), it is precisely this fantastical excess that allows audiences of the animation to imagine different queer places, producing queer spaces, beings, and becomings. Butler states that fantasy is “part of the articulation of the possible; it moves us beyond what is merely actual” and “into a realm of possibility, the not yet actualized or the not actualizable” (*Undoing Gender*, 28). Fantasy, therefore, is a location of possibilities of becomings and beings: a location, Ahmed notes, of subjectivity itself (35-36). The dazzling displays (because they are fantastical) at the Palace of the Versailles suggest possibilities of being and becoming to viewers in ways that make many different kinds of subjectivities available. According to Halberstam, “what has made queerness compelling as a form of self-description in the past decade or so has to do with the way it has the potential to open up new life narratives and alternative relations to time and space” (*In a Queer Time*, 1-2). Ikeda’s queer French Revolution opens up new narratives about eighteenth century France and opens up alternative spaces for audience members to explore their queer desires and queer possibilities.

Queer Place-Making in the Family Home

In contrast to the place and space of the Palace of Versailles, the family home, the second most prominent place in the animation, violently confines and constricts bodies, most particularly Lady Oscar. Oscar illustrates the experiences of queer bodies tenuously navigating in a heteronormative world that can be discriminatory, marginalizing, and violent. A home is often thought of as a place of comfort. Ahmed notes that the term “comfort” often suggests “well-being and satisfaction, but it also suggests an ease and easiness” (425). Therefore, to be comfortable means that one is so at ease in one’s environment that it is difficult to differentiate between where one’s body ends and the rest of the world begins (Ahmed 425). Home is considered to be one of those places where one becomes one with the space. One can think of normative genders and sexualities, too, as comfortable places to reside in. Heteronormativity is a comfortable place where one feels the warmth and love of a world “one has already taken in,” and many benefit from this warmth and love by not feeling alienated or displaced (Ahmed 425). Queer lives, however, are quite the opposite. Queers feel discomfort: “one’s body feels out of place, awkward, and unsettled,” constricted, and restricted (Ahmed 425). If one feels out of place and constricted, one cannot extend in space—making space one’s own. Domestic trauma and violence because of one’s queer feelings and desires in a home constrict space to the extent that one cannot make that place one’s home. In short, a family home for a queer individual is sometimes not livable at all.

Lady Oscar’s home attests to such discomfort and constriction. Her father Count Jarjayes physically and verbally abuses her due to his own fear of losing social standing with the king and the nobility. Although Count Jarjayes treats Oscar like a son and even calls her his son, especially outside the home, he still views her as woman, a second-class citizen at best, who must respect and abide by the will of the patriarch. Ikeda introduces viewers to the oppressive atmosphere and discriminatory practices in the home in the first episode, “Oscar! The Destiny of the Rose,” when Oscar,



Fig. 6 Count Jarjayes pushing Oscar down a flight of stairs (Ikeda)

introduces viewers to the oppressive atmosphere and discriminatory practices in the home in the first episode, “Oscar! The Destiny of the Rose,” when Oscar,

at the age of 14, refuses to compete for the Commander of the Royal Guard position, the official position of being Marie Antoinette's bodyguard and advisor. Young Lady Oscar declares to her father, "I do not wish to babysit a girl [Marie Antoinette]." There are three reasons why Lady Oscar does not want to be Marie Antoinette's bodyguard and advisor: 1) Already at the age of 14, Lady Oscar is becoming resistant to political authority; 2) She is a young adolescent, who, like most adolescents, would rather spend her day enjoying the company

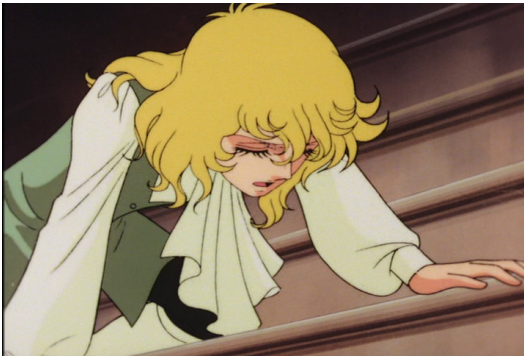


Fig. 7 Lady Oscar catching breath after fall (Ikeda)

of friends, such as spending time with her best friend and servant André; and 3) She, reminiscent of *shōjo*, does not perceive herself as male or female at this point in her life. In response to Oscar's declaration, Count Jarjayes grabs Oscar and yells at her, "Don't be a fool! Cool your head!" (Fig. 6). He then pushes Lady Oscar down a large and long flight of stairs. Although visibly shaken, Oscar rises after her fall and says to her father, "If you'll excuse me." She then removes herself from the family home.

Oscar rhetorically symbolizes the trauma and violence that many queer individuals endure physically, emotionally, and sexually, especially when the trauma and violence come from family in familial places. In many cases, domestic abuse from family members is often disguised as discipline in the form of corporal punishment (Fig. 7). Yet, queers know that corporal punishment in familial places often stems from the failure of not doing one's gender or sexuality right (Butler, *Gender Trouble*, 96). The purpose of using physical punishment, according to Grosz, is to (re)produce and (re)inforce memory: "Civilization instills its basic requirements only by branding law on bodies through a mnemonics of pain, a memory fashioned out of the suffering and pain of the body" (131). Physical punishment not only produces physical pain but also psychic pain via memory. Additionally, the body (physical markings as a result of punishment) constantly reminds the person of the psychic inscription, the memory of enduring the physical punishment. Systematically, the memory then has the potential to inform not only the person who has been punished but also individuals who engage or interact with the punished individual. Punished (or inscribed) bodies produce, reinforce, and circulate

knowledge(s) (Grosz 136). Although cultural, social, and political perspectives have certainly evolved and changed since Ikeda's *The Rose of Versailles*, many adult queer individuals still remember trauma and violence as children and teenagers in domestic places, mostly because such punishment and pain, as Grosz explains, can never be forgotten. There cannot only be physical tracings on the body but also psychic tracings on the body. Oscar's violent experiences remind viewers of their own possible memories connected to violence in domestic spheres because of their queer feelings. These memories also connect Oscar to such viewers because they *read* the physical and psychic tracings on Oscar's body, further providing a link (through Oscar) to travel slantwise.

Ikeda's exploration of violence in the home is also important because, as Ann Cvetkovich notes, trauma that happens in domestic or private spheres is often invisible to those outside of those spheres (3). For viewers of the animation who have also experienced trauma within domestic locations, Oscar's violent experiences make traumatic, violent memories and experiences transparent, which can finally bring LGBTQ viewers validation of their own traumatic pasts in domestic places. Oscar desires to be an intelligible being outside the traditional notions of gender and sexuality and is willing to endure violence and trauma for visibility not only for herself but also for the people that surround her, including readers and viewers. Ikeda, therefore, incorporates violence in the animation to help her queer viewers find validation of their own experiences and let them know that they are not alone.

Queer Place-Making in Queer Spaces

In addition to specific locations, such as the Palace and the home, Ikeda



Fig. 8 Globe of Europe on fire (Ikeda)

also produces queer spaces to encourage queer place-making activities. A European map on fire is an example of such a space (Fig. 8). In episodes one ("Oscar! The Destiny of the Rose") and four ("Roses, Wine, and the Conspiracy..."), viewers watch as a globe, which turns into a larger map of Europe, and another regional map of France, Austria, and Switzerland, are engulfed in flames. These images challenge dominant, cis-gendered

are engulfed in flames. These images challenge dominant, cis-gendered

narratives of the French Revolution by representing a map—a manifestation of dominant place-making activities—on fire. Cintrón suggests that “a map is an abstraction or representation, a kind of text” (29). He further explains that maps are a certain type of “optical knowledge that comes into being after real space overwhelms the eye” (29). Cintrón connects maps and histories as being a discourse of measurement, an attempt of “ordering, and understanding, a fixing of protean and complex conditions” (42). However, like any other type of text, a map can be “both a lie” and an “important revelation” (29). Kress and Van Leeuwen’s articulation of maps further clarifies Cintrón’s claim. Maps are often interpreted through an “objective attitude,” but depending upon the angle of any given map, the map can be read or interpreted much differently (Kress and Van Leeuwen 149). A frontal angle of a map, such as the maps in *The Rose of Versailles*, actually elicit “maximum involvement” and action (Kress and Van Leeuwen 149).

What kind of involvement and action? The fire in the foreground provides a possible answer

(Fig. 9). Fire, or the color red, as a signifier in Japan and in the West, often denotes passion, anger, spirit, intensity, vigor, renewal, energy, and power. With this understanding in mind, the fire, coupled with the frontal angle maps, challenges or resists the current discourse of measurement of the French Revolution: the current historical record, which

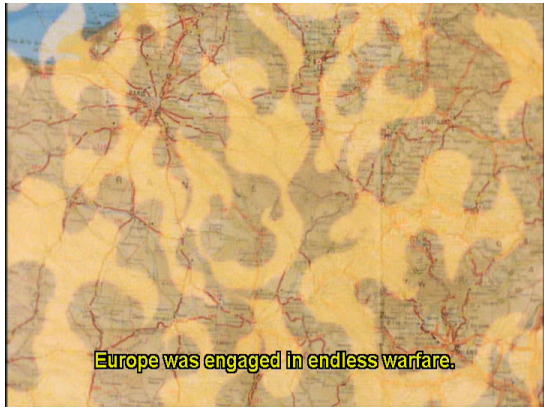


Fig. 9 Map of Europe on Fire (Ikeda)

fails at documenting and archiving the emotional experiences and lives of the individuals of the French Revolution, individuals such as queer women like Lady Oscar. Because the map asks audiences to become involved and take action, it compels audiences to take part in changing the larger narrative of the French Revolution by creating a queer counternarrative.

Conclusion

Because of Ikeda and her fans’ efforts, *The Rose of Versailles* became a pivotal manga that fostered queer rhetorical place-making practices in the East and now in the West. Royster and Kirsch might suggest that such practices

unite “women not just across sociopolitical and cultural contexts, settings, and communities” but also “across generations, across time,” and, most importantly for my purposes, “across space” (Royster and Kirsch 101). Today, female manga artists, such as Shimura Takako and Milk Morinaga, are passing down these queer rhetorical place-making practices with intense examination of queer female experiences. In Takako’s *Sweet Blue Flowers* and *Wandering Son*, readers and viewers explore coming out of the closet, staying in the closet, passing in modern Japanese settings, physical and psychic trauma (such as incest), the feelings related to such trauma (such as shame), and gender dysphoria. In *Kisses, Sighs, and Cherry Blossoms*, Morinaga explores the affective consequences (good or bad) of queer practices and desires, such as becoming aware of one’s queer feelings for the first time, engaging in queer practices for the first time, and having to hide one’s queer feelings and desires from family members, friends, and crushes. Because both Takako’s and Morinaga’s works explore middle and high school individuals understanding and practicing queer feelings and desires, many of the settings take place in schools or school clubs, such as Literature and Drama clubs where main characters read Western Victorian novels or perform Western Victorian plays. The clubs provide spaces for queer place-making activities with Western texts, such as *Wuthering Heights*, becoming a vehicle to explore queer feelings and desires. Undoubtedly, works like Takako’s and Morinaga’s would not have been possible without pioneering predecessors such as Riyoko Ikeda.

Queer places and spaces are integral to the lives of queer individuals because, as Ahmed poignantly notes, it is queer desire that produces such places and spaces: queer desire is what “makes things happen” (106-107). If this is the case, there are certainly more stories, like *The Rose of Versailles*, that make things happen, and as rhetoricians, we should encourage these stories to make things happen not only for our own further understanding of feminist rhetorical practices in transnational texts, such as Yuri texts, but for a more pressing reason. Countless children, teenagers, and young adults suffer at the hands of people they love because of identifying as LGBTQ. In *Tendencies*, the late Eve Sedgwick makes note of this particular kind of trauma and violence:

I’d heard of many people who claim they’d as soon as their children were dead as gay. What it took me a long time to believe is that these people are saying no more than the truth. They even speak for others too delicate to use the cruel words. For there is all the evidence. (Sedgwick 2)

Although Sedgwick’s statement comes from a work published in 1993, her words, like the majority of her words, still ring true today. Many LGBTQ youth experience physical, sexual, and emotional harassment and abuse by

family members, friends, mentors, and lovers in public and personal places. For many of these young LGBTQ individuals, Japanese manga and animation has become a way for them not only to explore gender and sexuality but also to escape the violent and traumatic realities of their lives and to find validation of their identities through the characters and their stories.

Many LGBTQ scholars (who in some shape or form have also experienced harassment and abuse) have made promises to themselves or to family members, friends, and mentors to not only make LGBTQ lives visible but also to make LGBTQ lives livable. Sedgwick made such a promise:

I think many adults (and I am among them) are trying, in our work, to keep faith with vividly remembered promises made to ourselves in our childhood: promises to make invisible possibilities and desires visible; to make the tacit things explicit, to smuggle queer representation in where it must be smuggled and, with the relative freedom of adulthood, to challenge queer-eradicating impulses frontally where they are to be so challenged. (5)

Ikeda (and many other Yuri and Shōjo manga artists and illustrators) produces queer places, queer spaces, queer bodies, and queer stories to uphold promises and to honor memories; to make possibilities and desires visible for audiences; to smuggle queer representations to viewers who might need them to survive. We should answer Sedgwick's and Ikeda's calls, and uphold our promises to our past selves. We need to read and produce texts with a queer slant, sneaking in queer interpretations and representations when we can, in as many professional and personal spaces as we can. We need to help make stories, like Ikeda's texts, make things happen because the survival of our own past, present, and future queer selves and the survival of current and future queer youth depends upon it.

