Peitho
Volume 25.1
Fall 2022

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About the Journal: Peitho seeks to encourage, advance, and publish original feminist research in the history of rhetoric and composition and thereby support scholars and students within our profession. For submission guidelines and requirements, please see http://peitho.cwshrc.org/submit/. Peitho (ISSN 2169-0774) is published twice a year, in the Spring and Fall. Access to back issues of Peitho are part of the Coalition membership package. Coalition membership is $10 for graduate students and $25 for faculty; more information is available at cwshrc.org.

Cover art: "Our Secret," by Mike Edwards
Mike Edwards (https://preterite.net) is an associate professor of rhetoric and composition at Washington State University in Pullman. His work has appeared in *Pedagogy*, *Rhetoric Review*, and a number of edited collections. His scholarship focuses on the intersections of rhetoric, technology, composition, and economy. He likes cats.

Editor's Introduction

Author: Rebecca Dingo and Clancy Ratliff

Rebecca Dingo is Professor of English at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. Rebecca's research has addressed transnational rhetorical and composition studies and in doing so she forwards a transnational feminist lens attuned to global political economy. She is the author of *Networking Arguments: Rhetoric, Transnational Feminism*, and *Public Policy Writing*, which received the W. Ross Winterowd Award in 2012. She has published widely in both the field of Women's Studies and Rhetorical Studies. Rebecca has also offered workshops and trainings across the globe on her research, writing pedagogies, and writing development. Her pedagogy seeks to connect theory with practice and all of her classes tend to offer on-the-ground case studies paired with theoretical lenses. Rebecca earned her Ph.D. in English with an emphasis on Rhetoric and Composition from The Ohio State University.

Clancy Ratliff is Friends of the Humanities/Regents Professor in the English department and Associate Dean of the College of Liberal Arts at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette. Her research and teaching interests are in feminist rhetorics, environmental rhetorics, writing program administration, and copyright and authorship. She has published research in *Women's Studies Quarterly*, *Kairos*, *Pedagogy*, and other journals and edited collections. She is involved with several community advocacy organizations, including Sierra Club Delta Chapter, Move the Mindset, Citizens Climate Lobby, Acadiana Regional Coalition on Homelessness and Housing, and Louisiana Association of Sports, Outdoor Adventure, and Recreation (LASOAR).

keywords: agency, context, genre, copyright, transnational feminisms, rhetorics of shame, accessibility, pedagogy, Iran

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Greetings from the Peitho editorial team! This issue marks one year of Clancy and I leading the journal! In addition to day-to-day tasks of keeping the journal fresh, relevant, and fierce, we have been working on creating processes that align with our commitment to anti-racist practices, improving our submission and reviewing processes, and working to make the journal more accessible not only on our site but also in databases. With our new editorial board, our constantly hardworking team, and our soon to be announced associate editor, we see that Peitho is going to thrive! But we need our

readers' continued support too. Please fill out (and share with your feminist colleagues) our reviewer interest survey. We rely on our feminist community to act not only as supportive peer reviewers but also mentors for prospective authors. Our current list is a bit out of date. Over the past years, many of our reviewers may have developed additional research, teaching, and service expertise, and there are always new folks entering the conversation. We'd like to know who you are, what you are doing, and how you'd like to engage with the Peitho community.

In this Fall 2022 issue of *Peitho*, feminist approaches to agency, context, and genre thread across the essays and demonstrate the dynamic and broad feminist inquiry that scholars continue to bring to the journal. Read together, authors in this issue invite readers to consider rhetorical nuances by re-seeing and re-examining the agentive writing of individual women students ("Student Writings as 'Mutt Genres' and 'Unique Performances'"), the popularity of the well-circulated and celebrated book *Persepolis* ("Global Mobility"), and the rhetorical uses of shame and affect ("Unsticking Shame"). These essays demonstrate the importance of feminist rhetorical scholars working at various scales and the need for scholars to consider contexts. In this issue's case, this means examining local writing and composition pedagogy within the context of one university in the mid-west USA, tracing rhetorics of shame in a US-national context, and questioning the transnational perceptions of the Iranian Revolution in a book that has been incredibly popular for US and European audiences.

In Azadeh Ghanizadeh's essay "Global Mobility and Subaltern Knowledge: A Transnational Feminist Perspective on Marjane Satrapi's *Persepolis*," she lays bare the often unexplored complex historical and feminist contexts of the well-circulated (especially in first-year writing curriculums) book *Persepolis.* In doing so, Ghanizadeh draws attention to how US and European-feminist audiences often celebrate the book for its feminist and multicultural story of migration and Iranian identity. However, as Ghanizadeh suggests, rhetorics of Islamophobia and Eurocentric feminism weave through *Persepolis* and thus limits US and European audience members' understanding of the complexities of migration. Moreover, such rhetorics perpetuate misunderstanding about people and cultures different from our own. As she argues, these rhetorics are shaped by histories of capitalism, colonialism, and cosmopolitanism, making them fascinating for US and European audiences who are interested in stories about exile and subaltern identities while not demonstrating these discursive limits for the very people they impact. Ghanizadeh asks us as readers to re-see and re-examine the affinity of stories like *Persepolis.* This essay is timely given the protests in Iran against strict veiling laws that have come in the wake of the murder of Masha Amini, a member of Iran's minority Kurdish group, at the hands of police for allegedly wearing her hijab incorrectly. Amini's murder is just one of many examples of the violence against women, particularly women protesters, currently unfolding in Iran.

While Ghanizadeh is concerned with audiences' needs to understand the nuance of popular stories about subaltern women, Sarah Polo, in "Student Writings as 'Mutt Genres' and 'Unique Performances,'" looks at how women students write against and with common rhetorical and composition conventions. She uses the archive of one student at the University of Kansas in the early 1900s to show how women students developed savvy rhetorical skills and agency that responded to (and even critiqued) their writing instruction. As Polo details, the student's unique uptake of genres shows a shift from the teaching of rhetoric to the teaching of composition and in doing so she asks her audience to re-see and imagine how students developed agency through their writing. Polo's nuanced reading of the archive points to the complex ways that student writing and their "mutt genres" helps readers revise the history of composition.

Like Polo, Hannah Taylor considers how participants of the *Braving Body Shame Conference* similarly use rhetorical skills to carve out agency and in doing so help rhetorical scholars re-examine how they have analyzed rhetorics of shame. Shame, according to Taylor, has been flattened in rhetorical theory. Taylor shows how participants in the conference have usefully redefined shame by attending to it not as monolithic and flattened feeling but rather as a recursive process that can be generative and agentive. By drawing readers' attention to the nuances of shame and recontextualizing as it as agency, Taylor offers feminist scholars grounded and fruitful examples of how to reconsider rhetorics of shame. Taylor ultimately ends with a call for scholars to ground their analyses of women and their rhetorical acts "as characterized by those women," shifting feminist rhetorical methods toward thinking about the dynamics of agency.

A Note on Copyright (and Accessibility)

In the past, *Peitho* has provided only PDF versions of articles. Then, for a time, we had both web and PDF versions of articles, and then only web versions. Recently, under the leadership of our Web Coordinator, Kelli Lycke, we have been offering both PDF and web versions of articles again. We do this for two main reasons: first, we sometimes get inquiries from people who are putting together portfolios for tenure and promotion, and they would like a PDF of their article with the journal's formatting and branding. Second, and more significant, for accessibility: PDFs offer more flexibility for screen readers – apps like Speechify allow users to download PDFs and listen to them without needing an internet connection. Kelli is leading the effort to design front matter for the PDF version of the journal, and copyright is part of that.

When I (Clancy) first applied to be an editor of *Peitho*, I was thinking about my time in graduate school, when I first became passionate about open access scholarship.

I wanted to be a part of *Peitho*, especially because it is free and open access, meaning no subscription fees are required and no paywalls, logins, or other barriers to entry exist. When I was in graduate school, during the height of the blogosphere, some of us mounted an informal campaign to pressure rhetoric and composition journals to adopt Creative Commons licenses, and several did: *Kairos*, *Computers and Composition Online*, and *The Writing Instructor*. Now, we are pleased to announce that the issues of *Peitho* during our term as editors will have a CC-BY license, or Attribution license. That is considered the gold standard of open access, meaning that we grant permission in advance for *Peitho* articles to be reprinted in edited collections, archived on other websites including institutional repositories and course websites, as well as permission in advance for adaptations, including translations into other languages and audio recordings. We hope that, observing the process of shared governance including input from the *Peitho* Editorial Board, Coalition Advisory Board, and Coalition Executive Board, we may eventually revise the *Peitho* bylaws to adopt a Creative Commons Attribution license permanently.

Global Mobility and Subaltern Knowledge:
A Transnational Feminist Perspective on Marjane Satrapi's *Persepolis*.

Author: Azadeh Ghanizadeh is a graduate of the Oregon State University School of Writing, Literature, and Film where she studied literature and culture. She received her undergraduate degree in philosophy at the University of Oregon and wrote her honors thesis on women and gender in Islam with an emphasis on anti-colonial Islamic movements. She is broadly interested in social and political philosophy with a focus on globalization, internationalism, and asylum. Her current work examines regimes of transnational mobility and the politics and discourses of international asylum. In this vein, her work views different and contending interpretations of refugee and refugee protection from within a postcolonial studies and transnational feminist framework. She is currently a graduate fellow at Syracuse University's Composition and Cultural Rhetoric program.

Abstract: This article examines the workings of class, ethnicity, and religion as they appear and are obscured in popular writings by Iranian women. Reviewing Marjane Satrapi's popular memoir, *Persepolis,* as foremost in an ensemble of works by Iranian diaspora women writing for Western audiences, this article uses a transnational feminist framework to critique the Eurocentric and Islamophobic rhetoric in *Persepolis* and in its critical reception. Though *Persepolis* is often viewed as multiculturalist and feminist, the persistence of a Eurocentric and Islamophobic subtext provides insight into how demographic differences in immigration and diaspora spaces are shaped by unchecked capitalist, colonial world markets populated by readers fascinated by stories about migration, exile, and subalterneity. Focusing on representations of the 1979 Islamic revolution, and its aftermath, this article reviews Eurocentric feminism disguised in multiculturalist rhetoric in *Persepolis* to argue that migration, and stories about it, can create distance and misunderstanding rather than knowledge about far away peoples. Against this reading, Satrapi's work can generate new insight when placed into comparison with *Under the Shadow,* in an example of anti-authoritarian and anti-patriarchal critique that avoids the usual orientalist and colonialist depictions of Islam and Muslims so typical when the topic in question is the Middle East and its peoples. In this diaspora film, patriarchal colonialism and masculinist Islam are simultaneously cr

itiqued for their relational and mutually constitutive character leaving out the Eurocentric rhetoric in *Persepolis* and adjacent texts.

Keywords: Transnational feminism, globalization, *Persepolis*, migration, Iranian Revolution, Economic Class, Islam

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This article examines the effects of global economic disparities between states on the production and reception of popular contemporary writings by Iranian women. Focusing on works by Iranian women in diaspora as staples in multiculturalist education geared toward worldly Western readers, this article re-reads Marjane Satrapi's *Persepolis* through a transnational feminist framework to contextualize the historical struggles that inform the enthusiasm for this work[1]. As part of a larger pattern of diaspora writing by Iranian women, *Persepolis* is meant to convey the culture and character of Middle Eastern people to Western audiences who wish to engage, in good faith, in multiculturalist exchange across distance and difference. Falling short of this promise, however, *Persepolis* is laced with subtle Eurocentric rhetoric presenting as class bias, Islamophobia, and appeals to 'white feminism[2].' While diaspora writings by Iranian women are widely read with enthusiasm for their apparently progressive offerings, a transnational feminist reading can highlight how global and local syncretism can, in this case, increase misunderstanding and bias rather than create knowledge about distant peoples. Far from removing this work from study, however, *Persepolis* should be re-read for the critical insight it can provide into the vagaries of multiculturalism and the inequities that persist in the aftermath of European colonialism and its globalizing markets. Despite being a popular text in American and European higher education, *Persepolis* is a class-inflected work read as class-neutral by a readership that attempts to address global colonial inequalities through narrative discourse without paying enough attention to the historical struggles that create them. To address some of these misconnections, a transnational feminist re-reading can provide insight into how global market dynamics between states can influence literary production and audience reception. In sum, despite being an exemplar of work that signifies the humanist and anti-racist bona fides of the academic humanities and women's studies, *Persepolis* is distinctly Islamophobic and Eurocentric in ways that implicate economic class within nations and market dynamics between them as historical struggles are translated into neutral narratives of migration and exile.

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[1] 'Western' in this article is consonant with my use of the term 'Third-World,' stressing the vast economic differences between, broadly speaking, regions of the world separated by the divisions created in the wake of the 'age of discovery.' For further elaboration, please see note number 6.

[2] My usage of Islamophobia is aligned, broadly, as "dislike of or prejudice against Islam or Muslims, especially as a political force" (Oxford 2020).

What happens when American academic institutions, motivated by progressive values, wish to encounter Middle Eastern subjects as a pathway to becoming more worldly readers (Fisk 44)[3]? Marjane Satrapi, along with others like Azar Nafisi and Azadeh Moaveni, are best-selling Iranian women authors in the economically dominant, or Western, world. Their works often appear in college writing classes and feminist rhetorics anthologies: "in the U.S. alone, *Persepolis* appears on about 250 university syllabi" (Chute 137). Why is there such enthusiasm for this work among Western readers when it is banned in Iran? Perhaps the popularity of these stories suggests a preference on the part of Western readers for narratives that feature characters whose differences are buffered by resemblances – in this case, class and its attendant ethnic and religious features. In other words, in *Persepolis,* we are faced with a literary figure who is different, to be sure, but the difference in question is a kind of "difference within sameness," or difference that is palatable (Iranian) but not excessive (Muslim) (Puar 25)[4].

Analyzing this work at the nexus of literature on one side and economic and historical struggle on the other to "foreground the concerns of people who have been the most marginalized in social and cultural life," can tell us a great deal about how global literature, rather than uniting distant people, provides citizens of similar geopolitical status a way of exchanging discourse across national borders in an act of solidarity that can reify the very processes of hegemony that reading such literature is seen as subverting (Stone-Mediatore 128). With *Persepolis*, global literature provides a cathartic release for educated, liberal readers benefitting from uneven political and economic arrangements that, ultimately, allow them to profit from the consequences of colonialism. To understand these transnational entanglements, it is important to recognize how historical, political, and economic structures influence the shaping of migration narratives. For example, the Iranian diaspora is largely homogenous. Hailing from the Northern provinces, often light-skinned, and often members of the middle or

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[3] Gloria Fisks's 2018 *Orhan Pamuk and the Good of World Literature* outlines the persistent misunderstandings created by a literary readership attempting to build connections across difference. Ultimately, Fisk argues that there is a great deal of bad faith thinking involved in these attempts leaving almost nothing knowledgeable for readers of such works.

[4] In her work, *Terrorist Assemblages*, Jasbir Puar describes the workings of the necropolitical carousel operating in the modern world today and argues that one distinctive feature of this machinery is the "careful management of difference" where "what little acceptance liberal diversity proffers in the way of inclusion is highly mediated by huge realms of exclusion: the ethnic is usually straight, usually has access to material and cultural capital (both as a consumer and as an owner), and is in fact often male. These would be the tentative attributes that would distinguish a tolerable ethnic (an exceptional patriot, for example) from an intolerable ethnic (a terrorist suspect)" (25). Ana Ribero makes a similar argument about acceptable heterogeneity in her characterization of "brownwashing rhetoric" used in national addresses by Barack Obama "to placate liberal allies, garner the Latin@ vote, and posit a humane national image, while it disguises continued discriminatory tactics against racialized undocumented migrants" (1).

upper classes, *Persepolis* gives a reading of the 1979 revolution that glosses over the anti-colonial and egalitarian elements of this event suggesting that certain ideological alliances, informed by class and ethnic status, influence this perspective (Parrillo 121). Asking why this memoir is so popular among Western readers means recognizing that the audience it addresses is similarly composed of market-dominant ethnic elite readers who come across *Persepolis* in college language and women's studies classe[5]. In such venues, connection across difference is seen as an antidote to the unequal economic dynamics between first and third-world countries[6]. However, instead of creating the kind of 'bridge building' that addresses these distances, *Persepolis* does the opposite and solidifies class alliances across national borders under the auspices of literature and women's studies.

Recalling that migration is informed by specific colonial processes unfolding within specific colonial zones of influence, the connection between anti-Islamic sentiments and classist attitudes in *Persepolis* provides insight into how global and local syncretism can create disconnect rather that unity. Recalling that current members of the Iranian diaspora, who are often categorically opposed to the 1979 revolution and Islam, are composed of distinct Iranian classes and attendant ethnic groups suggests that the anti-Islamic consensus in these writings is tied to a perspective that is informed by market-dominant ethnic elite status. Let it be stated, immediately, that the failures of the Islamic revolution are legion and that the current regime in Iran is corrupt in countless ways, but the revolution did attempt, through popular consensus, to meet the promises of a modern, democratic republic in ways that even drew the attention of embittered Western philosophers like Michel Foucault, who met with the Ayatollah Khomeini in 1978[7]. In the spirit of re-reading *Persepolis* as a graphic nonfiction text

[5] My usage of the term "market-dominant ethnic elite" refers to the emergence of a class of economically dominant Third-World citizens who reside in economically dominant or Western countries–countries which are wracked with their own internal ethnic politics rendering the presence of seemingly non-dominant ethnic individuals or groups into a kind of currency. For example, many American universities hire international students who are seen as injection of pluralism on campus. Because of how wealth and power are currently distributed across nations, however, these are the market-dominant ethnic elite members from their respective nations.

[6] I use the term "Third-World" deliberately in its non-alignment and Bandung spirit. For a biography of the short-lived Third-World project, see *The Darker Nations* by Vijay Prashad and "The World Without Bandung, Or "For a Polycentric System with No Hegemony," by Samir Amin. In addition, my use of the term 'western' is synonymous with the term first-world and invokes the same mapping of power and wealth cited in the sources above.

[7] Foucault visited with Ayatolla Khomeini during the early revolutionary period and developed his ideas about "political spirituality" based on what he saw on the ground in Iran. He did not, however, publish those writings which remain obscure in academic circles. Behrooz Ghamari-Tabrizi's very recent work, *Foucault in Iran: Islamic Revolution after the Enlightenment* covers these writings and notes that Foucault was inspired by "the revolutionary subjects in the streets of Tehran [and] the possibility of a transformative politics one can exercise outside normative conventions of the Enlightenment […] in response to his critics, he insisted that the manner in which the revolution was lived must remain distinct

firmly situated within history, this study reviews several examples of Islamophobic rhetoric present throughout the text and concludes with a counter-text by Babak Anvari engaging the same themes as Satrapi's memoir (the effects of the Islamic revolution on the lives of Iranians and especially on the lives of women) without reifying Eurocentric ideological paradigms. Anvari's *Under the Shadow* presents serious challenges for comparison as a film being contrasted with a graphic novel; however, both texts focus on the same historical moment and explore similar themes all in distinctly visual terms making them sufficiently tied together to warrant comparison. With these elements in mind, the following examples of Eurocentric rhetoric in *Persepolis* suggest that the creation and consumption of popular diaspora writing by Iranian women indicates a discursive alliance between market-dominant ethnic elites communicating across national borders.

Islamophobia in Iranian Women's Diaspora Writing: The Case of *Persepolis*

While *Persepolis* is part of a larger pattern of texts written by Iranian women in diaspora, it is noteworthy both for its prominence in literary and feminist studies across the United States and for its graphic representation of the lives of Iranians, especially its women. It is important to emphasize the visual nature of this work since Islamic practices and philosophies are known for their habits of concealment and covering (including various Islamic head coverings), a tradition that continues to baffle, and fixate, Western viewers who long to uncover the Middle East. Especially its women. In an example of pandering to this tendency, the visual representation of Iran in *Persepolis*, notably, begins with a chapter ominously titled "The Veil."[8]

Fig. 1. - Page 3 of Persepolis Pantheon Books, New York, 2007. The figure includes a black and white illustration of a woman's face cropped out of sight except for the right eye illustrated next to the words "The Veil" in all capital letters.

from its success or failure" (189). Please note: another author, an Iranian woman and academic named Janet Afary, has commented about this event and her take is consonant with the same Eurocentric and Islamophobic line in Satrapi's thinking.

