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Cover Art: image description: a photo of the CCCC Feminist Caucus wall quilt, sewn by Holly Hassel from fabric squares made by attendees of CCCC 2019. Overlaid in the lower right corner is a yellow square with Peitho Volume 25.3 Spring 2023 typed in a handwriting font.

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Editors' Introduction

Rebecca Dingo & 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: in memoriam, post-pandemic

The 2022-2023 academic year has come to an end, and while some may mark this year as "post-pandemic," most of us are still feeling its consequences. We are mourning lost loved ones, perhaps carrying debt from a period of lost income, and burdened by other forms of debt as well: sleep and rest debt most centrally. We are working with students who have experienced learning loss, including in many cases our own children. The summer may or may not be an opportunity to rest, as we struggle to regroup and make progress on long-stalled research projects, pursue additional summer jobs to supplement income, and just do the work that is needed at home.

In addition to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, residents of many states in the US are dealing with other serious emergencies and attacks. Those of us who are trans, and who have friends and family members who are trans, are contending with state legislatures' attempts to deny life-saving gender affirming health care, which was already far too burdensome to access. Those of us who work within our communities and institutions to increase diversity, equity, inclusion, decolonization, and belonging are seeing small and hard-won gains being threatened. Those of us with student loan debt are facing the end of the respite from having to make monthly payments

and are having to make difficult plans and choices about household budgets.

As these events unfold around us, we continue writing, mentoring, and supporting our communities as we are able. We gather together this month, June 2023, for Juneteenth events (in the US) to learn about our history, and for Pride celebrations to show solidarity with the most vulnerable in our communities, insisting on the right to exist, and thrive, in public as queer and trans. This issue of Peitho is among these acts of resilience.

Hyoejin Yoon Memorial

We begin this issue by remembering Hyoejin Yoon, who passed away on December 16, 2022. She was a professor at West Chester University and a leader in the field of composition studies, particularly in the Conference on College Composition and Communication's Asian/Asian American Caucus. Essays by Eileen Schell, Terese Guinsatao Monberg, and Jennifer Sano-Franchini, Jennifer LeMesurier, and Jen Bacon share memories of their years of knowing Hyoejin. In last summer's issue of Peitho marking the journal's tenth anniversary, one of the essays, written by Brooke Boling, Laura R. Micciche, Katie C. Monthie, and Jayne E.O. Stone, engaged feminist grief by going through the archives of Peitho and reading the memorials. We are committed to devoting space in this journal to remembering cherished feminist mentors and reflecting on their legacies, especially those lost far too soon, as Hyoejin Yoon was at only 52 years old.

Schell's personal account of her friendship with Yoon is a beautiful portrait of a mentoring relationship, and it helps those of us who did not have the good fortune to meet Hyoejin to have a way to know her. Monberg and Sano-Franchini's essay collects memories from several members of the CCCC Asian/Asian American Caucus who worked with Hyoejin for many years, and they share their experience of working closely with Hyoejin, including on the excellent book *Building a Community, Having a Home: The CCCC Asian/Asian American Caucus*. Monberg and Sano-Franchini also provide a review of Yoon's published research and show its contribution to the field. Jennifer LeMesurier's piece has the immediacy of remarks delivered in an in-person meeting; Hyoejin had been scheduled to serve as the respondent after a panel discussion at the Asian/Asian American Caucus meeting at CCCC in February 2023, and Jennifer is speaking in her place, both engaging the valuable research presented by early-career scholars, as Hyoejin would have done, and paying tribute to her as well. It was a difficult rhetorical task, and LeMesurier does it with the utmost intellect and sensitivity. Finally, Jen Bacon's remarks, delivered at a memorial at West Chester University, show us the magnitude of the impact that colleagues can have on each other day to day, year to year.

Articles

The essays for this Spring 2023 issue offers scholarship that move from the local class-

room out into the global realm and back again. They demonstrate various acts of resiliency: a teacher patiently leads students towards a feminist consciousness, even when they are reluctant to follow, students question and educate others about the research practices of their land-grant university, and a novel carves out new forms of human rights ideals that are based on feminist solidarities instead of capital accumulation. To begin, Abby Dubisar's essay "Feminist Ethos and Global Food Systems Rhetorics on Campus" and Weiming Denise Yao Gorman's essay "From Textual Subjects to Voracious Feminists: Rethink Constitutive Rhetoric," for example, center students and their rhetorical practices. In Gorman's case, she explores how students come to her communication studies classroom as reluctant feminists but leave as voracious ones. Gorman chronicles the pedagogies she uses that help students develop feminist thinking and action in her general education classroom, demonstrating how rethinking constitutive rhetoric through feminist rhetorical theory alongside centering students' experiences and perspectives helps students to develop a feminist politic. Her deep dive into classroom practices offers feminist teachers a series of pedagogical approaches to moving even reluctant students towards becoming voracious feminists.

Dubisar similarly shows how students developed and employed their feminist ethos when challenging their land-grant university's politics around global food security and GMO research and testing. Students schooled in feminist and transnational feminist thinking attuned to legacies of colonialism and global capital production, challenged their institution's broader narrative of "feeding the world" by asking who was really benefitting from their institution's seemingly charitable food system projects. Dubisar's analysis shows how students' ethos around food systems and their rhetorical actions had both limits and possibilities—the students were able to employ rhetorical strategies to question and call out their university's limited understanding of food systems but at times were ignored due to their subject positions. Although Dubisar does not mention it specifically in her essay, the rhetorical actions and knowledge-making strategies that the students engaged in demonstrate the unique lenses that rhetorical scholars can bring to interdisciplinary projects that can help disrupt the Capitalist-economic, colonial, and neo-imperial logics that often frame global food system projects. Such ethos will potentially help policymakers and scientists create better global food systems projects. The students that are showcased in Dubisar's essay demonstrate the sorts of rhetorical acumen and resilience that Gorman sought to develop in her students and the sort of anti-capitalist human rights approaches Belinda Walzer gestures to in her essay in this issue. As one of the students in Dubisar's essay argues, the GMO research the university conducted overlooked the local needs and perspectives of populations that the research purported to benefit. This sort of local (on the ground) connection to global issues is echoed in Walzer's study of how local human rights needs are represented.

Walzer, in her essay "Economies of Rights: Transnational Feminism and the Transnational Structure of Rights," relatedly seeks to disrupt the Capitalist-economic, colonial, and neo-imperial logics that frame human rights discourses around global sex trafficking. Walzer's deep transna-

tional feminist analysis demonstrates the ways that economic rhetorics form the basis of the logic of women's rights in general, making projects of solidarity across difference difficult. To imagine a model of transnational feminist solidarity, Walzer then turns to a Burmese novel that complicates the economic logics of human rights. As Walzer describes, the novel exposes the limits of the trope of passive sex-trafficking victim that tends to frame anti-sex trafficking human rights discourses. Instead, the novel depicts a subject of gendered human rights who, because her sex-work does not fit with the dominant victim narrative, cannot be recognized within the larger rhetoric of global capitalism in human rights. It is through transnational feminist rhetorical solidarity that the novel disrupts the legal marking of gendered human trafficking. As all these essays show, feminist resilience and practices can take many forms and each practice can move us closer to a more just world.

Cluster Conversation on Feminist Internet Research Ethics

This issue also includes a Cluster Conversation, a feature in Peitho that first appeared in Spring 2020 with the Queer Rhetorical Listening Cluster. In this issue, we have a collection of pieces about Feminist Internet Research Ethics, edited by Kristi McDuffie and Melissa Ames. These seven essays offer insights not only about internet research ethics, but also research methods, research design, and feminist pedagogy. Internet research ethics has been a topic of study since at least the early 2000s, and with each new technology, the ethical responsibilities of researchers must be reconsidered in an accretive process. The essays in this cluster show the progression of the conversation about ethics in internet research, which was fairly new when I was in graduate school in the early 2000s. The question we frequently grappled with was: are we studying texts, or are we studying people?

The contributors to this Cluster Conversation unpack the complexities of that early question, taking into account perceived privacy, vulnerability of the people involved, sensitivity of the subject matter in posts, removal of identifiers, whether or not permission was requested and granted, and sharing of the research with participants prior to publication: generally having and maintaining a good, respectful relationship with users in online communities. Cam Cavaliere and Leigh Gruwell explain the importance of self-care and strong mentoring when doing research about aggression and harassment online: a real problem that needs to be studied, but that can be very upsetting to engage with. Wilfrido Flores describes a new approach to coding data: "slow coding," which requires researchers to slow down and approach data more reflectively and that can result in conclusions that are more nuanced, accurate, and critical. Hannah Taylor shares careful ethical reflection on work that she has done on visual content online, which is more difficult to anonymize. Charles Woods and Devon Fitzgerald Ralston offer a heuristic for reflecting on research ethics specific to podcasting, which reveals the considerable behind-the-scenes labor and time commitment involved in producing podcasts; it is valuable for any scholar who is including podcasting in their tenure and promotion dossiers. Nora Augustine's examination of the ethics

of doing research about online support groups engages the rapidly shifting norms of privacy and confidentiality that are in effect for support groups that meet on Zoom. Gabriella Wilson's essay on teaching feminist research ethics and methods is a helpful guide, with student-facing reflection prompts, that can be adapted for any undergraduate or graduate course, including first-year writing. Because so much communication happens online, most of the research we do in our field is internet research, so this cluster would make a valuable addition to any syllabus of a course on methods for a graduate program or for undergraduate research.

Book Reviews

With this issue, we are thrilled to introduce our new Associate Editor, Jennifer Nish. Thanks to her work, we have three book reviews in this issue. Maria Ferrato reviews *Utopian Gender-scapes: Rhetorics of Women's Work in the Early Industrial Age*, by Michelle C. Smith. Lane Riggs reviews *Ethics and Representation in Feminist Rhetorical Inquiry*, edited by Amy Dayton and Jennie Vaughn. Ellen O'Connell Whittet reviews *Body Work: The Radical Power of Personal Narrative*, by Melissa Febos. These three books are diverse in subject matter but all equally interesting and relevant.

We hope you enjoy this issue, including its cover art, which was a labor of love: the CCCC Feminist Caucus gave conference attendees the opportunity to create fabric squares to be made into a wall quilt, which Holly Hassel sewed after the conference. The Caucus then auctioned the quilt, with the proceeds going to help fund caregiving grants for the CCCC convention. We thank the Feminist Caucus for allowing us to use a photograph of the quilt as the cover of the Spring 2023 issue. The next issue will be from our guest editors: Angela Clark-Oates, Louis M. Maraj, Aurora Matzke, and Sherry Rankins-Robertson. It's a summer special issue with the theme *Coalition as Commonplace: Centering Feminist Scholarship, Pedagogies, and Leadership Practices*, and we're excited to read it.