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Ethical Dilemmas and Digital Subcultures: Silencing Self-Starvers as Epistemic Violence

Kristen Gay

Abstract: *This article argues that two non-profit national eating disorder advocacy groups, the National Eating Disorder Association (NEDA) and the National Association of Anorexia Nervosa and Associated Disorders (ANAD), play an integral role in censoring pro-anorexia (pro-ana) subculture on social media platforms. This article adds to the ongoing debate surrounding the censorship of pro-ana discourse by interrogating the erasure of digital forums due to fears that eating disorders are communicable through narratives written predominately by young women. In response to these ostensibly infectious narratives, the advocacy groups institute guidelines for crafting a singular recovery narrative that might be “useful” for others, eschewing much of the research pertaining to eating disorder treatment and recovery and the lived experiences of self-starving women. As I will demonstrate, viewing this erasure through the lens of epistemic violence reveals that a social discomfort with pro-ana content may speak to a general unwillingness to confront structural violence that influences some women to engage in self-starvation.*

Keywords: *epistemic violence, eating disorders, recovery, illness narratives, rhetoric*

For many, the moniker pro-anorexia (pro-ana) is perversely ironic: how can someone be for anorexia? What are the people who write in such spaces for, exactly? The promotion of eating disorders? The sharing of stories in a supportive space? In part due to its discomfiting tone, the term, adopted by female self-starvers¹ who write about their experiences in online forums, has been the locus of much dissension in recent years, and social media websites have particularly struggled to address the potential threats such narratives may pose. Pro-ana websites have proliferated since the early 2000s, and in 2012, Lewis and Arbuthnott found that more than 13,245,000 Google searches

1 I primarily refer to self-starvers as women in this article because, according to the Office on Women's Health, 85-95 percent of anorexics are female (“Anorexia Nervosa Fact Sheet” n.p.). Also, I adopt the term self-starver rather than anorexic to avoid labeling those who grapple with eating disorders and to emphasize their agency.

for pro-eating disorder websites are conducted annually (202). The surge of pro-ana narratives and thinspirational images (thin-inspiration) in online forums provoked many to study what was happening in these spaces, and what the effects were on viewers.

Pro-ana communities are often considered dangerous because they offer support for disordered eating behaviors, prevent recovery, discourage users from seeking help, and function as a type of Online Negative Enabling Support Group (Codie R. Rouleau and Kristin M. von Ranson 526; Stephen M. Haas, Meghan E. Irr, Nancy A. Jennings, and Lisa M. Wagner 51). According to Rouleau and von Ranson, these websites are often shut down because of concerns surrounding the “alluring quality of pro-ED websites to young girls and the potentially deadly effects of promoting self-starvation to this vulnerable population” (526). In 2010, Scarlett Jett, David J. LaPorte, and Jill Wanchisn found a correlation between viewership of a pro-ED website and significantly reduced caloric intake for participants following exposure (413). Similarly, Jeannine Gailey explains that she had to limit her research on pro-ana websites, and seek help from colleagues and friends, because the content negatively affected her eating behaviors (97). In part due to such findings, researchers often refer to the effects that pro-ana websites might have on those who are experimenting with disordered eating behaviors as “contagion-like” and “exceptionally deviant and destructive” because it seems that pro-ana content itself can trigger eating disorders (Stephen P. Lewis and Alexis E. Arbuthnott 201, Krista Whitehead 621, Jessica Reaves n.p.). This metaphor of contagion is especially provocative, as many fear that anorexia might be transmissible—not through face-to-face contact or airborne germs, but through infection with a pro-ana narrative.

Kelsey Osgood’s *How to Disappear Completely* reifies this belief by explicitly labeling the women who compose pro-ana narratives in any forum (online or in print) irresponsible. She recalls that even materials intended for anorexia treatment or awareness became, for her, a how-to manual. She warns against the sharing of self-starving experiences, which she finds inherently dangerous because readers might “catch” an eating disorder by reading about it: “[a]norexia,” she writes, “is contagious . . . It is a behavior that can be learned through stories . . . [It is] communicable, like herpes, mumps, AIDS, or the flu” (26-7). While Osgood’s own experiences speak to the danger that pro-ana narratives can and do pose for those vulnerable to such content, her account also renders any narrativizing about eating disorders potentially unethical, a problem that needs further investigation.

Risk-of-transmission frames have led to the erasure of pro-ana narratives on the blog hosting platform Tumblr and on two photo sharing services, Instagram and Pinterest. These three websites have in fact authored policies

that threaten to erase self-harm content and redirect users who search for pro-ana discussions to professional organizations such as the National Association of Anorexia Nervosa and Associated Disorders (ANAD) and the National Eating Disorder Association (NEDA). More specifically, in 2012, Tumblr changed its policies to ban any content that might encourage users to “embrace anorexia, bulimia, or other eating disorders; or commit suicide rather than, e.g., seeking counseling or treatment” (“Community Guidelines”). In an attempt to be responsible about its hosted content, Tumblr took a public stand against pro-ana (Pinterest and Instagram quickly followed suite), threatening to delete any accounts that engaged in positive discussions of eating disorders. While of course such websites must have guidelines for what kinds of content are acceptable, I want to interrogate their response of erasure to what are oftentimes complex and multi-faceted narratives about eating disorder experiences.

This article attempts to theorize a discomfort with erasing female voices because they are considered “dangerous.” While I understand the need to protect minors and vulnerable viewers from potentially dangerous ideas, I also wonder about the implications of censoring the narratives of women in digital spaces—and what other stories might be banned using rubrics of “contagion” and “danger.” Furthermore, the metaphor of pro-ana “infection” that conceptualizes eating disorders as diseases that may be “caught” immediately obscures the complexity of these illnesses, which may stem from many causes and develop over long periods of time. I am also concerned with the way the infection metaphor potentially discredits the women who write (about) themselves and their experiences. Debra Ferreday argues that pro-ana forums are shared subversive spaces: “Pro-ana represents an attempt to facilitate communication between people with eating disorders and, in doing so, implicitly aims to subvert the medical model of anorexia, whose emphasis on recovery tends to isolate individual sufferers” (284). Ferreday remains committed to seeing pro-ana community members as just that—members of a community wherein they can share experiences outside of medicine’s purview. Is it so strange that the self-starver’s attempt to reclaim control of her body through an eating disorder might also drive her to reclaim control of a forum for speaking about it? She adds that while many pro-ana sites do in fact “contain medical advice together with links that refer anorexics who feel ready to seek recovery to relevant sources of information” they also “provide a forum for young women who do not feel able to take such a step to discuss their lives as anorexics” (290). For Ferreday, “It could be argued that this also constitutes support,” albeit the kind of support that allows for many different recovery trajectories (290).

Similarly, some feminist scholars have argued that pro-ana writers should not be punished (with erasure) for merely reproducing dangerous messages.

Although Gailey experienced personal difficulty while researching pro-ana websites, she urges researchers to blame “the cultural messages that we are inundated with daily” instead of self-starvers and their websites for the proliferation of eating disorders (107). This is an important point for a feminist approach to understanding self-starving women, since I suggest that self-starvers are oftentimes maintaining (and exaggerating) cultural scripts about female bodies² they have learned from society at large rather than generating dangerous ideologies themselves. And, generally, pro-ana writing is less focused on converting others to anorexia than on attempting to gain control over one’s otherwise chaotic life. In fact, feelings of inadequacy, needs for nurturance, and fear/mistrust of people tend to motivate eating disorders, not a desire to convert others (Michele Siegel, Judith Brishman, and Margot Weinschel n.p.). Those at high risk for eating disorders are also often victims of sexual abuse, domestic violence, or sufferers of PTSD, which further complicates the idea that such pro-ana writers are dangerous (“Trauma and Eating Disorders” n.p.). Perhaps self-starvers’ narratives instead reveal their responses to violence that has already been done to them. In particular, NEDA’s website notes that 30 percent of self-starvers have been sexually abused, and Jacqueline C. Carter, Carmen Bewell, Elizabeth Blackmore, and D. Blake Woodside found that patients with a history of childhood sexual abuse (CSA) reported “more severe eating disorder psychopathology” when compared with patients who had no history of CSA (“Trauma and Eating Disorders” n.p.; 264). Because many women’s self-starving narratives stress the degree to which experiences of abuse and trauma have contributed to their eating disorder, a response of erasure to all pro-ana content might encompass a refusal to interrogate Western culture’s disproportionate abuse of women. Overall, the erasure of pro-ana subculture represents a misplaced and shortsighted attack on those who propagate and exaggerate unattainable bodily standards and respond to abuse rather than a structural engagement with the many issues that lead to eating problems.

While these banning practices have been met with much positive reception—and some criticism—no previous research has considered the impetus for erasure in terms of the organizations that provoke it. More specifically, no previous research has examined the role that non-profit advocacy groups play in perpetuating the violent erasure of the digital self-starving subculture. Unless they have carefully examined press releases and social media policies, some might not realize the integral role professional eating disorder organizations play in waging the digital war against pro-ana. In a press release from 2012 on the National Eating Disorder Association’s (NEDA) website, the

2 For example, that women must be thin, toned, and without appetite.

organization explains that they have joined forces with Tumblr to combat the pro-ana subculture that haunts their forums:

NEDA is now working with Tumblr to assist them in flagging pro-ana/ mia (short for pro-anorexia/bulimia) websites and to create language for directing individuals . . . to resources and help. Tumblr expressed their dedication to removing content that could trigger those susceptible to an eating disorder or further entrench the illness for those struggling, stating that they want to ‘do the right thing.’ (“National Eating Disorder Association Partners with Tumblr” n.p.)

NEDA, then, has played and continues to play an integral role in determining the acceptability of eating disorder content on social media websites, and they have even helped such websites locate content that should be flagged for removal. Furthermore, NEDA has encouraged social media websites to redirect searches for pro-ana content to eating disorder treatment resources. NEDA argues that removing pro-ana content to protect other viewers represents a justifiable excuse for erasure, and they furthermore claim this is “the right thing” to do. NEDA also mentions that they have previously partnered with Facebook “to help the company establish policies regarding reporting, flagging and removing individuals or groups—as well as photos, wall posts or statuses—that promote unhealthy behavior related to body image and eating disorders” (n.p.). The slipperiness of NEDA’s word choice—such as unhealthy behavior and dangerous media messages—and the moralistic stance they take to eliminating the pro-ana subculture as it ostensibly preys on innocent victims warrant further analysis in terms of erasure and ethics.

In what follows, I analyze the websites of the two most prominent non-profit eating disorder advocacy organizations, NEDA and ANAD, to interrogate some of the ways in which they define eating disorders and control the narratives that can be shared about self-starving experiences. In attempting to counter the pro-ana subculture, NEDA and ANAD oversee the erasure of marginal voices as they generate one “healthy” and “responsible” narrative that can be told about eating disorders—to the exclusion of countless others that fail to fit their parameters. I will argue that the erasure of pro-ana subculture grants NEDA and ANAD the authority to speak for the relationships that self-starving women and men should have with their bodies and their eating problems. In what follows, I will discuss epistemic violence in connection to eating disorder treatment and pro-ana subculture more generally.

Then, I will shift to an analysis of the NEDA and ANAD websites, considering the extent to which their practices may be seen as silencing an important set of experiences and voices that bring vital issues surrounding eating disorder treatment to the surface. To illustrate the narrative constraints that

NEDA and ANAD place on self-starving writers, I will incorporate some of the narratives shared on their websites, and I will consider how they do or don't "measure up" to the organizations' ideal anorexia narrative. I will finally argue that attempts by female self-starvers to bear witness to complex systems of oppression enacted upon their bodies warrants our careful response, and not our fearful silence.

Epistemic Violence and Pro-Ana Erasure

Gailey identifies pro-ana as a "subculture" within which self-starving women might engage in edgework, or "voluntary risk-taking" behaviors (94). Gailey locates the pro-ana subculture movement within a general shift towards community formation and aggregation in digital spaces. She also points out the rhetorical significance of the communication practices that happen in these communities when she argues that "the young women are bound together by specialized symbols, images, and language" through which they communally share experiences (94). Gailey, then, emphasizes the personal risks that self-starving women take in pro-anorexia (pro-ana) forums and the extent to which they rely on these specialized communication practices and symbols to confront and/or cope with the stigmatization they experience.

While the narrativizing of stigmatization, abuse, and eating problems have been characterized as dangerous, I want to take an alternative approach that in some ways engages in edgework itself. Instead of further blaming self-starving women, I want to instead ask how viewing the erasure of pro-ana narratives through the lens of epistemic violence might alter our ways of responding to the embodied stories they share. For Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, epistemic violence is a concept that describes (1) the violent re-appropriation of subaltern epistemologies as oppositional to imperialist epistemology and (2) the reduction of subaltern ways of knowing into a coherent and unified epistemology. In "Can The Subaltern Speak?" Spivak explains that examples of epistemic violence are characterized by "remotely orchestrated, far-flung, and heterogeneous project[s] to constitute the colonial subject as Other" and "the asymmetrical obliteration of the trace of that Other in its precarious Subjectivity" (2115). Put another way, epistemic violence occurs when the representation of subjugated ways of knowing are assimilated into one coherent narrative that is then conceptualized as oppositional to the dominant way of knowing.

Of course, pro-ana discourses are not the same as anti-colonial discourses, and there are inherent differences in reifying the authority of a colonializing nation vis-à-vis professional eating disorder organizations. However, the concept of epistemic violence resonates with the way pro-ana subculture is reduced to a series of dangerous, devious, and disingenuous communication strategies in contrast to the (ostensibly) healthy, affirming, and honest

communication strategies espoused by NEDA and ANAD. This transaction involves a relation of power, too, one that denigrates self-starvers' ways of knowing their bodies as it applauds the official narrative generated by advocacy organizations. For the self-starver, the erasure of her story results in a form of violence against her identity—what Spivak describes as the “obliteration” of the Other’s subjectivity—because it discounts her ways of coping as deviant (2115). Also, as NEDA and ANAD attempt to generate one acceptable and “helpful” narrative about eating disorders, they hint that all other narratives are (conversely) threatening and dangerous. In an epistemic violence framework, there cannot be a spectrum of narratives; there can only be two, and only one can be acceptable. Through Spivak’s frame, it’s clear that obliterating an Other’s ability to speak on her own terms is always an act of violence, one that renders the authoritative speaker or narrative more powerful.

When self-starvers do speak, their narratives and bodies are notoriously misread. Spivak describes a different yet similar problem in her example of embodied epistemic violence when she reflects on a young woman named Bhubaneswari Bhaduri, who killed herself in 1926 because she was unable to complete a political assassination. She delayed her suicide until she was menstruating because she did not want her suicide to be attributed to an illicit pregnancy (2123). Bhaduri’s suicide, according to Spivak, “generalized the sanctioned motive for female suicide [sati] by taking immense trouble to displace (not merely deny), in the physiological inscription of her body, its imprisonment within legitimate passion by a single mate” (2123). The complexity of this suicide was later dismissed by a new generation of female family members, who misinterpreted Bhaduri’s body’s message: “Bhubaneswari attempted to ‘speak’ by turning her body into a text of woman/writing. The immediate passion of my declaration ‘the subaltern cannot speak,’ came from the despair that, in her own family, among women, in no more than fifty years, her attempt had failed” (Spivak 2124). The misreading of Bhaduri’s body is analogous to the misreading of self-starving women, whose bodies bear complex and often contradictory messages. While of course there are differences in what the bodies of Bhaduri and pro-ana writers say, the idea that women communicate messages through their bodies—and that these messages are often misread—should give us pause as we consider the erasure of the narratives that further articulate these messages. As Bhaduri’s family misread her suicide, we now risk the potential misreading of self-starvers when we silence their bodies.