[8] The "veil" is a blanket term used in the West to describe various forms of spiritually informed dress used by Muslim women–and sometimes men. There are various types of veiling practices informed by various interpretations of Islam. These include not only clothing practices but also states of mind and choices in conduct. In the West, however, the "veil" continues to be depicted in simplistic, sensational, and decidedly orientalist terms.

With this opening move, Satrapi introduces the 1979 Islamic revolution using the politically charged and often orientalist image of the veil. Considering the intended audience, whose imagination is undoubtedly saturated with assumptions about women, gender, and Islam, Western readers are introduced to the Islamic revolution in a familiar iconography that likely evokes certain ideas in the minds of Western readers about fundamentalism and clashing civilizations[9].
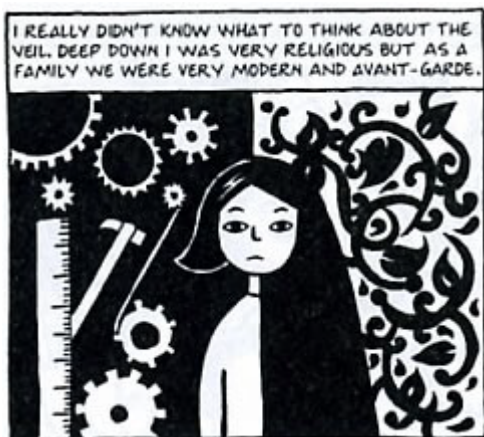
Fig. 2. - Page 6 of Persepolis. The figure includes a black and white illustration split in half and featuring a young girl in the center. Directly above her there is black text on a white background. On her right side, her hair is uncovered, and she wears a white long-sleeved shirt. Here, there is a black background with images of white gears, a ruler, and a hammer. On left side, her hair and body are covered and against a white background there are black geometrical, floral shapes.

Folded into this opening move, Satrapi goes on to present two sides of herself from a child's perspective as she reflects on the revolution. On one side she is unveiled and surrounded by a ruler, a hammer, and gears implying modernity and on the other side is veiled and surrounding by ornate, geometric shapes indicating religion/tradition. She remarks, "I didn't know what to think about the veil, deep down I was very religious but as a family we were very modern and avant-garde (6)." The implication is that veils and religion are non-modern (a refusal to progress forward into the present) and that religion/tradition lacks any world-making potential. The implication being that to be unveiled is to be measured, rational, and decidedly modern, while to be veiled is its opposite. The articulation we encounter here, of modernity and religion as two discrete and mutually exclusive categories, is not an innocent or facile rendering but, in fact, indexes a profound Eurocentricity (Asad 14; *Can Non-Europeans Think?* Dabashi 222). Aside from this, the reduction of the Islamic revolution into a mere matter of religious sentiment or cultural motivation erases the more urgent material conditions and anti-colonial resistance that was far more central to the founding of the republic than head scarves. As part of a larger pattern of stories written by market-dominant ethnic elite

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[9] I am referring to Samuel Huntington's infamous "clash of civilizations" thesis in his book of the same title. He argues that conflicts of the post-cold war arena will be primarily cultural conflicts between the so-called East and West–a view that erases the undeniable economics and political (colonial) dynamics in East/West relations. See "The Clash of Civilizations?" in *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 72, no. 3, 1993.

Iranian women who write for their Western counterparts in highly legible terms, Satrapi's illustration of tradition and modernity smacks of civilizational discourse and, in ways that will be outlined further, attempts to humanize Iranians by excising their connection to Islam.

As a graphic memoir, Satrapi's account presents the thoughts and feelings of a child caught in a revolutionary moment. As such, historically precise portraits cannot be expected from such an account. However, Satrapi does declare in the preface of *Persepolis* that this is an attempt to clear up misconceptions about Iranians: "writing Persepolis was so important to me. I believe that an entire nation should not be judged by the wrongdoings of a few extremists (1)." While precision cannot be expected of a work of art, the representation of events in this memoir outlines a specific goal: to dispel misconceptions about Iranians and, as it turns out, their relationship to Islam. *Persepolis* is one striking example of a multiculturalist work read for its ethos of so-called bridge-building and its promise of unity a "contact zone"; however, a reading focused on class reveals the workings of political economy in the shaping of the Islamic revolution and its transnational links to the international politics of the American academy (Pratt 8)[10]. In other words, *Persepolis* is an example of a discursive, class-based alliance between the "global coalition of dominant groups" that exist in both First and Third-World contexts (Prashad 278). One striking example of this appears in Satrapi's use of Western popular culture to convey the similarity of Iranians to the West against the dissimilarity of Muslims to the same. To understand this attempt at strategic union through strategic separation, it is important to contextualize the historical moment out of which the Islamic revolution emerged: the Cold War. As scholars have noted, the triumph of the war against the Soviet agenda marked the beginning of the rise of an elite class of citizens in former colonies and semi-colonies who acted as agents of colonialism for personal gain (*Class and Nation* Amin 136; Al Ahram Dabashi 44; Prashad 278). In the case of Iran prior to the revolution, the United States and Britain influenced the formation of a social order composed of middle and upper-class Iranians who benefited from the colonial presence and were thus unsurprisingly more receptive to the culture of the West compared to other classes who saw their situation worsen after the arrival of British and American trade[11]. Satrapi's aim in this work to dispel harmful views about Iranians by

[10] First, Mary Louise Pratt coins this term (contact zone) to describe the complexities of disparate cultures attempting to establish understanding and connection in her work, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*.

[11] Leila Ahmed describes this pattern of social stratification that follows Western commercial activity in the region, "The lower-middle and lower classes, who were generally adversely affected by or experienced no benefits from the economic and political presence of the West had a different perspective on the colonizer's culture and ways than did the upper classes and new middle-class intellectuals trained in Western ways, whose interests were advanced by affiliation with Western culture and who benefited economically from the British presence" (147). While Ahmed is describing events in Egypt during the British occupation, this pattern, she notes, has repeated in many Middle Eastern societies "in one way or

invoking the so called wrongdoings of a few extremists camouflages the important class-based struggles that informed the revolution and undoubtedly resonates with her target audience who are barraged with media rhetoric about presumed Muslim extremists[12].

Again, though the Islamic revolution failed on many grounds, the material dynamics between Iran (and similarly suited Third-World nations) and the British and American corporations that ruthlessly exploited its natural resources are often glossed over by Iranian women writing in diaspora[13].The argument outlined suggests that class interests inform Satrapi's account of the Islamic revolution in a memoir rightly praised for its gorgeously illustrated graphic depictions of an important historical moment. However, the popularity of *Persepolis* and its status as the foremost text depicting Iran as "an ordinary Iranian girlhood" obscures some important elements involved in the revolution indicating "an association of social interests" between the dominant groups of disparate nations in the name of literature and feminism (Chute 136; Quijano 166)[14]. In both the memoir and its film adaptation, the 1979 revolution is illustrated as a takeover by bearded goons and veiled, serpent-like revolutionary women targeting American pop culture. In an example of pandering to elite, Western reading audiences, such imagery says little about the targeting of such icons and what that has to do with economic imperialism and, instead, illustrates these events as random bursts of anti-Western sentiment. In this case, Western audiences seek connections with Iranians based on their mutuality (never their difference) and based on their mutual consumption of American popular culture products. There is no discussion as to why these commercial products ended up in Iran and other Third-World nations in the first place. Again, while precision cannot be demanded of a work of art the consistent concealment of economic class dynamics, and Western corporate trade within Iran, as well as its translation

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another" and influences a discourse that still informs our understandings of gender in the Middle East today (130).

[12] For a summary of key events leading up to the Iranian Revolution, please see Vijay Prashad's *The Darker Nations*, page 75, titled, "Tehran." This chapter describes the emergence of an elite Iranian class (secular and Euro-imitating) in the aftermath of trade consolidation by the Anglo-Persian Oil Company (the forerunner of British Petroleum). In addition, as noted in Edward Said's *Covering Islam: How the Media and the Experts Determine How We See the Rest of the World* the American media landscape is saturated with deceptive representations of Islam and Muslims suggesting that any discussion of the region or Muslims risks breathing further life into this harmful rhetoric.

[13] Like many regions in the Third-World, British and American corporate interests dramatically re-shaped the destinies of entire nations while British and American governments either stood by tacitly or actively engaged in maintaining these interests. In the case of Iran, the British enabled William Knox D'Arcy's brazen theft of Iranian oil and American business interests motivated the 1953 CIA-backed overthrow of democratically elected Mohammad Mossadegh. For one small glimpse into this history, please see *The Rise and Fall of OPEC in the Twentieth Century* by Giuliano Garavini.

[14] Hilary Chute remarks, "*Persepolis: The Story of a Childhood*, which made its first appearance in the United States in an explicitly feminist, antiracist context in Ms. magazine in 2003" was initially intended to circulate under the title "*Persepolis: Tales From and Ordinary Iranian Girlhood*" (136).

outside of Iran suggests a pattern. Namely, categorically anti-Islamic narratives from homogenous diaspora spaces do not dispel harmful misconceptions about Iranians; instead, they displace harmful ideas about Iranians onto Islam and Muslims.

Fig. 3. - Page 132-133 of Persepolis Pantheon Books, New York, 2007. The first frame is illustrated in black with two figures etched against this background. One is a salesman wearing a long black coat carrying contraband and stating "110 Tumans" in response to a young Marji who stands beside him asking, "how much?" Above them, a line of text reads, "I bought two tapes: Kim Wilde and Camel" in all capital letters. The second frame illustrates this same scene with a young Marji departing with a set of tapes.
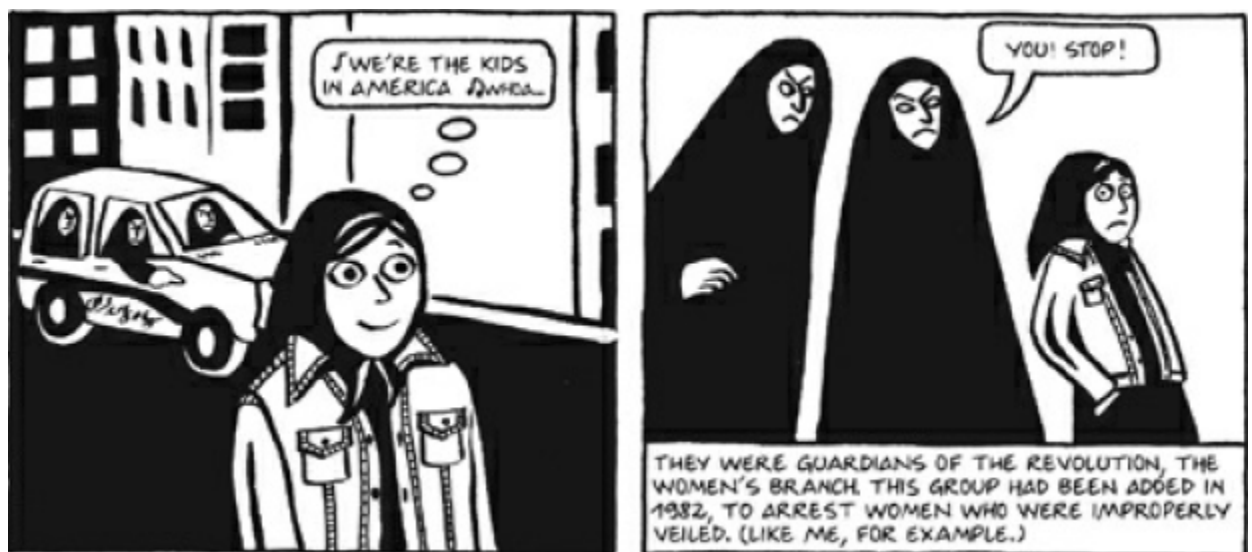
Fig. 4. - Page 132-133 of Persepolis Pantheon Books, New York, 2007. The frame on the left illustrates Marji walking down a street in Tehran with a text box above her head reading. "We're the kinds in America…whoa" in all capital letters as a group of revolutionary guards (women) clad in Islamic veils advance upon her, pointing. The second frame shows Marji apprehended by the women while she looks into in the direction of the audience. A text box at the top of the second frame reads "You! Stop!" uttered by the guards accompanied by another text box at the bottom of the frame reading, "They were guardians of the revolution, the women's branch. This group had been added in 1982, to arrest women who were improperly veiled. (Like me, for example)."

Fig. 5. - Page 134 of Persepolis Pantheon Books, New York, 2007. The frame on the left contains a cassette with a tape being inserted accompanied by a text box at the top of the frame stating, "I got off pretty easy considering. The Guardians of the revolution didn't find my tapes." The second text box illustrates Marji dancing to the music from the cassette with a text box at the bottom of the frame reading, "to each his own way of calming down." A text bubble in zigzag shape at the top of the frame reads, "We're the kids in America…whoao."

The above images show a young Satrapi searching for contraband, like a fugitive, dodging Islamic revolutionary guards and their seizure of such goods. In former colonies and semi-colonies, consumption of Western media, like skin bleaching, is imbricated with class and economic dynamics informed by global colonialism which, in the case of the Middle East, is also very often connected to patterns of religious belief. In Iran, post-revolutionary measures taken to rehabilitate native culture to rebuild Iran after the ravages of colonial theft are illustrated as random acts of Islamic authoritarianism. Such a depiction, in all its dramatic pathos, will resonate with an audience who will react positively to the image of a young Iranian girl yearning for American popular culture goods as if the scene is untouched by colonialism and its structures of harm and gain. In this example of an Iranian girl opposing "extremism" by resisting an Islamic boogeyman, the echoes of Islamophobic and Eurocentric rhetoric emanate in the undue focus on culture and religion–a position that parallels the famous 'clash of civilizations' thesis that has been thoroughly discredited for its obscuring of economic and political forces that underlie regional tensions[15].

While Satrapi's illustration of ominous revolutionary women and their bearded male counterparts working to eject Western consumer products from the Islamic republic provides one view of this pandering, another perspective appears in Robert E. Looney's *Economic Origins of the Iranian Revolution*. In this version of events, Western collusion with Iranian ruling classes, and the instability it produced, led to conditions of

[15] See note 9.

scarcity whereby "two-thirds of the agricultural population," according to Looney, "faced poor nutritional intake" (45)[16]. The second perspective suggests that this revolution, like many revolutions, was about bread and not women's veiling practices or popular culture. When brutal monarchies are overthrown in Iran or even places like Haiti, for example, the story is not so aspirational as when one would find such revolutionary stories in French or American history. There is little sympathy for popular uprisings and expressions of the democratic will of a people when the people in question are defending their sovereignty in the language of Islam and when they are placed in a global racial hierarchy consonant with economic and political self-determination, or in this case, the lack thereof[17].

Satrapi's account does not provide anything close to a nuanced perspective of why Iranians took to the streets in droves to overthrow a colonial puppet regime and shatter the iconography associated with it. What she does provide is a look at the revolution from the eyes of an ethnically elite Iranian residing in France, in Satrapi's case, and addressing audiences in former colonial centers where her memoir continues to garner enthusiasm (Ansari and Parillo 122). Yet again, class tensions within Iran and larger colonial dynamics outside Iran inform the anti-Western sentiment seen during the 1979 revolution and the smashing of Western consumer products. Despite seriously glossing over these important details explaining why American popular culture is banned in Iran, Satrapi does make some brief comments about the rigid class systems motivating the revolution. For example, in the chapter titled "The Letter," Satrapi chronicles her housekeepers love affair with her neighbor's son who, Satrapi says, "like most peasants, […] didn't know how to read and write (35)." The figure in question became Satrapi's family servant when she was just eight years old and is caught breaking across class lines in this chapter.

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[16] For an in-depth look into how austerity and income inequality influenced the revolution, see chapter 3 of Robert E Looney's *Economic Origins of the Iranian Revolution*, titled "Developments in Agriculture."

[17] The Sykes-Picot Agreement in 1916 was a secret agreement between France and Britain, with the agreement of Russia, to carve up the remains of the Ottoman empire into zones of colonial influence.

Fig. 6. - Page 34 of Persepolis Pantheon Books, New York, 2007. This figure contains five frames in black and white with capital letters. The top left frame has an image of a young girl with an arrow pointing to her stating, "her," "this is Mehri." The second figure illustrates a scene in rural Iran featuring Mehri's parents handing over Mehri to Satrapi's family as a servant. The third frame shows a young Mehri looking after an infant Satrapi. The third shows the same scene in a playground. The last scene shows Satrapi and Mehri sitting at a table eating with a text box stating, "she always finished my food."

At a certain point, the maid is caught carrying on a flirtation with the neighbor until Satrapi's parents find out and put an end to the relationship saying, "in this country, you must stay within your own social class (34)."

Fig. 7. - Page 37 of Persepolis Pantheon Books, New York, 2007. This figure contains two frames. The one on the left shows Marji speaking with her father in her bedroom as they discuss class dynamics. Her father says, "you must understand that their love was impossible." The second frame shows Marji and her father disagreeing about the inflexible nature of class lines in Iran with two text boxes: one from Marji stating, "why is that" and one with her father's response, "because in this country you must stay within your own social class."

Explaining the importance of maintaining rigid class lines in Iran, this scene illustrates the issues resting at the heart of many revolutionary struggles: inequality and exploitation. While one generation reinforces these class divides, a young Marji questions them, providing readers a glimpse into another very different story buried in the iconic memoir–one that is not captured in the idea of dispelling myths about Iranians by denouncing the 'wrongdoings of a few extremists.'

While recognizing how the Islamic revolution in Iran, and popular stories about it, are informed by economic class dynamics, both within and between nations, it is important to also note that ethnicity, and especially religion, are deeply inflected by class in the context of many Middle Eastern countries and communities. Iran, like many places in the contemporary world, is a region influenced by contemporary racial classifications systems and what Rey Chow calls the "ascendency of whiteness" (Puar
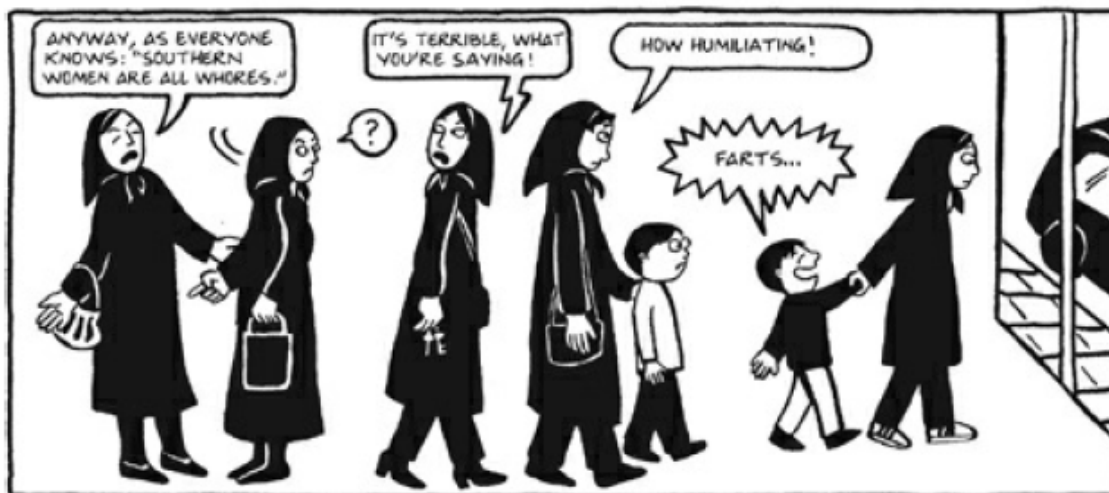
200)[18].