In Memoriam: K. Hyoejin Yoon

Memorial Statement for K. Hyoejin Yoon

Eileen E. Schell

Eileen E. Schell is Professor of Writing and Rhetoric and L. Douglas and Laura J. Meredith Professor of Teaching Excellence and Faculty Affiliate in Women's and Gender Studies. Schell is the author of six books and co-edited collections and many articles, which have examined the intersections of food rhetorics and agricultural literacies, feminist rhetorics, and academic labor, among other subjects.

All of us who had the honor of meeting Dr. Hyoejin Yoon of West Chester University will never forget how generous, smart, perceptive, insightful, beautiful, fierce, and kind she was. She was a leader and a role model for many of us in higher education and especially in Asian/Asian American studies and feminist studies. When Hyoejin passed away this past December of 2022 of a stroke, her death was unexpected. Her son Han, age 5, fiancé Tom, her parents, extended Korean American family, colleagues, and friends are all heart-broken at losing her when she was only in her early 50s. I would like to share with you briefly my memories of Hyoejin as her professor and mentor and as her friend of thirty years. My response may be more personal than professional, although I wish to intertwine both dimensions.



Image description: a close-up photo of Hyoejin Yoon hugging her toddler son, Han. She is smiling warmly, and Han has a joyful grin with closed eyes.

'I first met Hyoejin when she was a student working on her master's degree in English at Virginia Tech in Blacksburg, VA. I was an Assistant Professor of English at Virginia Tech and only six years older than Hyoejin. She attended a guest lecture I gave on feminist criticism for a graduate seminar on research methods in English studies. I remember her sitting in the front row of the lecture hall, gazing up at me expectantly. I enjoyed being introduced to her afterward. Hyoejin told me she was interested in learning more about feminist theory and said she hoped we'd work together someday. She invited me to go to the local bar "The Cellar" in downtown Blacksburg where she and some other graduate students were meeting for a drink and playing music. I already had plans for the evening, but I remember being flattered by the invitation and curious about her life as a musician. I later learned she was an accomplished singer and violinist and played gigs regularly with John Priestley, another of our English graduate students.

During our two years together at Virginia Tech, I worked with her in graduate courses on composition pedagogy and critical theory, and I was honored to become her major professor and support her thesis work. Hyoejin was an excellent reader and writer of complex critical theories, including feminist theory and film theory, willing to stretch and work hard as a writer and thinker. I enjoyed seeing her tackle and critique theories of critical pedagogy and point to the ways these theories did not acknowledge the specificity of teachers' or students' bodies and affective relations in the classroom. Seeing her strong work ethic and theoretical acumen sparked me to ask her to collaborate on proposing two summer conference panels on feminism and writing pedagogy.

Hyoejin, and then fellow graduate student Jenny Bay (now at Purdue University), and I traveled together to conferences and presented while the three of us were at Virginia Tech. One of those times was to a conference at the University of Wyoming where we gave papers critiquing and questioning theories of critical pedagogy in relation to teachers' embodiment in the classroom. The conference included outdoor activities such as hiking, hanging out at a local campground for a barbeque, trainspotting, and visiting the infamous Cowboy Saloon in downtown Laramie, where visitors could rub elbows with local ranchers and cowboys. One night, we found ourselves at the Cowboy Saloon, playing pool against a group of rodeo cowboys clad in Wrangler jeans, massive belt buckles, plaid snap button shirts, and cowboy boots. Hyoejin was a pool shark and handily beat every single cowboy who approached the pool table. Part way through the evening, she leaned over and whispered, "*I'm the only Asian woman in this whole place, and I'm kicking their butts!*" They were no match against her skills.

Another time we attended and presented papers at a conference in Hamilton, New York at Colgate University. After driving for what felt like days through the tundra of upstate New York, we arrived in Hamilton only to learn that there were no restaurants open. Everything shut down after 8 p.m. except for the local mini mart and the laundromat, and our conference lodging was a newly built college dormitory with no dining access. We ended up the mini mart buying boxes of

“Lunchables” and then going back to our dorm room bunk beds to eat cheese, crackers, grapes, carrots, and skittles out of cellophane wrapped plastic trays. We giggled on our bunks and felt like we were back in college; we even glimpsed Andrea Lunsford striding down the hallway in her sleepwear later that night. The next night after a long day of conferencing, we went out to dinner with Joe Trimmer and Pat Belanoff to a two-hundred-year-old inn that was out in the countryside near farm fields. Joe told us stories about attending college at Colgate University, and Pat regaled us with stories of her work with Peter Elbow at SUNY-Stony Brook. At that point in the day, our energy was flagging after a long day of conferencing, but we saw how Pat was still going strong, still full of energy while we were slumping in our seats. I remember Hyoejin, Jenny, and I agreeing that we were going to do our best to match Pat Belanoff’s energy levels as we continued into our careers.

When Hyoejin finished up her master’s degree at Virginia Tech, I wrote a letter to support her application to doctoral programs. I remember confessing in that letter how much I was going to miss her at Virginia Tech. Hyoejin was admitted to the doctoral program at University at Albany—State University of New York and went north to work with Steve North, Lil Brannon, and other colleagues. The move to Albany was hard for her and a bit of a culture shock; she missed her supportive extended Korean-American family and friends in Northern Virginia and D.C. and the cold climate and fraying urban infrastructure of Albany was an adjustment. I remember visiting her in Albany, staying in her graduate school apartment a few times, listening to her try to make peace with her gray, cloud covered new hometown and the cold and snow of upstate New York. I had moved to upstate New York, too, to accept a position at Syracuse University so I could relate. I remember her sending me a determined letter after one of those visits in which she proclaimed: *“This summer, I’m going to find a way to love Albany,”* and she did over time. She made lifelong friends at Albany, taught, moved her scholarship forward and became involved in working at a non-profit organization where she supported LGBTQ rights and the rights of people of color. Hyoejin’s activist voice was amplified by this work and carried over into anti-racist teaching and her advocacy for BIPOC faculty throughout her career.

It’s rare that we, as faculty, follow our M.A. students to their next institution, but I was fortunate to be able to serve on Hyoejin’s dissertation committee at Albany, serving alongside Bret Benjamin and Steve North (her director). She wrote an insightful 334-page dissertation “The Subjects of Critical Pedagogy and Composition: The Asian-American Teacher Intellectual and Affect” on the problem of critical pedagogy and her own positionality as an Asian-American woman teaching in the writing classroom. Bringing together theories of racial identity, multiple consciousness, and the idea of the “teacher-in-process,” she argued for a “self-reflective process of teacher development that for Asian-American (and other) teachers could counteract critical pedagogy’s reliance on a finished and inscrutable teacher, who is also, often, white and male. This perspective could illuminate how to successfully enact alternative, liberatory pedagogies” (ix). One of the chapters in Hyoejin’s dissertation was revised to become the article “Affecting the Transformative

Intellectual: Questioning ‘Noble’ Sentiments in Critical Pedagogy and Composition” published in *JAC*, and it became the winner of the 2005 Elizabeth A. Flynn award for the best feminist essay in rhetoric and composition.

I remember tearing up when I read the dissertation’s acknowledgements page: “To Eileen E. Schell, my long-time mentor and friend, and a role model of a scholar, feminist, and activist, working for (i.e., doing) the things that matter most; she has been an unflagging supporter and a constant source of inspiration and intellectual stimulation” (vi-vii). I felt the same about Hyoejin—she inspired me, too, and our mentor/mentee relationship was more horizontal than vertical, what Pamela Van Haitsma and Steph Ceraso refer to as the “offering of help, guidance, and training) that is carried out within a horizontal rather than hierarchical relationship (between peers, as opposed to a more and less experienced mentor and mentee). (Van Haitsma and Ceraso 211).



Figure 2: two photos, side by side, of Hyoejin Yoon and Eileen Schell.

They are sitting at a table in a dimly lit restaurant and are both wearing black and white print blouses with champagne-colored jackets: “twinning,” as Eileen Schell put it. In the photo on the left, Hyoejin and Eileen are smiling and looking into the camera. In the photo on the right, they have started to laugh. These photos are from the Conference on College Composition and Communication: the Atlanta convention in 2011.

As other colleagues have pointed out in their tributes, Hyoejin’s scholarship and administrative work were dedicated to making universities better places for women and people of color. She won awards and gained recognition for her work. She served on and ably co-led national committees: The CCCC Committee on the Status of Women in the Profession, which became the Feminist Caucus Standing Group, the Asian/Asian American Caucus of CCCC and others. She also co-edited the important book *Building a Community, Having a Home: A History of the Conference on College Composition and Communication Asian/Asian American Caucus* (Working and Writing for Change, University of South Carolina Press) with Jennifer Sano-Franchini and Terese Guinsatao Monberg, which Terese and Jennifer comment on in their tribute.

Hyoejin and I often talked about the challenges of balancing career with family, especially the challenges of motherhood. One summer we met up near the Philadelphia airport for breakfast at a diner near Hyoejin's home, and we talked about her excitement about becoming an Associate Dean, about how I was balancing motherhood with being an academic Department Chair, and her struggles to have a child and the ups and downs of marriage. Having a family was a high priority for Hyoejin, but it was not an easy process for her. I was so excited to hear about the birth of her son Han Alexander, born May 28, 2017, when Hyoejin was 46 years old. She was up front about her fertility struggles and challenging birth process, agreeing to be interviewed after Han's birth by "Parent Trip" columnist Anndee Hochman from the *Philadelphia Inquirer*. As she said of motherhood in the interview with Hochman. "It is nice to have something really important and big other than work in my life. It does feel like there's a little more balance" (n.p.).



Figure 3: a close-up selfie of Hyoejin, holding her son Han, and Eileen, who are standing together outdoors in a city at night. They are all smiling.

I finally got a chance to meet Hyoejin and Han in Philadelphia in October of 2019 when I attended the Community Writing Conference. Han, Hyoejin, and I went out to dinner and caught up. Han, now a toddler, enjoyed observing the fish tanks in the restaurant and running between our table and the tanks. I gave him a stuffed tiger as a present, which he clutched all night, and we snapped a photo of us outside the hotel where I was staying while we hugged goodbye. I had no idea that it would be the last time I saw Hyoejin. The COVID-19 pandemic shut down the conferences in which we usually staged our annual reunions. The last time I spoke with Hyoejin was in May of 2021. She called me for advice about a particular challenge she was facing in her job. We

made plans to meet up for dinner and attend each other's panels at the next in-person CCCC.