The erasure of pro-ana websites, which discredits female ways of knowing, perpetuates a cycle of violence that is always already done to women’s ways of understanding and experiencing their bodies. As an extension of Spivak’s

concept of epistemic violence, I posit that self-starving bodies are subaltern to the extent that they are potentially able to speak but not be heard. I argue that the self-starver cannot be heard or read because her ways of knowing herself and her body are subjugated in favor of ostensibly more credible medical and professional discourses which claim to offer support to women with eating disorders, even as they authoritatively speak for and, perhaps unwittingly, commit violence against them.

Epistemic Violence and Treatment

Before I shift to an analysis of the non-profit organizations that influence the erasure of pro-ana subculture and position themselves as the authorities for speaking about eating problems, I will first briefly describe the inadequacy of traditional medical forums as spaces wherein self-starvers might speak. Despite the apparent logic of recommending that women seek professional help rather than support from a pro-ana community, given the barriers that make treatment for eating disorders ineffective and unaffordable, such directives might make many self-starvers feel hopeless. In such cases, the pro-ana writer is unable to be heard because she does not have a stable forum wherein she might speak.

First, treatment methods for eating disorders are largely ineffective, despite the fact that eating disorders have the highest mortality rate of any mental illness. More specifically, according to research compiled by the Eating Disorders Coalition, up to 20 percent of people with anorexia will die from the disease (often due to heart failure), and the rates of recovery indicate that “1/3 recover after [the] initial episode,” “1/3 fluctuate with recovery and relapse,” and 1/3 will die (Ellin n.p.). Many women who do seek treatment will be turned away due to high costs or subjected to failing treatment models and unbalanced power dynamics within treatment centers. Herzog et al. also found that forty percent of anorexic patients will relapse after completing treatment (834). Thus, overall, the treatment model for eating disorders is largely ineffective in the long-term, and the mortality rate (due to suicide or complications) remains staggeringly high.³ In part, the proliferation of pro-ana forums might be read as a response to the inefficacy of treatment methods and the need to find alternative ways to speak about eating problems.

Furthermore, it is worth noting that many have criticized healthcare professionals for the ways in which they infantilize and dominate self-starvers

3 According to their meta-analysis of 36 studies, Jon Arcelus, Alex J. Mitchell, Jackie Wales, and Søren Nielsen found that the “weighted annual mortality for AN was 5.10 deaths (95% CI, 3.99-6.14) per 1000 person-years, of which 1.3 deaths resulted from suicide” (726). They also found that mortality rates for anorexia are “much higher” than for other psychiatric illnesses (729).

(and self-starving young women, in particular). In *Biting the Hand that Starves You*, David Epston reflects on his years of practice and research and reveals that psychological treatment for female patients is often deplorable. He writes:

women described with uncanny repetition that the hospitals to which they had been admitted as a last resort were “no better than concentration camps.” Although they had physically survived the ordeals of hospitalization and the terror of their force-feedings, many felt that their spirits had been trampled upon in the process, making them even more vulnerable to a/b [anorexia and bulimia] upon discharge.
(5)

As Epston reveals, the lack of attention physicians pay to empowering and listening to patients during treatment may render any physical improvements that are made temporary—even futile if patients leave feeling more dedicated to their eating disorders than before. The “concentration camp” metaphor offers an extreme depiction of the powerlessness and psychological torture that patients may experience during treatment. Epston also characterizes physician attitudes towards patients as violent: “Over the years, I heard many professionals refer to [patients] as ‘prima donnas,’ ‘spoiled brats,’ and ‘manipulative attention-seekers,’ describing them as people deserving of disdain and even loathing. At the same time, they also feared these young women” (5). Not only are psychological treatment models for eating disorders potentially violent in the sense that they might physically intrude upon the woman’s body through force-feeding or mentally retrain her ways of seeing and valuing her body, the sentiments and motivations behind such treatment can be violent as well. Such violence is also gendered, as the language used to vilify patients reflects a paternalistic and sexist stance toward female self-starving women and their illnesses. Furthermore, the discussion of loathing and fear as rhetorical responses to self-starving women serves as a valid frame through which we might conceive of the erasure of pro-ana subculture. By reacting to self-starving women and their narratives with disgust and fear, rather than a willingness to listen, we again refuse to hear their bodies speak.

Furthermore, traditional treatment methods for eating disorders may be inaccessible to some self-starvers who experience social anxiety or stigmatization for their illness. For example, Renee D. Goodwin and Marian L. Fitzgibbon found that “social anxiety is associated with a decreased ability to engage in treatment among individuals with eating disorders” (105). They add, “It is logical that social anxiety, in which fear of humiliation and rejection is often coped with through avoidance, may inhibit eating disorder sufferers from entering therapy in which social fears of evaluation may be activated” (105). An extreme fear of others and the opinions that eating problems can engender

can itself be a deterrent to seeking treatment, as self-starvers may fear the judgment and sharing that treatment requires. Ironically, treatment models that emphasize extreme monitoring of eating behaviors can reinforce habits that patients already inflict upon themselves. Furthermore, fears that a psychiatric diagnosis will haunt them in the future may keep some patients from seeking treatment. In *Don't Shrink to Fit! A Confrontation with Dehumanization in Psychiatry and Psychology*, psychiatrist Eileen Walkenstein writes, "[a] psychiatric diagnosis is like a jail sentence, a permanent mark on your record that follows you wherever you go" (22). When self-starvers diagnosed with Anorexia Nervosa are required to disclose their diagnosis for life insurance policies, job applications, and other official documents, they may fear that the risk of being stigmatized for their eating problem outweighs the benefits of insurance coverage for treatment costs. A diagnosis may secure funding for their treatments (although even a diagnosis fails to guarantee this), but they might not get a job because of their diagnosis, an even more devastating financial blow.

Many women will never have to face such a conundrum at all, however, since only a select few can access treatment due to the high costs for both in-patient and outpatient care. The South Carolina Department of Mental Health, for example, estimates that "[t]reatment of an eating disorder in the US ranges from \$500 per day to \$2,000 per day. The average cost for a month of inpatient treatment is \$30,000" and "[t]he cost of outpatient treatment, including therapy and medical monitoring, can extend to \$100,000 or more" ("Eating Disorder Statistics"). They also explain that health insurance companies often do not cover treatment costs ("Eating Disorder Statistics"). Lack of coverage and high treatment costs, unsurprisingly, have negative consequences for many women with eating disorders who are told that they have a disease but cannot afford treatment. According to ANAD's website, only "1 in 10 men and women with eating disorders receive treatment" and "[o]nly 35% of people that receive treatment for eating disorders get treatment at a specialized facility" ("Eating Disorder Statistics"). Thus, the violent medicalization of female bodies also fails the women who are excluded from treatment due to their inability to pay.

As previously mentioned, the research pertaining to the violence surrounding eating disorder treatment and the erasure of pro-ana has increased in recent years due to the growth of the pro-ana subculture. However, I will now add to this ongoing discussion by considering the role that NEDA and ANAD play in this cycle of violence that involves the physical control over female bodies in treatment, the erasure of their voices in cyberspace, and the epistemic and narrative control over their experiences on the NEDA and ANAD websites.

Epistemic Violence and Defining Anorexia

The erasure of pro-ana narratives stems from a joint commitment on the part of healthcare facilities, social media websites, and professional eating disorder organizations to monitor and control what can be said about eating problems. While medical treatment models reify medicine's authority over female bodies, thereby silencing self-starvers in favor of healthcare providers, professional eating disorder associations raise awareness about eating disorder treatment, inform the public about eating disorders, and connect women who might be at risk to helpful resources. More specifically, NEDA explains that their mission is to "support individuals and families affected by eating disorders, and serv[e] as a catalyst for prevention, cures and access to quality care" ("Mission and Vision"). This mission speaks to the important role that professional eating disorder organizations play in connecting self-starvers to treatment options and information. However, when professional eating disorder organizations use inadequate definitions for eating disorders and provide exclusionary guidelines for "responsibly" sharing narratives about eating disorders, they propagate the epistemic violence that is sometimes committed by medical authorities.

One way in which professional eating disorder associations, and ANAD and NEDA in particular, risk enacting this violence is by defining eating disorders in rigid ways that exclude many women who may not meet the "official" criteria for an eating disorder. For example, ANAD's website defines anorexia as being "characterized by emaciation, a relentless pursuit of thinness and unwillingness to maintain a normal or healthy weight, a distortion of body image and intense fear of gaining weight, a lack of menstruation among girls and women, and extremely disturbed eating behavior" ("Anorexia Nervosa"). They also use terms such as "obsessions," "deteriorates," "battle," "illness," "deliberate," "irregular," "abnormal," "compulsive," "excessive," "continuous," "refusal," and "a very frightening experience [that] feels very real" to describe the symptoms associated with anorexia ("Anorexia Nervosa"). These definitions characterize anorexia in exclusionary ways, as they insist that anorexia is characterized by absolute physical conditions (i.e. "a lack of menstruation") and vague psychological conditions (i.e. "a distortion of body image"). The definitions are both too broad (who among us in Western culture *doesn't* have a distorted body image?) and too narrow (some self-starvers continue to menstruate). Further, in using terms such as "relentless," "distortion," "intense," and "extremely disturbed," which suggest extreme degrees of psychological illness, ANAD risks the potential alienation of women who know that they experience anorexia, but not to the extent that these singular definitions suggest.

These definitions are problematic because the extreme medicalization of female bodies, particularly in regards to weight management, dictates that an expert must diagnose women with an eating disorder before they can seek treatment and receive insurance coverage. When the criteria for defining an eating disorder is simultaneously this specific and vague, many women may be told that they are not “really” or “officially” anorexic when they nonetheless experience disordered eating behaviors or relationships with their bodies. Functioning self-starvers who find that they are “not anorexic enough” to meet this definition’s standards may not seek treatment if they feel that their experience of disordered eating does not meet the official criteria. This means that many women may not be able to seek treatment until their anorexia is very severe, at which point treatment is usually less effective.⁴ Defining eating disorders, particularly anorexia, in very specific and extreme ways, is an act of epistemic violence because it speaks for self-starving women by defining who they (officially) are and are not. Furthermore, such a practice casts all women with anorexia into one category, as if they share one unified experience with it and can be treated in the same way. Finally, such an exclusionary practice commits the violence of preventing many self-starvers from seeking treatment as it delegitimizes their eating problem as irregular or not “real” enough to warrant coverage.

Guidelines for Sharing

Professional organizations go beyond speaking for self-starving women; they also tell them how to speak. NEDA’s website provides a set of guidelines that encourage women to blog about their experiences, but only within specific parameters for sharing stories “responsibly.” The guidelines for responsible sharing inform women that they “are in a unique position to offer hope” to others, and they urge them to “present your story in a *useful* way while protecting your personal well-being” (“Guidelines for Sharing,” emphasis mine). The guidelines tell women that there are ways of sharing their stories that are dangerous to themselves and others. To mitigate the risks of sharing their narratives, they must follow NEDA’s directions and shape their stories in accordance with these guidelines. While this warning does clearly articulate the rules for participating in the websites’ forums, it also potentially places blame on female self-starvers (in advance) for negative responses readers might experience.

For example, in a section called “Remember your reason for speaking,” writers are told to “[m]ake sure [they] leave [their] audience with the message that there is hope” (“Guidelines for Sharing”). Women are also warned to

⁴ According to Mental Health America, “The earlier a person receives treatment, the greater likelihood of full recovery” (n.p.).

avoid “anorexia chic” and told to remind the audience that “eating disorders are illnesses, not choices” to be glamorized (“Guidelines for Sharing”). These guidelines tell women which forms of narrativizing about their eating disorder are acceptable, but perhaps more importantly, they also tell them how to think about their disorder. Whether or not they feel that they *choose* to engage in disordered eating behaviors, they are told that they do not—anorexia is an illness that infects them against their will. They are told that eating disorders are not glamorous, which assumes that the women feel that way to begin with, even though some actually find the daily realities of self-starvation to be quite ugly. Finally, being told to leave the audience with a message that there is hope may be akin to asking the women to lie when we remember that two thirds of self-starving women will not fully recover.

Narrative Control and Eating Disorder Stories

While the previously mentioned forms of narrative control enacted by ANAD and NEDA, in terms of what constitutes an eating disorder and how experiences with an eating disorder can be described, represent forms of epistemic violence by controlling the definition and conceptualization of eating disorders, perhaps the most troubling way in which they establish themselves as the authorities for speaking about self-starving comes from their recovery story collections. ANAD features a page called “RECOVERY—True, Inspirational Stories,” where they invite women who have recovered from an eating disorder to share their stories. However, a message at the top of the page clarifies their philosophy on eating disorder narratives:

ANAD believes that full recovery is possible for each individual, but we also know how difficult it can be to imagine what life in recovery looks like. Here are the stories of people from all walks of life who have found freedom, happiness, and renewal through their own paths to recovery! (n.p.)

This philosophy, of course, seems overly optimistic when we again recall the low recovery rate for eating disorders. Although ANAD stresses that the writers come from “all walks of life,” they mention that they have all had the same outcome: recovery, happiness, and even freedom. They also suggest that the stories provided will help readers visualize what recovery looks like so they can shape their own problem narrative to fit those that they see featured on the website. In generating one narrative of recovery for people from different walks of life, ANAD restricts what readers can expect from the recovery process, fails to account for a variety of recovery narratives, and rejects the fact that recovery may be impossible or ongoing for many self-starvers.

NEDA echoes ANAD's philosophy on their own "Stories of Hope" page, where they similarly note that recovery is possible for every "diverse" person who experiences an eating disorder. However, "[t]he path to recovery is different for everyone, and each person's experience with an eating disorder is uniquely impacted by their many identities, including race or ethnicity, age, ability, religion, gender, and sexuality" (n.p.). It is interesting that NEDA invokes diversity and intersectional identities to speak about recovery, because I would argue that intersectionality is precisely what makes eating disorders so difficult to treat and recovery so challenging for many women. Becky W. Thompson suggests that "eating problems begin as survival strategies—as sensible acts of self-preservation—in response to myriad injustices including racism, sexism, homophobia, classism, the stress of acculturation, and emotional, physical, and sexual abuse" (2). With this intersectional framework in mind, Thompson relabels eating "disorders" as eating "problems" to position them as "logical, creative responses to trauma" rather than psychopathology (2). Thus, while NEDA attempts to argue that intersectional identities will not prevent any person from recovering from an eating disorder (although they admit that recovery journeys may vary), Thompson reminds us that curing eating disorders must involve a structural mission to confront social injustice and violence against women just as it involves an interpersonal goal to help women embrace their bodies. Full recovery from an eating disorder may entail not just a personal triumph over illness, as ANAD and NEDA imagine, but also a commitment to addressing institutions that contribute to the powerlessness and hopelessness that drive women to self-starve in the first place.