Fig. 8. - Page 132-133 of Persepolis Pantheon Books, New York, 2007. This figure depicts seven characters at a grocery store in a moment of tension. The figure furthest on the left states, "Southern women are all whores" while a retreating figure in the center states, "its terrible what you're saying."

An example of this appears in the chapter titled "The Jewels" describing an interaction in a grocery store in the northern city of Tehran during the Iran/Iraq war when Southern Iranians fled the war to find shelter in the North. Like many nation-states, Iran is populated by different ethnic groups, and Southern Iranians are viewed as darker skinned than their Northern counterparts. In this scene, the statement "anyway, as everyone knows: 'Southern women are all whores,'" is made with all due rhetorical force conveying the kinds of internal ethnic and class hierarchies that persist, always, in reference to European colonization (93). These conceptions of ethnicity, tied to class, do not disappear in diaspora spaces. For instance, the ethnically ambiguous term "Persian," at best used to hide the more Islamically charged "Iranian" and at worst tied to a notorious Aryan discourse, is sometimes used by Iranians who strategically support the idealization of whiteness[19]. It is important to note the manner in which class, ethnicity, and religion shift and mutate across borders and distances to reappear, later, in economically-dominant host nations (mired in their own racial dynamics) only to form unexpected alliances in literary and feminist attempts to address borders and distances. What follows is a fusion of power, based in class status, across national borders and between market-dominant ethnic elites who are educated enough to recognize their own dominant status in the global colonial order of things and what that means for far-away others (Fisk 179)[20].

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[18] Puar is drawing extensively on Rey Chow's work on the ambiguous concept of ethnicity in the contemporary world in her famous book *The Protestant Ethnic and Spirit of Capitalism*.

[19] For a study of Aryanist discourse in Iranian home and diaspora communities, please see Reza Zia-Ebrahimi's "Self-Orientalization and Dislocation: The Uses and Abuses of the 'Aryan' Discourse in Iran."

[20] Two remarks: First, attending to the formation of a transnational elite does not refute the reality that (in some sense) wealth and power are still concentrated along so-called first-world and Third-World lines—

Satrapi's conjuring up of a foreign friend to help assuage anxieties about inter-state conflicts and exploitation is asymmetrically mirrored in American foreign policy which, as David Harvey notes, is so often in the business of conjuring up a foreign enemy during times of domestic tension (Applebaum and Robinson 94). As noted, the fleeing ruling classes in pre-revolutionary Iran now reside in America as minorities and hold a palpable and categorical anti-Islamic attitude toward not just the Islamic Republic but Islam as such (Ansari and Parillo 122). Some of them even collaborate with the Department of Defense and call, publicly, for open warfare against the Iranian regime[21]. The economic undertones that shape these tensions are left unexplored since they point inevitably to past and present colonial policies by British and American corporations and the governments that back them, as well, it should be noted, as the constituents who benefit from these arrangements. Class elements are left unexplored, however, as both *Persepolis* and other bestselling works by Iranian women consistently focus on clerical authoritarianism in highly legible terms (veils and facile remarks about modernity and traditionalism) as they address Western reading audiences[22]. An example of this appears in one scene involving the hospitalization of Satrapi's uncle, who tries to get official permission to leave the newly formed Islamic republic for medical reasons. In this scene, his wife is enraged at finding her former domestic servant who, because of the Islamic revolution and its reordering of classes, is now dictating the life and death of the formerly upper classes:

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those disparities continue to this day as evidenced by ongoing imperialist aggression against Iran and the larger Middle East by the United States. However, economic realignments and transformations in the world require us to switch from the analytic units currently in use to recognize that there is a first-world within the Third-World and a Third-World within the first-world. And second, recognizing how Third-World elites interact with, and reinforce, power in elite first-world spaces can tell us a great deal about misguided notions of 'diversity' currently operating in the academy today. For a reading of these misunderstandings, please see Roderick Ferguson's *The Re-Order of Things: The University and its Pedagogies of Minority Difference*.

[21] Masih Alinejad is a prominent Iranian diaspora writer and outspoken activist for women's rights based in the U.S. She, like Azar Nafisi, is seen moving through Department of Defense circles in an approach to women's liberation that places her alongside Mike Pompeo. For a discussion of these partnership, please see the following source on the official American Embassy Website https://ir.usembassy.gov/secretary-pompeos-meeting-with-iranian-womens-rights-activist-masih-alinejad/. In addition, please see Hamid Dabashi's chapter, "The Comprador Intellectual" in *Brown Skin, White Mask* for a view of this tendency among Iranian women writers (44).

[22] Azadeh Moaveni's *Lipstick Jihad* and Azar Nafisi's *Reading Lolita* in Tehran are vastly popular memoirs by Iranian women whose handling of the Islamic revolutionary project is biased, one-sided, and categorically opposed to any aspect of this on-going project.

Fig. 9. - Page 121 of Persepolis Pantheon Books, New York, 2007. This figure contains three frames featuring five characters. Marji, her parents, her aunt, and a hospital administrator. The first and second frame shows a conversation between Aunt Firouzeh and the administrator in which approval for foreign travel is denied. The third frame illustrates the family, minus the administrator, reviewing this result with outrage.

Contempt for the lower classes, and a sense of their having a rightful place, is sharply apparent in Aunt Firouzeh's frustration, which is informed by attachments to an Iranian economy arranged by British and U.S trade agreements dividing Iranians along class lines[23]. As such, Satrapi's account of the revolution does not present "Tales from an Ordinary Iranian Girlhood" as subheadings have suggested but rather illustrates "an association of social interests" between the dominant groups of disparate nations in the name of literature and feminism (Chute 136; Quijano 166)[24].

The argument outlined suggests that *Persepolis* provides an example of how global literature, under the auspices of multiculturalism, can obscure certain, perhaps more unsavory, differences while accentuating other, more palatable ones: that is, by presenting a class-inflected historical moment as class-neutral. In this case, as other scholars have noted, this version of events is linked to different and contending versions of global mobility–who can move across national borders and who cannot–and the colonial market dynamics which enable or enclose those movements. As Maboud

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[23] Another example of Satrapi's classist views appear in the following interview with Robert Root: "The basic culture is not that the woman is nothing–Iran is not Saudi Arabia–the women, they are educated, they are cultivated, they work. You have women who are judges, they are doctors, they are journalists, they work. So, these women, when you tell them that their witness doesn't count as much as that of the guy who is going to wash the windows even if she is a researcher in nuclear science or whatever […]" (Root 151).

[24] Hilary Chute remarks, "*Persepolis: The Story of a Childhood*, which made its first appearance in the United States in an explicitly feminist, antiracist context in Ms. magazine in 2003" and was initially intended to circulate under the title "*Persepolis: Tales from an Ordinary Iranian Girlhood*" (136).

Ansari notes, most Iranians in diaspora are "upwardly-mobile, ethnically homogenous Iranian emigres who are the demographic majority in the West" (Ansari and Parillo 121). Recalling that in Iranian and other Middle East contexts, patterns of Islamic and secular belief often run parallel to economic class standing meaning that Satrapi's narration, as a diaspora Iranian, is fittingly anti-Islamic.

Critical Responses to *Persepolis*: Class, Culture, and Revolutionary Struggle.

Immigrants and diaspora subjects do not automatically populate universities and literary environments with progressive values. Instead, they can sometimes reinforce imperial power and bias through discursive alliances centered around class interests. While these elements are apparent in *Persepolis* itself, they are also echoed in secondary readings of Satrapi's work by critics who invoke it to confirm what they suspected all along: that the conflict in Iran is *not* yet another instance of the United States strong-arming Third-World nations into conditions of production and exchange that vastly favor the United States. Instead, they would suggest that the conflict in Iran has much to do with amiable cultural exchange being thwarted by Islamic fundamentalists. In "Rewriting the West in Marjane Satrapi's *Persepolis*," Typhaine Leservot remarks, "Western products and cultural references abound in Satrapi's Iran. Marji, her character, listens to popular western music, wears western-style clothes, goes to parties, and […] rebels against her parents and society like any western teen" (115). Evidently, to see Iranians as human, we must "highlight how westernized Iranians are (ibid)." Ignoring the economic relations behind the presence of the Western consumer products she lists, and what they ultimately point to (imperialism), Leservot goes on to make the case for Occidentalism as an underexplored analytic framework[25]. We are left to wonder how Leservot approaches contemporary Middle East/U.S relations in her position as director of "Muslim Studies" at Wesleyan University. In a similar focus to that of Satrapi, Leservot's emphasis on culture and religion obscures the relations of exchange and inequality that create the kinds of crises she is rightly exploring in this work[26].

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[25] Ignoring the relations of exchange between dominant nations and the nations that often supply them with resources is an irresponsible move for any researcher or educator considering the increasingly serious consequences of these relations. For instance, the G-7 (Canada, France, U.S, U.K, Germany, Japan, Italy), own more than half of all the world's wealth and extract much of it from Third-World nations, "In 1970, when the third-world project was intact, the sixty states classified as "low income" by the World Bank owed commercial lender and international agencies $25 billion. Three decades later, the debt of these countries ballooned to $523 billion […] over the course of three decades, the sixty states paid $523 billion in principle and interest on loans worth $540 billion" (Prashad 277).

[26] These would be figures such as David Graeber and Michael Hudson whose works examine global financial structures and argue that the U.S Dollar and contemporary monetary systems function as a mechanism of warfare against many nations. Please see Hudson's Finance as Warfare (2015) and Graeber's *Debt: The First 5,000 Years*.

Despite its success in describing the time in question in striking illustrations, Satrapi's account of the 1979 revolution inspires simplistic readings about this event which land on familiar Eurocentric and Islamophobic ground. Despite an admirable attempt to reflect on important topics, Mary Ostby, like Leservot, reviews the "stereotype-defying" memoir as an exemplar of diversity and indeed cites Leservot to argue that the crisis leading up to the revolution was not anti-colonial in nature, "contrary to any notion of the Islamic revolution as a historical rupture, Iranian culture is the product of mutually constitutive contact in which it both shaped and was shaped by other cultures–both Western and non-Western (570). In what Elysium realm is any nation of the Third-World, in this case Iran, engaged in "mutually constitutive contact" is a mystery considering historical facts indicating otherwise[27]. The impulse to screen the realities of colonial theft and meddling between vastly unequal states may be rooted in a yearning for connection, or even a yearning for atonement, tied to the realization of one's own position on the benefiting side of the colonial divide. The intention fails it promise, however, as indicated by critical readings that are congruent with Satrapi's account of the revolution captured in her framing in the preface about the difference between Iranians and "a few extremists."

Perhaps no other critical response is as intensely filtered through a Eurocentric lens as Gloria Steinem's endorsement on the back cover of the text, hailing *Persepolis* as having "the intimacy of a memoir, the irresistibility of a comic book, and the political depth of a conflict between fundamentalism and democracy." It is important to note that Steinem, a famous feminist author, was once a paid employee of the Central Intelligence Agency, whose notorious campaigns against Third-World governments and economies are well-documented and critiqued[28]. Steinem's characterization resonates with the way global literature is read and written by often dominant economic and ethnic groups across national borders who communicate across distances and unite, ultimately, around class interests[29]. In this case, Eurocentric rhetoric in *Persepolis* "capture[s] the interplay of market dynamics, power relations, and social forces that cut across borders," in contrast with the multicultural ethics and feminist values such works are meant to convey (Appelbaum and Robinson 21). In sum, telling tales about ethnic 'others' in humanities and women's studies classes across the United States has the effect of obscuring–not disclosing–what 'others' are like. As global economies continue to orbit around colonial relations of exchange, and global politics are shaken by the

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[27] Again, like many nations of the Third-World, Iran was pulled into colonial relations of exchange that could easily be described as theft. For a summary of these relations please see Vijay Prashad's *The Darker Nations* and Robert E. Looney's *Economic Origins of the Iranian Revolution*.

[28] Please see Sheel B. Yajee's *CIA Operations Against the Third World*, 1985.

[29] Similar arguments appear in the works of decolonial scholars (such as Walter Mignolo, Ramon Grosfoguel, and Anibal Quijano) whose analysis of colonialism often surpasses national borders as a useful unit of analysis.

conflicts these relations produce, global literature and feminist rhetoric (inadvertently) disguise the effects of uneven development in ways that point toward religious and cultural differences rather than material conditions.

While diasporic spaces do hold promise, it is important to be aware of the adverse consequences of transnational migration when diasporas are often shaped by race and class differences and borders selectively filter welcome and unwelcome entrants. The forces that enable the movement of international students are very different from those that enable the movement of other kinds of migrants with other stories to tell. These differences can manifest in especially harmful ways when considering the intensity of economic differences between First and Third-World states. This is not to suggest, however, that global inequalities have surpassed North/South binaries, or that wealth and power are not concentrated along the same old colonial lines. This does suggest, however, that established colonial patterns have fissured into elaborate subdivisions, feeding into new and emerging alliances between market-dominant ethnic elite writers in Third-World countries and their market-dominant ethnic elite reading audiences in Western contexts. In these cases, well-meaning readers end up simply looking back at themselves in a yet another example of subaltern speech unrealized. In sum, the emphasis on culture and religion erases the fingerprints of colonialism–which mark the contemporary crises facing both Iran and the Middle East as well as the larger Third-World in a global economic system that continues to orbit around past and present theft of resources and military domination. In this vein, the subtlety of Satrapi's anti-Islamic rhetoric has gone unnoticed by audiences and critics and academics who repeat her Eurocentric biases in their readings of this famous memoir. Against these readings, the following section provides a counter-text that addresses the consolidation of power by the authoritarian clerical faction in Iran while folding this assessment into a critique of ongoing colonialism and its effects on Iranian social development.

Lessons in Feminist Criticism: Babak Anvari's *Under the Shadow.*

While primarily responding to economic imperialism, the Islamic revolution also intervenes in a global media climate dominated by Western knowledge and representation. Few would deny that the Islamic revolution fell short of its many promises, but it did succeed in shifting consumer-producer relations between the West and Iran in the domain of media and film. Iranian films have become a major player in the world of global cinema, doing the much-needed work of demonstrating that other regions of the world do, in fact, think, "the anti-Western politics of the post-revolutionary Islamic state enabled a reversal of the filmic flow, which used to move from the West into Iran, so it now moves out from Iran" (Moallem 27). It is important to note that it is precisely the Islamic, anti-western, censorship laws enacted by the post-revolutionary regime, and their insistence on films drawing material only from local sources, that has

decentered the Western gaze and its attendant political, economic, and epistemic hegemonies.

Having discussed the subtle Eurocentric rhetoric underlying critiques of Islam in popular and academic writing by Iranian women, I now turn to a counterexample of feminist critique addressing similar issues as those of *Persepolis* (the rise of masculinist, clerical Islam among other post-revolutionary failures) in a film titled *Under the Shadow*. A 2016 Iranian diaspora film written and directed by Babak Anvari, *Under the Shadow* is a horror story set in the immediate aftermath of the revolution during the height of the Iran/Iraq war. Set in Tehran, *Under the Shadow* critiques Islamic veiling laws enacted after the revolution. The shadow, in this case, refers to both mandatory veiling and continued colonial interference in Iran which destabilizes Iranian sovereignty in the midst of the Iran/Iraq war. This film successfully weaves anti-imperialist and anti-patriarchal critique together by situating the problems of this age into a story about a haunting featuring an entity from Islamic theology known as djinn. The djinn in this case is presented in an Islamic veil, or *chador*, that reflects anxieties about the role of religion, spirituality, and native consciousness in a society forced into modernity by a violent and dominating power[30]. Post-revolutionary anxieties about the role of religion in society are a common theme in this film which features the arrival of the demon (djinn) immediately after an American bomb punctures the roof of an apartment building where the main characters live. In other words, the arrival of the djinn reflects both the contemporary spiritual crisis haunting Iranian social consciousness and the colonial forces that shape them.

Under the Shadow opens with Shideh, a young mother, learning that her university appeal process has been denied and that she is barred from attendance because of her political activism during the Islamic revolution. Shideh, a revolutionary who remains in Iran after 1979, sits across from a cleric and arbitrator who tells her, in harsh and uncompromising terms, that she will not be admitted to university. In a scene showcasing the multivocal character of the revolutionary movement (two different and contending revolutionary actors find themselves on opposite sides of the newly born Islamic republic), Shideh is excluded from university, perhaps, it is implied, because she is a woman. This critique repeats in other, subtler, examples of misogynistic thinking presented throughout the film. For example, Shideh's landlord accuses her of failing to lock a garage door, implying that because she is the only women in the building who drives a car, it must be her negligence causing the problem. Later on, Shideh's husband makes a vague claim about how Shideh is neglectful of their daughter, Dorsa, and

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[30] The chador is a covering that conceals the entire body, except for the face, and is worn within or outside the home. The home chador is usually made of colorful and floral fabrics and is the veil of choice during prayer. The outdoor chador is normally all black or navy blue and it almost always worn by women in public service. The djinn in this story appears in a home chador, further emphasizing the enclosure of women into the private sphere in the aftermath of the revolution.

should behave in a more conventionally motherly fashion. *Under the Shadow* portrays the many faces of sexism in a society that questions woman's competence in every area of life, whether private or public, and maps the contradictions and absurdities of patriarchy while also depicting how these sexist views are informed by, and multiplied by, incessant colonialist meddling.

In this sense, the film draws on, and therefore affirms, indigenous theologies and mythologies to perform a dual critique of patriarchal versions of Islam and always/already patriarchal colonialism. The missile, which initiates the haunting, does not detonate and, in the ensuing chaos, Shideh's daughter, Dorsa, tells her mom that she saw an apparition. Once the missile is removed, it leaves a rupture in the ceiling. This becomes the place of entry and exit for the djinn who initiates a campaign of *fitna* against Shideh and Dorsa. The Islamic notion of *fitna,* referring to civil strife, originates in the first civil war in the history of Islam, the one that erupted soon after the death of the prophet (PBUH), and is an event which continues to haunt the Ummah through ongoing Shia/Sunni tensions[31]. It is important to note that the Iran/Iraq war broke out two years after the Islamic revolution when Saddam Hussein made territorial claims on Iran's oil-rich Khuzestan province, aided by the Reagan administration, which armed both Iran and Iraq during this conflict—a textbook example of *fitna*—prolonging and amplifying a war that killed hundreds of thousands of Iranians and Iraqis. Paralleling the *fitna* that the Reagan administration stirred between Iran and Iraq, the djinn hides Dorsa's doll and starts telling Dorsa that her mom has taken it away. The djinn also hides Shideh's workout cassette, which Shideh later finds in the garbage, implicating Dorsa as the only other person in the house. The sowing of *fitna,* or civil unrest, in this household alludes to the strategic and calculated *fitna* imposed on Iran and Iraq by the Reagan administration and, thus, performs a double-edged critique of patriarchal imperialism from outside and sexist bias from within. While *Under the Shadow* critiques sexist oppression in post-revolutionary Iran by focusing, in some sense, on the private sphere, it folds the narrative into a larger social and historical event, showcasing the impact of imperialist intrusion on internal social development.

As the djinn's aggressions escalate, Shideh flees her home forgetting to wear the now-mandatory Islamic veil. She is promptly picked up by revolutionary guards and sent to jail where she is reminded of her main duty in life by yet another cleric: to guard her modesty. They send her home where Shideh, pushed back into the private sphere, returns to an escalated haunting; the djinn takes her daughter Dorsa. Shideh throws herself into the attack, creating, perhaps, the most visually striking scene in the film where the protagonist is shown drowning in the fabric of an Islamic veil. This heavy-handed symbolism makes a clear statement about women's struggles in the Islamic republic while avoiding critiques that center and justify Eurocentrism and, perhaps most

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[31] 'Peace Be Upon Him' is invoked by believers who speak the prophet's name.

importantly, acknowledges the influence of colonialism. Anchoring its critique in native ideas and mythologies, this diaspora film, despite not being under censorship by the Islamic Republic, nonetheless avoids the kind of Eurocentric critique we see in *Persepolis.* In its very title, *Under the Shadow,* suggest a dual-critique of internal sexism and external patriarchal imperialism highlighting how women's situation in post-revolutionary Iran is always informed by both: the shadow is a demonic entity haunting the splitting of society into public and private spheres; the shadow is an American-made missile sold through Israeli channels. When placed into conversation with a work like *Under the Shadow, Persepolis* can provide a great deal of insight into the many layers of complexity that inform U.S/Middle East relations and thus meet the promises of cosmopolitan liberalism with much greater force than as a stand-alone text.