When I heard the news of Hyoejin's passing in December 2022 from a colleague at West Chester, I could not imagine a world without her. Via zoom, I attended her moving memorial service broadcast on February 4, 2023. I pored over pictures of us and past emails I had saved where she sent me her work-in-progress. I penned a letter for a notebook of remembrances that Hyoejin's family gathered for Han to read as he grows up. These past weeks and months since Hyoejin's death have often felt empty and sad due to losing her so unexpectedly. At CCCC in Chicago this year, I went from panel to panel thinking of Hyoejin. CCCC was our annual reunion time, and it was hard to wrap my head around the fact that she was gone. I had hoped we might tote Han around Chicago to see the local sights as we used to do with my daughter Autumn when she was a child attending CCCC. Walking the halls of the convention, I remembered so many milestones: Hyoejin presenting her first CCCC paper, accepting the 1996 CCCC Scholars for the Dream Award, receiving the 2005 Elizabeth A. Flynn award for best feminist essay in rhetoric and composition, attending the all-day Wednesday Feminist workshops together, attending the CCCC Committee on the Status of Women in the Profession and Women's Network meetings, knowing that the next night she would be attending to the Asian/Asian American Caucus. I don't know if I will ever get used to Hyoejin being gone, but I do know she would tell us to keep going and to keep doing the work that needs to be done.

In Hyoejin's honor, West Chester University, where she spent 20 years of her career, founded a scholarship to support women of color, a wonderful way to remember and honor her commitment to mentoring and supporting faculty and students of color and fighting for racial justice in higher education. One way we can honor Hyoejin is to donate to that fund, and another way is to continue to stay in touch with and nurture those who have mentored us and those we have mentored or are now mentoring. Hyoejin was an amazing, mentor, scholar, teacher, activist, Mom, family member, friend, and partner. We are all better for knowing her.

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Asian American Affect and Advocacy: Remembering Hyoejin Yoon

Terese Guinsatao Monberg & Jennifer Sano-Franchini

Terese Guinsatao Monberg is a community-engaged teacher and scholar in rhetoric, writing, and literacy studies. She is an Associate Professor and Associate Dean of the Residential College of Arts and Humanities at Michigan State University. Through methodologies that look at spatial and temporal dimensions of community—dwelling, listening, and reciprocity—Dr. Monberg is interested in the ways communities use arts and humanities methods to write, revise, and sustain their rhetorical legacies and collective memory. Her research has been published in *Representations: Doing Asian American Rhetoric; Reflections: A Journal of Community-Engaged Writing and Rhetoric; Enculturation: A Journal of Rhetoric, Writing, and Culture; and the Community Literacy Journal*. She also published, as co-editor, *Building a Community, Having a Home* (with Jennifer Sano-Franchini and K. Hyoejin Yoon; 2017) and a special issue of *Enculturation* on transnational Asian American rhetoric (with Morris Young; 2018).

Jennifer Sano-Franchini is Gaziano Family Legacy Professor of Rhetoric and Writing and associate professor of English at West Virginia University. She researches cultural rhetorics approaches to technical communication and digital rhetoric, especially as pertinent to user experience design. She teaches courses on professional writing, visual rhetoric and document design, cultural rhetorics, Asian American rhetoric, and feminist interaction design. She has published articles in *Composition Studies, Rhetoric Review, enculturation, College Composition and Communication, Open Words*, and other journals and edited collections.

Keywords: Asian/Asian American Caucus, Affect, Institutional Discourse, Pandemic Rhetorics, Mentoring, Pedagogy

K. Hyoejin Yoon served as Co-Chair of the CCCC Asian/Asian American Caucus from 2012 to 2016. We both had the honor of co-chairing the caucus with Hyoejin—Terese from 2012–2015, and Jennifer from 2015–2016. She was a thoughtful leader, mentor, and scholar who was careful with her words yet not afraid to speak up about injustice.

Hyoejin’s scholarship in the discipline is consistently boundary-pushing and purpose-driven. As described in Jennifer LeMesurier’s tribute to Hyoejin in this issue, Hyoejin’s work on affect—as is all of her work—is theoretically rigorous, contextualized historically, and grounded in the embodied experiences of Asian American women. We encourage *Peitho* readers to revisit this work, including “Affecting the Transformative Intellectual: Questioning ‘Noble’ Sentiments in Critical Pedagogy and Composition,” published in *JAC, the Journal of Advanced Composition*. Ilene Crawford’s response to this piece noted how Hyoejin made “an unabashed case for imagination” (235), urging that we consider how “institutional discourses, even radical ones, keep our work and our imaginations and other real possibilities bound” (Yoon “Affecting” 734). In another

er response, Catherine Fox noted how “Yoon asks us to question our investment in the ‘noble’ emotions deployed in the name of democracy and citizenship and how these tropes occlude the fraught nature of emotions and desires elicited by critical pedagogy discourse, particularly for those who find themselves on the outer edges of this discourse” (244).

Further pushing the contours of affect in the discipline, Hyoejin’s chapter published in Lu-Ming Mao and Morris Young’s collection, *Representations*, titled “Learning Asian American Affect” articulates how the model minority trope is shaped in part by embodied performances of affect by Asian American subjects, and would likewise influence many in the affective turn in our discipline. Morris Young reflects on Hyoejin’s work and impact:

I don’t recall exactly which year it was, but I first met Hyoejin at the CCCC Convention in the early 2000s. In those days, the Asian/Asian American Caucus was growing and reaching out to emerging scholars and teachers to provide a space to support their work. When I met Hyoejin at one of these caucus meetings, it was clear she was going to be an important voice and leader. I got to know her even better as I worked with her when she contributed an essay for the collection, *Representations: Doing Asian American Rhetoric*, that LuMing Mao and I were co-editing. Her essay, “Learning Asian American Affect,” was sophisticated, insightful, and beautifully written. There was little to edit but much to learn from this essay that offered an early articulation of the affective turn that we have seen in current scholarship in composition and rhetoric. Her scholarship was cutting edge, her leadership inspiring, and her generosity unmatched.

Morris Young

University of Wisconsin-Madison

Hyoejin was always looking for ways to push the discipline further. Her co-edited issue of *College Literature* on Native/Asian Encounters acknowledges settler colonialism while also looking to other frameworks for understanding that relationality. A consistent theme in her work is a move between media representations, theory, an unpacking of affect to reveal racist biases, and a method for mobilizing affect to radically change our pedagogical, scholarly, and institutional practices. In this collection of essays, Hyoejin and her co-editor, Cari Carpenter, consider “how the space that Chinese and American Indians shared on the newspaper page can be likened to their shared space in the American nineteenth century” (8). As with her work on affect, she leads the field in research related to Asian/Americans, especially how we are complexly positioned in relation to other marginalized groups in the U.S., in ways that continue to shape our experience but have been largely under examined.

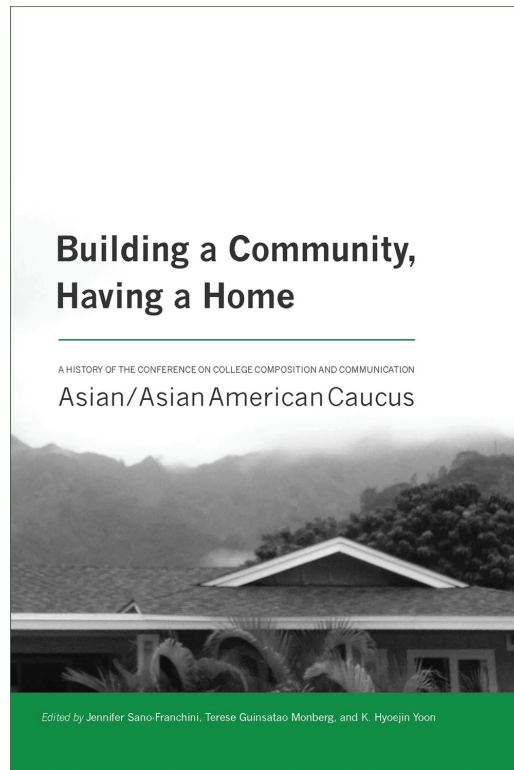


Figure 1: the cover of the book that Hyoejin Yoon co-edited with Jennifer Sano-Franchini, and Terese Guinsatao Monberg: *Building a Community, Having a Home: A History of the Conference on College Composition and Communication Asian/Asian American Caucus*. The top half of the image is white with the title of the book written in black font, and the lower half is a hazy mountain skyline and the roof and upper part of a house with palm trees in front. The bottom of the image is a solid green block with the editors' names in white font.

We later worked together with Hyoejin on a project documenting a history of our caucus, leading to an edited collection titled *Building a Community, Having a Home: A History of the Conference on College Composition and Communication Asian/Asian American Caucus*. Hyoejin was an essential part of this project, particularly in how we intentionally brought emerging scholars into the collection and into the caucus. Hyoejin took the lead on this part of the project as she supported the scholars from a conference roundtable through the publication process, always responding to their work with generosity, empathy, and care. This work is reflected in Hyoejin's forewords to essays in the collection by Phuong Tran and by Scott Ka'alele, Edward Lee, and Michael Pak. Hyoejin was committed to mentoring emerging scholars, scholars of color, and especially women of color.

We also worked together to co-author an article for *Reflections* focusing on anti-Asian racism “before, during, and after the COVID-19 pandemic.” As we worked on this piece, we’ll always remember how much it meant for the three of us to be together on a video call following tragic events affecting the Asian American community. We also remember how enthusiastic we all were that she could bring her background in biology to our discussion of pandemic rhetorics of virality and infection. As a Senior Associate Dean at West Chester University, she brought an important perspective about how university leadership positions don’t necessarily protect Asian/Asian American women from anti-Asian racism. We both benefited from the chance to work together with her on this piece that allowed us to process our own experiences in the discipline and in current society collectively and think about ways to shift institutional practices. We could not have written this piece or the work that will continue to follow without her.

Hyoejin was passionate in her advocacy of others. The February 4th memorial service that West Chester University held for her included colleagues, family members, and lifelong friends who all spoke about Hyoejin’s impact, tireless advocacy, and mentorship. Her legacy of service for marginalized scholars in the profession extends far beyond our own caucus, as she also served as a co-chair of the CCCC Committee on the Status of Women in the Profession, a member of the CCCC Committee for Diversity, and was an elected advisory board member of the CFSHRC (then the CWSHRC). She was also active in NCTE’s Scholars for the Dream network. Florence Elizabeth Bacabac reflects on Hyoejin’s generous mentorship and the impact it had on her:

Without her knowing it, Hyoejin was a source of encouragement for me when I first organized (and directed) a campus women’s resource center while juggling a TT position at Utah Tech University. Her generosity allowed me to gain access to the National Women’s Studies Association resources/listserv and led me to attend the A/AA Caucus meeting at the C’s which she co-chaired in 2013. Our brief encounter may be an accident, but it had a lasting impact on my career. Safe travels, fly free, and see it all, Hyoejin!