ANAD: "True Inspirational Stories" and Recovery

Despite the problems associated with making universal claims about eating disorder recovery, 33 out of 33 stories on ANAD's Inspirational Stories page ultimately conclude with the message that recovery is possible (although, to be fair, this is a criteria for having a narrative posted in the forum). In general, the self-starving men and women who post their stories identify a few common factors that helped them recover such as their own resolution to do so, an experience of being shocked by the reality of their situation, effective treatment, finding friends or mentors to confide in, finding alternative hobbies/interests, or religion/God. However, many of the writers' narratives reveal tensions between their recovery experiences and the criteria for such narratives espoused by ANAD. For example, a woman named Courtney emphasizes the role that trauma played in generating her eating disorder; she explains, in particular, that her eating disorder served as a "distraction" from the painful memories of that experience (n.p.). She writes, "I'd heard the statistics before: that at least 30 percent of people with eating disorders have experienced

significant trauma, and that eating disorders are unhealthy coping mechanisms. But of course, my eating disorder convinced me otherwise" (n.p.). For Courtney, a "light bulb moment" allowed her to "break down the cage" of the eating disorder and achieve full recovery (n.p.).

It is important to note that Courtney is one of the few writers who never shifts to second person point-of-view in her writing. Within the 33 narratives, most begin with a first person, past tense narrative, and shift to a present tense, second person call to action for readers. Thus, in concluding that she is "bigger and stronger" than her eating disorder and trauma, Courtney ignores the rhetorical imperative from ANAD to explicitly articulate an inspirational message for readers. Instead, she chooses to reflect on her experiences and share this introspection with readers, thus implicitly preventing the adoption of her narrative as a model for others to follow.

While Courtney feels that she has broken free of her eating disorder and the trauma she faced, a writer named Cody Barnes seems slightly less sure of his ability to completely escape his eating problem. Barnes, too, speaks of a man who abused him, and he describes his experience with bulimia that ultimately led him to try to commit suicide at Disney World: "[i]t was a wakeup call. I kicked my butt in gear and I was ready to fight this. I was no longer going to let this destroy me. I began standing up for myself. I began talking" (n.p.). He adds that he was able to put the man who abused him "on a shelf," and that in terms of recovery, "I'm getting there" (n.p.). However, after this admission of an ongoing process towards recovery, Barnes shifts into second person point of view to assure readers, "You can beat this! Life is so beautiful, you are so beautiful and you should be able to see that" (n.p.). While I do not mean to suggest that Barnes has not recovered from his eating disorder, I hope to highlight the way in which his narrative moves from a moment of doubt, of personal reflection, to self-assured motivational speaking for readers. The dual purposes served within Barnes' narrative points to a project not endorsed by ANAD's story collection. Although ANAD intends for the stories to be inspirational for readers, Barnes, like Courtney, engages in personal introspection throughout the piece. Barnes' piece also reveals a moment of hesitation—a revelation that "I'm getting there"—but he quickly shifts into a positive affirmation for readers, telling them with certainty that they can "beat" their eating disorder for good.

A feeling of uncertainty about recovery can be more clearly witnessed in a post by Jessica, who explains that recovery has been an ongoing struggle for her. She writes, "Lately I've focused on my negativity pushing my thoughts into a downward spiral. My lifesaver is the comfort my OCD and eating disorder provide. I escape and go numb. My mind can't hurt me there" (n.p.). This phrasing makes it unclear as to whether or not Jessica still engages in self-starving behaviors. She also describes her eating disorder as an "addiction," which

presents an interesting contrast in terms of recovery; significantly, it suggests that recovery might be a constant state of active and willful resistance rather than an epiphanic moment that allows one to fully heal. Jessica's narrative also stands out because it is one of only a few that doesn't shift to past tense when describing her eating disorder at the end. She remains in present tense to say, "[i]t's so hard for me, and every day I need to practice. I need to try to tell myself that I can handle anything, that I am strong and everything will be OK" (n.p.). Jessica's portrait of recovery, then, is one of an unending and difficult struggle.

In contrast to Jessica's account, a writer named Lauren H. again adopts the metaphor of "beating" anorexia in discussing her perspective on recovery. She explains, "For me, finding the resolve to beat this illness was about learning to engage in life and finding happiness and pleasure in the simple things in life. I think that one of the most important aspects of recovering from anorexia, which is often overlooked, is creating a life for yourself that you want to live in" (n.p.). Lauren H. also invokes the idea that recovery can be quantified when she notes that "[a]fter suffering from Anorexia Nervosa for a terrible 15 years I can finally and honestly say that I am 100% free from it" (n.p.). In contrast to Jessica's account about eating disorders, addiction, and recovery as constant struggle, Lauren H. argues that she has beaten her anorexia and is now "free" of it. The metaphor of freedom is invoked 24 times in the 33 narratives in a variety of forms: free, freed, freedom. Despite the few tentative accounts that present recovery as extremely difficult, full of relapses, and ongoing, ANAD's argument that recovery is possible for everyone seems to have influenced the rhetorical moves made by those who submit narratives for their collection.

These true, inspirational stories present some interesting tensions in response to ANAD's call for narratives that will inspire others to recover. The tension between writing for oneself and writing for an audience of other self-starvers can be seen in many narratives, where writers commonly shift from a first person point of view to a second person point of view in the last paragraph. Writers also seem divided on the issue of the tense used when describing their self-starving experiences (past or present), which highlights a larger issue of whether or not full recovery can be achieved, or whether it must be constantly attempted. Overall, then, the writers reflect some of the very problems inherent in making sweeping claims about the possibility of recovery for each person who experiences an eating disorder. The variety of experiences reflected in the stories demonstrates the importance of a more encompassing discussion of recovery on the part of ANAD.

There are also, noticeably, stories that are missing: stories by self-starvers who couldn't afford treatment, stories that reveal the violence that treatment can enact, and stories that reveal the possibility that freedom from an eating

disorder is not always possible. There is a disconnect, then, between the statistics used to discuss eating disorder recovery, mortality, and treatment, and the narratives ANAD embraces, even requires, on their website.

NEDA: “Stories of Hope” and the Role of Others

While ANAD stresses that contributors should ensure their story inspires others to be hopeful, NEDA provides guidelines regarding the role other people (family members, friends, and care providers) should play in the anorexia narrative. They explain that self-starvers should clearly describe that they depended upon others throughout their recovery process, and that eating disorders cannot and should not be faced alone. NEDA writes, “Be careful about providing testimony of how you ‘bravely fought this illness alone’ (“Guidelines for Sharing”). This message presumes, first of all, that self-starvers will want to present themselves as brave heroes who have rescued themselves from eating disorders. NEDA also asks that such testimony, even if it is true, be withheld from anorexia narratives. As they clarify: “Perhaps you did [fight the illness alone], but most do not—the vast majority of those who recover from their illness do it only with the ongoing help of trained professionals. Remember that isolation is one of the most difficult aspects of eating disorders for many sufferers” (“Guidelines for Sharing”). Again, it is not productive to generalize about how “most” do or do not recover from an eating disorder, particularly when those claims are not substantiated with any evidence.

NEDA’s policy also implies that self-starvers should have access to treatment, that such treatment is actually helpful for patients, and that there are other people available (such as supportive family members or friends) who are willing to be involved in the recovery process. For many women, these supportive networks of family members, friends, and caretakers may not exist, or they may be unable to care for the self-starver for financial, physical, or other reasons. Also, while it may be true that “most” do not recover in isolation, this statement strips the self-starver of her sense of agency in suggesting that she probably did not play a significant role in her own recovery. Finally, NEDA explains that self-starvers should “[m]ake sure you reinforce that it is courageous and necessary to reach out for support and guidance during the recovery process” (“Guidelines for Sharing”). For the reasons previously mentioned, insisting that others should “reach out” for help is unfair given the financial and emotional restrictions, and the stigmatization, that keep many women from doing so.

On NEDA’s website, nonetheless, while self-starvers do generally discuss others as a positive, motivating factor in their recovery, their stories reveal some important tensions between the role that others play in the recovery process and the self-starver’s own agency. A contributor named Ericka reveals

that other people—particularly one child—ultimately led her to seek help. She explains, “It wasn’t until I became a preschool teacher that I even began to appreciate and understand what life is about. I watched one of my students battle (and survive!!) cancer. It was then that I realized that I had a critical choice to make. I could honor my body...Or I could continue to abuse it” (n.p.). Other contributors echo this narrative by revealing that other people’s illnesses, their near-death experiences, and interpersonal confrontations led them to realize the severity of their illness and seek help. For some, becoming responsible for another person in a crisis situation served as an epiphanic moment that reminded them of the importance of living. However, Ericka’s framing of her epiphany as suddenly “choosing” to recover is at odds with NEDA’s and ANAD’s own claims that eating disorders are not lifestyle choices but diseases. While they in some cases deny that self-starvers have agency in choosing to perpetuate their disorder, they also ironically demand that self-starvers should *choose* to recover, with the help of a supportive community.

Contributors also describe the role a supportive community played in helping them through the challenges of the recovery process. Another contributor, Meghan, writes that her family and a friend named Sam were her motivation for healing. She notes, “My family never judged. They just loved. They also worried. Learning of the worry my anorexia and bulimia were causing for the ones I loved most became a main motivator in my later recovery” (n.p.). In this case, other people motivate Meghan to the point that she feels guilty for her illness. Meghan seeks treatment when she realizes how her pain affects others, but it seems that this is due to a sense of obligation to family rather than for her own benefit. Meghan also shares her future plans as they relate to her health and the family she is creating with Sam: “A continuous motivator in beating this thing has been the hope for a happy, healthy family with Sam. I want happy, healthy children who never have to experience the horror of anorexia and bulimia” (n.p.). Even in describing the future, Meghan seems to hold herself accountable for being healthy enough to create a family and bear children. It is others—both present and potential—who motivate her health—but they also foster feelings of guilt and potential inadequacy.

Another writer, Debbi, describes the role her treatment facility played in her recovery. She explains that those who cared for her while she was in treatment became very important to her—so much so that her final day in their care was very emotional. She remembers that “Tears streamed down my cheeks as the therapists, staff members and other girls touched my heart when they told me how far I had come” (n.p.). She adds, “I’m so grateful for all the love and support I received from everyone—it truly showed me how lucky I was. There was even a mock funeral staged for me at the facility to prove how many people I’d be hurting if I let my disorder consume me entirely. Physically

and psychologically, I was torn apart by this" (Debbi). Like Meghan, Debbi experiences guilt at the thought of hurting her family and friends by potentially dying. Unlike Meghan, however, Debbi seems unnerved by the experience of the mock funeral, and a bit overwhelmed by the pressure to stay healthy for so many others. Also, the phrase "if I let my disorder consume me entirely" reveals that Debbi views the disorder as something that she can, and should, control. Her ethical obligation to not hurt others makes her feel (perhaps unfairly) a responsibility not to allow anorexia to control her. She insinuates that if she allows anorexia to control her, then she allows anorexia to hurt the people she loves. This undermines NEDA's claim that others should be included in the narrative because they have helped the self-starver recover. As Debbi's account reminds us, even well-intentioned family and friends can cause more harm than good when they respond to the eating problem by reinscribing feelings of inadequacy and guilt. Perhaps acting brave for others does not differ so much from rescuing oneself from a disorder.

Ultimately, NEDA's argument that self-starvers must stress the extent to which they rely on others to help them recover from their eating problems risks placing guilt on women, who may feel that they must maintain their health for others. While feeling responsible for others is not wrong, of course, it does seem important that a person suffering with an eating disorder not be unfairly burdened with ensuring the happiness of others as she fights to save her life. Furthermore, NEDA ignores the extent to which many women do face eating problems alone, and this loneliness can cause self-starvers to seek support in the very pro-ana forums that NEDA attempts to erase. An ugly but nonetheless true reality is that many women cannot afford professional support and cannot find emotional support for their eating problems. Thus, NEDA's narrative both unfairly imposes a particular narrative stricture upon writers and excludes women for whom this element of eating disorder recovery does not apply.

Conclusion

In the future, social media sites should reconceive of their role in the ongoing censorship and erasure that medical treatment centers and professional organizations engage in. Rather than focusing their efforts on banning pro-ana content, social media platforms should help democratize access to support groups and treatment and encourage more self-starvers to seek help—but on their own terms. Social media platforms hold unique benefits as spaces wherein self-starving narratives can be shared; for example, such spaces are much more readily available than expensive treatment options. Additionally, pro-ana forums and social media websites can provide anonymity that may encourage some self-starvers to feel more comfortable speaking out about

their experiences. Finally, such spaces can connect self-starvers who may otherwise never meet in person—especially for those who live in remote areas, for whom treatment can be more difficult. For some women who might not be able to travel to areas where support groups or treatment facilities can be found in abundance, online forums offer such communities at the click of a button. Social media websites constantly encourage both personal testimony and shared meaning making, so such spaces might also foster supportive engagements among self-starvers, who can assert the unique qualities of their experience even as they connect with others whose narratives overlap with their own.

As I conclude this alternative reading of the importance of pro-ana forums, and the violence of their erasure, I am struck by what might at first seem like a curveball analogy. However, I believe it has important implications for the way we respond to the framing of particular texts as dangerous. In early 2016, a new edition of Adolf Hitler's *Mein Kampf* was published, reigniting a fraught discussion among various stakeholders—within politics, education, and the media—about the ethical implications of reading Hitler's Nazi treatise. The scholarly publication, which features heavy annotations and contextualization, is now available for sale and purchase in Germany for the first time since World War II. The fear of Hitler's text inspiring a neo-Nazi revival in Germany—or perpetuating Germany's shame for having embraced Hitler as a leader—has led many to suggest that Hitler's text should continue to be banned. However, in "Does 'Mein Kampf' Remain a Dangerous Book?" Adam Gopnik argues that rather than fearing a text, we must fear and respond to the circumstances that allow such "dangerous" texts to be embraced. He writes that Hitler "didn't invent these arguments. He adapted them, and then later showed where in the real world they led, if taken to their logical outcome by someone possessed, for a time, of absolute power. Resisting those arguments is still our struggle, and so they are, however unsettling, still worth reading, even in their creepiest form" (n.p.). Gopnik's argument is twofold: first, Hitler wasn't himself the sole author of Nazism. Although he led the movement and actively participated in the murder of millions of Jews, social forces such as racism, nationalism, and even the devaluing of the arts⁵ contributed to the Nazi movement. Hitler's responsibility must be viewed within a system of violence and oppression that supported his message and helped him put it into action. Furthermore, Gopnik reminds us that we must read Hitler's narrative precisely because it is dangerous, since we cannot expect to respond to and prevent such tragedies from occurring in the future by simply pretending that they did not happen.