Conclusion

This article presents Marjane Satrapi's *Persepolis* as a case study illustrating how literature produced by Iranian writers in diaspora is often read as an exercise in progressive, liberal education served with good multicultural intentions. Reading *Persepolis,* instead, for what it says about the structure and function of international migration vis-à-vis global colonial markets can tell us a great deal about how religion in the Middle East is always imbricated with ethnicity and class—and how that manifests in diaspora spaces. This, in addition to the increasingly securitized regulation of who gets to cross borders and what kinds of stories get to be told about border crossing, can provide readers with lessons in feminist criticism and the misunderstandings and distances that can occur regardless of good intentions[32].

Despite the anti-Islamic consensus in Iranian women's writings, and its ties to class and ethnicity in the Middle East, readers of such works continue to view difference and inclusion in purely visual terms lacking the depth of analysis that can come with attention to historical context (Sara Ahmed 173). In the case of Iranian diaspora writings and scholarship, and in recognition of the rhetoric of multiculturalism and its failures, it is important to note that migratory flow from the global south does not inherently reduce inequity, but in a seemingly paradoxical move, can sometimes strengthen it. In Satrapi's work, important class differences, always tied to market-dominant ethnic status, dictates transnational movement. These differences are not readily visible to someone unfamiliar with class-based (and thus ethnic and religious) stratification in Iran and its specific manifestations during the time and place in question. In Satrapi's border-crossing, we see how certain kinds of migrant interaction with host nations differs based on economic

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[32] Recognizing how anti-racist and feminist intentions can subtly serve homogenizing processes, the failures of liberalism are highlighted, again and again, by scholars of postcolonial, and especially, decolonial studies, "diversity is a concept that can have some usefulness […] but it must be properly situated alongside other less ambiguous concepts and within an emancipatory and decolonial rather than liberal framework" (Samir Amin "The World Without Bandung" 17; Maldonado-Torres 99).

or citizenship status—an international student traveler vastly differs from a humanitarian entrant, for instance[33]. These differences in kinds and categories of migration express the carefully managed nature of borders and how population control mechanisms influence art and literary culture without the awareness of readers and critics. Arguably, in the case of *Persepolis,* global literature serves as a platform on which dominant groups form communicative alliances across national borders and assuage shared anxieties about their own complicities in benefiting from an uneven global market. As a reward for such effort, and in the case of authors like Satrapi, safe passage is granted to certain kinds of migrants while enclosure prevents the entry of others. In addition to serving transnational economic alliances, national borders also serve the ongoing alliances of power within the United States in favor of ruling ethnic groups by avoiding tipping the demographic scales too far in the direction of minoritized peoples whose perspectives might disrupt the contemporary American social order.

In this vein, proponents of anti-racist and, of course, feminist teaching and learning concerned with the ongoing effects of racialization may read this literary text for the subtle Eurocentric rhetoric apparent in it to study what kinds of structures it reflects. What I suggest in this article is not to abandon this work—quite the contrary—what I suggest is that we update our reading of this text with counter examples like *Under the Shadow* to shed further light on the political and historical dimensions of how a story like this comes to be told in the first place. As scholars of world literature note, readers now have unprecedented connection to the writings of peoples in distant regions, but understanding has not caught up at the same speed of connection. With certain geopolitical updates in mind, we can read *Persepolis* for its expression of the cultural politics of globalization and the complexities presented in the figure of the migrant writer.

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[33] Because Satrapi's migration experience is, "limited to institutions (hotels, resorts, schools, businesses) that isolate them from having to deal with the local culture in a substantial way and on its own terms" it is highly specific to particular economic classes despite being presented as 'an ordinary Iranian girlhood' (Klapcsik 71).

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Student Writings as "Mutt Genres" and "Unique Performances": The Course Papers of Kate Hansen, Spring 1900

Author Bio: Dr. Sarah E. Polo is an Assistant Professor of English at Cottey College, a private women's college in Nevada, MO. She teaches courses such as first-year composition, professional writing, digital and multimodal composition, and archival research. She also serves as the Coordinator of Cottey's First-Year Writing Seminar program. Her research focuses on areas such as histories of composition, rhetorical genre studies, writing program administration, and parenting in academia. Her work appears in The Journal of Multimodal Rhetorics.

Abstract: This article uses a rhetorical genre studies approach to examine the archived writings of twenty-year-old Kate Ingeborg Hansen, a student at the University of Kansas at the turn of the twentieth century. A detailed examination of Hansen's papers for a course called "Advanced English Composition" demonstrates that the flexibility in Hansen's uptakes of genres stand in contrast to the otherwise systematic structure with which KU's Department of English strove to operate. More largely, Hansen's course papers–which are effectively what Elizabeth Wardle calls "mutt genres"–illustrate Edward J. Comstock's theory regarding the development of nineteenth century writing instruction and its shifts from rhetoric to composition. As such, this study emphasizes that studying women students' individual responses to writing instruction and the unique performances in which they engage provides a fuller picture of composition's past.

Recent feminist historiographies in the field of Rhetoric and Composition continue to yield nuanced understandings of the past rhetorical practices, including those engaged in by women, people of color, and other marginalized subjects and sites. Ranging from book-length studies to chapters in edited collections and scholarly articles (Enoch; Gold and Hobbs; Ostergaard and Rix Wood; Schultz), our understandings of writing, broader rhetorical practices, and marginalized subjects continue to grow. Within *Peitho*'s own recent issues, particularly poignant examples of archival studies of women's rhetorical practices include Julie A. Bokser's reclamation of women's contributions to the 1893 Columbia Exposition, Liz Rohan's examination of the writings of students Mabel and Max, students using Jane Addams' service-learning methods at the Northwestern University Settlement in 1930, and Marion Wolfe's exploration of women's missionary society publications.

In many recent feminist historiographies, the origins and evolution of Rhetoric and Composition itself is a frequently recurring thread, including with regard to formalized writing instruction. Within Lori Ostergaard and Henrietta Rix Wood's 2015 collection, *In the Archives of Composition*, Edward J. Comstock's "Toward a Genealogy of Composition: Student Discipline and Development at Harvard in the Late Nineteenth Century" provides such an origin story. To do so, Comstock builds on past composition historians and primarily cites Carr, Carr, and Schultz, Connors, and Kitzhaber. Rather than composition emerging as a response to capitalism and the need to prepare students for the workforce, as James Berlin contends, with a pedagogy marked by repetition and rote practice, Comstock argues that what is actually going on in writing classrooms at this time is not a "decline" in writing instruction (202), but instead a shift "from the classical pedagogy of 'mental discipline' to the pedagogy of *body* discipline" (186).[34] Further, this shift is actually one that uses modes and significant practice in writing more heavily and beneficially centers students and their experiences: "Now the student, and his or her development, becomes the location where knowledge is formed. By making the disciplined body the site of disciplinary knowledge, the student becomes, in fact, the *subject* of writing[…]" (Comstock 194).

As evidence, Comstock analyzes samples from an archive of student self-reports which are "written in response to a question asked of all students taking English courses (including the Lawrence Scientific School and Radcliffe College) by the [Harvard English Faculty Committee of Composition and Rhetoric] in 1869" (187). Comstock's examination of these Harvard students' self-reports provide not only insight into the shift from the old rhetoric to the new composition, but also provides an opening for new ways to view student writing produced in actual courses around the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.

In this article, I use Comstock's framework as I focus on the writings of one woman student, twenty-year-old Kate Ingeborg Hansen. Hansen was enrolled in a course titled "Advanced English Composition" at the University of Kansas in the spring of 1900, a course that was co-taught by Edwin M. Hopkins and an Assistant Professor, Raphael D. O'Leary. In contrast to Hopkins, who is a well-known figure in Rhetoric and Composition due to his advocacy for fair labor conditions for writing teachers,[35] Hansen is a figure unknown to the field, a seemingly-ordinary student pursuing an education. Born in 1879 as the daughter of an American mother and a Danish political refugee

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[34] Connors is the first scholar to coin the term "Composition-Rhetoric" to distinguish this shift. While I recognize that Comstock is using Connors as a base model (although he does not explicitly state this), I have chosen to use Comstock here because of his focus on pedagogy and on specific student writing, which provides a more detailed example and an updated read on Connors' work.

[35] For example, histories of writing instruction by Robert J. Connors (*Composition Rhetoric*), James A. Berlin, David R. Russell, and Ryan Skinnell all discuss Hopkins. Hopkins' work and life were also extensively studied by Randall Popken.

father, Hansen was the eldest of six children. Hansen first came to KU along with her brother, George, to obtain a teaching certificate (though she returned again in 1903 to complete a Bachelor's degree) (Bales et al. 110). Hansen went on to become a career-long missionary and music teacher at the Miyagi College in Japan, eventually becoming the dean ("Guide to the Kate I. Hansen Collection").

Although she would later go on to achieve these feats, Hansen's writings for "Advanced English Composition" were produced when she was only twenty years old, a regular college student just beginning to make her way in the world. Her forty-two handwritten assignments for this course are archived at Kenneth Spencer Research Library, the special collections library of KU. These papers comprise just one folder within the thirty-six box collection, which was donated by a female relative ("Guide to the Kate I. Hansen Collection"). While another student's notes from an earlier iteration of the course do exist (Margaret Kane, Spring 1899), Hansen's writings are the only known assignments submitted for the course to be preserved, and they have not been a subject of study in previous rhetoric and composition examinations of KU. This study of Hansen's writings, particularly the ways she responds to genre-based assignments, is therefore all the more significant, as it presents an opportunity to engage with a rare archival find, further verify Comstock's theory regarding the shift from rhetoric to composition, and reinforce research about student use of genre.

Searching for Student Writings; Finding Kate Hansen

In her 2002 *College English* article titled "The Platteville Papers: Inscribing Frontier Ideology and Culture in a Nineteenth-Century Writing Assignment," Kathryn Fitzgerald opens by stating that her work investigates "a kind of writing not usually deemed culturally significant–school assignments" (273). Indeed, this notion that school assignments and student writing are typically not viewed as valuable is confirmed by other scholars. Patricia Donahue and Gretchen Flesher Moon, for instance, note that locating teachers' assignments and student writings responding to them is challenging because students often did not save their writing and teachers lacked the space to store all of their students' writings indefinitely (7-8). Robert J. Connors suggests that freshman composition writings in particular may not have been viewed as valuable by student writers, and therefore not saved ("Dreams and Play" 58). Julie Garbus points out that this lack of value may extend to the level of the archive, as well, since "institutional archives tend to show a preference for the papers of committees, administrators, and professors over students (Sullivan 365, 366; Moon 2-3)" (564-5). Given student writing's low status on the hierarchy of preservation-worthy documents, within the eyes of the archives, instructors, and perhaps even students themselves, it seems all the more important to carefully examine and prioritize student writing from the past when we are so lucky as to find it.

In addition to their rarity, Hansen's writings also have the unique feature of having been "labeled" with the course and assignment title. Though some of Hansen's writings lack specific labels for their genres, a notion discussed below, the full range of explicitly-labeled genres in Hansen's papers from Spring 1900 include: descriptions, exercises in paragraphing, an exercise in outlines, a definition and synopsis, an exercise in editorial and news paragraphs, an exercise in letter writing, an exercise in theses, exercises in briefs and brief-making, exercises in refutations, an exercise in brief and amplification, an exercise in characterization, a theme, and an oration. Although Hansen's papers do contain brief feedback and scores that appear to be from her instructors, I do not explicitly analyze them in the scope of this piece. Hansen's papers alone are a treasure trove of insight, with topics ranging from things like "The Greatest Need of the University of Kansas" (a new fine arts building) to a "Description of a Library Chair." Working at the intersection of archival research and rhetorical genre studies, this article performs a case study of this woman's responses to writing instruction and her performance of Comstock's "rhetoric vs. composition" through the genres she composed.

Combining Comstock's framework for approaches to writing instruction emerging in the late nineteenth century with contemporary understandings of genres, I argue that Hansen's course papers demonstrate Comstock's theory of the struggle that students evidenced when trying to mesh rhetorical training with the new mode requirements for composition, creating what Elizabeth Wardle refers to as "mutt genres" (774). This article explores Comstock's framework through the guise of student writing (rather than students' self-reporting about their writing), and in doing so, contributes to our understandings of the ways that students attempted to navigate the use of older rhetorical practices within the confines of the new "composition," which in turn encouraged the production of mutt genres.

I proceed by first detailing this conception of genre and its intersections with archival research, focusing in particular on the concept of *uptake*. Next, I situate Hansen's writings within their particular local context, drawing heavily on other archival materials. Afterward, I move to a detailed analysis of her papers themselves.

Combining Genre Studies with Archival Work

In order to undertake this analysis of Hansen's work through Comstock's lens, I utilize the concept of *genre* furthered by rhetorical genre studies. Within our field's expanding range of archival studies, genre is utilized by some histories, though in varying degrees. For some of these scholars, genre is a briefly-mentioned term used to label a specific form of writing (see Lowry; Mannon). And certainly school-based writings more broadly, including those that came to prevalence with the increase in what some historians have termed "current-traditional" or rhetoric or "composition-rhetoric", have been a focus of some scholarship (see Schultz; Connors, *Composition-Rhetoric*). In

contrast, genre plays a much more dominant role in some archival scholarship on women's writings and rhetoric. Particularly exemplary examples include: Wendy Sharer's use of genre to look at bulletins from the Women's Bureau; Suzanne Bordelon's analysis of Louise Clappe's use of genre to construct ethos in *The Shirley Letters from the California Mines, 1851-1852*; and Risa Applegarth's examinations of women's vocational autobiographies in the 1920s and 30s, which women used to push against the strict separation of personal and professional identities of the day and allowed women to disrupt "professional spaces of labor" (531). These examples demonstrate that genre can be of particular utility to feminist scholars engaged in recovery work.

While these examples clearly demonstrates that genre is, as Dara Rossman Regaignon notes, a useful "tool" for engaging with "historically distant texts" and that many scholars' usage of genre aids in their ability to perform highly rich, successful analyses of women's archived writings, little scholarship exists that uses genre to explore women's rhetorical educations in formal school settings (141). Perhaps the clearest examples take place in Fitzgerald's work with archived student papers at the Platteville Normal School in Wisconsin ("The Platteville Papers"; "The Platteville Papers Revisited"). The forty-four student papers that are the subject of her analyses are authored by seniors at the Platteville Normal School in 1899 to "commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of Wisconsin's statehood" ("The Platteville Papers Revisited" 117). Using conceptions of genre by Carolyn Miller, Carol Berkenkotter, and Thomas Huckin, Fitzgerald is able to demonstrate that the genres of these student papers are simultaneously empowering and constraining ("The Platteville Papers Revisited" 133). Thus, even though Fitzgerald's analyses contribute to a fuller understanding of writing instruction in normal schools, they also have implications for our understanding of the generic nature of student writing.

Miller argues that the definition of genre should be based on the action the genre accomplishes and defines genres as "typified rhetorical actions based in recurrent situations" (159). This conception of genre provides a lens for viewing student writing–whether historical or contemporary–as situationally-embedded rhetorical actions. The set of archival documents this article examines–Hansen's forty-two course papers–constitute particular genres of writing, ones which Hansen was expected to produce to successfully complete her "Advanced English Composition" course. Hansen's writings are typified in form and in function. That is, these texts are similar in features and in purposes to other writings of the same genre. Even so, rhetorical genre studies recognizes the role of individuals in selecting, using, and shaping genres. Amy Devitt writes that recent genre scholarship "recognizes and helps to account for the variation that necessarily occurs every time someone performs a genre in a particular text" (2).

This variation within genres occurs because "genres are at once shared and unique" (Devitt 2). Devitt continues,

> Each performance of a genre demonstrates its degree of prototypicality, disciplinary membership, historical moment, authorial identity, and many other qualities shared with other members of its category. Yet all of those sources of variation gathered together cannot account for the unique text that an author performs in a unique moment in a unique rhetorical situation, its unique action carrying out a unique communicative purpose through a unique process. In the end, each text is a unique performance. (2)

I extend this same consideration of genres as "unique performances" to the writings of Kate Hansen, examining her course papers not simply as evidence of the genres students produced, but, more significantly, as evidence of her unique response to writing instruction as she worked to straddle her sense of rhetoric with that of composition.

In addition to the notions of genres as social action and unique performances, a closely-connected and useful concept is that of *uptake*. Anne Freadman describes uptake, a term from J. L. Austin meaning the "bidirectional relation" between texts ("Uptake" 40), using the metaphor of tennis players exchanging shots ("Anyone for Tennis?"). According to Freadman, genres need to be understood as series of uptakes or "interaction[s]" ("Uptake" 40). Summarizing Freadman's conception of uptake, Anis Bawarshi and Mary Jo Reiff explain that uptake is "The ability to know how to negotiate genres and how to apply and turn genre strategies (rules for play) into textual practices (actual performances)" (85). In other words, uptake is both knowledge and application of genres; it is understanding the "rules" for negotiating meaning as well as carrying these rules out within "textual practices." Part of this negotiation relates to genre selection, of which Bawarshi and Reiff write that "knowledge of uptake is knowledge of when and why to use a genre; how to select an appropriate genre in relation to another or others; where along the range of its uptake profile to take up a genre, and at what cost; how some genres explicitly cite other genres in their uptake while some do so only implicitly, and so on" (86). Uptake, then, can be understood in part as the phenomenon by which individuals and groups select genres to employ based on their memory and understanding of which genres are appropriate to given situations, as well as the individual composing decisions users make within the genres they select, including possible deviations from genre norms. In other words, uptakes are individual uses of genres, resulting in Devitt's "unique performances."

Since Freadman's initial work, rhetorical genre studies scholars have continued to articulate and add nuance to the notion of uptake and the ways in which processes of uptake occur, and several features of uptake as articulated within this scholarship make it a fitting lens for my own study of the writings of Kate Hansen. First, uptake is

frequently utilized in rhetorical genre studies scholarship to examine writing within academic settings, a context in which Hansen's writings belong. Reiff and Bawarshi, for instance, consider the antecedent genre knowledge that students bring to their first-year composition courses. One implication of their study advocates that instructors should attempt to disrupt their students' "habitual uptakes," such as by assigning tasks that begin with metacognitive exercises that ask students to reflect on their prior knowledge (Reiff and Bawarshi 331-332). Likewise examining contemporary students' utilization of genres in the first-year writing classroom, Heather Bastian describes the usefulness of uptake in that it "allows [her] to highlight the ways in which the individual as well as genre and context influence how writers take up texts and make use of their discursive resources" ("Capturing Individual Uptake"). To make largely invisible uptake processes more visible, Bastian employs "disruptive pedagogical interventions" within her study by giving students a writing task but not specifying the genre in which they are expected to complete it. As work by Reiff and Bawarshi and Bastian indicate, genres scholars are concerned with the cognitive processes by which students recall and select genres to achieve desired outcomes, as well as the ways in which instructors can assist students with that process.