Florence Elizabeth Bacabac

Utah Tech University

Hyoejin had an amazing ability to be present, to lift you up and push you forward—and to tell you what you might not want to hear but need to hear but in a way that was so calm, kind, and thoughtful. (We remember how she did this for the discipline when she wrote “Affecting the Transformative Intellectual.”) She had a calming presence but was also fierce in pushing the boundaries of the ways she found herself and others boxed in by the institution. She was a first-generation college student who majored in English and biology as an undergraduate, a daughter, a mother, a poet, a Kundiman fellow, and a 1996 CCCC Scholars for the Dream Award Winner. She was

committed to mentoring others, bringing them into the conversation, and developing them as scholars, teachers, and leaders. She will be deeply missed, and we encourage us all to carry forward—and build upon—her legacies as a scholar, teacher, mentor, and leader in the discipline and beyond.

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Remarks Given at the CCCC Asian/Asian American Caucus Meeting, February 2023

Jennifer Lin LeMesurier

Jennifer Lin LeMesurier is an Assistant Professor of Writing and Rhetoric at Colgate University in Hamilton, NY. Previous work, including articles in *College Composition and Communication*, *Peitho*, *POROI*, *Rhetoric Review*, and *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* analyzes the interchange of discourse and embodiment in dance, choreography, and pedagogy. Her monograph, *Inscrutable Eating: Asian Appetites and the Rhetorics of Racial Consumption*, is forthcoming from Ohio State University Press. Currently, she is the book review editor for *Present Tense* and on the editorial boards of *Capacious*, *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, and *Xchanges*.

Thank you all for being here. I was originally just the chair of this panel, but I am now here today to pay tribute to the original respondent, K. Hyoejin Yoon, who sadly passed away late last year. She was a leader for us here at C's via her work in the Asian/Asian American Caucus, in her writing that reveals our own history to us anew, and her relationships with so many here in this room and in our field, and in the legacy of her teaching and mentoring.



Figure 1: a close-up headshot of Hyoejin Yoon smiling and looking at the camera. She is wearing a black blouse and is in front of a quilt that is hanging on a wall.

Other people on this panel knew her better than I, and so I will focus my remarks today on the depth in her carefully layered work that is incredibly attentive to historical context and nuance. I also want to speak to the threads in her work that the members of this panel are taking up and developing in their own scholarship as we all strive toward a richer, healthier field and world.

On a personal level, I first came to her work through her scholarship on the portrayal of Asian American women in the media. I felt a connection to her nuanced discussions of how Asian femininity in particular is specifically bracketed by expectations for model minority behavior in her chapter “Learning Asian American Affect” from the collection *Representations: Doing Asian American Rhetoric*.

In reading this work again, I am struck by her skillful deployment of affect theory in her analyses of cultural and pedagogical situations. Before the wave of scholarship focusing on affect, her work offered nuanced analyses of the emotion/affect distinction and how individual feelings were enmeshed in broader structures. For example, her pairing of “emotionologies” and Asian American identity offers a model for doing cultural rhetorical analysis of affect while also remaining grounded in pedagogical concerns.

Her work, while boundary-pushing, is also purpose driven. Yoon’s article “Affecting the Transformative Intellectual: Questioning “Noble” Sentiments in Critical Pedagogy and Composition” offers a serious challenge to one of our field’s dominant emotional orientations. In this essay, she clearly and firmly demonstrates how the commitment to fostering critical thinking and intellectual transformation can inadvertently support, or at the very least sidestep questions about, embedded assumptions about student agency, whiteness, and responsibility. Through her careful examination of touchstone texts in critical pedagogy, she highlights how the goal of being a transformative teacher too often relies on affective assumptions that minimize student agency and maintain white supremacist ways of understanding the goals of composition.

In addition to her critical yet caring eye for our field and pedagogical practices, Yoon also modeled how to write interdisciplinary work with sophistication. Her essay co-written with Cari Carpenter on the historical and rhetorical portrayals of Chinese immigrants and American Indians during the nineteenth century shows both the challenges and delights of doing cross-racial historiography and media analysis.

As I listened to the wonderful panelists today, I was struck by several moments that resonate with what feel like the motivations and aims of Yoon’s work.

Sweta - In your descriptions of the Nepali work on responding to COVID-19, we see clearly how rhetoric from marginalized communities/knowledges does not mean small. Often, home-spun bricolage is fetishized as the most recognizable form of grassroots rhetoric. In contrast, this study shows how Asian rhetorical work can be and is transnational in scope. It is dynamic, responsive, modeling genre awareness, and in some cases, literally life saving.

Bo Jimenez - I was just sitting in a panel on hopeful feminisms, and your work on the rapper/singer Ruby Ibarra exemplifies an affect-ful way to think about hopeful, Asian feminist resis-

tance to colonizing instincts and attitudes. Resistance is never complete, as your point about the urge to represent Ibarra as just a female body makes clear. But nonetheless, Ibarra demonstrates how the affect of translingual craft can be sexy, playful, flippant, and complex simultaneously.

Jennifer and Terese - Your work on the normalizing force of citation practices demonstrates the importance of Yoon's engagement with affect and emotion. She lays bare the falsity of the "intellectual primitive" via her honest discussions of how race and power shape how Asian affect is perceived and also felt within the teaching body. On a personal note, even though I have read Yoon's work before, I found a key concept that I am using in my other panel through my rereading of her work for this dedication. We all need to be shaken out of a colonial mindset sometimes.

Xiaobo - Grappling with the real affect of Asian and Asian American lives means sometimes there is no affective closure. But that means all the more we need stories that reject model minorities, robotic intellects, and exotic temptresses; we need stories that hold our rage and care in tandem.

It is impossible to fully encapsulate a life, so I will close with this brief consideration of Yoon's own words. She states, "Our motives and reactions are riddles of displacements and substitutions, written like language, only accessible through its continual deferments" (692). These words, from her article "The 'Good' Teacher of Composition: Toward a Genealogy of Emotion," urge all of us to reckon with the genealogies of emotion that shape not just our identity but what we valorize as best reading and writing practice. This piece gently but urgently encourages us to confront the spaces in our pedagogy that are indebted to guilt more than to social justice. As the above sentence demonstrates, Yoon does not make such recommendations flippantly. Rather, she models and performs the sort of deep emotional labor that is required to even begin to crack the seal on our disciplinary idols. Such work requires an immersive dive into a field's histories and attachments, looking past easy interpretations and delving into the patterns of feeling that also bear ethical responsibilities.

I am grateful to be a compositional 'descendant' of Yoon and will carry her words and insights with me. Thank you.

Remarks Given at West Chester University

Jen Bacon

Dr. Jen Bacon is Dean of the College of Arts and Humanities at West Chester University. She has served in a variety of leadership roles over her career, including Interim Associate Provost, Faculty Associate for the College of Arts and Sciences, Chair of the English Department, Director of Women's and Gender Studies, and Director of the University Writing Center. With an interdisciplinary PhD from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, she has worked to build connections between the departments and programs in the College of Arts and Humanities during her time as dean, including the college's Change Agent Fund to support experiential learning, funding opportunities for internships, study abroad, and faculty-student research. The college's Campaign for Social Justice is another initiative that she developed in order to better understand barriers to academic success for students and faculty alike, and the fully funded Equity Communications Internship is a legacy that links the fund to the college initiative.



a professional headshot of Dr. Hyoejin Yoon. She is smiling and wearing a navy blue blazer and navy blue blouse with flowers. The out-of-focus background is sunlit trees and shrubs.

As Dean of the College of Arts and Humanities, I had the honor of working with Dr. Katherine Hyoejin Yoon her for all of her 20+ years at West Chester, from her job interview with the English Department back in 2001 until her untimely death on December 16, 2022. She was 52.

A specialist in rhetoric and composition, she received her Ph.D. from the State University of New York at Albany. She received both a BA and an MA in English from Virginia Polytechnic Institute, where she also earned a BS in Biology. She attended the HERS: Women in Higher Education Leadership Institute in 2014 and held numerous positions at the university on her path to becoming Senior Associate Dean in 2016.

Her focus on both student and faculty research was evident from the beginning. A first-generation college student, she knew at a deep and personal level how imposter syndrome could creep in, and as an Asian woman, she knew what it felt like to have students with racial and gender biases question her expertise in the classroom. She never forgot those feelings, and it made her a fierce and passionate advocate for our most vulnerable faculty and students.

I really got to know Hyoejin when she moved to my neighborhood in Philadelphia and joined my carpool. We spent those long commutes talking about our teaching and our research, but also about our lives. We learned that Hyoejin was a cat lover (and then a dog lover); we learned that she was eager to find a partner to build a life, and a family, with. We learned about the ways her Korean heritage had shaped her, and we learned that she really wasn't a morning person.

Hyoejin helped launch our Equity Access Inclusion and Diversity Grants, she encouraged a group of amazing faculty members as they formed the Women of Color Faculty Resource Caucus, and she advocated for the resources to appoint a Faculty Associate for Equity Action in the college. I was delighted to learn that the university has named the HERS scholarship for women in leadership in her honor, so that future women leaders who participate in the institute will be part of her legacy.

Hyoejin – we are still not ready to say goodbye to you. I am so grateful to have your insight, and your compassion, and your humor in my life. I miss you, friend. I know we all do.

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Articles

Economies Of Rights: Transnational Feminism and the Transactional Structure of Rights

Belinda Walzer

Abstract: This paper draws on transnational feminist rhetorical methodologies to uncover the economic imperative that underwrites the relationship between women's rights and human rights in the sex-trafficking industry. It first traces the economic rhetoric that founds the logic of women's rights through normative rights discourse before examining fiction from the Burmese diaspora. The novel offers a model for transnational feminist rhetorical solidarity that complicates the economic structure of rights and tropes of passive victimhood that mark the discourse of gendered rights, even as the narrative does not deny the foundational role that this economic imperative has in women's rights.

Belinda Walzer is an Assistant Professor of Rhetoric and Writing Studies in the English Department at Appalachian State University. She has served as Interim Director of Composition at Appalachian State and Director of the Writing Center at Northeastern University. Dr. Walzer received her Ph.D. in English from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro specializing in rhetoric and composition, human rights discourse, and transnational gender studies. Her current research focuses on human rights and rhetoric, transnational feminism, and diversity, equity, and justice in higher education. Her work has been included in human rights collections by MLA and Routledge, and *Precarious Rhetorics* (Ohio State Press). She has essays in journals including *Philosophy and Rhetoric*, *College Literature*, and *Comparative Literature Studies*. Dr. Walzer teaches undergraduate and graduate courses in writing studies, rhetorics of resistance, human rights and rhetoric, transnational feminism, and literature.