5 See Peter Ross Range's "Why 'Mein Kampf' is a Must-Read Now" for a fascinating account.

Of course, pro-ana narratives are a far cry from *Mein Kampf*. But the idea that narratives can be dangerous—and that they can transmit dangerous actions—fails to justify their erasure. As Hitler’s narrative must be read within a social context that allowed his ideas to take root and succeed, pro-ana narratives must be read within a social context that encourages eating problems, promotes extreme thinness and dieting, and generates troubling relationships between women and food. Similarly, just as we must engage with Hitler’s ideas precisely because they make us uncomfortable, we must also face the uncomfortable truths that pro-ana narratives reveal: that treatment is often ineffective, that women are disproportionately victims of abuse, violence, and rape, and that Western beauty ideals can have devastating effects on those who try to meet them, among others. Just as we have a social responsibility, as citizens of a global community, to actively prevent tragedies such as the Holocaust from occurring again, as digital netizens, we have a responsibility to actively respond to the social ills pro-ana discourse reveals.

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Graban, Tarez Samra. *Women's Irony: Rewriting Feminist Rhetorical Histories*. Southern Illinois UP, 2015. 258 pages.

Daune O'Brien and Jane Donawerth

Women's Irony: Rewriting Feminist Rhetorical Histories is a significant contribution to history of women's rhetoric, to feminist studies, and to rhetorical studies (especially of figurative language). Graban argues that we need to move beyond current descriptions of the functions of irony in women's rhetoric: self-deprecation, a means of recognizing stereotypes, or a device for constructing a strong but feminine ethos. For Graban, irony in women's rhetoric instead promotes activism and disruption, engages multiple audiences across time, raises consciousness, and pushes us to reconsider how we do history. Irony allows us to approach an archive differently, complicating the relationships between women and agency, language and history, archival location and memory. This is a book that will be of interest to scholars and graduate students in Rhetoric and Composition, Women's Studies, and Nineteenth-Century American Studies.

In the Introduction, "Why an Irony Paradigm for Feminist Historiography, and Why Now?," Graban outlines the premiere themes located within her research: ironic discourse beyond intentionality, irony as rhetorical agency, irony as a gateway to historicity, and irony as a method of knowledge-making. Throughout the introduction, Graban makes clear her primary concern is *how* and *why* irony occurs, rather than defining "what irony is" (5). Graban seeks to generate discussion about the ways in which irony creates opportunities to destabilize and disrupt feminist historical work. Citing Jacqueline Jones Royster, Cheryl Glenn, Andrea Lunsford, and Patricia Bizzell, Graban's work responds to the question: "What comes next in historical studies of women rhetors?" (13). Her study offers answers to this question through her analysis of Anne Askew's, Anne Hutchinson's, and Helen Gougar's rhetorical performances of irony. The introduction, then, forecasts for the reader specific approaches to Renaissance texts, Colonial histories, and suffrage archives that enable Graban to reveal "irony's knowledge-making potential" (13).

In a brilliant first chapter on Anne Askew, Graban argues that instead of separating contextual study of Askew in Reformation politics and early modern gender roles from reception studies of her text, a methodology using irony

as a focus allows us to see a continuum of realization across multiple historical audiences of responses to Askew's irony. Such an approach forces us to see that Askew is not just resistant, but is inventing a civic discourse for women reformers, a plea for common-law rights for women. In this chapter Graban also reconceptualizes how the complexities of feminist subjectivities contribute to rhetorical agency. As an example of how feminist ironic discourse complicates the relationship between agency and rhetorical activity, Graban reexamines the trial of Askew as a critical site of historicized events. Graban problematizes the role of Askew as agent by rethinking Askew's use of silence, by relinquishing the attempt to discern whether Askew is truthful in her *Examinations*, by investigating her combination of logic and rhetoric and dialectic, and by exploring her invention of a Renaissance civic discourse for women. Graban explains how "reexamining texts to rereading histories to (re)using archives" (28) opens historical texts to interpretive possibilities that consider the agential interactions between multiple rhetors—writer(s) and audiences. She is particularly concerned with troubling historians' positioning of Askew by looking beyond Askew's own self-perception to include perceptions of other agents in Askew's trial and the distribution of her texts. Graban exposes the limitations of feminist historiography methodologies that merely piece together coherent metanarratives (51) by showing that interactions and performances between multiple actors have complex and residual implications that enable us to reconsider how Askew (and others) "successfully inhabit a textual event" (53). This analysis allows us to view from disparate perspectives the interstitial relationships between Askew's voice in the text and her multiple audiences—her immediate questioners, the King's Council, pan-Europe Reformers, and eventually historians.

In a second case study, Graban pictures Anne Hutchinson not as inhabiting or resisting expected domestic roles for colonial women's speech, but by representing her private experience as public religious belief, helping to produce her religious culture through irony. The residual implications of historicized rhetorical performances are evident in Chapter 2 where Graban considers how historians might study women's texts apart from their authorial intent or use of irony to overcome social censure. Graban examines "how language moves historically through Hutchinson's Colonial controversy and on what cultural logics could have been" (58), while considering the potential interactions between Colonial women's private experience and public language. Rather than read Hutchinson's text as "divisive" (60), Graban offers historians an opportunity to reimagine Hutchinson as a co-creator and producer apart from her traditional gendered or religious role. Graban examines Hutchinson's verbal exchanges with the elders using a four-pronged methodological approach: arguing beyond "words" and "works," engaging

a topos of difference, repositioning “ecclesiastic” as “civic,” and accepting a hybrid conscience (63). Graban’s analysis of Hutchinson makes several contributions to the study of women’s historiography. Besides arguing that, for Hutchinson, public and private were not strictly separate categories, Graban calls for a more critical consideration of how traditional methodologies ensure that Hutchinson’s identity “remains bound by narratives that are based in models of action and inaction” (91). Rather than read Hutchinson’s narrative only as an instance of her overcoming ecclesiastic expectations for women, Graban advocates holding in balance the tropes of “prophecy, maternity, and fecundity” (90) so that multiple readings of Hutchinson remain possible.

Chapter 3 recovers a little-known suffragette, Helen Gougar, and rehabilitates her image from dissident to ironist, not as agitating outside of the Suffrage Movement and nineteenth-century political parties, but as blending suffrage genres in order to deliver a message that, across her career, sought to unite suffragist, temperance, labor, and economic reform rhetorics. In chapter 3, Graban is concerned with the ways traditional methodological approaches to recovering historical texts embody assumptions and motives that drive limiting perspectives thereby determining how historians position historical figures. As an example of how historians might re-read where and why figures are historically positioned, Graban examines Helen M. Gougar’s political career, traditionally interpreted as antagonistic to mainstream suffrage goals, as an undeveloped site of re-discovery. Graban is particularly interested in potentiality and is persistent in advocating for the examination of “who or what else complicates” rhetorical situations rather than who has done or received the action (96). In Graban’s application of Sharon Crowley’s research, for example, she underscores the ways in which historiographers’ “impulses are as important as the narratives themselves” (96) as an example of looking at “*who or what else complicates*” (96-97) our notion of writing history, and as a way of ultimately challenging the underlying logic of canon formation. While most historians position Gougar as a minor “regional” suffragist, historians can open up a richer perception of the nineteenth-century women’s movement as full of different viewpoints by using a local archive and by approaching Gougar as ironist and dissenter. Graban analyzes Gougar’s political texts through identifying five strategic political responses and so further advances an alternative method of engaging with archival selections that disrupt traditional historiographical analysis. Through a case study of Gougar’s political affiliations, texts, and activism, Graban importantly warns against the tendency to oversimplify, advocating instead for methods of remembering and locating rhetorical situations through irony’s lenses—“in the interest of using irony to read through history and not merely in history—to unsettle the constraints of location or memory that might limit how we access . . . discourse” (132). Thus

Graban employs the irony paradigm to trouble the view of Suffrage as a coherent platform.

Chapter 4, "Freeing the Archon," further addresses the possibilities that emerge when we examine *how* historians recover and write history, rather than the particular *things* they write about. Graban's research allows us to consider "how historiographers can and should analyze ironic discourse in a theoretical milieu that understands history, language, memory, and rhetorical identification as contingencies rather than stabilities" (164). In her extended analysis of Gougar's political discourse, Graban poses a series of questions that advance historiography and feminist methodologies. What are suffragists' actual and probable impacts on the way we have done history? What are our other options for constructing and being constructed by these histories? How do other options bear on the function of *kairos*? What attitudes intrinsic to feminist recovery in rhetoric and composition contribute to historical studies in other disciplines? (145). Graban seeks answers to these questions through an analysis of suffrage archives as a site for "locate-ability" (145), seeing topoi in archival gaps, and defining ontological problems for third-wave recovery, especially how to acknowledge multiple feminist ideologies and how to maintain a dialectic between historical context and present memorializing. This chapter allows us to consider new sites of historical study that challenge normative assumptions that limit construction and recovery of archival texts. According to Graban, limitations can be mediated by "expanding the range of texts and methodologies we use to value activism" (149).

The final chapter, "Toward an Irony Paradigm," summarizes Graban's intentions for *Women's Irony* and its impact on feminist historians' methods of archival recovery. Graban argues against theories of irony that are traditionally formed "by and large, on the basis of expecting a coherent and orderly universe in which each discursive act is dictated by a single intention..." (167). Citing Rengar and Soward's "three-pronged" approach to feminist contradiction, Graban makes the case for an irony paradigm that considers new ways of recovering, arranging, and remembering feminists texts: an irony paradigm that has a transformative effect on its own theory building and on developing new theories of archive; an irony paradigm that represents rhetoric as a discipline that simultaneously focuses on its tasks, its knowledge-makers, and its students; and an irony paradigm that is interdisciplinary and enables a cross-cultural historical project. According to Graban, "absences of information and methodological gaps" (169) provide an important opportunity for historians to examine feminist contradictions by questioning historical practices and historiographical agency, as well as reconceptualizing how historians might use irony.

The irony paradigm for feminist rhetorical studies reveals the contradictions vital to a feminist discourse, opens up the collaborative nature of feminist interpretation, re-orientes archival memory as a dynamic social process, and raises consciousness, welcoming the innovation of students in the discipline. Although this work is primarily a theoretical study of the uses of irony, it also offers important archival research in the chapters on Gougar. If the study has a limitation, it is the dense theoretical vocabulary that Graban deploys that limits its accessibility for undergraduates and a more popular audience. The study's strengths lie in its new definitions of irony, its inventive use of irony as a method rather than only a figure, and its appreciation of archives as constructed. We strongly recommend Graban's study for scholars and graduate students interested in irony and in feminist historiography and archival work.

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Ostergaard, Lori and Henrietta Rix Wood, editors. *In the Archives of Composition: Writing and Rhetoric in High Schools and Normal Schools*. University of Pittsburgh P, 2015. 264 pages.

Tiffany Kinney

Lori Ostergaard and Henrietta Rix Wood's edited collection, *In the Archives of Composition: Writing and Rhetoric in High Schools and Normal Schools*, challenges dominant historical narratives in the field of composition by drawing from local archival sources. The editors' mission is to add complexity to disciplinary narratives by including the many voices of teachers and students operating in different institutions such as high schools (chapters 1-4), normal schools (chapters 5-8), and programs that connect these two institutions (chapters 9-11). In addition to this overarching mission, the editors also identify additional goals for their collection, which include offering a local perspective on pedagogy and employing a method of "doing history" in order to revise dominant narratives by integrating histories from marginalized spaces. This review will consider the extent to which each of these goals is met in the book.

Although the collection does not specifically identify the dominant narrative each chapter is responding to, hints of these narratives exist throughout all the chapters. Many of the chapters respond to pervading disciplinary narratives crafted by well-known composition historians such as Robert Connors and James Berlin—narratives that primarily take their evidence from elite educational spaces. Connors is most cited for his text *Composition-Rhetoric: Backgrounds, Theories and Pedagogies*, wherein he traces the birth of composition in American educational institutions from the mid-1800s onward. He moves away from calling this period "current traditional rhetoric," because it is simplistic and inaccurate, as instructors were not only "autocratic [and] error obsessed ... [teachers] who assigned formulaic themes" (31). Instead, he proposes the notion of Composition-Rhetoric to describe this period and those working in it. He explains that instructors focused on errors because of their intensive labor loads and suggests that these same instructors were unable to advocate for better working conditions because of these labor loads. He uses the term Composition-Rhetoric to demonstrate how rhetoric, as the practice

of oratory, and composition, as the practice of writing, were separated with the entry of women into educational spaces, effectively suggesting that women initiated the downfall of oral and argumentative rhetoric. Another disciplinary narrative contested in this collection is one developed by James Berlin in *Rhetoric and Reality: Writing Instruction in American Colleges, 1900-1985*. Berlin posits that the economic and ideological superstructure changed the way writing was taught in American colleges. More specifically, he argues that this history is marked by a shift from entrepreneurial to corporate capitalism which meant that “rhetoric was replaced with an emphasis on practice training in mechanical skills” for success in the sciences and business (186).

According to several of the scholars in this collection, the problem with these two disciplinary histories is that they do not capture the localized nuance that exists in composition instruction outside of white, male-dominated spaces. Although Connors’ history gives validity to the field of Composition-Rhetoric as one that has its own theories, pedagogies, and traditions, chapters by Henrietta Rix Woods, Melissa lanetta, Lori Ostergaard and Whitney Myers, directly challenge Connors’ assumptions about this period, its characteristics, its instructors and its students by examining archival materials from institutions other than public research universities or elite liberal arts colleges. Edward J. Comstock directs his critique at Berlin’s history by considering student self-reports and teaching materials housed in archives outside of Harvard to argue that the shift in composition instruction Berlin notes is due to students’ internalization of pedagogical disciplinary practices rather than to larger economic and ideological changes. Many chapters in the collection also indirectly challenge both Connors’ and Berlin’s histories by selecting educational spaces that their narratives omit—spaces that were co-educational, located on Indian reservations, and/or created under segregationist conditions.