A second important facet of uptake relates to the subjectivities which uptakes reinforce. In "Acknowledging the Rough Edges of Resistance: Negotiation of Identities of First-Year Composition," Melanie Kill explains the fittingness of uptake for describing students' positions in the university:

> If we understand the academic writing of first-year students to be largely delimited both by these students' position within the university and by the materials and assignments provided to them, this formulation [uptake] seems to describe their situation quite well. To participate successfully in the academic and intellectual communities to which they are presumably pursuing entrance, they must write in genres, and thus assume subject positions, for which they might not yet understand the motivations or possibilities. (219)

Thus, more than just the selection of genres and strategic composing decisions within selected genres, Kill's conception of uptake draws attention to the risks and affordances of particular genres through the subjectivities they construct. Kill's focus on subjectivities and the ways which genres and uptakes of genres construct student identities within the university is particularly fitting to my study of Hansen's writings, as her uptakes of required genres necessarily position her within the academy in particular ways and demonstrate Comstock's sense of students straddling the old rhetorical training with the new composition. Importantly, though, Kill notes that this positionality does not mean that students are completely without agency (219). This is something confirmed in the

studies above in which instructors study their students' individual uptakes and create tasks designed to encourage new, productive uptakes.

Thus, by studying Hansen's work closely, I gain an understanding of how she accepts, resists, or transcends her positionality as a woman student via her particular uptakes. Like most students, Hansen wrote within genres that she was required to produce for successful completion of her "Advanced English Composition" course. I explore Hansen's particular, individual uptakes, her "abilit[ies] to know how to negotiate genres and how to apply and turn genre strategies (rules for play) into textual practices (actual performances)" (Bawarshi and Reiff 85).

Before situating Hansen's course papers within their local context and their embodiment of Comstock's framework for the shifts in writing instruction that occurred at the end of the nineteenth century, it is important to consider the specific generic nature of Hansen's set of course papers. The genre labels that appear on some of Hansen's papers–and likewise, the genres these papers constitute–provide evidence of Wardle's "mutt genres" (774). Mutt genres are those which writing teachers assign which "mimic genres that mediate activities in other activity systems, but within the [First-Year Composition] system their purposes and audiences are vague or even contradictory" (Wardle 774). In other words, mutt genres are those that only exist within the context of composition courses. Though Wardle is speaking specifically of modern-day assignments in FYC courses, this very much is the case for some of Hansen's papers as well, particularly since many are labeled as "exercises" in various genres, rather than just the genre names alone. They are similar to what Amy J. Lueck, citing Ronald J. Zboray and Mary Saracino Zboray, calls "'boundary-blurring items' in the archives...which are those that do not easily fit in the categories of diary, scrapbook, commonplace book, and so forth" (384). Thus, Hansen's writings can be understood as school genres that might not necessarily perform a full function outside the context of the classroom but that are nevertheless deserving of careful study for what they can tell us about her uptakes and what these moves can demonstrate about disciplinary shifts in composition.

Situating the Old Rhetoric and the New Composition: Writing Instruction at KU & "Advanced English Composition"

Next, it is important to situate Hansen's writings within the local context in which they were produced. Throughout this section, I strive to frame secondary scholarship on KU history and material contained within the university's archive through the lens of how they relate to Hansen and her "Advanced English Composition" course, seeking to center this woman and what affected her work as a writer. These primary and secondary sources promote an understanding that the writing curriculum at KU was systematic and rule-governed; likewise, they show a writing faculty who were aware of the labor-

intensive nature of writing instruction and actively sought to make that work more manageable. Students, then, were expected to abide by those rules and expectations. Further, and perhaps explaining this rule-governed emphasis, the writing instruction occurring at KU at this time is illustrative of the same kind of shift Comstock and others say was going on at elite, eastern schools as they moved from the old rhetoric to new writing instruction. The result of this was often the production of mutt genre writings such as Hansen's.

The University of Kansas officially opened in Lawrence, Kansas on September 12, 1866 (Griffin 33). Archival materials documenting the history of the Department of English show that it consistently sought to create clear systems for managing the grading of student writing, particularly as it moved away from a more rhetoric-based curriculum to the newer writing instruction, which was much more likely to involve frequent, repeated writing exercises, "a system of daily written work" (Comstock 193). KU underwent a number of curricular changes in its early history, but courses in English had remained a requirement throughout each of these shifts, as Skinnell points out (*Conceding Composition* 9). Offering these courses became more challenging as enrollments at KU continued to grow. Enrollment numbers totaled 1150 in 1899-1900, the year of Hansen's "Advanced English Composition" course. By this time, the Department of English faculty listed in the university catalog included two full professors (Charles G. Dunlap, Professor of English Literature, and Edwin M. Hopkins, Professor of Rhetoric and English Language), one associate professor of elocution and oratory (Charles Vickrey), and two assistant professors of English (Raphael D. O'Leary and H. Foster Jones) (1899-1900 *Course Catalogue* 65-6).[36]

In addition to rising enrollments, the difficulty of managing the teaching of writing was further compounded by the forensic system in place at KU. David R. Russell broadly defines the forensic system as "various college wide writing requirements from entrance to graduation, which endured in the curriculum until 1900 at Harvard and elsewhere into the 1920s" (Russell 51). After moving away from a system of orally-delivered *rhetoricals*, KU moved to a forensic system beginning in the 1886-87 school years. KU's forensic system consisted of *themes*, *theses*, and *forensics*. A daily (or near-daily) theme, as Comstock notes, is very much "an artifact of the classroom with only an arbitrary relation to 'outside' forms of communication. The system was legitimized in the institution to the extent that it made intelligible the development of the

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[36] Although these five men are the only English faculty listed in the course catalog, documents produced internally by the Department of English. This catalog and the preceding year's likewise list seminar librarians (Edith M. Clark and Dora C. Renn) and manuscript readers of the department (Robert Wilson Neal, Annie H. Abel, and Will B. Sutton). So, although women helped to comprise and perform important labor within the department during the year of Hansen's composition course, the professorship roles, those that the university apparently assigned the most institutional credibility by their listing in the catalog that circulated to all of the other schools, belonged only to men.

student him/herself, and vice versa" (193). Students were, in effect, regularly producing mutt genres for their themes and other assigned genres.

While the distinctions between these three genres of writing within the forensic system are not always clear,[37] each of them were graded by Department of English faculty (and, most likely, manuscript readers). These required writings within the forensic system certainly contributed to the labor required of Department of English manuscript readers and faculty, including Hopkins and O'Leary, the co-instructors for Hansen's "Advanced English Composition" course.

Due to the quantity of text that students produced in the new composition-based program, the Department of English had to find ways of making the work of grading forensic system writings more sustainable. To help manage this work, the Department of English published its *English Bulletin* for the first time in 1894. This booklet was written by the department and appears intended to be read by all students engaged in English coursework (which itself also sometimes included the production of themes, theses, and forensics) and all students engaged in forensic system writings as required by their individual schools. The 1899-1901 *English Bulletin* opens by articulating its purpose, remarking heavily on the "need of a system" for handling its immense number of themes, theses, and forensics received by the department (8).[38] The *Bulletin* remarks that

> The English Department receives each year from 1,100 students about 45,000 pages of manuscript aggregating nine million words, requiring for critical reading and correction the equivalent of four years' labor by a single reader working four hours per day, which is the limit of endurance for such work. Only by making it as systematic as possible can it be done at all; and it is evident that in the handling of such a mass of material every detail, however minute, is of importance [. . .] every student is required, by careful attention to these instructions, to aid the department in the most burdensome part of its duty. (1899-1901 *English Bulletin* 8)

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[37] In general, themes at KU referred exclusively to the required writing done within most degree plans by sophomores. Themes were expected to be "not less than 1000 words each" and had specific due dates throughout the year (1899-1901 *English Bulletin* 9). Theses and forensics, which were the junior and senior requirements, differed in that they were "designated *forensics* when argumentative, and *theses* when expository" (1899-1901 *English Bulletin* 15). There is no evidence that students at KU were required to deliver their forensic writings orally (as they had been in the previous tradition of *rhetoricals*). However, the delivery of approved types of orations or other public addresses could substitute in place of forensics (1899-1901 *English Bulletin* 16). Students were still required to submit their orations "to an English instructor for criticism at least a week before delivered" (1899-1901 *English Bulletin* 16-17).

[38] There are four issues of the *English Bulletin* preserved in the Department of English artificial records. The 1899-1901 edition is the only one that spans two academic years rather than one, and the document itself offers no explanation as to why.

The *Bulletin* goes on to detail its systems, including providing criteria such as exact specifications for paper size and folding methods to follow, precise "superscriptions" to write on the outside of completed work, and protocols and locations for submitting work, picking up graded work, and re-depositing it again "for permanent filing" (1899-1901 *English Bulletin* 9-10, 17).

Further, much like a contemporary handbook, the *English Bulletin* also provided expectations for quoting and citing material and constructing bibliographies and structuring outlines (1899-1901 *English Bulletin* 11-12, 13-14). Much like a modern syllabus, the *Bulletin* also provided late work submission policies, office hours, and a grading system and scale (*English Bulletin* 18). Thus, the Department of English at the time of Hansen's "Advanced English Composition" courses had very specific procedural expectations for the submission and handling of student work in their writing courses and in their completion of themes, theses, and forensics, and the *English Bulletin* served as a genre through which those expectations could be conveyed.

And so, in addition to preparatory requirements that aimed to standardize the courses, textbooks, and content that students were taught prior to enrolling at KU, the *English Bulletin* suggests that the department sought to be systematic and rule-governed in its approaches to receiving, responding, and returning student work once they were fully-fledged students fulfilling their forensic system requirements. In this way, similar to what Comstock observes at Harvard, "training in writing becomes disciplinary and largely physical" (189).

By the time Hansen was a student at KU, individual schools within the University set the requirements for their students. Hansen's school (the School of Fine Arts) and her specific Pianoforte program required that she take "Advanced English Composition." Although courses in the Department of English were frequently restructured in the years surrounding Hansen's course, in 1899-1900 the course was grouped within English B, "Rhetoric and English Language," relating more strongly to rhetorical and language concerns than to literature. For Hansen, a student in the School of Fine Arts, this course was required, and she opted to take it during the second semester of her first year (Hansen enrollment card).

The ways in which Hansen's "Advanced English Composition" course is described varies somewhat across the documents and genre systems of the university and department. The course description for the class in the course catalog during the year of Hansen's course describes it as "A study of the general theory of all forms of discourse, with copious original exercises" (119). Within the *English Bulletin* of 1899-1901, the course is a "Study of the forms of discourse with reference to structure and style; lectures, exercises, reference reading, and seminar" (6). These descriptions of the course are helpful in shaping an understanding of the course, and they reflect an

emphasis on repeated, "copious" writing exercises that seem more about "disciplining of the body" using routine than "training of the mind" (Comstock 189). But how did students–in particular, women students–actually respond to the instruction they received? What did they actually write? What were their unique performances of the genres they were expected to produce? These are questions that university/departmental documents such as the course catalog or the *English Bulletin* cannot answer.

Analyzing Kate Hansen's Course Papers

I now move to an examination of the forty-two course papers archived at KU's Kenneth Spencer Research Library which Hansen produced for her specific "Advanced English Composition" course in the spring of 1900. Each of these papers is handwritten with pencil on lined paper, and each is labeled with a superscription and folded in half, as the *English Bulletin* indicated was required. The information contained in the superscriptions of Hansen's papers are highly valuable for a study of her writings. Students' superscriptions were required to list the following: "First, the subject of the paper; then, in this order: the writer's name, the writers' class, and the date of presentation" (*1899-1901 English Bulletin* 10). Hansen's superscriptions are most often full and complete, and their dates provide a clear indication of the order in which her papers were submitted throughout the course. The earliest paper's date is February 2, 1900, and the latest May 28, 1900. Only four of her papers are missing dates within their superscriptions.

While determining the precise genres students were expected to produce is not always possible, in many cases, clues to the genres in which Hansen composes are likewise provided by her papers' superscriptions. Twenty-seven of her papers' superscriptions include a title, while fifteen of Hansen's papers lack this exterior title. In these cases, I rely on the title that appears at the top of the interior first page of the assignments. These titles in either Hansen's superscriptions or her papers' interior first pages frequently provide what I call *genre labels*, named indications of what genre she was asked to write. For instance, her February 25 paper is titled an "Exercise in Editorial and News Paragraphing," which indicates that Hansen was asked to produce the genre of editorial and news paragraphs, or at least exercises closely connected to the imitation of these genres. As described above, the range of labels present within Hansen's paper set suggest that students in "Advanced English Composition" were required to write within a wide variety of genres, some of which were certainly mutt genres brought on the by the movement from the old rhetoric to the new composition. These pieces contain those "purposes and audiences" Wardle describes as "vague or even contradictory," and they appear to only exist within the context of a composition course (774). Of Hansen's forty-two papers, eleven do not contain a direct indication of their intended genre via a label.

Remaining Within Genres

Hansen's course papers demonstrate that she often remained largely within the conventions of the genres she was expected to produce. When I use the term "within," I mean that Hansen takes up the assignment and produces a text that appears in keeping with the form and function of the genre she has been assigned to produce. This is often evident based on expectations presented in the *English Bulletin* because, although Hansen's writings in her paper set are for her "Advanced English Composition" course and not for the additional forensic system writings to which the *Bulletin* most often directly refers, it is logical that her instructors maintained many of the same logistical expectations for the writings produced within the courses they taught.

My analysis of Hansen's course papers demonstrates that there are three primary overarching genres in which Hansen makes no obvious deviations from the genres' form, content, or function, instead maintaining the "habitual uptakes" expected by the assignment, and each of these certainly function as mutt genres that do not exist outside classrooms: outlines, briefs and refutations (refutations are identical to briefs, yet involve arguing for an opposing claim to the one presented in a brief), and descriptions (Reiff and Bawarshi 331). In her outlines, for instance, which discuss topics such as "What I think of Being Vaccinated" or "Some Advantages of Eight O'Clock Classes," Hansen follows the parameters and models provided in the *English Bulletin* to carry out her own outlines for "Advanced English Composition" (Hansen, "Exercise in Outlines" 1; Hansen, "Some Advantages" 1; 1899-1901 *English Bulletin* 13). Likewise, in each of her briefs, Hansen begins with a clear thesis and then follows with outline-like structures, detailing reasons that the thesis is true, another expectation presented in the *Bulletin*. Some thesis statements which begin her briefs include: "Industrial education should be given a place in the public schools," "The study of German is preferable to that of Latin," "All teachers in country schools should be required to pass an examination in music," "Students should not study on Sunday," "Students in college should help frame the laws by which they are governed," and "Undergraduate students should devote themselves to a single line of study" (Hansen, "Exercise in Briefs" 19 Mar 1900 1; Hansen, "Exercise in Brief-Making" 21 Mar 1900 1; Hansen, "Exercise in Brief-Making" 23 Mar 1900 1; Hansen, "Exercise in Brief-Making 25 Mar 1900 1; Hansen, "Exercise in Briefs" 27 Mar 1900 1; Hansen, "Exercise in Briefs" 11 Apr 1900 1).

However, even within these mutt genres for which Hansen performs seemingly normal uptakes, she frequently includes clear traces of her own interests and experiences, as well as her past experiences. For example, nearly all of Hansen's arguments in her briefs connect closely to the subject of education, a subject Hansen has an investment in as both a former educator in rural Kansas schools and as a current student herself at KU. Only one brief's thesis, "The poet makes use of his earlier writings in his Latin works" does not directly address education or students (Hansen, "Exercise in

Briefs" [4 Apr 1900] 1). Likewise, some briefs showcase Hansen's knowledge of the German language. In other words, the briefs Hansen produces are still unique performances of those mutt genres because they reflect her own interests and experiences; her uptake of writing instruction to produce these very mutt-genre-esque briefs that are largely about repetition and following prescribed rules does not preclude her ability to do so in ways that are unique to her as an individual.

Further, Hansen's papers demonstrate that her engagement with assignments relies on her personal interests even in genres that would not necessarily require student writers to draw on the personal as the basis for their work. To return to Hansen's briefs to illustrate this, the personal connections Hansen utilizes do not appear to be required components of the form and function of briefs as established in the *English Bulletin*, which instead appear very logic-based, requiring an argument and evidence or proofs. However, writing within the genre of a brief seems to intrinsically require an insertion of the self and an investment in the selected proposition or thesis. Hansen must have familiarity with the argument she presents in order to readily and successfully convey it. As such, Hansen's use of personal connections within her briefs does not seem to constitute a deviation from the genre. Or, at least, having familiarity with her topic and argument serves as an aid and makes producing a brief more feasible. This notion of making academic tasks more personal is similar to observations made by Sue Carter Simmons in her study of Radcliffe student Annie Ware Winsor Allen. Simmons argues that Allen, who was likewise writing for male professors, was able to learn and eventually manipulate the academic discourse she was taught to "[transform] the hostile curriculum she met into a more personally fulfilling one that enabled her to meet her own goal of becoming a school teacher" (270). In this way, Simmons demonstrates that Allen made use of her daily themes–themselves a genre–to help achieve her own educational and personal goals. Though it is not clear if this was likewise a motivation for Hansen, it is clear that Hansen's affinity for taking up genres in ways that draw on her personal interests and experiences spans across genres, and doing so appears to allow her to more readily enact the mutt genres she was expected to produce.

Pushing Against Genres

While Hansen's enactments of the genres of outlines, briefs and refutations, and descriptions most certainly demonstrate her working within these mutt genres in expected ways, as well as using her personal interests and experiences to assist herself in doing so, she engages in other kinds of uptakes, as well. There are other clear instances in her writings for "Advanced English Composition" that instead show her pushing against the mutt genres she was expected to produce. Hansen is not a passive recipient of writing instruction and the bodily discipline teaching methods that Comstock demonstrates were becoming the new method of writing instruction at the end of the nineteenth century. I illustrate this by providing examples from Hansen's work where

she either expresses difficulty with producing specific genres or where she uses genre imitation in ways that show her understanding of mutt genres' forms and function, yet also her manipulation of them to evoke humor.

Challenges in Completing Writing Tasks

First, there are instances in Hansen's course papers in which she attempts to take up the mutt genres she has been assigned to produce but expresses her difficulty with doing so. On April 23, Hansen submits an assignment–one whose contents reveal is the genre of a theme–titled "One Student's Directions for Cultivating Cabbages." This assignment opens as follows:

> The cultivation of cabbages! Dire dismay overwhelmed the mind of at least one long-suffering student, when this subject was announced. "What do I know about the cultivation of cabbages?" she exclaimed. "I never cultivated a cabbage in my life! I do not know if cabbage grows from a seed or a bulb!" For two days she worried over those cabbages. She searched every nook and corner of her brain for "subject" or "theme material", but she searched in vain. She annoyed all her friends with questions about cabbages. They knew but little more than she did. She obtained only two bits of information which she thought of any value- the first, that cabbages do not grow from bulbs, and the second, that the plants must be transplanted to make them grow well. But that could never be made into a five hundred word theme, she thought. At last, into the gloomy emptiness of her brain there flashed a dangling light. It was, an idea- at last. "Now," she thought, "I have been studying reasoning for these past six weeks, and I surely ought to know something about it. Why should I not reason out the proper manner of cultivating cabbages?" She did so, and here is the result of her reasoning […] (Hansen, "One Student's Directions" 1)

In this theme, Hansen spends nearly half of her two-page assignment expressing the difficulty she has with completing this writing task. Narrating her pre-writing process, she begins by explaining that she took an inventory of her already-held knowledge. Finding nothing useful to aid her in writing about cabbages, she writes that she then consults friends, which yields some information, yet not enough for a "five hundred word theme," which is apparently the required length for her paper. After narrating this process, she claims that she draws on her skills of "reasoning" to write the remaining page of her two-page paper (Hansen, "One Student's Directions").

Hansen's meta-commentary on the difficulty she has with completing this assignment, as well as the percentage of the whole theme that these commentaries take up, show her engaging in uptakes that seem out of keeping with the genre of the theme. The *English Bulletin*, previous student Margaret Kane's 1899 course notes, and Hansen's other themes suggest themes instead ought to begin with a clear focus or point and then proceed in a logical order to address that focus or point. Instead, Hansen

devotes substantial time and space to overtly describing why she has difficulty carrying out the assignment. The challenges Hansen faces in taking up this theme are certainly valid–she simply does not know how to cultivate cabbages. But Hansen's use of the theme itself to describe those challenges pushes against the form and function of the genre she has been assigned to compose. Like the students at Louisville Girls High School described by Lueck who produce or even sign their school memory books (394-9), Hansen recognizes the expected uses of genres while also noting and even pushing back against those same genres' constraints. This demonstrates her rhetorical savvy when faced with a composition-based task.