Keywords: human rights, transnational feminism, women's rights

Recalling that discrimination against women violates the principles of equality of rights and respect for human dignity, is an obstacle to the participation of women, on equal terms with men, in the political, social, economic and cultural life of their countries, hampers the growth of the prosperity of society and the family and makes more difficult the full development of the potentialities of women in the service of their countries and of humanity.

-Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (resolution 34/180) 1981

The irreducible imbrication of all claims to human rights within the force field of global capitalism requires us to rethink the understanding of normativity that is the basis of currently existing human rights discourse.

-Pheng Cheah, Inhuman Conditions (149)

This paper draws on transnational feminist rhetorical methodologies to trace the rhetorical relationship between women's rights and the economic imperative that underwrites the project of human rights¹. This multipart argument turns on several questions: on what and whose terms are gendered rights being determined and made normative? How does that normative discourse contribute to the operations of power that both construct and undermine women as rights-bearing and rights-claiming subjects throughout the world?² And, foundational to these questions: how are different kinds of *violence* recognized (or not) as legal *violations*?

These questions are vital to women's rights as human rights in particular because until about the mid-nineties, despite the existence of the 1967 Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, the 1979 Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women, and the UN's "Decade for Women" from 1975-1985, violence against women was not considered a human rights violation through most of the twentieth century. Instead, gendered violence was framed as "women's issues" or more problematically, "domestic issues," categorized outside the purview of the state and saturated by Global North definitions of domesticity, heteronormativity, and gender. These "domestic issues" were, paradoxically, codified as beyond the reach of the state by individual rights, including the right to privacy, which had the unintentional effect of largely removing gendered violence from the legal reach of international human rights law (see Bunch, Sullivan).

Thus, despite the decades of conversation on women's rights, the discourses surrounding gendered human rights in legal, rhetorical, and narrative discourses have traditionally addressed gross human rights violations that interrupt the perceived state of normalcy while frequently neglecting less acute but sometimes more pervasive human rights abuses, including women's rights and gendered rights occurring in the so-called private sphere. As Donna Sullivan argues, "the challenge is not to shift focus away from gross violations of civil and political rights by the state, but, first, to broaden the normative framework to include the abuses suffered by women that do not fit this paradigm" (127).

In the first half of this article, I start by examining the Greek history of the rhetorics of

1 I use the term transnational because it designates the very literal crossing of borders without evacuating the political and economic.

2 As Wendy Brown articulates it, if human rights "reduce suffering, what kinds of subjects and political (or antipolitical) cultures do they bring into being as they do so, what kinds do they transform or erode, and what kinds do they aver?" ("Human Rights" 453).

economy to articulate how deeply intertwined the notion of rights and economy are, not just in terms of how economy founds the language of rights, but also vice versa, in terms of how eudemonia and the language of rights founds Ancient Greek rhetorics of economy. I then trace the economic rhetoric surrounding the mainstream emergence of women's rights as human rights through discourses operating in the Global North that are widely viewed as historically central to the normative international women's rights movement, including the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (hereafter CEDAW) and speeches by Hillary Clinton. This tracing is informed by the robust literature of transnational feminism and transnational feminist rhetorics from the last several decades (for example, see Grewal and Kaplan, Mohanty, Chowdhury, Mahmood, Dingo, Hesford, Lyon, and Yam to name a few). As Rebecca Dingo argues in *Networking Arguments: Rhetoric, Transnational Feminism, and Public Policy Writing*, rhetorical methodologies help us understand how the rhetoric of women's rights travels across discursive networks, becoming reframed and coopted to fit development agendas as it mainstreams ³(2). Taking up this methodology, I offer that the normative discourse of international women's rights has always been tied to discourses of development and framed in economic terms. As it flowed through rhetorical networks, this hegemonic relationship became the primary justifier of women's rights as human rights in the transnational mainstream. This first section ends with a reading of the structure of rights that demonstrates the ways in which women's rights were always already embedded in a transactional economy of rights.

I am not the first to address the rhetorical relationship of women's rights to neoliberal economic discourse (see Dingo, Jensen and Hesford, Grewal and Kaplan, Brown and more). For example, in *Networking Arguments*, Dingo traces this rhetorical logic of predicating women's rights on economic value and development rhetorics through speeches given by mainstream international spokespersons like the president of the World Bank. Additionally, Inderpal Grewal and Caren Kaplan as well as Wendy Brown offer important critiques of women's rights and neoliberalism. Building on these and other scholars, I offer a complimentary reading of this networked discourse but framed explicitly through the lens of human rights theory. I suggest that this rhetoric of economic development was not so much coopted by economic justifications as it traveled across rhetorical networks, but rather that the language of rights originated through economic terms steeped in colonial logics, extractive politics, and unequal development structures. In other words, women's rights as human rights cannot escape the originating premise of the economies of rights—it became part and parcel of the project of women's rights the moment women's rights were named human rights. Recognizing this logic as a founding premise in women's rights as human rights is an important step in understanding how to conduct advocacy, activism, and structural critique from a transnational feminist rhetorics analytic that seeks to expand the notion of women's rights despite its origins.

3 See also Rebecca Dingo's and J. Blake Scott's *Introduction to The Megarhetorics of Global Development* for an articulate discussion of why rhetorical methodologies are so important for critiquing the normative and hegemonic doxa of discourses like human rights by "examining the vectors of power that can be found in the contexts behind these rhetorics" (2).

In the second half of the article, then, I turn to narrative and theories in human rights and literature to analyze the ways in which transnational cultural production both legitimates and potentially remakes the normative discourse of what Inderpal Grewal calls the human rights “regime” (*Transnational America* 1). I argue that Wendy Law-Yone’s novel *The Road to Wanting* offers a transnational feminist perspective on this underlying logic in the relationship between women’s rights, human rights, and global capital in the sex-trafficking industry⁴. The novel imaginatively depicts a nuanced subject of gendered rights who cannot transcend the normative and gendered hegemonic rhetoric of global capitalism in human rights. However, through depicting a kind of transnational feminist rhetorical solidarity, the novel complicates the economic structure of rights and the tropes of passivity and victimhood that continue to mark the legal discourse of trafficking and gendered rights discourse, even as it does not deny the foundational role that this economic imperative has in women’s rights. Human rights are legitimated by narrative⁵. This article uses a rhetorical methodology to examine how literature as cultural production both constructs and potentially remakes human rights discourse. Ultimately, I argue that the novel offers an alternative model of women’s rights as human rights born out of a feminist solidarity that is formed because of the economy of rights, not in spite of it.

Economies of Gendered Rights

The term “economy” as it is used in this article comes from the Ancient Greek, οἰκονομία (*oikonomía*) and is often translated literally as household or estate management based on *oikos* (household) and *nemein*, or “management and dispensation” (Leshem 225). What was once a way to describe the relationship between means and ends in household management and *eudemonia*, or the pursuit of the good life in abundance, has now become a vernacular term largely divorced from the ethical and defined by a transactional framework concerned with the distribution and consumption of goods and services in a framework of scarcity (Leshem 226). However, the Ancient Greek usage is interesting for this argument since it has gendered and political implications: one of the first recorded usages of the root of *oikonomía* is in a sixth-century poem by Phocylides in which the poet recommends marriage to a woman who has good “*oikonomis*,” or work ethic (Leshem 227). Perhaps the most enduring relationship that carries forward to the contemporary notion of economies and rights is the connection between the home (including

4 This novel, published in 2010, was written prior to Myanmar opening to global trade and relations after the Military Junta relinquished power and therefore prior to the mass atrocities perpetrated against the Rohingya. Although this article focuses more specifically on a different kind of gendered violence in the region, that context is ever present in my reading of the structure of rights.

5 See Joseph Slaughter’s *Human Rights Inc.: The World Novel, Narrative Form, and International Law* for more on this legitimating link between human rights and narrative. For more on the relationship between human rights narrative circulation, see Kay Schaffer and Sidone Smith’s *Human Rights and Narrated Lives*. For more on the conversation on human rights and literature see Elizabeth Swanson Goldberg and Alexandra S. Moore’s edited collection *Theoretical Perspectives on Human Rights and Literature* and Crystal Parikh’s edited collection *The Cambridge Companion to Human Rights and Literature*.

the family as well as slaves), property, and the polis. In fact, the word “estate” in Ancient Greek is *oikoi*. During Aristotle’s time, the discourse of *oikonomía* became much more commonplace and extended beyond household or estate management to philosophy and the political sphere so much so that the term came to be used to describe the “rational management” of everything from the marketplace to bodily functions (Leshem 228). This historical trajectory of the term *oikonomía*/economy has bearing on the argument that follows because it exemplifies not only the ways in which the discourse has foundations in patriarchal systems but also, relatedly, in the notion of estate management, including slave ownership and the heteronormative familial unit that founds the *polis*, the same building blocks of human rights discourse. I use the language of economies to signal this history as well as the more contemporary transactional definition that signifies the unequal global and transactional movement of media, bodies, knowledge, etc. across borders—what Arjun Appadurai calls global “scapes” (296). To speak of economies, then, is to speak of concepts that are enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). Simultaneously, to speak of the economies of rights in rhetorical terms, then, is to speak of the ways in which human rights have always been understood within systems, rhetorical networks, and mobilizations of local and global capital, a concept that I will elaborate further.

The epigraphs that frame this argument offer insight into the normative relationship of global economies to women’s rights as it manifests in transnational sex trafficking, and the challenges and potentialities of transnational feminism as an approach to mobilizing women’s rights. The first epigraph is from the preface of the Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination Against Women. CEDAW was adopted in 1979 by the UN General Assembly as an international bill of rights for women. It was entered into force in 1981 and has been ratified by 189 states⁶. This particular passage quoted above from CEDAW’s preamble demonstrates the ways in which the convention is framed by a prefiguring economic premise. Discrimination against women, it argues, damages the ability for women to contribute to the “political, social, economic, and cultural life of their countries,” which in turn damages countries’ “growth and prosperity” (CEDAW). As Donna Sullivan, Charlotte Skeet, and others argue, since the latter half of the twentieth century, this instrumentalization of women’s rights in economic terms has been foundational to the normativity and mobilization of women’s rights, particularly in “developing” nations or the global south.