The majority of the chapters draw on research done in or through a local archive, while the rest use sources that are not necessarily local but still work to articulate a perspective localized to one area. Archival sources include personal diaries, interviews, student class papers, student newspapers, yearbooks, and teacher-authored curricula, among others. Henrietta Rix Wood, in her chapter “The Rhetorical Praxis of Central High School Students, 1894-1924,” examines writings from student newspapers published at Central High School, which served middle-class students in Kansas City, Missouri. From these local perspectives, Rix argues for the efficacy of “composition-rhetoric” wherein she claims that “composition-rhetoric” was “not a period of relative stasis” as Connors would have his readers believe, but was instead a period when “student[s] react[ed] to potent social needs” as evidenced by their writing published in student newspapers (37, 30). Another example comes from Melissa lanetta’s chapter “Stand ‘Mum’: Women’s Silence at the Lexington

Academy, 1839-1841." lanetta analyzes two diaries outlining the pedagogical activities of a classroom in one of the first schools to admit women, the Lexington Academy. More specifically, she explores the diaries of Cyrus Peirce (a teacher at Lexington Academy) and Mary Swift (his assistant). Through her interpretation, lanetta counters Connors' supposition that women's entry into higher education necessitated the "downfall of classical oratory" as women are "innately non-confrontational and [only use] collaborative discourse" (98). Through her incisive analysis, lanetta demonstrates that women's performance in higher education could be attributed to schooling and pedagogy, specifically to a "lack of training in argument and opportunity for practice," instead of a "biologically driven need for cooperation" (110).

As sites of analysis, scholars use these local histories to "do history" where they question dominant narratives in order to create space for diverse voices, demonstrate an array of pedagogical approaches (e.g., experiential and personal writing), illustrate the institutionalization and democratization of writing instruction, and delineate the origins of contemporary pedagogy. In her own chapter, Ostergaard "does history" by tracing the professional trajectory of June Rose Colby, whose modest career was understood as a "failure" because it was outshined by other faculty members in her department at Illinois State Normal School. Ostergaard questions this label by highlighting Colby's career successes and, in the process, challenging Connors' history of composition, which assumes that early compositionists did not have the wherewithal or authority to improve their working conditions. Ostergaard uses Colby to rebut Connors by illustrating that at least one composition instructor was able to improve her working conditions by arguing for curricular reform—as Colby successfully argued for the separation of writing and literature (127). Another chapter that "does history" and that demonstrates how this doing can undo dominant narratives is Beth Rothermel's chapter "'A Home for Thought Where Learning Rules': Progressive Era Students and Teacher Identity at a Historic Normal School." Rothermel counters the dominant narrative that normal schools developed teachers by "drill[ing] students in their subjects, verify[ing] that they were of good moral character and teach[ing] them how to keep order" (140). Instead, Rothermel draws on student essays and outlines from Westfield State Normal School between 1903-1911 to argue that student-teachers created classroom personas that were not authorities or experts but instead "facilitators." As facilitators, pre-service teachers cultivated identities through self-reflective writing that allowed for "social critique, learning and collaboration" (132).

Another goal of this collection is to bring diverse voices from localized spaces into disciplinary narratives. Whitney Myers' chapter "'Raise your Right Arm / And Pull on Your Tongue!' Reading Silence(s) at the Albuquerque

Indian School” and Candace Epps-Robertson’s chapter “Radical, Conservative, Extreme: The Rhetorical Education of the Prince Edward County Free School Association, 1963-1964,” are examples of scholars seeking to include diverse voices by exploring the marginalized voices of American Indians and African Americans under reservationist and segregationist conditions, respectively. Myers uses three student yearbooks and a school assessment report to advance an argument about the pedagogical practices employed at the Albuquerque Indian School. More specifically, she claims that these practices, “grounded in revision, which included interrogating genre conventions, analyzing audiences and receiving detailed feedback,” were designed to accommodate linguistically diverse students (50). Similarly, Epps-Robertson “does history” by examining the language arts curriculum at Moton High School in Prince Edward County. This curriculum included a traditional skills-based approach that addressed concerns from students’ home communities (63).

Other chapters in the collection make clear the many benefits of expanding disciplinary narratives to involve local histories, such as revealing an array of varied approaches to teaching writing. Curtis Mason’s chapter “Project English: Cold War Paradigms and the Teaching of Composition” traces assorted approaches to curriculum as he investigates archival resources from the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) and the University of Nebraska’s Project English Center and conducts an interview with a former Nebraska English professor. It is important to note that “Project English” grew out of a response to the National Defense Education Act (NDEA). English teachers, faced with the NDEA’s overwhelming support for science and math, argued for their discipline’s importance in preparing and protecting the citizenry. Mason discovers that the facilitators of Project English suggested a varied approach to the English curriculum, which involved scaffolding lessons from year to year and required the students to learn composition by “analyzing published works and then by acting as professional writers” (217). Mason argues that the Project English curriculum exemplifies variation as it moved from “teaching grammar to teaching form and function of language” by focusing on process pedagogy (217). A chapter that also illustrates a “varied curriculum” is Nancy Myers’ chapter “Adapting Male Education for a Nation of Females: Sara Lockwood’s 1888 *Lessons in English*.” Myers finds that Lockwood combines two early composition curricula to create her textbook—current traditional rhetoric from Harvard and a belles lettres approach from Yale. Written by Lockwood to use in her high school classroom in New Haven, Connecticut, this textbook was also adopted at various co-educational high schools throughout New England (168). According to Myers, Lockwood fuses the two curricula because current traditional rhetoric teaches students to “more effectively communicate with the diverse citizens of the country,” while the belles lettres approach

advocates “reading literature for cultural and literary enhancement” (171). Ultimately, Lockwood’s varied curriculum was designed for female students to develop rhetorical skills and to encourage them to live a life outside the home as a form of social agency.

Selecting local histories as artifacts of analysis offers glimpses into the use of the personal and the experiential in writing instruction. In “Be Patient, But Don’t Wait!': The Activist Ethos of Student Journalism at the Colored State Normal School, Elizabeth City, North Carolina, 1892-1937,” Elaine Hays explores writings from two student publications, *The Normal Magnet* and the *Normal State Banner*. In her analysis, she finds that these students “redefine what it means to be a normalite” by encouraging their peers to live according to Christian principles, to use their writing to engage in local issues, and to work as leaders and activists in their communities and on campus (153). Other chapters, such as Edward J. Comstock’s chapter “Toward a Genealogy of Composition: Student Discipline and Development at Harvard in the Late Nineteenth Century” also involve analyzing personal, experiential writing. Comstock explores students’ self-reports of their own writing assignments and considers how these reports encouraged students to internalize disciplinary techniques and explain their writing deficiencies in terms of personal failure and failure of their preparatory schools (196).

Ostergaard’s chapter on June Rose Colby and Myers’ chapter on Sara Lockwood’s *Lesson in English* highlight another benefit of including local histories in the field’s disciplinary narratives: they can shed light on the democratization of writing and its institutionalization. According to Ostergaard, Colby raised the stature of composition when she successfully argued for separating the teaching of writing from the teaching of literature. Although Colby’s early pedagogy resembled current traditional rhetoric, she became an advocate for a writing-across-the-curriculum approach later in her career. Her efforts to focus the curriculum on writing and to promote writing in various contexts effectively meant that she democratized the teaching of writing and institutionalized it through her publications and in her addresses to the Illinois State Normal School Faculty. Myer’s chapter on Lockwood similarly illustrates a democratization of writing instruction and an institutionalization of these practices. Lockwood’s *Lessons in English* helped to democratize writing by inviting women into the practice of composition by integrating female-specific pronouns, including examples from women’s lives, and requiring assignments that spoke to experiences many female students had. This effort to include women in the writing curriculum was institutionalized as this text made its way across the country and was adopted by many academic institutions.

Each chapter in this collection illustrates how local histories can enrich disciplinary narratives by providing a better understanding of the origins of

contemporary pedagogical practices, but Epps-Robertson's and Greer's chapters arguably do this best. Epps-Robertson finds that the pedagogy developed at Moton High foregrounded "emancipatory rhetoric" wherein marginalized students were taught the rhetorical strategies of those in power in order to use these strategies to advance themselves. Additionally, Epps-Robertson discovered that the teachers at Moton High employed a skills-based approach (called for by Booker T. Washington) that was grounded in a particular context, which paid attention to the students' home communities (called for by W.E.B. Du Bois). This blended curriculum anticipates composition's contemporary attention to critical pedagogy and to respecting the knowledge students bring with them from their home communities. Similarly, Jane Greer's chapter "'These Parts of People Escaping on Paper': Reading Our Educational Past Through the High School Diary of Pat Huyett, 1966-1969" demonstrates how historic local practices of writing instruction prefigured modern pedagogies—specifically, constructionist and expressivist pedagogies. In her chapter, Greer considers the personal experiences of Pat Huyett, a female, high-school-aged student from Kansas City, Missouri, who writes extensively in her personal diary. According to Greer, Huyett's diary illustrates that she knows how to "position her work within broader textual networks, seek feedback on her work-in-progress, hone her style, and evaluate her progress" (85). As readers, we learn that Huyett's writing knowledge is conditioned by social contexts as she demonstrates how her work fits in relationship to others, shapes her diary with attention to genre, and develops standards for effective writing. From her analysis, Greer posits that Huyett's diary combines lessons she learned from two pedagogical strands, expressivism and social constructionism, as it showcases a "high school student using expressive writing to engage with the social realities that shaped her world" (90).

The editors and contributors to this book should be commended for crafting a collection that is well organized and innovative, specifically in its focus on "localized" narratives that "do history." Not surprisingly, there are limits to the "local" nature of the histories in this collection, as some of the histories analyzed go beyond the local—such as Myers' analysis of Sarah Lockwood's *Lessons in English* or Mason's chapter on Project English. Various academic institutions throughout the northeastern United States adopted Lockwood's textbook during the late 1800s, which meant that its influence extended outside of New Haven. Mason explores the archives at the University of Nebraska to offer a more localized perspective, yet this perspective is tempered by frequent references to findings from the national NCTE archives. Also, throughout *In the Archives*, attention to the "local" inevitably focuses on the particularities of some locations while ignoring histories from other places. For example, the collection dedicates two chapters to composition history in Kansas City (in

Kansas and Missouri). While the authors justify why it is important to include these narratives and the narratives vary in their content, it is striking that most of the narratives come from certain areas of the country (Midwest and Eastern Seaboard) while other locales in the United States are not as well represented (e.g., parts of the West Coast and Inter-mountain West). Ultimately, this observation is less of a critique than a challenge to the editors, contributors, and other scholars interested in our disciplinary history to conduct future research in overlooked locations.

Together, the chapters in this groundbreaking collection set the stage for future research on composition in spaces outside of higher education—this research might include projects focused on the teaching of writing and rhetoric in religious institutions, other secondary institutions (e.g., middle schools), or even charter schools. This book will be of interest to any graduate student or faculty member in rhetoric and writing who is interested in a more multifaceted understanding of our discipline's origins. It would work especially well in graduate courses on composition pedagogy and history, teacher training courses, or as an exemplar in an archival research methods course. Ultimately, *In the Archives of Composition* is a thoughtful and cohesive collection that functions to reshape how scholars understand rhetoric and composition education and its history.

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About the Author

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Owens, Kim Hensley. *Writing Childbirth: Women's Rhetorical Agency in Labor and Online*. Southern Illinois UP, 2015. 272 pages.

Heather Brook Adams

Recently I viewed several episodes of a feminist sketch comedy web series, "Expecting," that satirizes pregnancy as an experience shaped by social norms and the desires of contemporary mothers-to-be. In one episode, the pregnant protagonist, Mikala, lounges on a chaise and lists her plans for labor and delivery (these include a "birth kimono," four hours of labor that is like "a hard yoga class," and eating her placenta). Mikala's birth plan is spliced with what we can assume is footage of real women (i.e., non-actors) who have given birth, each of whom describes birthing experiences such as days-long labor, indescribable pain, and the fear that this is "all going to end up horribly" (Riot, "Will I"). The juxtaposition of the clips makes the sketch humorous (and eye-opening for those not intimately familiar with childbirth); Mikala's wishes are rendered indulgent, wholly unrealistic, and thus laughable. In another episode, Mikala walks to a corner store with a friend as the two discuss her pregnancy. The chat is banal until a stranger hears the conversation, approaches the two women, and insists, "Do not waste your money on pregnancy jeans!" (Riot, "Everyone's"). Another stranger approaches and, unsolicited, counters this advice. One by one, a crowd gathers, each stranger plying Mikala with directives as to what she should or should not do as an expectant mother, each directive becoming more intrusive and absurd than the last. As both sketches suggest, Mikala is a comic character because of the wild discrepancy between her perceived and actual agency while "expecting." For in this early part of the twenty-first century, as women experience gender-based gains as well as the persistence of intersectional hierarchies of power, pregnancy and childbirth remain key sites of women's diminished agency. Or, in simpler terms, the more things change, the more they stay the same.

As suggested by its title, *Writing Childbirth: Women's Rhetorical Agency in Labor and Online*, Kim Hensley Owens's monograph cuts to the heart of this vexing topic of pregnant women's agency. A recent contribution to the

Southern Illinois University Press's Studies in Rhetorics and Feminisms series, the text applies an academic exploration to the same sorts of discomforts and frustrations raised in the "Expecting" comedy series. Owens's book has much to offer readers through its focused analysis of two genres of childbirth writing (the birth plan and the birth narrative), historical overviews that contextualize contemporary practices and perceptions of childbirth, and a range of theoretical contributions that promise to inform but also extend beyond childbirth-related literacy activities.

Not the least of these contributions is Owens's exploration of rhetorical agency as a still-undertheorized concept. Owens argues that those wishing to recognize "feminist rhetorical agency" must not measure such agency through women's successes, nor should they focus on agency's manifestation "at a particular moment frozen in time" (10). Her analysis of childbirth writing explicates these claims and leads to her contention that feminist rhetorical agency can be recognized as "a series of disparate, collective assertions over time and space" (138). Feminist rhetorical agency can likewise exist even when rhetorical goals have been "thwarted" (137). And as will prove central to Owens's analysis, rather than only producing specific effects, such agency can do the subtle yet significant work of enabling rhetors to shape "events for their own and others' understanding and reassessment" (10). Specifically, this project illustrates how pregnant and birthing women's rhetorical agency in writing childbirth genres brings understanding to and invites reassessment of giving birth, a process that is simultaneously biological and constructed through human rhetorical action and motivations. These exciting interventions into the dynamism of rhetorical agency share synergies with those of Sarah Hallenbeck, whose recent scholarship reworks the notion of agency to be recognizable beyond (only) the individual rhetor, maps agency's distributed forms, and identifies the "rhetorical effort" that "both emerge[s] from and reverberate[s] within" networks of activity (xviii). Owens's project, then, not only offers insights into genres of childbirth writing but extends rich current discussions of rhetorical agency and the methods (here rhetorical and qualitative) for tracing this increasingly complicated but crucial concept.