Hansen's expressions of difficulty with writing tasks are most obvious in this theme on cultivating cabbages. However, shorter commentaries on the challenges of taking up her assignments likewise occur in other papers. In her April 25 paper titled "Two Games of My School Days," Hansen is apparently tasked with describing games she played as a child. She opens her essay by saying that

> It is indeed a difficult task to go back in memory to the games of childhood. The distance is so great, that very few objects can be recalled with sufficient accuracy for the present scientific investigation. Vague pictures, scraps of verse with their accompanying monotonous chant, one or two names- these are all that now remain. Here is one of the verses which come to me: [...]. (Hansen, "Two Games of My School Days" 1)

Hansen next provides two verses that appear to be nursery rhymes, after which she further elaborates on the lyrics and the actions that accompany them. Hansen could have omitted this opening and moved directly to providing these verses; instead, she chose to open the paper by expressing the challenge this assignment presents. This may be because she feels these "verses" are not in keeping with the "games" her paper's title suggests she was instructed to write.

In this paper, as in "One Student's Directions for Cultivating Cabbages," Hansen seems to want to produce her assignments in ways consistent with her assigned tasks. But when she feels she is unable to do so successfully, she modifies the genre's contents to instead devote (sometimes substantial) length to explaining the challenges she encounters. She may do so for a variety of reasons, such as to expand her papers' lengths to meet their requirements, or perhaps in order to ensure her readers, Hopkins or O'Leary, are aware of the challenges she faced (and perhaps not grade her harshly for remembering verses but not actual games). Or, like the Louisville Girls High School students who Lueck studies (398), Hansen simply has anxieties and difficulties in composing in this new (mutt) genre. For whatever reasons, Hansen's uptakes may push against the specific assignments with which she is tasked, showing that although she was a recipient of the new composition and the bodily discipline that came with it that

Comstock describes, doing so does not mean Hansen did not struggle or engage in uptakes that are individual to her own experiences.

Using Genre Imitation in an "Exercise in Letter Writing"

In addition to expressing difficulty with her writing assignments, Hansen subtly pushes against the genres she has been assigned through a use of humor or playfulness. While many of Hansen's papers demonstrate this usage of humor, it is particularly well-illustrated in her March 9 "Exercise in Letter Writing." This example is also especially interesting because letters themselves are real-world genres, not classroom mutt genres; however, the ways in which Hansen choses to compose this particular letter shows that she still recognizes the artificiality of a letter-writing *exercise*; she realizes that she and her classmates are writing letters that will not actually circulate outside the classroom.

Hansen's "Exercise in Letter Writing" is dated "Lawrence, Kans. March 9, 1900" and addressed to "Mr. J. S. Bach, The Seventh Heaven." Hansen writes:

Most Honored Master:- A poor student, who for the past six months has been laboring, with ardent devotion, but alas! all in vain, to gain some conception of the meaning of your wonderful Inventions and three part Fugues, ventures to address you, the Master, alike of past, present, and future music. Words are indeed inadequate to express my admiration for those sublime compositions. They are also inadequate to express my opinion of the labor involved in mastering them. O, Master, We work so faithfully: we practice, "one, two, three, four," regularly as the clock ticks, for four weary hours every day. We think we understand your meaning; we go to class full of confidence. We play one measure, or perhaps, in rare cases, two; then our instructor, hard-hearted as he is, interrupts- tell us it is all wrong, that we have not the slightest idea of your meaning, and in short makes us feel that we never can attain any understanding of your works, no matter how we work. We wish, so earnestly, that we might see you, and year you tell us what to do, and how to express your thoughts- But what do these Inventions really mean? One voice says something; then another one begins, then a third one interrupts- All three keep on, each one with a different something to say, until it seems that neither is saying anything. So they keep on quarreling, arguing, disputing. Sometimes one stops for a measure or two, apparently for lack of breath. Once in a while, although rarely, two agree for a measure enough to follow each other in thirds and sixths. Finally, with a last parting thrust, they die away one after the other. Is that what you think people do? Is this meant to be a philosophy of life? Or is it just so much "exercise for the independence of the fingers?" Forgive the presumption of the questions, dear Master, and set at rest the mind of one who is well-nigh distracted with these confusing, conflicting

"voices." With all humility, Your disciple, Hansen Ingeborg Hansen. (Hansen, "Exercise in Letter Writing" 1-2)

In this letter, Hansen describes the difficulty she has with learning Bach's musical compositions. This letter clearly shows a connection to Hansen's own interests as a piano student in the School of Fine Arts.

Aside from taking up the genre in a way that connects to her personal interests, Hansen's uptake of the letter genre is significant in that she has addresses it to a non-living recipient. Other features of the letter seem in keeping with the genre: the structure of the heading, paragraphs, salutation, and closing all seem to match the form of a personal letter. But the actual content of these features shows Hansen crafting an imaginative, humorous letter, one addressed to long-deceased composer Johann Sebastian Bach who resides in "The Seventh Heaven," entreating him to reveal the purpose of his complex musical compositions (Hansen, "Exercise in Letter Writing" 1). In these ways, Hansen shows her understanding of both the form and function of a letter; in this sense, she is writing within the genre and engaging in expected uptakes. However, these modifications to its form and function may likewise show her ability to imitate the genre, to use it in playful ways that do not fit its real-world function. Hansen may also be pushing against the constraints of a fairly prescriptive genre and looking for ways to exercise creativity or choice within those constraints. This is her "unique performance" of the genre (Devitt 2).

On a deeper level, Hansen may be showing a keen understanding of the artificiality of classroom writing assignment genres, even ones that aren't necessarily mutt genres. She may recognize that she does not need to write to a living person in order to successfully complete her assignment. Thus, being a recipient of the new, much more disciplined composition does not preclude her abilities to take up genres in her own unique performances.

Moving Beyond Genres

Hansen most frequently writes within the genres she is assigned as part of her course. And there are occasions, as I demonstrate above, in which Hansen may even push against the genres she is required to produce. It's clear that, although a woman being taught by men in a time when teaching writing was becoming more disciplined and rule-governed, Hansen is not a passive recipient of writing instruction, but rather a unique individual engaging in unique performances and uptakes of her assignment genres. In this final section, I analyze ways in which Hansen may do more than write within or against genres. In the two examples that follow, I argue that she may even write beyond genres, utilizing the genres she has been required to write within "Advanced English Composition" in ways that expand beyond their intended forms and functions. In each of these examples, while I have no reason to believe Hansen did not

actually engage in the activities she claims she did, the possibility should be acknowledged that the writing Hansen produces were products of her imagination.

Writing Beyond Genre in "An Experiment in Artistic Observation"

On May 7, Hansen submits an untitled paper slightly over three pages in length whose interior title is "An Experiment in Artistic Observation." Unlike most other papers, Hansen opens this one by directly identifying the writing task she has been assigned: "We had been assigned as a subject for composition, 'A Night in the Deserted House.' Not being possessed of sufficiently vivid imaginations to manufacture a story about it, and never having been in such a place, several of us were at a loss what to do" (Hansen, "An Experiment" 1). Hansen and her friends have apparently been assigned to construct a paper–perhaps a theme–related to this subject. Though the genre is not completely clear from this opening, it does seem that this assignment requires students to use their "imaginations" to construct this piece of writing.

Next, Hansen discusses the plan formulated by herself and some fellow students, who she identifies only by their first initials (M., B., and R.), to accomplish this work. She writes that "At last M. had a brilliant idea. 'Why not go there tonight?' Four of us agreed to try it. The owners of the place looked surprised at our request, and cast some unkind reflections on our common sense. However, on our explaining our object, they granted us the desired permission" (Hansen, "An Experiment" 1). Hansen and her three friends find their assigned task to be challenging, and, in response, they apparently actually go to a deserted house. The remainder of Hansen's paper recalls their experience, which includes their arrival at the deserted house, their surveillance of it, and their splitting up to spend the night in separate rooms within it, "In order to make [their] impressions more vivid" (Hansen, "An Experiment" 1). Hansen manages to fall asleep, during which time she experiences a terrible nightmare. She is awakened by a loud noise (which her paper later reveals to be one of her friends falling out of their hammock) that scares Hansen and her companions, many of whom then flee the deserted house (Hansen, "An Experiment" 1-3).

Hansen turns in this assignment for "Advanced English Composition," and she titles this experience "An Experiment in Artistic Observation." Again, this title that Hansen writes at the top of the interior first page of her assignment is quite distinct from the assignment Hansen says in the beginning of the paper's body that she and her classmates have been assigned to write. She writes that "We had been assigned as a subject for composition, 'A Night in the Deserted House,'" and that it is supposed to be written through use of the imagination alone.

Hansen's construction of her *ethos* within this paper is interesting. On one hand, her movement well beyond the genre she has been assigned to complete shows

somewhat of a disregard for the instructions she has been given. However, she is careful to include an indication in her paper that she and her friends did ask permission to stay in the house, and that they were not trespassing or breaking actual laws in modifying their assignment to actually go to a deserted house. Even so, Hansen identifies the sex of at least one of her friends accompanying her on this excursion as male. As such, Hansen spends at least a portion of the night in the house with other male students, a mixing of company that likely would have been frowned upon in 1900.

While in papers such as "One Student's Directions for Cultivating Cabbages" or "Two Games of My School Days" Hansen expresses her difficulty with carrying out her writing tasks, and while in "Exercise in Letter Writing" she carries it out in a humorous, genre-imitating fashion, in this "Experiment in Artistic Observation" she moves well beyond the task she has been asked to undertake, and does so using a complicated construction of personal *ethos* that likely would not have been raised had she remained "within" the confines of the original assignment. Scholar Brad Peters describes his own student's use of a different genre to accomplish a writing task an "antigenre" (201). Likewise, as Peters says may be the case of his modern-day student, Hansen may "[feel] a need to conceptualize and articulate what she knows about a topic in a new way," one other than the genre that has been assigned (Peters 201). Rather than imitating or playing with the assigned genre, Hansen experiments with a new genre to achieve her purposes.

Not only is the genre very different from what she is assigned, but so are Hansen's methods for completing it. Whereas "A Night in the Deserted House," Hansen's actual assignment, asked that she produce a fictional account based on her imagination (and it is possible that is what she did), Hansen and her friends certainly appear to instead enact first-hand field research. Rather than construct their papers from their imaginations, as Hansen's opening suggests they were asked to do, they actually go to a deserted house to be inspired and gain material for their assignment, moving beyond the assigned genre and task in both their writing process and their final writing product. Comstock argues that the previous rhetorical instruction was about training students' minds, while the newer composition was more about disciplining their bodies; in this example from Hansen's papers, the separation between the two is not so clear and may actually be a combination of each.

Writing Beyond Genre in an "Oration"

Hansen's decision to alter the parameters of her assignment in order to produce "An Experiment in Artistic Observation" shows her taking up the assignment in a unique way, though one apparently shared by her three friends. But there is one other instance of Hansen writing well beyond the genre she has been asked to complete.

On May 28, Hansen submitted the final paper contained within this collection of her "Advanced English Composition" papers. This "Oration" is one, according to the line following the main title, that Hansen "Delivered Before the Freshman Harmony Class." The full transcript of this oration is as follows:

Miss President, ladies and gentleman [sic]:-

It is indeed a sorrowful occasion which calls us together. For nearly nine months we have had toil and suffering in common. Our brains have vibrated in unison as we labored to calculate the ratios of the vibrations in a chord of the augmented sixth. The most violent discords have not disturbed the concord of our relations with our esteemed instructor. Without a word of complaint we have robbed ourselves of our much-needed sleep, which we strove to rid our exercises of parallel fifths, augmented seconds, and doubled leading tones. We have strained our ears to comprehend the difference between consonances and dissonances, until our whole existence seemed to be moving to the time of a diminished seventh. With unmixed patience we have striven to understand the mysteries of mixed chords. With unalterable determination we have wrestles with the difficulties of altered chords. Dominated by the one desire to do our whole duty, we have not shrunk from the multitudinous array of dominant discords. These were comparatively easy. But what shall I say of our last month's work? it is unnecessary to speak of that; for the pale face, in which the lines of care are all too deep, the tired eyes, the attenuated forms before me bear a far more eloquent testimony than I could every do, to the devotion with which we have given ourselves to the last task-master, the subject of modulations. We have succeeded. Even our professor admits that. The family of keys is to us as our own kindred. The relative minor of the dominant, the opposite mode of the relative minor of the sub-dominant, present no more difficulties to use. Direct extraneous modulations, consecutive dominants, enharmonic exchanges, have become as integral parts of our minds. We have avoided no part, however abstruse or mystifying. At last, our labors seemed about to be ended. it would be only one week, and then freedom, for had not the chancellor decreed it. Do you remember our rejoicing? Alas, that it was in vain! Soon there came to use the awful news, that when all the other schools had ended their work, when all the other students, happy in their release from quizes [sic] and "cramming," were hastening homeward- we alone were to be compelled to remain, in order to prove our possession of this dearly-bought knowledge of ours. No matter, that our instructor already knows we possess it. Classmates, you do not need to be told that this is unjust and injurious. You all agree that such cruelty must not be. For the sake of our health, which will surely give away under the strain of that extra day; for the sake of our faithful work in the past; for the sake of Harmony in every

sense, I move that we present a petition to our instructor, most humbly begging and entreating him to spare us that last crowning ordeal. (Hansen, "Oration" 1-3) This particular paper is likewise transcribed in the biography of Hansen written by Dane G. Bales, Polly Roth Bales, and Calvin E. Harbin, though the only commentary or analysis Bales, Bales, and Harbin offer is to say that it was a "good-natured student protest" (117). The situation surrounding this particular assignment is somewhat complicated: Hansen claims that her "Freshmen Harmony" class worked exceptionally hard to learn a difficult set of chords, finally succeeding in doing so. However, even though all the other schools had dismissed for the semester, the Harmony instructor announced the students would still be quizzed on the material and need to "prove" their "dearly bought knowledge" (Hansen, "Oration" 2). Hansen's oration is an address to her fellow "Freshmen Harmony" classmates (including a "Miss President"), asking them to stand together and petition the music professor for a release from this final exam.

At the end of this paper, Hansen includes the following parenthetical comment on the outcome of her oration: "The motion was carried unanimously. The petition was written in the most touching style. But the hard-hearted professor, instead of being moved to compassion, seemed only amused at our suffering. The quiz will proceed" (Hansen, "Oration" 3). In other words, Hansen was successful in getting her classmates to agree to petition their instructor for a release from the exam. They then did so; however, their attempts to persuade the professor were unsuccessful.

In this paper, Hansen produces a writing assignment that, in many ways, resides "within" the genre of an oration. The course notes of student Margaret Kane from May 29, 1899, who was enrolled in a course by the same title and instructors just one year earlier than Kate Hansen, include ample information about this genre, the various classes of orations, and many of their characteristics. Kane's notes likewise indicate that in her own "Advanced English Composition" course, an "address to a class" was one of the options from which students could select for their assignment (Kane 169). It is likewise feasible that Hansen was given this option during her course a year later. In this sense, Hansen is writing within the parameters her instructors likely set.

Even so, there are two features of Hansen's oration that call its "within-ness" into question. First, Hansen actually delivers her oration. Kane's course notes regarding her own assignment are unclear as to whether this was a requirement; rather, Kane simply writes in her notes that she has as "choice" of six possible orations and that she must "avoid oratorical errors" (Kane 169). But Kane gives no indication as to whether this entails simply writing a script for an oration or whether it must also be delivered. In this sense, it is possible that Hansen may be writing beyond the requirements of her assignments in writing and actually delivering an oration.

This issue of delivery is unclear, but a second factor, and one which I argue does indicate Hansen moves beyond the genre of the oration, is the particular exigence and function of her oration to her harmony class. Kane's course notes indicate that, while an "Oration contains persuasion," its actual likelihood of being persuasive is not likely (Kane 166). Among Kane's options listed for the assignment are seemingly non-persuasive situations, such as "an after dinner speech" or "a toast to a class" (Kane 169). Kane writes, "One goes to hear an oration expecting to be entertained and expecting the orator to try to convince him against his better judgement & so he is less easily convinced" (Kane 166). Because it is unlikely that a speaker will actually be able to persuade using the genre of an oration, "Oratory is not considered practical now-a-days" (Kane 166).

Assuming that the instruction that Hansen receives in her "Advanced English Composition" course taught by the instructors one year later is similar, Hansen should not have expected to be successful in actually persuading an audience through the genre of an oration. However, Hansen selected an exigence for her oration that she actually felt was pressing and in need of modification, rather than something she needed to do simply to fulfill the requirements of a classroom mutt genre, as perhaps Hansen does in a paper like her "Exercise in Letter Writing." Moreover, Hansen used her oration writing assignment from the course to attempt to enact change where she saw need for change. She has created an active situation out of what was likely intended to be passive exercise. Her speech itself was successful, as her classmates were persuaded that they should petition their harmony instructor. Although this later petition to the instructor was not successful and did not yield Hansen's desired outcome, her speech itself did accomplish what she intended.

Hansen uses her assignment to attempt to enact change, and the instruction she likely received about the nature of orations suggests that it was very likely her attempts at change would be unsuccessful. But doing so, Hansen shows her desire to move beyond the genre of an oration, do more than entertain, and successfully persuade for a cause connected to her own interests and beliefs. In this way, Hansen has taken up the oration genre in a way that moves beyond the function her instructors expected an oration could feasibly perform. This shows an interesting blending of both mind and body discipline that coincides with the blending that may have occurred between rhetoric and composition in the framework Comstock forwards.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that the fusion of rhetorical genre theory and archival research provides meaningful understandings of the factors shaping and shaped by writing instruction at individual universities, as well as by larger, more widespread shifts in writing pedagogy. It prompts a recognition of what can be gained by focusing on

individual women students and their responses to that instruction, their unique performances of the genres they are assigned.

Writing instructors at KU were undoubtedly working under enormous strains as a result of moving toward a newer writing instruction and away from the older rhetoric, and they attempted to mitigate those challenges by creating orderly systems and procedures for themselves and their students. Documents such as the *English Bulletin* show an English department making concerted efforts to establish its role in the university, attempting to define and teach writing effectively long before the formal establishment of rhetoric and composition as a recognized field with journals, professional organizations, and doctoral programs. In his analysis of Harvard student self-reports, Comstock shows the movement from the old rhetoric to the new composition and its prioritizing of bodily discipline. My own analysis of Hansen's papers show that the shift from the old rhetoric to the new writing instruction described by Comstock was very much happening at KU and that it resulted in the production of mutt genres. However, there is still more that can be learned about students' individual uptakes and their work to balance rhetorical moves with composition in this time period when we narrow to a focus on individual students.

While KU as a site of formal education has been previously examined largely in terms of its instructors and programs, by narrowing in on the previously-unexamined writings and uptakes of writing instruction of a female student, we gain a closer understanding of what it was actually like for such a student to receive that instruction. Even when Kate Hansen was largely writing within the expected confines of specific genres' forms and functions (thus conforming to the expectations for students presented in documents like the *English Bulletin*), she still frequently used her own knowledge and past experiences as touch-points for doing so. Her uptakes, movements against, and even movements beyond the conventions of genres further emphasizes that her responses to writing instruction results in unique performances of genres. Though academic genres, including mutt genres, in the new composition may encourage habitualized uptakes, Hansen manages to insert her own identity and assert agency in her individualized uptake of her writing tasks. Hansen's writings provide a missing piece to understanding writing instruction at this institution, demonstrating how this sort of feminist recovery work can illuminate hidden corners of Rhetoric and Composition.

Acknowledgements

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Unsticking Shame: Considering Lived Experience and Processes of Overcoming

Author bio: Hannah Taylor is a second-year doctoral student at Clemson University in the Rhetoric, Communication and Information Design program. Her research focuses on corporeal feminism, digital rhetorics and reproductive justice.