This rhetorical move in the preamble that puts women in service to the nation (as opposed to the converse) brings to mind Gina Heathcote’s argument about the ways in which preambles to UN security council resolutions have “deployed feminist-derived messages as a normative weapon” by ignoring the transnational feminist histories, origins, and protests behind the law. What used to be a space to establish the legal antecedents to a current resolution, she argues, became in the 1990s, a space to establish normative groundings through references to “soft law” like the Beijing Platform to Action and other “non-legal text that invokes values, agendas, and justifica-

⁶ The US is a signatory, but has still not ratified CEDAW, although this does not stop the U.S.’s mobilization of women’s rights language in service to its own economic and international relations ends.

tions for the resolution” (Heathcote). The preamble therefore now functions more like a rhetorical premise without exposition that generates its own exigence by flattening the history of localized feminist activism and presenting the current opportune moment in ways that do not align with the diverse “temporal and geographical range of transnational feminist activism, which...is the true preamble to women, peace, and security” (Heathcote). Under this logic, the preamble to CEDAW can be viewed as a premise that (re)calls a referential past into being. In calling into being the conditions against which the convention is working, it actually establishes and solidifies the normativity of those conditions of violence while simultaneously inaugurating them as a violation. In this case, the particular quoted section of the preamble articulates the ways in which “discrimination against women violates the principles of equality of rights and respect for human dignity,” establishing the context of the violence, gendered discrimination, as a violation of human dignity. In the same moment, it establishes that violation as an “obstacle to the participation of women, on equal terms with men, in the political, social, economic and cultural life of their countries” that “hampers the *growth of the prosperity of society and the family*” (emphasis mine). In other words, women’s full development and potentialities are always already “in the service of their countries and of humanity” such that if discrimination against women prevents their full participation in the economies and development of their nation, then rights must be granted for the prosperous good of society, the nation, and therefore of humanity. Even as the preamble to CEDAW establishes gendered discrimination as not only violence, but also a violation, it does so via its relationship to economic development of the nation.

This reading of the epigraph from CEDAW provides rhetorical context for the normative discourse of women’s rights as it is exemplified by one of the most neoliberal spokespersons for women’s rights as human rights: Hillary Clinton. I examine Clinton’s speeches during her political career as exemplary of a normative discourse of rights because she was a prominent mainstream voice in the Global North for women’s rights in the late 20th century and early 21st century and because her speeches demonstrate how pervasively the logic underwriting that normativity becomes tied to global capital over time, especially in the networked, mainstream discourses circulating at an international and UN level.

In 1995, then First Lady Hillary Clinton, in front of thousands at the United Nation’s Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, declaimed that “women’s rights are human rights.” Although transnational feminist activists had been lobbying for decades for women’s rights, the 1995 Beijing Conference at which Clinton delivered her famous speech is widely recognized as marking the moment in which women’s rights were geopolitically articulated as and recognized as human rights. Clinton’s speech is both pedagogical and performative of the rhetorical framework articulated in CEDAW whereby women’s rights gain legitimacy through their instrumentalized relationship to global capital via alignment with heteronormative familial prosperity and national economic growth.

Clinton states in her 1995 speech, “What we are learning around the world is that, if women are healthy and educated, their families will flourish. If women are free from violence, their families will flourish. If women have a chance to work and earn as full and equal partners in society, their families will flourish. And when families flourish, communities and nations will flourish.” Clinton bases her ethical and logical appeal for women’s rights as human rights by justifying them as in service to the family, and thus the nation. In fact, the Programme of Action published after the first UN International Conference on Population and Development in 1994 articulated a 20-year course of action based upon the relationship between “population, development and individual well-being,” predicating economic well-being on women and their access to family planning, education, and maternal health. By this logic, when women’s rights are violated, all human rights are violated and therefore, women’s rights *are* (and provide the foundation for) human rights and conversely, human rights are women’s rights. Through this framework, Clinton draws on and mimics existing normative structures of rights as declared in the UDHR. The enthymemic structure of the UDHR, articulated by Joseph Slaughter in *Human Rights Inc.*, slides from “human” to “individual” to “person (before the law)” as it maps onto the *bildungsroman* enlightenment narrative, forming the family and community as the building blocks of the nation-state. This same logic was taken up by the U.S.’s 1996 Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act, in which women’s roles were tied explicitly to individual responsibility and then family. As Dingo articulates it, the act “argues that to prepare women for a postindustrial, neoliberal economy” women must be “responsibility caregivers *inside* the home through the institution of marriage and more productive workers *outside* the home through paid labor” (5).

Thus, by 2010, when then Secretary of State Hillary Clinton began her remarks at the 15th Anniversary of the Cairo International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) with the statement that “women’s health is essential to the prosperity and opportunity of all, to the stability of families and communities, and the sustainability and development of nations,” she was trafficking in well-traveled discursive territory when she justified women’s rights as human rights for their value to the nation and the economy, not on their own terms. This speech in particular argued that granting women the right to contraceptives and other basic reproductive justice and health contributes positively to population control as well as the basic subsistence level and economic standing of families. In doing so, Clinton draws extensively on the language of economic capital:

In the Obama Administration, we are convinced in the value of investing in women and girls, and we understand there is a direct line between a woman’s reproductive health and her ability to lead a *productive*, fulfilling life. And therefore, we believe investing in the potential of women and girls is the smartest *investment* we can make. It is connected to every problem on everyone’s mind around the world today (emphasis mine).

In the fifteen years that elapsed between the 1995 Women’s Rights and Human Rights speech and the 2010 ICPD speech that centered women’s interests as an issue of economic

development, the function of women within the normative discourse of universal rights widened from the family, to the nation, to the global economy. This rhetorical logic of justifying women's rights as human rights based not only on their role in the economic prosperity of their families and their nation, but also in neoliberal terms on their role in the global market, echoes the *bil-dungsroman* of the UDHR and had by then become normative enough to be rhetorically effective when speaking to an international audience.

As presidential candidate in 2016, Clinton's platform was partly predicated on what she called her "historical activism" work on women's rights. In 2017 at a speech titled "Women's Role in Peace and Politics" given at the Georgetown University Institute for Women, Peace, and Security, Clinton evolves the narrative that women's rights are human rights and ups the stakes of the relationship by linking this economic role to securitization. Referencing her 1995 speech she states: "we thought back in the '90s that we needed to do more to elevate the rights and opportunities of women and girls on every level—obviously, education and health and *economic opportunity*, but also to unleash the potential for involvement in ending conflicts, in creating more secure environments for all people to live in and thrive... A rising tide of women's rights lifts entire nations" ("Women's Role in Peace and Politics"). Thus, in the late twentieth century and early twenty-first century as women's rights became normative under the heading of human rights – from the 1990s with the advent of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action (1993) and the first International Conference on Population and Development (1994) to Clinton's speeches during the 1995 Beijing platform for action, and subsequent Conference on Population and Development (2010) to the Millennium Development Goals and current Sustainable Development Goals— the logic underwriting women's rights was always already tied to and predicated on economics.

The second epigraph for this argument is a passage from Pheng Cheah's *Inhuman Conditions: On Cosmopolitanism and Human Rights* that theorizes this fundamental grounding of human rights in global capitalism. As Cheah argues, "Globalization touches the core of what it means to be human" ("Humanity" 1552), because discourses of rights are always already "contaminated" by global capital (*Inhuman Conditions* 146). Therefore, in order for the subject to be recognized as a person before the law within the global capitalist regime out of which rights emerge, the subject must be legible economically—this becomes the foundation for the concept of a person before the law. In fact, "contamination" might not even be the most appropriate word since this implies an uncontaminated form of rights that predates this economic structure when it is established that the individual foundations of human rights and legal personhood were designed first to protect the exploitative practices of the transnational corporation Dutch East India Trading Company. As Slaughter argues, "The 'human' of human rights is not simply given... Historically, the legal category of 'person' precedes the 'human' of human rights; juridically, the legal category of the 'person' carries certain rights and duties that precede the individual, that (perhaps) await activation in – or occupation by – the human" ("However incompletely" 275). We

know that corporations have legal personhood, but Slaughter's argument points out that the colonial charter and transnational corporations like the Dutch East India Company were granted legal personhood as subjects of rights well before people were and well before what we now know as human rights came into being. In other words, "corporations, and especially the colonial charter companies, were recognized as international persons in advance of the human beings they ostensibly served" ("However incompletely" 280). Thus, the foundations of rights as attached to sovereign individuals outside of exploitative capitalist structures is a convenient fiction perpetuated by the UDHR and subsequent legal frameworks. However, this is not to say that these discourses are unsalvageable.

Women's rights as human rights comes of age in the latter half of the twentieth century and the first few decades of the twenty-first century within normative discourses of human rights by assuming a legal personhood predicated on a fictional liberal notion of the ideal sovereign subject. In reality, this legal category of personhood that is tied already to neoliberal global economic structures and humanitarian aid, while perpetuating this fiction by ostensibly working toward an ideal of sovereign subjectivity, in fact undermines this fiction through the unequal structure of rights⁷. In this equation, as Cheah defines it, the Global South functions as participants in the global capitalist system through their response to the Global North's model by calling upon global capitalism as the vehicle for development and seeking to compete on the North's grounds, in particular through NGOs (*Inhuman Conditions* 166). Ironically then, despite the fact that the rights of the disenfranchised in the Global South are used as justification both for and against economic development (in the case of sanctions as penalties for rights abuses), as Cheah says "it is the disenfranchised who are caught in the aporetic embrace between a predatory international capitalism and an indigenous capitalism seeking to internationalize" (*Inhuman Conditions* 164).

This economy of rights perpetuates the unequal structure of rights and white saviorism, including what Gayatri Spivak refers to as "white men saving brown women from brown men" ("Can the Subaltern" 93), what Makau Mutua calls the "savage victim savior model" (201), and what has come to be known as the "white savior industrial complex" (originally coined by Teju Cole in *The Atlantic* in 2012). As Mutua argues, human rights are deployed and humanitarian aid mobilized through an operational and "damning" metaphor of savages, victims, and saviors (hereafter SVS metaphor). In this metaphor "the predominant image of the savage...is that of a Third World, non-European person, cultural practice, or state" (216). Culture itself, Mutua argues, is ultimately figured as the savage and Global North NGOs, academics, and governmental aid organizations are figured as saviors who must step in to save victims from their own savage culture (220-221). The treatment of women and children in particular is utilized as evidence for the savagery of the culture and thus justification for intervention on humanitarian terms by the Global North. For example veiling in Iraq and Afghanistan, rape in the Democratic Republic of Congo, and sex trafficking in South Asia have all been used as humanitarian justifications for interventionist and political

⁷ I use the term "structure of rights" following Gayatri Spivak's argument in "Righting Wrongs" (2004).

ends⁸. Of course, this is not to deny the very real violence and disenfranchisement perpetuated by the state in these circumstances, but read alongside Mutua's metaphor, one can see the ways in which violence against women and children in these contexts is capitalized on as a justification and cover for alternate interventionist reasons that carries forward colonial histories⁹. As Elora Halim Chowdhury argues, Mutua's SVS metaphor and this structure of rights "helps us understand the discourse of human rights as a space for the systemic creation of concepts, theories, and practices that reinscribe inequalities even after the dismantling of formal domination with the end of colonial rule" (xvii). While this SVS metaphor of rights that feeds the structure of rights and the white savior complex might be best framed within the context of humanitarianism rather than human rights politics, I argue that in fact it suggests the instrumentalization of human rights as a value of exchange that establishes fixed subject positions on both sides with gendered implications.