Owens situates her work not only within feminist rhetorical conversations but also among examinations of "rhetorics of the everyday" and "rhetorics of health and medicine" (14). Her introduction explores the unique convergence of these areas of inquiry and acknowledges that the "rhetorical power and agency" that birthing women experience is shaped by the "rhetorical context of childbirth" as well as how this power and agency functions online and in non-digital environments. It might be helpful to note that although Owens's project examines a number of digital texts and "focuses on the Internet" (9), she does not primarily investigate rhetorical delivery in online spaces, but

rather a range of on- and off-line rhetorical experiences of pregnant and birthing women. Many of these experiences are as enabled and/or constrained by physical place (e.g., hospital or home in the case of a home birth) as much as by digital spaces and the affordances of an earlier Internet age. Said another way, although the texts analyzed in this book were largely made possible by women's access to information shared online, Owens's theoretical contributions are not concentrated around digital literacies. Her insights are likely to animate conversations well beyond those related to the "labor" and "online" rhetorics suggested by her title.

In her first body chapter, "Understanding Birth: Commonplaces of Modern American Childbirth Advice," Owens pens a deft summary of the history of giving birth in the United States since colonial times. This overview enables Owens to lay familiar medical progress narratives (e.g., that specialized knowledge and professional oversight of pregnant and birthing women is beneficial to their wellbeing and thus an ever-developing "good") alongside narratives of decline (e.g., expressions of an allegedly unfavorable shift from birthing as a women-centered practice to one managed by male physicians using new technologies). This compressed survey reveals how such narratives are steeped in praise and blame. Owens complicates trajectories of progress and decline by acknowledging that women themselves historically advocated for some of the medical interventions that have been construed as limiting birthing women's agency. She counters misinformation about the supposed danger of birthing and identifies the role that "support" (e.g., technologies and human attendants) has played in bolstering the perceived need for biomedical interventions during pregnancy. Having carefully laid out this history of birthing as a social, medical, and technological context for contemporary practices, Owens returns to her focus on agency, arguing that women have become "sites, or objects, of childbirth, while physicians and technologies [have become] childbirth's agents" (34). The insight prepares readers for her subsequent explanation of childbirth writing through birth plans and birth narratives that, Owens argues, disrupts this agential control.

The next two chapters of the book investigate the online birth plan as an unusually complex genre that simultaneously enables and in some ways denies birth plan writers' agency. In "Inventing Birth: Rhetorics of Control and Resistance," Owens presents the birth plan as a "rare instance of patient-to-doctor written communication" (42) in which everyday women write "as consumers," indicating their wishes during labor and delivery in order to resist an otherwise passive role in medicalized and intervention-heavy approaches (44). Connecting this chapter to the previous one on birthing history, Owens argues that US women have lost a significant amount of control over childbirth as the process moved from the home to the hospital in the

first half of the twentieth century. This spatial shift aligns with an increased reliance on specialized/medical knowledge instead of women's experiential knowledge of the birthing process. Analyzing online birth plan templates and survey results from women who wrote a plan, Owens finds that many plans seek to bring "home-birth norms" to hospital births, a "rhetorical challenge" that frequently leads to "mixed results" (43). Owens's keen analysis situates these mixed results in relation to several sites of "control" that the birth plan writer cannot easily change. Namely, these sites include the space of the hospital; the *chronos*-oriented assumptions of medicalized norms that devalue a *kairic* approach to the process of birthing; the lack of control that can be exerted over the birthing body (which can result in plans being dismissed by physicians and attendants who revert to medical and legal standards); and the heuristic function of online birth plan templates that, in suggesting content and conventions, circumscribe writers' inventional possibilities. Making a compelling argument that the birth plan genre reflects societal assumptions about birth as much as the will of their authors, Owens claims that such plans "represent a technological and ideological confrontation of wills, the wills of birthing women, dominant culture, and medical staff" (65). Because of this conflation of wills, women's assertions of rhetorical agency do not necessarily translate into "material power" (66) during childbirth; more simply, their hopes and assertions do not necessarily change the material conditions of birthing even though the point of a birth plan is to do just that. Despite the fact that at times plans simply are not respected and/or implemented (particularly in the hospital setting), Owens cedes that the self-directed education involved in developing a plan amid conflicting and abundant information could serve a rhetorical value that exceeds a plan's implementation.

Chapter three, "Confronting Birth: Rhetorical Disability and Five Women's Birth Plans," extends and amplifies the claims made in the previous chapter. Owens analyzes an "archive" (71) of five birth plans obtained from survey respondents, triangulating these plans with plan templates and participant responses. Through close analysis of the aspects of birth plans that she deems to "serve a rhetorical function" (74), Owens maps the discursive characteristics of plans (e.g., style, ethical appeals, strategic uses of politeness) that simultaneously bolster and limit plan writers' rhetorical agency. It was when reading this portion of the book in which Owens explains the "medical, legal, and narrative" convergences present in birth plans and their flagrant dismissal by some medical professionals that I realized just how complex, strange, and rhetorically intriguing the genre is. I value Owens's contemplation of how writing functions as a technique that can expose and undermine, if not directly overturn, the embodied performances of medicalized birth (such as laying on one's back while birthing) that literally render women passive. Birth plan writers,

Owens contends, both anticipate and “confront” (84) their own “rhetorical disability” during childbirth, or their expected inability to communicate due to pain, being medicated, and/or power differentials in the delivery room. Thus birth plan writing is meant to “stand in for” a voice that may be silent during childbirth. Charting textual features of the plans illustrates the rhetorical negotiation that writers undertake in anticipation of the power differentials and contextual factors contributing to this rhetorical disability. The chapter compellingly argues for the educational value of birth plan writing as a “research and writing exercise” and makes a case for recognizing the indirect empowerment such writing can afford. Women “embody the philosophy of writing to learn” (86) as they proactively educate themselves about birthing options and communicate their preferences to others.

Shifting from birth plans to birth stories, Owens next takes readers to a genre that women compose after giving birth. “Hosting Birth: Birth and Birth Stories over Time and Online” investigates five Web 1.0 “childbirth and parenting” sites that have posted women’s narratives about their birthing experiences. Owens analyzes the content (alphabetic and visual) and commercial features of these sites, some of which are corporate and some non-corporate. Owens frames this form of writing childbirth as the “online descendants” (94) of traditional, often oral, birth stories. She advocates viewing this form of writing as remediation because it enables women to make private experiences public and thus potentially remedy contemporary women’s lack of knowledge and experience in relation to childbirth (95). Arguing that these host sites enable the possibility for women to connect, interact, and create a “virtual coterie” (97), Owens also demonstrates how the sites constrict this rhetorical potential. She focuses on the presence of advertisements, the inclusion (or exclusion) of visual images including photographs of birthing women, the hosts’ methods for categorizing and labeling stories, and their invitations for submissions, all of which constrain contributors. She further uses these observations to suggest that women writers have been hailed as “procreative customers” (107) who, in some cases, are likely prompted to write in ways that will increase consumer traffic on commercial sites. As with earlier chapters, Owens extends her theory of feminist rhetorical agency, here focusing on how websites “invite and use” women’s birth stories and, subsequently how agency can be “distribut[ed]” (90) in online environments. Through her close-textual analysis, Owens presents a fair assessment of how these sites extend a promise of distributed agency that they ultimately fail to uphold.

“Th[e] complexity [of birth narratives] mirrors the complexity of birth itself as a profound physical, psychological, social, and often medical event” (125). This claim illustrates the insights Owens provides throughout her text and especially in the last body chapter, “Sharing Birth: Catharsis, Commentary, and

Testimonial in Online Birth Stories.” In this second chapter examining birth narratives and survey responses, Owens argues that birth narrative authors “write [themselves] into a rhetorical stance” (130) that enables them to thereby “write themselves into the role of mother” (136). In so doing, these women construct a “received truth” (132) that may differ from reality but nevertheless enables them to remediate their experiences and create restorative and empowering memories. Specifically, the birth narrative writing that Owens investigates suggests that women use storytelling to “come to terms” (130) with varied experiences including (often traumatic) births and challenging hospital encounters. Birth stories hold a range of rhetorical functions, Owens demonstrates; they function as public writing that educates other women, as a site for personal catharsis, as testimonials inviting exchange, as a mash-up of “advice column” and “consciousness-raising tract” (120), and—above all—as “disruptive” writing that can unsettle and reframe both personal experiences and public expectations of childbirth. Owens’s explication of writing as a “method of remembering” (131) and narrative as “sociopolitical expression” (115) are two of the most generative aspects of this intriguing chapter.

I found Owens’s epilogue the most surprising and thought-provoking portion of the entire text. I admit that I anticipated Owens retelling her own birth story in order to state her positionality, to better align herself with self-disclosing study participants, and to bolster the claims made in earlier chapters. The first half of the epilogue, however, is unexpected in that it theorizes the concept of “experience” based on the shifting critiques Owens received as a researcher on childbirth writing before, and then after, she experienced childbirth herself. She casts experience as most usefully understood in divergent ways, as a “legitimate” source of *ethos* and/or as a constructed rhetorical space that enables or constrains a rhetor (140). I admit that my expectations for this autoethnographic chapter reflect my own deficits in thinking about the rhetorical complexity of experience which, itself, is “so amorphous a concept” (145). Lacing this rewardingly conceptual material with ideas presented earlier in the book (e.g., memory and narrative), Owens illuminates the value of embodied experience for scholars working on body-related topics. Ultimately, though, she advocates for sound scholarly training and research methods to be the most significant basis for evaluating one’s *ethos* on any topic, even those related to our intimate and bodily ways of knowing. Owens concludes the book with her personal birth stories; these narratives were so engrossing and elegantly written that, upon taking a pause, I realized I had stopped annotating the final pages of the text. As a coda to the project, the narratives are anything but self-serving or superfluous; Owens uses them to ponder how her scholarly and embodied selves have merged across time, space, and experience and how she remembers them through her writing.

Writing Childbirth promises to contribute much to the study of feminist rhetorics. I found myself grappling throughout the book with some fundamental paradoxes of the social and rhetorical constructions of childbirth (at least in the US) that necessitate the kind of unpacking, articulating, and explicating that Owens performs. For instance, while reading the book I began asking stasis-like questions about childbirth writing and its animation of the differing ideologies of stakeholders (i.e., women, partners, and medical professionals), all of whom arguably want the best for both mothers and children. Consider rhetorical agency, for example: Owens has taught me that the control a birth plan writer seeks is already potentially in conflict with the limited control a woman can exert over her birthing body. This site of tension prompted me to ask myself generative questions: What is agency in light of these embodied situations? How do we recognize its forms? Is rhetorical agency among self-educating women always good? And how, when, and why should its limitations be renegotiated? I appreciate Owens's consistent choice to offer dual interpretations that honor the complexity of these sites of rhetorical production and consumption instead of hastily casting victims and perpetrators within the arena of medicalized births. For instance, when analyzing websites that host women's birth narratives, Owens refrains from villainizing commercial sites as irredeemably exploitative. She explains:

at first glance, websites' commodification of women's experiences could be read as damaging to women, or at least to their ability to use their experiences and stories for their own agency or for their own financial, intellectual, emotional, or other purposes—and it may be. But the commodification through copyright also may have a positive effect, in that the sites that copyright stories remain online, perhaps in part because of the financial stability lent by taking ownership of the stories. (100-101)

Notable in this excerpt is Owens's speculative tone, as evidenced through her use of non-declarative words such as "may" and "could." Such language is present throughout the project. I consider that rather than suggesting tentativeness, this speculative authorial stance invites readers to share, perhaps even codetermine, Owens's insights. Such an approach also lends credence to the intricate possibilities of "everyday" women's rhetorics that compose the confounding, if widely shared, experiences of childbirth.

Owens not only models how to expertly unpack tacit assumptions (Introduction), a move necessary to most feminist rhetorical scholars, she also engages with a "wider, messier circle of both influence on and output by individuals and across technologies" that is "critical for deep understanding" (137). Moments of close textual analysis ground key arguments, but it is Owens's

willingness to cast her net wide—transhistorically and across space and media—that adds a crucial dimensionality to the project. In this way her project will provide a useful model to other researchers working “messily” to span familiar and unfamiliar sites of rhetoric.

The potential limitation of not having examined Web 2.0 childbirth writing offers an opportunity, perhaps for others in the field if not Owens herself, to expand upon the useful work accomplished in this book. Another opportunity for development would be to more explicitly consider how ability, sexual orientation, race, socioeconomic status, education level, and other variances are manifest (or rendered mute) in these literacy practices. Admittedly, Owens notes that her “hearty data set” of 120 narratives, while representing “the full spectrum of birthing locations, attitudes, and experiences,” was otherwise less diverse than she would have expected (15). Do other types of childbirth writing exist? And, if so, would knowledge of these genres render this “full spectrum” only partial? Although I would have appreciated a more robust reflection on how and why the genres of childbirth writing examined in this book are taken up by white, middle-class women more than women of other demographics, I respect Owens’s critical work in understanding extant birth narratives. I also acknowledge her calls for further investigation into issues of diversity/inclusivity in relation to these genres. A single paragraph noting the absence of miscarriage and stillbirths in birth plans and on birth plan templates summons further, and needed, exploration. Much additional work awaits, and this project will hopefully serve as the foundation for new questions and sites of analysis.

Owens’s focus on everyday women’s experiences also opens up space for exploring feminist rhetorical scholarship’s relationship to advocacy and raises questions about who (all) our work should address. Marika Seigel has provided an admirable example of academic work (on the rhetoric of pregnancy, no less) specifically written for both scholarly and non-scholarly audiences. Should attention to rhetorical interventions written by everyday women prompt scholarly resistance to the exclusivity of academic publishing? I raise these questions, perhaps familiar to readers of *Peitho* (see Adams), not to suggest an oversight on Owens’s part in her artful and intellectually rigorous monograph, but to suggest how new work in the field of feminisms and rhetorics should urge more sustained attention to the conventions, expectations, audiences, and purposes of our work. With each new boundary-pushing piece of scholarship investigating the rhetorical and material realities of living women, our field is prompted to revisit the goals and uses of our writing.