Abstract: Taking the *Braving Body Shame* conference, which featured women discussing their experiences with shame, as a case study, this paper addresses what women do with their affective experiences. The paper examines videos from the *Braving Body Shame* conference to discuss how participants frame shame as a generative, recursive process of overcoming that stems from a recognition of their subjectivity. This paper offers one way of complicating our scholarly understanding of shame to avoid the flattening of affect and highlights the manifold ways individuals cope and seek empowerment within oppressive systems.

Keywords: shame; feminist rhetoric; embodiment

Shame has become a hot-button topic in popular discourse over the past few years.

Brené Brown, a researcher who moved into public consciousness through her moving TedTalk "The Power of Vulnerability" and book *Daring Greatly*, describes shame as "universal and one of the most primitive human emotions that we experience" ("The Power of Vulnerability"). The popularity of Brown's TedTalk and 2022 HBO Max series, *Atlas of the Heart*, demonstrates the resonance of this emotion in our contemporary moment. Brown claims that: "Shame is highly, highly correlated with addiction, depression, violence, aggression, bullying, suicide, eating disorders…if you put shame in a petri dish, it needs three things to grow exponentially: secrecy, silence, and judgment" (*Daring,* 68). Brown positions shame as the root cause behind much tension and turmoil in contemporary society. In contrast, other popular writers, like John Bradshaw, view shame as occasionally healthy, because shame is human and allows us space to make mistakes (127). Kristina "The Shame Lady" Cizmar sees people escaping shame by translating it, interrogating the ideal we are failing to live up to and looking to others who don't feel shame to model individual behavior (17-19). For popular writers, the key to escaping shame is discussing it publicly, as "people who come out the other side by

default feel braver, more connected and compassionate" (Brown, "The   Power of Vulnerability"). Each of these approaches has led to increased public discourse about shame–both its impacts and possibilities.

This increasing public discourse has sparked new forums dedicated to discussions of shame. For example, the 2020 *Braving Body Shame* conference, which took place over eight days between February 24 and March 3, 2020, featured 36 men and women discussing their personal experiences with body shame and fatness.[39] Each day, hosts Alicia, Ani and Julie engaged the speakers in conversations about their experiences with shame through interviews lasting between 30 minutes and two hours[40]. Unlike other conferences on the topics of fatness and health, the event was free for participants, held entirely online, and featured a range of experts across fields, rather than academics and individuals whose knowledge is concentrated to a specific discipline[41]. From actresses and professional dancers to social workers and dietitians, the conference asked people from all walks of life to engage with and share their experiences of body shame. The conference had two primary purposes: community building and education. The inclusive, accessible, and diverse nature of the conference allowed speakers and audience members alike to hear others' experiences of shame, which were all validated as real and important by the structure of the conference. According to the website and opening remarks, building community was a central goal of the conference ("Home"). The second purpose was to grant individuals a unified platform to discuss their experiences of body shame with the goal of educating people in the community about the legitimate harms caused by shame. Within the conference, the speakers were framed as experts due to their own experience, regardless of academic or professional background.

While feminist academics would likely embrace the goals of this conference, especially its emphasis on lived experience and goal of empowering women, the organizers explicitly position *Braving Body Shame* as counter to academic conferences and discourse. The home page defines the exigence of the conference as follows: "After attending a couple of in-person academic conferences, one of our hosts saw that there was a BIG part of knowledge and understanding missing from each conference. She realized that there was a great NEED for a conference that was more accessible and

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[39] Scholars have shown how fatness and shame reinforce one another. For instance, Amy Farrell has looked at the material impacts of shame when experienced by fat women, and Esther Rothblum and Janna Fikkan offer a broad analysis of the impacts of weight bias and the work happening in fat studies. Jeannine Gailey also discusses explicit moves from fat shame to fat pride.

[40] Within conference proceedings, the hosts only used their first names. The full names of the conference hosts are available online, but in this essay I follow the naming conventions of the conference.
[41] There were paid options for additional resources, but the bulk of the material and all of the interviewers were available for no cost.

less academic-focused" ("Home"). This rationale suggests a gap between academic scholarship and the people these scholars imagine their work speaking to. While the conference organizers address academia broadly, as a unit, the focus of the conference on women's experience and shame makes their concerns particularly noteworthy for feminist scholars. Indeed, a potential gulf between feminist scholarship and the lived experiences of nonacademic women has been identified previously by feminist rhetorical scholars. For instance, Charlotte Hogg identifies a tendency in feminist scholarship to overlook "elements of women's lives that may be less palatable to feminists," specifically the ways that "participants are not working for systematic change in a patriarchal culture and may be reinforcing that culture" (403). But by overlooking "less palatable" gendered rhetorics, scholars risk misidentifying or mischaracterizing the people we study or that we hope might recognize themselves in our research, shoehorning them into existing feminist frameworks. Though the conference does not make explicit mention of feminist academic scholarship whose work, I argue, closely aligns with the mission of the conference, this aperture offers a fruitful opportunity for feminist rhetorical scholars to further investigate the rhetorical nature of shame. Specifically, this study explores what women *do* with shame as enumerated through narrations of overcoming this sticky emotion.

The conference participants' views on shame may be "less palatable" to feminist scholars because they position shame as something that can be productive and, what I am calling, inventional. Inventional shame is actionable, it is productive, and allows the person experiencing the affect to do something as a result of feeling. In contrast, many academic conceptions of shame focus on its formation and its inextricable nature. In many ways, shame is conceived academically as a feeling that cannot be shaped by the people experiencing it. Scholarly conceptions of affect note the difficulty of naming an emotion and understanding its impacts. As Erin Rand describes in her analysis of shame in the ACT UP (AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power) movement, "the rhetorical process of labeling the inchoate intensities of affect, of marshaling them in the name and direction of a particular emotion and toward the goals of a particular movement or cause" can be a critical way to engage and change social structures (130). However, this movement and direction is almost always more complicated than simply defining an affect such as shame, "since the language of emotion pins down the fluidity of affect only temporarily and incompletely, at best" (Rand 132). Affect, then, runs the risk of being flattened because in pinning down an affect through a specific definition, the fluidity of its embodied experience can be lost.

Shame is a particularly complicated emotion for scholars to conceptualize because it is, as Sara Ahmed characterizes, sticky (11). Part of what makes shame so sticky is its public nature– while feeling is commonly discussed as a private experience, emotional responses are shaped by public, social values. Focusing on its public aspect,

communications scholar Sara Banet-Weiser asserts that shame is a tool of discipline and self-discipline that renders women unable to act (72). Shame is an innately social feeling and structure of power as it "functions to regulate and police the gendered body" (Banet-Weiser 71). Shame and shaming, then, comprise both the action taken against women as a means of disciplining their bodies and a tool of self-regulation that develops as a form of protection against the material impacts of shaming. Within this conception, shame becomes very difficult to disentangle oneself from. Philosopher Bonnie Mann understands shame as "a viscerally lived experience and as a historical phenomenon" (404). Mann posits two kinds of shame: ubiquitous shame and unbounded shame. Ubiquitous shame is, as Mann describes, "that shame-*status* that attaches to the very fact of existing as a girl or woman, or of having a female body" (403). This is the kind of shame that all women must navigate in a world that defines their very selfhood. Ubiquitous shame has a "promissory temporality," one that asserts the possibility of resolution through rectifying the cause of shame (403). Similarly, Ahmed describes, shame is restorative "only when the shamed other can 'show' that its failure to measure up to a social ideal is temporary" (107). Unbounded shame, however, exists without a sense of resolution. It builds on itself and sticks. The two types of shame are related, in that the promise of resolution within ubiquitous shame can lead to unbounded shame– an intense, dangerous, and inescapable feeling that puts the subject at risk. In other words, there is a promise of escaping shame through aligning oneself with the dominant power structure–in the case of body shame, losing weight. However, aligning oneself with a dominant structure does not allow for escape from shame, because dominant structures are often changing and work to continue oppress people. Positioning an action intended to relieve shame as aligning with the dominant power structure that is inescapable flattens the actions that women take to cope with their own lived experiences. This view of shame highlights its complicated nature.

As shame is so deeply embedded in cultural beliefs and practices, there is a tendency in its academic exploration to overlook the ways it is addressed or confronted by the people who live it. However, the *Braving Body Shame* conference participants see shame as something that can be overcome, and even be generative[42]. Feminists might be tempted to discount these narratives of overcoming shame as unrealistic or wishful thinking but doing so limits the kind of work feminist scholarship can do. As Hogg notes, "broadening the scope of whom we study and how we engage them can better enact the kind of productive messiness and multiplicity we exhort" (401). I argue that scholars run the risk of flattening the productive qualities of shame through focusing exclusively on defining it and examining the multiple layers of its production. By

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[42] The concept of overcoming is a complicated one. Both disability scholars, like Ellen Samuels, and queer theorists note that overcoming is often associated with triumph narratives that render queer and disabled bodies incomplete. However, this was a theme of the conference–I both acknowledge the harm of overcoming discourses and seek to engage with the conference participants' own language.

focusing, instead, on what people *do* with this complicated feeling, I aim to honor the conference participants' narratives of their own lived experiences.

My goal in this article is not to make a judgment about whether the participants actually overcome shame, but instead to focus on the rhetorical power of narratives of overcoming for those who experience shame. Taking the *Braving Body Shame* conference as a case study, this article explores how feminist rhetorical scholarship can both critique oppressive structures and honor complicated affective experiences by focusing on what people do with shame. I attempt to chart this course in my reading of the *Braving Body Shame* conference by pausing over the urge to critique and focusing first on what participants' understanding of their own experiences do for them as people living with complicated affects. Below, I examine rhetorics of shame in the *Braving Body Shame* conference through an analysis of nine video interviews. In line with feminist rhetorical scholarship, these participants frame shame as an ongoing process. However, shame is also crucially narrated as a feeling and phenomenon that can be overcome through private, relational, and inventional acts. By focusing on these acts, on what women *do* with their shame, scholars can more fully recognize the generative potentials of shame. This study explores what women *do* with shame as enumerated through narrations of overcoming the sticky emotion.

To begin this work, I establish my case study approach through a discussion of research methodologies that center lived experience in feminist rhetorics. Next, I examine videos from the 2020 *Braving Body Shame* conference to discuss how the speakers position shame as a generative, recursive process. Specifically, I analyze the private, relational, and inventional acts that the conference participants feature in the discussions of overcoming. I conclude by noting how narrating shame functions as a generative, inventional practice for the women speaking at the conference and invite scholars to be attentive to the urge to critique individual acts.

Throughout, I seek to avoid flattening the affective experiences of the conference participants by modeling a process for grounding feminist rhetorical study in the expressions of gendered individuals. For complex affective experiences like shame, this is sticky work.

Case Study Methods and Women's Lived Experience

The *Braving Body Shame* conference provides feminist rhetoricians an opportunity to grapple with our understandings of shame, particularly what people who experience shame do with the feeling. However, this research also raises an ethical question about employing the voices of women who have expressly disagreed with

academic research to produce academic research[43]. My decision to discuss the conference in an academic paper arose from several considerations. First, the videos were public and intended for the purpose of education and grounding narratives of shame in lived experience, which is a goal I advance in this writing. As stated on the conference website, the vision "for this conference is to give those who have braved the path already, those who have overcome many obstacles to find a place of peace, understanding, acceptance, neutrality and yes often love for their bodies to use their voice and share their stories with others" ("Braving Body Shame"). Second, I resist the urge throughout to critique the participants' approaches to shame, but instead focus on what narratives of overcoming do for the participants. In this section, I unpack my methodological approach to analyzing *Braving Body Shame* as a useful case study for considering the rhetorical functions of shame.

I analyze the *Braving Body Shame* participant videos and paratextual material act as case study data for considering what women do with their shame. Case study analysis is an "inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident" (Yin 13). According to Robert Yin, the case study method "arises out of the desire to understand complex social phenomena" because it "allows investigators to retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events" (14). In other words, case study analysis is one way that scholars attempt to get at the lived experience of the people we study.

Additionally, case study analysis allows scholars to meet the people in our research where they are. For example, case studies are key components of Jacqueline Royster and Gesa Kirsch's notion of "strategic contemplation," a feminist research method which "involves engaging in a dialogue, in an exchange, with the women who are our rhetorical subjects" (21). Also important to Royster and Kirsch is that scholars use strategic contemplation to try to understand the world from the point of view of the people we are studying (21). Case study research allows scholars to focus "closely on existing resources, fragmentary and otherwise, and existing scholarship to assess what we understand and to speculate about what seems to be missing" (Royster and Kirsch 72). As the *Braving Body Shame* conference illuminates the complex relationship between affect and societal structures, complicates existing scholarly conversations about shame, and provides multiple voices for analysis, approaching it as a case study is appropriate.

To begin the work of this case study analysis, I follow methodological interventions from rhetoricians Sarah Hallenbeck and Michelle Smith that seek to

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[43] I attempted to contact the hosts of the conferences both via email and social media. Since the first conference, two of the hosts have also left. The information and interviews were public, as well.

ground feminist rhetorical research in the lived experience of women. One example of a methodology of lived experience is Hallenbeck's "feminist-material methodology" (21). Hallenbeck employs a case study approach to move beyond the "sanctioned narratives" of feminist scholarship, offering a vocabulary of networks and emergence that, while recognizing individual agency, disrupts intention and uses a feminist material methodology which accounts more for the embodied, broad, experiences of women outside of the sanctioned stories scholars have told about women's lives (21).

Specifically, Hallenbeck asks scholars to take "nothing for granted as background or context" and instead situate analysis within a densely populated constellation of materials and objects (22- 23). Scholars can then perform "close, intertextual rhetorical analysis within those constellations in order to identify trends, discrepancies, or transformations" in the ways that phenomena are addressed (21). Much like the often-shortchanged background materials that Hallenbeck discusses, affective experiences like shame are part of the constellation of rhetorical processes that warrant further attention (18).

Similarly, Michelle Smith builds on these methodologies by reframing Burke's recalcitrance to move beyond binary gender frames that often squash the material experiences of women. For Smith, a "feminist methodology informed by recalcitrance starts with a claim and constructs a discursive-material network of gender as lived" (523). Through a case study of utopian societies, she encourages scholars to not predetermine what is context and text, as the material situation may allow a new understanding of how a narrative has emerged. At the end of Smith's material discursive methodology, "we are left not with the truth of the situation, but with a new narrative" (523). Both methodologies seek to enable alternative narratives for women beyond the scope of sanctioned approaches to feminist rhetorical scholarship. They join Hogg in cautioning against reinscribing accepted ways of analyzing women, challenging the scholarly conversation around women by including the material alongside the discursive–which makes analysis messier and often times more illuminating.

Building off this scholarship, my own approach to case study analysis challenges scholars to dwell within the narratives that women create for themselves as individuals within larger social structures. It asks feminist scholars, in particular, to pause at our impulse to critique and focus on what experiences can show us about affect. To return to Hogg's earlier point, centering the affective experience of individuals can help scholars question "what assumptions or ideological approaches are prevalent that might canonize a more monolithic kind of feminism than we identify in our discussions about the state of the field" (392). The feminist-materialist methods sketched above ask scholars to account for the broad range of agents that allow for the emergence of any rhetorical experience, including affect. As Hallenbeck resists the sanctioned narratives

of women's rhetorical contributions, I resist a flattened analysis of shame as a phenomenon beyond the agency of individual women and instead focus on what women do with shame.

Before undertaking this analytical work, I want to point out that case study analysis requires close attention to the collection of data. According to Yves-Chantal Gagnon, "multiple sources should be used so that the researcher can analyze a variety of information, trace lines of convergence and strengthen construct validity" (58). Of the 36 videos in the *Braving Body Shame* conference, I chose to analyze nine that feature depictions of overcoming shame from female participants, as body shame is a historically gendered phenomenon. While men also experience body shame, it is a feminine phenomenon, historically, and its material effects are exacerbated when linked to a female identity. I also chose not to focus on the participants who are [44]medical professionals or experts–six dieticians, six therapists, three life coaches, and one fertility coach–who spoke about navigating the medical establishment and finding proper healthcare rather than personal experiences with body shame. Similarly, there were a handful of fitness professionals who discussed integrating body neutrality and acceptance into exercise practices. While fascinating, these presentations did not discuss the speakers' personal relationships with shame: they spoke *to* rather than *from* the lived experience of shame. Having made these choices, I was left with the stories of nine women to analyze for this case study–Ivy, Ashley, Sophie, Shannon, Amanda, Nia, Georgie, Katie, and Toni.

Following Hallenbeck's methodology of constellation, I transcribed the videos in order to analyze emergent themes present in the women's experiences with shame. The videos and transcriptions were kept in a Google Folder to both increase the possibility of replicability and ensure a clear chain of evidence for the claims I make throughout the paper (Gagnon 57). I then made note of recurrent approaches to shame throughout the interviews, including participants recognizing themselves within larger social structures, attending therapy, seeking community, and participating in social media, to name a few. I then categorized these approaches into the larger themes that illuminated what women were doing with their shame: private actions, relational actions, and inventional actions. The themes I will discuss in the following analysis appeared in all nine interviews to various degrees, with some participants leaning more heavily on therapy and healing practices. This emphasis was highly dependent on the material effects of the participants' shame. For example, participants who developed eating disorders needed

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[44] For Heather Adams, shaming is "a lingering experience of femaleness" tied to the social relationship between femininity and modesty (585). This is not to say that men do not experience body shame, just that the links between the ideal female and shame as a policing mechanism are very strong. This being said, body shame is increasingly experienced by men in the 20th and 21st century, and shame within the gay male community is a growing area of study. For more on this subject, see Jonathan Alexander's work on counter-discourses of shame and Erin Rand's work on queer shame.

different recovery strategies than those who had a falling out with their families. What is compelling, however, is the almost uniform way participants narrated their processes of overcoming shame.

It is worth questioning this uniformity, as the participants in the conference were instructed to answer a clear set of questions that may have directed them to frame their experience in similar ways. Every participant was asked a variation of the same questions, and those questions undoubtedly influenced the themes of my analysis: *What is your story of overcoming body shame? What communities or tools helped you overcome shame? What differences are you making in your communities now that you have overcome shame?* These questions, intended to prompt the participants to discuss their own experiences, assume that overcoming shame is not only possible but a universal experience for the participants. Again, I am not concluding that the women overcame shame or that it is possible to, but rather embracing this opportunity to explore how narratives of overcoming shame function rhetorically for conference participants and their communities. The framing of shame in these questions is not a primarily social entity, nor situated entirely in the individual; it is this interweaving of individual and structural approaches to shame that provides the opening for my analysis.

Narratives of Overcoming

The participants in the *Braving Body Shame* conference narrativized their experiences of overcoming shame. Within their narratives, the women were often empowered individually when they saw themselves as moving past their shame. They were able to connect with groups in more profound and meaningful ways and find a sense of acceptance within themselves. However, as I will examine in greater detail, they are also acutely aware of the social aspects of shame that feature in academic examinations. In this way, this case study is a productive exemplar for analysis of affect because the participants exemplify the kind of shame that Mann describes– one tied up in the political, personal, and social structures of shame–while also offering a way to coexist with the feeling. I see the speakers as navigating shame by engaging thoughtfully in private, relational, and inventional acts to experience relief from shame in their everyday lives.

Overcoming Shame Through Private Acts

Shame is a private feeling that impacts one's relationship with oneself, even situates the blame for shame on the individual. The emphasis on personal methods for achieving resolution is possibly because "shame in contemporary Western, late-capitalist life is a deeply personal and viscerally lived affect," and therefore requires

individual solutions (Mann 404). As a result, individual practices are necessary to unlearn and move past shame. Personal growth and practices were brought up when the organizers asked, "what struggles have you overcome?" Within this question, and the narratives at large, there is an assumption that, over time, it is possible to overcome shame through individual action. The resolution that the participants in the *Braving Body Shame* conference seek contests, rather than upholds, the structures of heteropatriarchal violence, resisting the unbounded shame they would otherwise experience. The women resist societally sanctioned body standards, and instead seek other methods of resolving shame through personal and private acts.