This section has demonstrated the multiple ways in which economies underwrite women's rights as human rights as a rhetorical justification and "original contamination" (Cheah) as well as the ways in which that logic is predicated on gendered notions of subjectivity tied to problematic heteronormativity and Enlightenment fictions of personhood and sovereignty. It also identified the economic structure of rights in which the Global North, the Global South, and NGOs trade on rights discourses, capital, and, as I further exemplify, gendered bodies. Thus, to return to the guiding question of on what and whose terms are women's rights being determined and made normative, then, it follows that this normativity rests in no small part on the rhetorical premise that women's rights are *just good economic development and securitization policy*.

Therefore, given that the normative discourse of women's rights cannot deny its emergence out of and location within global capitalism and economies of rights, then it follows that it is important to interrogate the limits and possibilities of that normative discourse in gendered terms for the most precarious and vulnerable. As Cheah reminds us, we must ask, "not...whether universal human rights exist...Instead we should focus on the nature and limits of the normative claims being made by various actors...when they appeal to human rights within the theoretical framework of established human rights discourse" (*Inhuman Conditions* 148). In the following section, I situate this conversation within coming-of-age fiction emerging out of the discourse surrounding sex-trafficking and alongside a discourse of women's rights that is always already embedded in neoliberal economies in order to articulate some of the limits and affordances of

8 See Kelly Oliver's *Carceral Humanitarianism: Logics of Refugee Detention* and Wendy Hesford's and Wendy Kozol's *Just Advocacy? Women's Human Rights, Transnational Feminisms, and the Politics of Representation* for articulations of human rights and women's rights as an alibi for military and humanitarian intervention, as well as Wendy Hesford's *Violent Exceptions: Children's Human Rights and Humanitarian Rhetorics*, which details the ways in which children are deployed as vulnerable subjects to justify humanitarian intervention.

9 It is worth noting here that it is particularly women's rights and children's rights that tend to activate the Global North's humanitarian response as alibi for interventionist tactics, rather than gendered rights, including transgender rights and LGBTQIA+ rights.

the economies of gendered rights. I turn to the literary form of the *bildungsroman* here because it is both pedagogical and performative of a subject of rights that cannot transcend the hegemony of global capitalism as it mimics the narrative arc of the UDHR. If the discourse of rights is both pedagogical and performative, then the literature that emerges from that discourse is also pedagogical and performative. In this case, the fiction provides a space beyond the law to imagine the potentials of feminist solidarity within this transactional economy of rights. I argue in the following section that Law-Yone's novel constructs a nuanced and complex subject of rights that re-envision transnational feminist solidarity not just in spite of, but rather because of the economies of rights.

The Road to Wanting, Economies of Rights and the Human Rights Industrial Complex

"Ready at last. I am not afraid" begins *The Road to Wanting* by exiled Burmese novelist Wendy Law-Yone. The book opens as the main character, Na Ga, prepares herself for suicide while waiting in the fictional frontier town of Wanting on the Chinese side of the Chinese-Burma border for her handler to smuggle her back across to Burma.¹⁰ The novel is structured as a series of flashbacks while Na Ga is waiting in Wanting. The present tense of the novel finds her discarded by her American erstwhile savior and lover, Will, who, after rescuing her from a refugee camp in Thailand where she was being held with other sex workers, has sent her back to Burma via China when he decides to marry an American woman. *The Road to Wanting* depicts the relationship of the gendered subject of rights to the larger forces of global capitalism via the economic imperative that underwrites those gendered rights. I argue that the text remakes the normative victim narrative surrounding sex trafficking and sex work that often perpetuates a global, gendered, transactional economy of rights predicated on a humanitarian "giver" of rights and an agent-less "receiver" of rights (Spivak, "Righting Wrongs") and in doing so, ultimately offers a form of transnational feminist solidarity that mobilizes economies of gendered rights.

The Road to Wanting portrays the sex-trafficking triangle between Myanmar, China, and Thailand in the latter half of the twentieth century, during the time that Myanmar was under control of the military Junta. I examine the novel for the ways it takes up yet resists normative narratives surrounding the conditions of sex trafficking and sex work and the ways it depicts the economic imperative that underwrites gendered rights. However, the text complicates the narrative of passivity and victimhood that the legal discourse of sex trafficking too often requires. Instead, it mobilizes a model of transnational feminist solidarity, albeit ambivalently as it leaves this promise open-ended. It critiques the human rights industrial complex and the narratives of victimization in sex trafficking by taking into account the complexities of gendered rights that are always already underwritten by neoliberalism, rather than trying to work against this embeddedness. Said differently, I argue that Law-Yone's novel offers a model of transnational feminist solidarity within the economic imperative underscoring women's rights as human rights, and an agency that accounts

for its founding logic in the economies of human rights. I do not mean to imply here that *The Road to Wanting* serves only as an allegory for the ways in which human rights are embedded in global economic structures and the narratives of victimhood surrounding the global sex trade. I do mean to argue that as a text originally written in English coming out of normative discourses, Law-Yone's narrative at once participates in this normativity while simultaneously speaking back to it. As such, rather than being allegorical, the text is performative and pedagogical. In this way, I echo Leslie Bow's materialist reading of Law-Yone's other fictional work when she argues it "suggests a fictive solution to an ongoing historical conflict in Burma" ("The Gendered Subject of Human Rights" 41).

Wendy Law-Yone has described *The Road to Wanting* as a novel about a young woman who moves from tribal existence to modernity within the course of a lifetime ("Beyond Rangoon" 194). As a *bildungsroman*—the enabling fiction for human rights discourse according to Slaughter—the novel's chronology traces Na Ga's coming-of-age from her childhood in a fictional, minority "hill" community called the "Wild Lu" through her experiences of being trafficked into Thailand to her decision to return to her hill community at the end of the novel. Throughout much of this movement, Na Ga is defined in economic terms and by her lack of agency. The novel's title and central metaphor have Na Ga constantly wanting or desiring rather than acting or doing. She is first trafficked when she is sold by her parents to an abusive village-headman's wife. The sale is meant to ensure Na Ga's survival in the dire economic circumstances of her indigenous community partly caused by the trade sanctions imposed by the Global North. After this experience she is taken to the capital where she serves an American family who treats her like a second daughter. This section of the narrative is defined by her desire to join the family when they return to America. After the family flees back to the US following a nationalist Junta crackdown, the narrative describes Na Ga wanting to leave her work in a rural factory. It is the desire to leave that leads to her being trafficked by a broker to Thailand and into sex work. Eventually she is given a "pink slip" with her freedom, but the novel implies that Na Ga remains in the industry before being detained in a police raid. She is taken by the police to a relocation and repatriation camp on the Burmese border, arguably a kind of sanctioned trafficking itself, where she is once again "rescued," this time by Will, an American who works for the International Committee for Repatriation (ICR). Will fetishizes Na Ga because she is an indigenous "Wild Lu." The narrative describes her feeling pressured into leaving with him and "blindly" signing the release papers. As her sponsor, Will removes her to Bangkok where she serves for ten years as his companion and lover. Many of the flashbacks describe Na Ga wanting her American savior Will to not leave her and marry his American girlfriend, wanting to commit suicide in China, and finally, wanting to leave Wanting. Na Ga's most active decisions as a character lead to a scene in a restaurant when she steals a baby in an attempt to make Will stay with her and, finally, when she returns to Burma¹⁰.

¹⁰ I refer throughout this project to both Myanmar and Burma interchangeably, utilizing Myanmar when referring to contemporary events and Burma as it is described in the novel since that is the language that the novel utilizes.

The narrative of the passive victim has come to define the discourse of sex-trafficking, particularly in the overlap between the economic and the moral. As Wendy Hesford, Juliette Hua and Holly Nigorizawa, and others argue, this narrative draws from and mobilizes a kind of problematic feminism predicated upon universalizing women (particularly third-world women) as oppressed and exploited victims needing to be rescued from all sex work, even consensual sex work (Hesford, “Kairos” 147), or conversely, as individualized and essentialized within certain “backward” cultural contexts (Hua and Nigorizawa 404), neatly setting up the SVS metaphor. Thus, since women are considered the lynch pin for familial, national, and global economic success, they also become the subject (and the site) to be freed and saved by those with rights from the trappings of what is seen as backwards, patriarchal culture. As Hesford argues, the politics of representation in antitrafficking campaigns is predicated on victimization narratives that garner “sympathetic visibility” for the women and children who are represented as “objects to be seen and then rescued” (*Spectacular Rhetorics* 126-130). I argue that the novel resists this narrative of passivity and victimhood surrounding global sex work. However, rather than replace it with an agentic narrative that suggests an individual sovereignty, personhood, and the ability to resist the economic structures that govern not only the industry, but also the rights discourse that protect women from it, the text instead draws attention to the ways in which Na Ga is trapped on both ends as a pawn in transnational global economies of sex work *and* rights.

When Na Ga’s brothel is raided in Thailand she is taken with several women to the border of Thailand and Myanmar while the women await deportation and repatriation—sometimes to a worse fate than that which they left. The women recognize the ways in which the label of “victim” by international aid organizations and human rights instruments strip them of agency:

“Names!” Thaya yawned. “I used to think names were important. But if you worry about names in a place like this, you’ll end up in a lunatic asylum...Are we DPs, displaced persons? Or are we just common refugees? Or are we IDPs, the internally displaced? Are we IIs, illegal immigrants - or LMWs, legal migrant workers? Or are we, God forbid, TVs - trafficking victims?”

“Well, why don’t they just call us what we are?” said another voice from further down the bamboo platform. “Whore 24681, Whore 24682 and so on?” (163)

These legal descriptors that define subjectivity echo Hannah Arendt’s description of the fundamental paradox of the stateless in which arrest by the state actually grants subjects more rights as a person before the law (286). The women recognize their liminal positionality within the economic structure of rights and legal discourse better than any of those offering aid might. It is not surprising that they describe trafficking victim as the worst legal status even though that should be the

designator that receives the most aid. This disconnect between the legal instruments of rights and the actual practice of promoting and claiming rights leads Upendra Baxi to the conclusion that “the violated peoples know, in their lived and embodied experience, the ways in which the reality of their suffering remains *unnamable*,” and “the many ways in which the concreteness of their everyday suffering remains unrelated to human rights texts” (8). Baxi’s argument that the “moral” language of rights is exhausted aligns with my larger claim here that to deny that the discourse of rights operates within a neoliberal human rights marketplace where multinational corporations are considered human and where the state is in the business of protecting capital rather than rights, is to ignore the reality of rights.