Writing Childbirth’s exploration of writing motherhood deepens an expanding interest in rhetorics of motherhood (e.g., Buchanan; Hayden and O’Brien Hallstein). Owens’s consideration of birthing-women-as-consumers

and writers seeking agency complements recent work largely situated in Communication Studies that takes up similar lines of inquiry (see Demo, Borda, and Kroløkke). An invigorating work of feminist rhetorical and writing studies scholarship, *Writing Childbirth* will make an outstanding contribution to the graduate classroom, could benefit mature undergraduate readers, would be a truly useful addition to the bookshelf of any feminist rhetorical scholar, and should be required reading for those in our field actively exploring women's agency, rhetorics of health and medicine, and body/embodied rhetorics.

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About the Author

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Ramírez, Cristina Devereaux. *Occupying Our Space: The Mestiza Rhetorics of Mexican Women Journalists and Activists, 1875–1942*. U of Arizona P, 2015. 272 pages.

Marcia Farr

Cristina Devereaux Ramírez's study of the historical writings of Mexican women is an important contribution to rhetorical studies, as well as to other fields. By delving into Mexican archives, she has rescued the ignored writings of women throughout the history of Mexico, focusing on writers from the late 19th and early 20th century. This work shows that women always have participated in important social movements in Mexico, even while having to adapt to varying patriarchal social constraints. Her analysis of the writings themselves stands as a significant contribution to feminist and rhetorical studies in both the U.S. and Mexico. This review first explains Devereaux Ramírez's mestiza rhetoric theoretical framework, including its history, then provides brief descriptions of the women and their writings that are analyzed in this book, and finally discusses concerns about the theoretical frame of mestiza rhetoric that is stretched to cover all these Mexican women.

Devereaux Ramírez notes the history of her theoretical framework, mestiza rhetoric:

[M]estiza rhetoric was first coined by Andrea Lunsford in her interview with Gloria Anzaldúa in "Toward a Mestiza Rhetoric," and it was developed further in Damián Baca's book *Mestiz@ Scripts, Digital Migrations, and the Territories of Writing*...[M]y interpretation of mestiza rhetoric deviates from Anzaldúa's Chicana articulation. I interpret that mestiza rhetoric stems, in part, from the identity theory of mestizaje that emerged in the modernist phase (1880-90) of Latin American literature, history, art, and philosophy. (33-34)

The identity theory of mestizaje (racial mixture) was articulated primarily by male intellectuals who "embraced their mestizo indigenous roots as a way of understanding their modernist identities" (34). This identity theory is derived most explicitly from a 1925 essay by José Vasconcelos, *La Raza Cósmica*

(the Cosmic Race). Reacting against Anglo-Saxon white racial supremacy dominant in the U.S., Vasconcelos proposed that the future belonged to the mestizos (mixed race people) of Latin America, though he primarily emphasized a European-Indian mixture. This ideology was adopted by the post-revolutionary Mexican state while Vasconcelos was Secretary of Education, and it dominates nationalist discourse in Mexico. Farr (2006) provides a synthesis of mestizaje in Mexican history, but briefly, this nationalist discourse attempts to counter European supremacy by valorizing Mexico's Indian heritage (133-138).

Devereaux Ramírez adopts this nationalist ideology of mestizaje but critiques its male-centric focus by recognizing the ignored late 19th and early 20th century women writers who also promoted the ideology. She emphasizes their marginal social positioning, primarily because of their gender; one of the writers is upper class, and all have varying degrees of mestizaje, but none are born indigenous. This is a significant point because Vasconcelos's ideology of mestizaje, while challenging European supremacy, promotes the acculturation of Indians into the mestizo dominant nation, effectively reinforcing the low status of (non-acculturated) Indians in Mexico, a concern addressed in more detail later in this review.

In chapter one, Devereaux Ramírez reconceptualizes Malintzin, the translator and mistress of the conquistador Cortés. Rather than adopting the traditional (male and now dominant) view of her as La Malinche, a traitor to her people, she views her as the first Mexican female active speaker, although not writer, who "undoubtedly...became a crucial player negotiating ideas and pleas within the complexities of two cultures" (42) and thus opened a rhetorical *puesto* (space) for Mexican women. Each of the women writers she presents throughout the book then further opened this public speaking/writing space for women.

Chapter two focuses on Laureana Wright de Kleinhans, an elite educated woman who wrote and edited a journal during the 19th century colonial period. Wright de Kleinhans used her position in society and her journal to re-present notable pre-conquest (before 1519) and colonial era (until 1821) women by writing about them, as well as to argue for the education of women. To enter the public sphere she adopted the highly formal, syntactically complex genres used by male intellectuals at the time, even though this reinforced the class distinctions such language engenders. Although she accepted some dominant societal ideologies (e.g., of La Malinche and the domestic roles of women), she did open a public space for women and re-envision the role of women in Mexican history.

Chapter three introduces the *Mujeres de Zitácuaro* (Women of Zitácuaro, Michoacán) who wrote and published at the turn of the 20th century. These women led a "progressive Presbyterian movement initiated by visiting

American missionaries" (94), and they engaged in anti-Catholic and anti-(President) Díaz public discourse that was a precursor to the revolution (1910). They adopted traditional revolutionary protest genres to promote a national identity based on the indigenous past (the Cosmic Race ideology), free schooling for everyone (including women), and freedom for women from the patriarchy of the Catholic Church, even while accepting "the nation's sacred calling for women: motherhood" (95).

Chapter four presents Juana Belén Gutiérrez de Mendoza's revolutionary writing in her dissident newspaper. This writer moved the *puesto* (space) for women in public discourse even further, since her writing is confrontational and activist (what the author describes as *pleito* or "in-your-face" confrontational rhetoric). This woman, unlike the others, argued on behalf of contemporary (not just historical) indigenous communities and against the dominant Cosmic Race ideology that promoted the assimilation of contemporary Indians, even as it glorified Mexico's Indian past. As a mestiza who identified with her mother's indigenous heritage, Gutiérrez de Mendoza's writings do fit the author's theoretical frame of mestiza rhetoric, much more so than any of the other women writers. Yet in identifying with only one side of her heritage, Gutiérrez de Mendoza tended to essentialize the indigenous as the "true identity of Mexico" (57):

As a mestiza, Gutiérrez de Mendoza made the conscious choice of rooting her identity in indigenous people's history as a much more genuine perspective than the popularized movement based in Vasconcelos's theories, which were framed as transitory connections with the indigenous cultures. (157)

The author goes on to note that this move parallels what Anzaldúa calls the "authentic path" (157), consciously choosing the indigenous side of a Chicana's heritage and discarding the rest. The author tells us that she also has made this rhetorical move, identifying with her mother's partial indigenous heritage. This is a political move, and as such it is defensible in intent. Yet when this move entails essentializing and dichotomizing, it is problematic, as elaborated later in this review.

Chapter five analyzes the writings of Hermila Galindo and her progressive women's magazine, *La Mujer Moderna* (The Modern Woman). As the author notes, Galindo's "ideas were highly influenced by European philosophers" (166) who promoted feminism, and her rhetoric integrated these ideas into nationalist politics during the revolution. She was the appointed spokesperson for one revolutionary president (Venustiano Carranza, 1917-1920) and in this role argued for a constitutional government and against the traditionally powerful Catholic Church. Thus this woman occupied a very public *puesto*

that promoted the inclusion of women as well as suffrage for women. In the Epilogue, the author argues that rhetoric (and I would argue, all language use) creates social reality, and as such all these women writers can be seen as gradually opening public spaces for women. Such discourse, moreover, can later “leak” into other contexts, promoting yet more feminist action. This perspective on language, and the author’s commendable use of archives for rhetorical studies, are the significant strengths of this book. The theoretical frame that promotes an indigenous identity over others, however, raises important issues.

Early in the book, the author laments the black-white binary in rhetorical studies (10). This binary, however, is not limited to rhetorical studies but in fact widely pervades thinking about race and ethnicity in the United States. Liberal or conservative, people too frequently equate “diversity” (ethnic diversity, at least) only with the inclusion of African Americans. There has been and is, of course, much more ethnic diversity in the United States, especially in regard to (but not limited to) the growing presence of Latin@s in our demographic. (I use the @ to represent both males and females.) Mexicans (and other Latin Americans) disrupt the U.S.’s black-white binary by simply existing in all skin colors, from (to use Mexican terms) *güer@* (white or blond) or *blanc@* (white) to *priet@* (swarthy) to *moren@* (brown) and *negr@* (black). Of course, African Americans also are comprised of a diverse population that is too often squeezed into a simple black-white dichotomy.

There are historical reasons for the pervasive black-white dichotomy in U.S. thinking (and for the category “white” itself) based on the attempt to exclude anyone with any African heritage; legally you couldn’t be part African American, only fully so. A contemporary explanation for such thinking is that many “whites” in the U.S. (excluding the Southwest) know more about African Americans than they do about Latin@s, or more specifically Mexicans, who comprise about two-thirds of U.S. Latin@s. Unless someone looks stereotypically “Mexican,” and especially if she is light-skinned, she often is not immediately perceived as non-white, that is, until she speaks. Spanish-accented English, or a Chicano dialect, instantly triggers the perception of Otherness and the stereotyping that accompanies it. Stereotypes of Mexicans, like those of any group, including women of all colors, are used to dehumanize and denigrate individuals, forcing everyone in a naturally diverse group into the same negative mold. Another unfortunate outcome of stereotyping is the “invisibility” of people who don’t fit the stereotype. For example, African Americans or Mexicans who “look white” sometimes struggle with not being considered “authentic” members of their groups. But what is “authentic,” and from whose perspective?

Unfortunately, such essentializing of human groups is common beyond the U.S. In Mexico a dichotomy between Spanish-urban-elite vs. Indian-rural-poor has a long history as well as contemporary force. Thus people who do not fit at either end of this dichotomy, for example being more Spanish than Indian in heritage but poor and rural like most Indians (e.g., the “rancheros” in my 2006 book), often are nevertheless assumed to be “indigenous” or Indian by elites or urbanites (but never by the indigenous themselves). As already noted, even Mexico’s well-known Cosmic Race mestizo ideology promoted after the 1910-1920 Revolution, which Devereaux Ramírez rightly criticizes for its male-centric focus and its emphasis on assimilating Indians, emphasized the indigenous over the Spanish heritage—but only in theory, not in practice. The indigenous past is celebrated, but contemporary Indians are generally at the bottom of the socioeconomic hierarchy in Mexico.

U.S. essentialist views of Mexicans also tend to emphasize the Indian identity, whether to denigrate and exclude them as “half breeds” or to valorize and support them as an oppressed minority. Scholars, who tend to be progressive, often take the latter view. Thus Devereaux Ramírez adapts (but modifies) Gloria Anzaldúa’s “mestiza rhetoric” that emphasizes the indigenous side of Mexicans and Chican@s. This is an understandable response to U.S. racism, yet it furthers dichotomous thinking, and it does not match the actual felt identities of many Mexican-origin people living in the U.S. or in Mexico. My (and others’) critique of this view applies not just to this book, but equally to Vasconcelos’s essay and to other scholarly works, including Anzaldúa’s “Toward a Mestiza Rhetoric” and Bonfil Batalla’s *Mexico Profundo: Reclaiming a Civilization*. Much recent scholarship has shown people’s identities to be multiple, fluid and dynamic, rather than essential (see, for example, Christiansen). Moreover, historians have documented the multiethnic and multicultural sources of Mexican heritage, including Africans, non-Spanish Europeans, Middle Easterners, Chinese, Jews, and others. Finally, the indigenous culture that is imagined in this move is long gone and unknowable given the intensity of both biological and cultural mestizaje following the Spanish conquest of Mexico (Knight). What is perceived as “indigenous culture,” even historically, is actually already a synthesis of indigenous and Spanish (and other) cultures.

My own linguistic ethnography (Farr, 2006) afforded me a rare opportunity to understand dynamic identities from within Mexican-origin families both in Mexico and the U.S., as well as how these identities often collide with U.S. perceptions of Mexicans as primarily indigenous (especially in the jokes about their own light skin color vis-à-vis white people). Moreover, in Mexico the truly indigenous view such mestizo rancheros as outsiders not to be trusted. A mestiza rhetoric that emphasizes fluidity and multiple, shifting identities is powerful. One that promotes an indigenous heritage as more “authentic”

unfortunately furthers dichotomous racial thinking. For example, the author ascribes authenticity to indigenous culture but not Spanish culture in critiquing a journal which published mostly male writers in the late 19th century: "*La Semana* [the journal] focused on Eurocentric ways of being for women. This focus both suppressed and silenced the more authentic claim to their culture and cemented women's ways of being" (66). Both in the U.S. and Mexico, this ideology collides with the reality on the ground, as much as the Cosmic Race ideology does. The reality, that is, is multi-faceted, rather than dichotomous: a spectrum of colors, rather than simply black and white.

Mexican scholarship has explored the pervasive Spanish heritage in Mexico (Diego-Fernández Sotelo), as well as an African heritage (Chavez Carbajál), moving beyond Cosmic Race ideology to recognize all sources of Mexico's complex heritage. An aspect unexplored so far is the effect of demographic movements from the U.S. to Mexico over time, including many southerners who lost the U.S. Civil War, missionaries, and contemporary retirement communities. Back and forth flows of people from long before the U.S. - Mexican border closed in the 1920s inevitably affect cultures and thus rhetorics. Devereaux Ramírez' father himself (Devereaux) was a Mormon missionary who acculturated to Mexican culture and married a Mexican-origin woman (Ramírez). Although Devereaux Ramírez notes that she "leans toward" her mother's heritage, in fact she is mestiza in yet another sense, combining heritage from both the U.S. and Mexico. In this regard, she is like one of the women whose rhetoric she analyzes, Laureana Wright de Kleinhans, who also combined these heritages in parentage and then married a German. Although the other rhetors analyzed in this book are more mestiza and less elite than Wright de Kleinhans, only one, Juana Belén Gutiérrez de Mendoza, identified with an indigenous community, even though she was not born in one. The others rhetors, moreover, were influenced variously by Protestant missionaries from the U.S., European philosophers, and worldwide feminist movements, as Devereaux Ramírez clearly explains. Yet these strong global influences are left out of the analysis under a theoretical framework that emphasizes indigeneity, as the mestiza rhetoric does. A broader conception of mestizaje (mixing) that includes all sources of cultural and thus rhetorical heritage would not only be more historically accurate, but more analytically powerful, especially as it highlights the indeterminacy of positioning within such a mix. I hope that the author's prodigious scholarship leads her to examine these more nuanced aspects of mestizaje in the future.

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About the Author

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