Before acting in personal, private ways, the participants had to first become visible to themselves as socially situated subjects. Michel Foucault expressed that visibility is often a trap for vulnerable bodies (187). To make oneself seen, particularly within a marginalized body, is to open oneself up for surveillance. Additionally, particularly in a neoliberal context, visibility cannot be separated from economies: the visible body is the commodifiable body. As Banet-Weiser explains, visibility in neoliberalism "indicates a move toward seeing visibility as an end in itself, where what is visible becomes what *is*" (67). Visibility, then, is a sort of requirement for any type of change to occur–it acts as a spotlight, highlighting one space while putting the rest in shadow. Visibility has become a performance that doesn't require further engagement, as "politics are contained within the visibility–visual representation becomes the beginning and the end of political action" (Banet-Weiser 23). The relationship between commodifiable bodies– read: normative bodies–and political visibility can be a damaging one; if there is not a way to profit off a subject's presence in a neoliberal society, visibility incurring positive action is considerably more difficult. However, these scholarly conceptions of visibility are about others viewing the self, and not what happens when someone becomes visible to themselves. This self- visibility occurs in the *Braving Body Shame* conference and provides the participants with an opportunity to combat their feelings of shame through private actions.

The women uniformly narrated a moment of visibility where they became visible to themselves outside of other's assessment of their bodies. The feeling of overcoming shame was intimately tied to this experience. Here, they were not different because of a personal failing or inability to achieve an ideal, but marked as different by the social structure they existed in. Seven out of the nine women described this as a moment of undoing, in which the social structure, itself, was now clear to them. Katie, a fat activist and social worker, described this moment of clarity as relief because her ontological failing could be corrected and blame replaced to the social structure, stating "obviously I am going to have fatphobic thoughts, because we live in a fatphobic society" (00:30:12-00:30:18). Other women expressed less catharsis from this realization but recognized that "we blame ourselves for all this stuff that is not coming out of nowhere. I am

receiving the message multiple times a day" (Sophie 00:11:22-0011:29). This moment which shifted the blame of shame from the individual to the social allowed the women to see themselves as socialized subjects in a world that placed material impacts on their bodily difference.

It was important for the participants to engage with their identity because, according to academic scholars, shame impacts an individual's conception of self. Feminist rhetorician Heather Brook Adams discusses in her analysis of rhetorics of unwed motherhood that shame is distinct in its effect on a woman's view of herself. Shame results in an "ontological failure," where the woman herself is positioned as beyond remedy or repair, as opposed to the action that brought on the shame ("Rhetorics of Unwed Motherhood" 103). In this ontological failing, the woman becomes responsible for the effects of shame, which "resituates an individual's failure of the self" as responsible for "threaten[ing] the social and economic viability and interpersonal wellness" of both their own life and their families ("Rhetorics of Unwed Motherhood" 97). The focus on individual and personal shame was present in the conference proceedings. The first question asked by the organizers, "tell us your braving body shame story," highlights the conference's emphasis on personal narrative to overcome shame and particularly the role that visibility plays in these narratives. Each woman expressed in some way that crafting a narrative about their body shame is how they came to publicly speak about their bodies.

However, this moment of visibility was not a uniquely positive thing. The women recognized that they exist in a system that provided them identity, even if that identity caused them harm. The process of untethering themselves from that identity was difficult.

Ashley, who is working on her master's in social work, noted this tie between their shame and identity, "I think a lot of us, our identities become our eating disorder or how we're obsessed with food, how we're obsessed with our bodies" (00:05:13-00:05:21). Shame and hatred of their bodies was not just a stumbling block but tied to how they related to the world around them. As Ivy discusses, it was "a lot of work to overcome it because it was a part of how I defined myself early on in life" (00:07:32-00:07:40).

Additionally, the knowledge of their subjectivity doesn't do much to alleviate the material impacts of their subjective position. As Shannon, a yoga teacher and sociology student expressed, "like most social constructions, it very much affects my life chances and the ways that people treat me and the way that medical establishments deal with me" (00:24:18-00:24:24) Other women mentioned   that stores still did not carry clothes that fit them, and they feared traveling on airplanes because they may not have seatbelt extenders that accommodate their size. For them, seeing the social structure that

creates these material impacts did not provide empowerment. Instead of relying upon the structure to change, the women engaged in other means of seeking empowerment.

Most of the women used the term *compassion* to describe their relationship to their body in the present moment–not a feeling of positivity or love, but of acceptance and care. "Body compassion allowed [them] to shed the layers of the body shame" (Ivy 00:06:18-00:06:20). Toni, a disability advocate and Instagram influencer, discussed that some of her first steps in the process of overcoming shame would be to visually and verbally reclaim her body. She said, "I would also stand in the bathroom and look at myself before I took a shower and say 'this is my body" (00:35:49-00:35:56). Seeing themselves, then, was an important move towards acceptance.

Untethered from their identity that was rooted in shame, the women expressed the need to engage in personal growth practices, such as body compassion, therapy, and reflection to gain a sense of embodiment. The rootedness in the individual is important because, as Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick notes, shame creates "far more durable, structural changes in one's relational and interpretive strategies toward both self and others" (59). To undo these ways of viewing the self, the women have to focus on unbuilding through practices of individual growth. Every woman discussed attending therapy, a support group, or another avenue for self-growth work to, as Katie put it, "come to a place of love for myself; from there the love or acceptance from my body grew" (00:07:16-00:7:23). These moments of growth were working toward the goal of embodiment, as years of shame and living in a body that was marked as different, as deviant and out of control, forced a disembodiment. Shannon describes this, "I didn't realize how much I had disassociated from my own body…you are told so much that you are wrong that you even stop thinking about this [referencing her body] as you" (00:10:56-00:11:08). Repeatedly, the women positioned their embodying actions as seizing their body back and claiming some kind of agency over it again. From this generative space of personal growth, the women were then interested in reaching outward and creating relationships.

Overcoming Shame Through Relational Acts

Part of what makes shame so difficult to capture is the way it is shaped by public and social values. Shame is also located in the female body across historical and cultural contexts. It "structures relationships and shapes women's identities across the three major aspects of subject formation… the individual, the familial, and the cultural or national" (Johnson and Moran 3).

Similarly, Adams notes that "shame was communicated by specific persons…but also that it emanated from an indirect source: the socially held standard for women's

purity" ("Rhetorics of Unwed Motherhood" 98). Shame's sociality relates to its rhetoricity, because it is "an affect that is always contingent and ever intersubjective" (Adams, "The Feminist Work of Unsticking Shame" 585). The feeling is the result of an encounter rooted in disappointment, and it does not exist for its own sake, reliant upon the subject to become visible to others. Shame builds on itself and spreads, then, as it comes from both the individual and the social, which then places the blame of its impacts back on the woman to amplify the felt experience of shame. To untether themselves from shame, the participants had to address shame in their relationships and work to forge new connections.

The participants additionally expressed moments narration that tied to the social nature of shame, and how the feeling requires affirmation from others. There were instances in each interview where the women said, "when I usually tell this," (Amanda) or "as I have explained on my blog" (Nia). In fact, it was clear through the introductions of each participant that the reason they were selected for the *Braving Body Shame* conference was their willingness to tell their story and act relationally. All but one of the women I discuss here were introduced with some variation of "your powerful story has impacted me," or "people have been touched by your stories." Additionally, I noticed an initial moment where the women described being looked at by others. This moment, expressed by each participant as pivotal in their story of shame, showed the women that they were different in a way that incurred judgment from others. In a sense, the difference always present on their bodies became visible to them. For example, Amanda, an 18- year-old professional dancer from Los Angeles, described a time when she was 7 at a dance convention where other attendees stared at her. She describes feeling confused, stating, "I didn't know why at first…and then I kind of put it together that it was because I didn't look like everyone else" (00:14:11-00:14:19). Sophie, a psychology student who studies Health at Every Size, mentioned that "[she] was kind of always aware that there was something not quite right with [her] body, apparently," but that repeated encounters with people in middle school illuminated her difference (00:06:57-00:07:05)[45]. It is important to mention that this was not framed as a positive event in their lives. Their difference, rooted in the body, becoming visible spurred shame, in every case, and in more extreme circumstances mental health crises and eating disorders.

After recognizing the moments when the women become visible to themselves as socially situated subjects, attention to narrative can show processes of coping and overcoming: what do the women do with this newfound understanding of their positionality? How do they employ this knowledge to cope and exist in the world that

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[45] Health at Every Size, or HAES, is a size acceptance group that promotes health not focused on weight. It is a branch of the Association for Size Diversity and Health (ASDAH). https://www.sizediversityandhealth.org/content.asp?id=19

may still actively work against them? As previously discussed, scholars have conceived of shame as difficult, if not impossible to extract oneself from. However, these women view the shame trap as escapable through intentional moves and relational acts over time that are unrelated to their body presentation.

Supportive friends and family were a key element to the women overcoming shame. When asked what support they had in the process of overcoming shame, every woman emphasized the importance of friends who understood their struggle. For example, Nia noted that it was "important to have the time and space with friends who you can have those honest conversations with" about body shame (00:24:22-00:24-31). Contemporary scholars agree that "shame arises when a break in social connection is made or threatened, whether real or imagined" (Stenberg 121). Therefore, work has to be done in order to rebuild those social connections. Georgie, a teacher from Australia, expressed this: "I find it's really important to surround yourself with people…you need some people in your life that have the same experiences as you" (00:39:37-00:39:52). The emphasis is on finding other women who had similar experiences of shame. For many of them, they would be the only fat woman in their town, or the only person willing to disagree with diet culture or dominant cultural messaging about their bodies. Connecting with other people who could help maintain strength to subvert hegemonic ideals was a priority.

When asked what three things listeners should take away from the conference, almost all of the participants stated, "find community." Ashley explained the importance of community, stating: "when you live in a marginalized body…having community is essential for getting through the muck…being able to have a resources, and I consider other people a resource…and being able to reach out, find solidarity…find people who occupy the same intersectional identities that you do that is huge and has been huge for me" (00:28:03-00:28:32). It was important not only to have community for the sake of having people to talk to, but to grow and change in their relationship to shame. For the participants, the internet was an important place to build connections and relationships. Katie noted that "online was the first place" she was able to find support and that she was "really really isolated" before joining online communities (00:31:34-00:31:39). Online spaces provided participants with a place to engage with others and work out their experiences of body shame among likeminded people.

The relational acts that the participants engaged in, in some cases, allowed them to get out of their shame. Shannon noted this her experience engaging with others: "The love you have for yourself should also.. you should see that for other people…sometimes you can't have the energy because you are focused inward but sometimes the way to get out of that, the way to give yourself more energy to work on yourself is to work for and with other people" (00:35:11-00:36:03). The women see their engagement with

others as undoing, at least some, of their shame, as it allows them to think carefully about their own relationship to their body and challenge body shame in others. Many of the participants noted that this also allowed them to engage with others more carefully. Sophie stated that engaging with others allowed her to be more thoughtful in how she discusses body shame: "on a small interpersonal level, the way I interact with people related to food and body image is very deliberate" (00:42:38-00:42:43) The relational acts to overcome shame allowed the participants to not only unmoor some of their own shame but also discuss shame more clearly with others.

As I outline in these sections, the complex network of private and public affective experiences make shame a difficult feeling to grasp. Within these complex academic discourses of shame, feeling shame is hard to escape. Because of its social nature and its role in policing the embodied experiences of people, shame lingers in a profound way. Therefore, to combat feelings of shame, the participants engaged in various public discourses. These discourses, while individual, were often inventional in nature, as they encouraged others to grapple with their experience of body shame through creative practices.

Narrating Shame as Inventional Practice

The public-facing acts that the participants engaged in were inventional in nature–they allowed the women to create worlds where they were untethered from their shame and beckon others to do the same. This invention could happen because the participants engaged their shame in public and invitational ways. The participants of *Braving Body Shame*'s processes were inherently public through the videos, opening themselves up to others. This is how they were selected for this conference–they are outspoken in how they live in fat bodies in a world that is constantly telling them to change. When asked how they saw themselves making change in the world around them, the women most frequently cited their public work of telling their stories.

This again emphasizes the importance of narrating women's experiences. As Toni describes, "if we had more people living life and showing them living life…we would have less astonishment when we saw people living in public" (00:29:56-00:30:07). Four different women mentioned that they wanted to be the role model they wish they had. Amanda, a young woman, explicitly stated that she "wanted to be the account she wished she could have followed in middle school" (00:21:19-00:21:24). They saw others in a world where shame was less of an issue, and in doing so, worked to invent their own.

Additionally, witnessing other women's acknowledgment of their subjectivity in public spheres became important for overcoming, as it provided models for how to overcome shame. Other ashamed women's expressions of shame became key for the

participants to understand and move past their own feelings, as it allowed them to invent a world where they were untethered from shame. One, almost uniform, space where this invention took place was on social media.

Instagram, specifically, provided a space for women to see like-bodied and minded people. This is worth pausing to discuss, as social media and its relationship to visibility is complicated. As Shari Stenberg describes, "while the prevalent role shame plays in cultural dynamics would seem to lend it visibility, in fact, the opposite is true" (123). This is because shame is an emotion that compounds, and publicly showing an experience of shame has the potential to compound its effect. Benet-Weiser discusses the role of humiliation in shame, particularly in public, online spaces. The public nature of social media, and the way it makes the body visible, can be an instrument for shaming. Though "social media sites… certainly have multiple functions…shaming, especially of women's bodies, seems to be a practice that they all share if not encourage" (Banet-Weiser 67). With the presence of trolls and fatphobic sentiments, to raise a few concerns, engaging on social media has the potential to reinforce the material impacts of shame.

Therefore, the choice of the women to display and discuss their bodies is counter to many scholarly conceptions of how social media operates within shame—it is an act of empowerment through reclamation, an act of invention. Toni describes her joining Instagram as a formative moment in her own acceptance: "I was seeing other people have those bodies and seeing them and loving them and thought, oh I can do that, too" (00:43:37-00:43:39).

The power of Instagram was tied to its ability to show bodies and provide a space for visibility. It allowed them to invent realities where they could exist without shame. Seeing bodies like their own existing happily was empowering for the women interviewed at the conference. As Sophie describes, "we seek permission from people who came before us to be ourselves…I want to see myself to get permission." Once they were able to see themselves as not alone in their experiences of shame, the women were able to move to create change in the world around them.

To do this, they started blogs, created art, moved to careers to help other women realize their subjective, socialized position in the world. In this way, shame is an inventional practice. Shari Stenberg, building off of Elspeth Probyn's work, argues that "writing shame is an invitational, critical, and generative act" (121). Much like the women Stenberg analyzed who shared their stories of sexual assault, the participants in the conference sharing their experience of body shame invites others to analyze their own relationship to shame. It additionally becomes a site of invention, a catalyst to create. This conference, itself, is a manifestation of the generative potential of shame. It

demonstrates that if scholars are attuned to the ways women write their shame, we can analyze how women use shame to connect to their larger communities. As shame creates a break in social connection, these efforts are paramount to the processes of overcoming shame. Notably, all but one of the women, Katie, resisted the term "activist." Nia, an Instagram personality with a large following, expressed, "I don't set out to fix the world, but I do put my story and experience out there and I think that a lot of people take that as activism because it is advocating for marginalized people" (00:37:51-00:38:08). Though the work they are doing is oriented toward acceptance, it is still deeply rooted in and borne of the personal because of its ties to narrative.

Despite the private, relational, inventional ways the women work to overcome shame and make visible their socialized subjectivity, the participants were hesitant to condemn or critique other women who were not fighting shame. As explained by Ashley, the women highlighted the importance of understanding that we all grow up in this. "We are all indoctrinated into this. And some of us have unlearned it and some of us haven't yet and it doesn't necessarily make you a bad person that you haven't unlearned and interrogated that yet, you just haven't done it yet" (00:34:13-00:34:42). The women don't see other people at fault for their shame and subjectivity, but rather point to diet culture, the Western ideals of thinness, and other material in social pressures that force shame upon them. In short, as enunciated by Sophie, "I have compassion for the individuals, I just hate the system" (00:43:11-00:43:14).

This move from difference and shame to embodiment and empowerment seems very neat as I present it here, but I would not be doing justice to the stories of the women if I didn't point out that the overcoming was, as all of them described, messy. It was not something that went away for them the moment that their subjective position in the world became visible to them.

The material world and infrastructures intervened, even when their intentions were to overcome. When the women discussed multiple marginalization, such as race and disability, the social pressures placed on them emerged in different ways. This particular forum for storytelling did not emphasize these roadblocks and realities as much as other spaces may, because it was guided and structured in a conference setting. More investigation into how the discursive and material realities of these women interact is needed to fully understand their relationship with their bodies, and with shame.

Reflections on Narration, or What to Do with Complicated Feelings

This is the moment in my analysis of this case study where I would typically turn to the ways that the women in the *Braving Body Shame* conference are, even if

incidentally or accidentally, reinforcing harmful body discourses that ultimately undermine their goal of escaping the sticky ties of shame. I would point out their emphasis on individualism and how that emphasis does not question the larger structures at play in their conception of shame. In other words, I would make the critical turn. However, I want to resist this urge, as it does not accomplish what I want to do–to meet the women where they are and grapple with their experiences as they see and describe them.

Within this case study, the women saw the narration of their affective experiences as part of their process of overcoming shame. These practices, particularly the creative and public expressions of shame, are inventional and generative practices that could potentially allow others to engage with their experiences of shame. What this research has illuminated is the generative potential of shame for the individual that scholars may miss if they focus too much on the structural formation of shame at the onset. Feminist tenets remind us that the personal is political, but perhaps we have lost sight of the truth that the political, likewise, is personal. Political structures impact people on a personal level just as personal experiences reinforce structures.

These women have come to know themselves as socialized subjects through their personal experiences with shame. The participants of the *Braving Body Shame* conference saw focusing on the individual as the beginning of their move outward, but it was rarely the final move in the undoing shame. They start blogs, recruit other women to the cause, and see their interpersonal engagements as changing the structures they see themselves existing in. If scholars stop at critiquing the personal, we risk missing a wide breadth of generative, empowering practices.

This is not to say that the women have fully overcome shame, particularly because shame exists as a cultural phenomenon separate from the bodies that experience it. "Shame discloses without resulting in a corresponding cognitive understanding of what is disclosed" (Bartky 85). Scrutiny toward the cleanly aligned narratives presented in the conference is fair, as shame rarely plays out as neatly as presented here. But these processes of overcoming resist the kind of unbound shame that results in harm and helplessness and maintain a sense of hope and agency. As Mann notes, "the futural, the promissory dimension is paramount" (413). We need a space for levity and hope within our scholarship, even in the face of difficult affective experiences.

The *Braving Body Shame* conference shows that there is more work to be done in feminist rhetorical scholarship to more fully capture affective experiences, particularly those that exist within complex structures. None of this is to say that the structural critiques feminist rhetorical scholars engage in are not important, but I challenge

scholars to continue to find ways of grounding their analysis in the experiences of women *as characterized by women*, so as to not flatten complex affective experiences. It is worth taking the time to ask: How are participants identifying with our analyses? How can we work to allow women to feel and express empowerment individually and collectively and do the essential work of critiquing the larger structures at play, especially when these goals are seemingly at odds?

This case study offers one way of dwelling with this tension, though further research needs to be done on the material infrastructures at play in people's relationships with their bodies. The participants repeatedly pointed to the compounding material effects of their multiply marginalized bodies. More scholarship needs to turn to the lived experience of people of color, disabled, and chronically ill people to understand how, as feminist scholars, we can reconnect the personal to the political. More broadly, we should ask who is served when we obey the academic impulse to critique. As Shannon eloquently framed it, "if you start undoing all of those ties and you haven't set something else up, you're gonna leave somebody lost and floating alone in a really scary world" (00:31:22-00:31:31).

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