Part of the complexity of the discourse surrounding sex work and transnational sex trafficking is that categorizing women as victims in all sex work, even consensual sex work, has the double effect of universalizing women across the world under the category of exploitation based upon sex. While antitrafficking campaigns capitalize upon and construct this universalization so that even legal prostitution or self-employed, online porn content creators become something to save women from, ultimately, this construct flattens the contextuality and complexity of women’s localized lives, depicts them as “radically naïve” (Hesford, *Spectacular* 130), and reduces their ability for agency within exploitative systems, which is always contextual and subject to localized structures of power¹¹. This is akin to the universalizing gestures of western feminism under the oppressions of patriarchy regardless of local operations of power and constructions of gender, and it “does not account for how the economy structures sexual desire and the demand for commercial sex work” (Wilson cited in Hesford, *Spectacular* 132). The scene in which Na Ga is saved by Will activates the trope in the economy of rights described earlier in which a privileged giver of rights (Will and the humanitarian institution he works for) saves a receiver of rights (Na Ga and the other sex workers), often by attempting to “modernize” them. Will’s infatuation with Na Ga’s indigenous ethnicity illustrates this very dynamic. However, when considered within the context of the arc of the narrative, Law-Yone actually undermines several of these normative discourses.

Na Ga lives with Will for 10 years, during which she refuses to let him play the role of savior through modernization. For example, when he first sees Na Ga, he begins speaking to her in her indigenous language, a language she doesn’t speak because she was removed from her home village at a young age. When they return to Bangkok together, she insists on continuing to serve him even when they become lovers. She leaves the house as little as possible and turns down opportunities for education, refusing to let him forget the neoliberal interventionist strategy and the transactional structure of rights upon which their relationship is founded. Most disconcerting to Will, however, is that Na Ga reverses the universalizing and objectifying gaze by staring at Will in an attempt to understand “his kind.” At the breakfast table, while he sleeps, and

11 In the case of trafficking, as Hesford argues, the transnational mobilization of this discourse also creates strange bedfellows of transnational feminists and international women’s rights activists with anti-immigrationists and anti-sex-worker, anti-pornography advocates (*Spectacular* 125)

in moments she knows he isn't watching her, she "studied him as a means of shedding light on the unknowable, unspeakable traits of all men" (178).

When Will decides he wants to marry his American girlfriend, Helen, Na Ga understands this as a threat to her futurity and stability. In a final conflict, Na Ga tries to embarrass Will for leaving her while he is at dinner with Helen and friends by showing up with a baby-for-hire since Na Ga assumes Will is marrying Helen to have children. The plan backfires spectacularly after Na Ga almost smothers the baby and she fails to generate the crowd's and the reader's sympathy. This scene further destabilizes and remakes the narrative of passive victim upon which the savior can project their desires in the rights industrial complex and exposes the instability of her positionality as subaltern within the larger global discourse of rights.

Shortly after this scene, in a thinly veiled metaphor for the structure of rights, as Na Ga is leaving Thailand for China and ultimately Burma via the smuggler that Will has arranged, Will gives Na Ga a "nest egg" to make up for his guilt in forcing her into the very fate from which he saved her in the first place: "I caught the look on his face as I took it out and counted it. The look of a man who seeks atonement by over-tipping" (14). In counting it, Na Ga is not only drawing attention to the structure of rights but also emphasizing it as the economic transaction that it is. In this scene, Na Ga represents the site upon which the liberalizing versions of western feminism and the problematic structure of rights in terms of neo-imperial interventionist strategies converge.

Transnational Feminist Solidarity and Economies of Rights

The previous section demonstrated the ways in which *The Road to Wanting* offers a recognition of the structure of rights and the refusal of the passive "victim" of rights in an economy of rights that, although purporting to do good, perpetuates the disenfranchisement of the vulnerable. In this section I argue that the novel also offers a version of transnational feminist solidarity that is not mobilized by universalizing rights discourses nor does it deny the economic foundations of women's rights as human rights. Instead, Law-Yone offers a version of transnational solidarity through feminist sisterhood that mobilizes economies of gendered rights in service to the most vulnerable.

According to Tamara Ho, Law-Yone is the first exiled Burmese author to write in English and thus, "introduced into the Anglophone literary frame Burmese immigrant characters who negotiate language as a tool of oppression and as a means of resistance" (666). In *The Road to Wanting*, however, Law-Yone uses language less as a means of direct resistance for her characters and more metatextually as a means of slippage, drawing attention to the relationship between the subject and the structures that construct and confine that subject. Although the book is written

in English it is unclear what language the narrative voice speaks¹². The fluidity of meaning as it
12 Often Na Ga clarifies when her dialogue is in English and/or Burmese making the reader question what language her narrative voice speaks.

relates to language leads to some of the more entertaining and insightful passages that describe failed communications in Burmese, Chinese, English, and Thai. For example, Na Ga thinks how strange the term “nest egg” is: “(Now there’s a term that’s never made sense. How is it that the same word can mean ‘savings’ as well as ‘tricking,’ for doesn’t a *nest* egg, in English, also mean a *trick* egg, a lure for a hen to come and lay more eggs in that selfsame nest?)” (13). The English language is depicted throughout as a tricky and ambiguous construct in which the very thing that it provides is, at the same time, a farce. In fact, Minzu, Na Ga’s friend in Wanting and the person who saves her from killing herself at the start of the novel, calls English “Anguish” throughout. This reference to multiple meanings of nest egg also serves as an unmistakable metaphor for the ways in which human rights discourse and global capital functions, in that often what is actually being traded doesn’t tangibly exist, but can still function as a lure for further investment. It also depicts the challenges of translation across borders, not only between languages as Na Ga navigates her translanguaging, but also in the ways in which the normative discourse of rights gets translated not just linguistically but also in different discursive locations and across different global markets. While the language of global capital and human rights as represented by English attempts to regulate, control, manage, and make stable, the language of the novel attempts to destabilize, disrupt, deregulate, and make fluid by pointing to moments in which meaning is not fixed, especially in English¹³.

After an exchange with a male desk clerk that Na Ga can’t understand, a young girl Minzu who also works at the hotel addresses Na Ga as “big sister” (Ma Ma) and Na Ga understands her perfectly: “Ma Ma! Where you go? I worry. I bring you tea...you not there” (49). It is through Minzu’s hailing and recognition of Na Ga as “big sister” that the foundation is formed for the possibility of a transnational feminist solidarity. The juxtaposition of the male clerk, who remains unintelligible to Na Ga and the reader, with Minzu the young girl employee, who Na Ga and the reader understand implicitly, suggests that this solidarity is predicated on being understood as an intelligible transnational subject.

Naming is a device that Law-Yone uses to express the relationship of subjects to language and the larger forces of both national and global discourses. For example, Na Ga stays in “The Friendship Hotel” in “Wanting” China. Na Ga’s name means something ostensibly insignificant—when pronounced as Nah Gah it means “ears-that-stick-out,” and when pronounced N’*gah* it means “the serpent-dragon” (60)—however the name Na Ga is symbolic for its lack of meaning. According to the fictional indigenous Lu tradition, a person does not find out their “real” name until they are old enough to have it drawn out of a name seed by their mother. Since Na Ga was sold by her family at a young age, she was never told her real name and so goes by a provisional

13 As Crispin Thurlow argues, not only is English the standard language of business and transnational corporations, but it is also used as an instrument of regulation for “evaluating, controlling and managing not just ‘products’ but also the people who ‘make’ them” (6). Thurlow uses the examples of call centers in which workers are “policed into particular ways of speaking” (6).

one that is effectively meaningless. This no-name is symbolic of subaltern positionality¹⁴.

It is the disenfranchised that are most affected by the embeddedness of rights within a discourse of global capital, often because it forces them to mobilize under a heading of collective identity that is constructed as outside of or against capitalism. This collective identity only gains epistemological purchase based upon an assumption about the preexisting indigenous subject, which paradoxically must be performed anew as one recognized by rights discourse (Cheah 172). Na Ga, however, suggests that this solidarity can be gained through transnational sisterhood. If the normative discourse in which CEDAW is embedded posits a heteronormative notion of the nuclear family, then Na Ga remakes this notion through her relationship with Minzu. The name Minzu can be loosely translated into “ethnic group” in Chinese. The relationship between Minzu and Na Ga represents a sisterhood that is not tied to normative national discourses on either side of their transnational solidarity. Structurally, the key moments and flashbacks in the novel that propel Na Ga through the coming-of-age narrative are framed by positive encounters with Minzu. For example, Minzu interrupts Na Ga’s suicide attempt, she enables Na Ga to have her first deep sleep in a long time, which signals a turning point in Na Ga’s decision to return home, and she takes Na Ga swimming where Na Ga finally feels healed of her many wounds. It is in her discussions with Minzu that Na Ga finally finds the kinship that she has been desiring that is equal in its transactional nature.

In a twist towards the end of the novel, the reader comes to understand that Law-Yone has named the Wild Lu after the Burmese word for human. This link becomes explicit at the very moment in which Na Ga finally claims her heritage as Lu and decides to return home to Burma. At the end of the novel, Na Ga receives a posthumous note from her trafficking handler confessing his identity as also Lu. When alive, Mr. Jiang had denied his Lu identity in the face of discrimination and subordinated it to the larger cause of the insurgency against the Burmese state. Mr. Jiang’s confession that they are of the same people, the Lu, prompts Na Ga to claim her indigenous identity but in relation to the larger construct of what it means to be human within a structure of rights:

“Mr Jiang...is a Lu!” I howl.

Minzu says, “A Lu...yes, indeed.”

“No! A Lu!” I am shouting to be understood, to emphasize the right tone, not

the tone for the same word that means ‘human being’ in Burmese. “I mean a Wild Lu!”

14 The indigenous group to which Na Ga belongs is intended to represent the smallest minority group in Burma. Law-Yone is clear that she based the fictional Lu on a real Burmese minority group called the Wa, but chose to construct a fictional tribe rather than name the Wa. Law-Yone says, “I don’t name the Wa in my novel; I don’t want to appropriate a culture. I want to respect it; I want to use it as a template” (Bow “Beyond Rangoon” 194).

“A Lu. A Wild Lu.” She is still using the tone for ‘human being’, but I know it

is only her accent now, I know she follows my meaning.

“But I, too...” I am beating my chest to make sure she understands – beating it too, to stop myself tearing out my hair. “I, too, am a Lu! I am a Lu! I am a Wild Lu...and I didn’t know another Lu in front of my face!” (245)

The confusion in the pronunciation of the fictional ethnic identity of Lu with the Burmese word for human being is in keeping with the actual meaning of Lu in Burmese. Lu is widely translated in Burmese to mean human or human being. What Na Ga is grieving here is not the fact that she didn’t recognize Mr. Jiang’s ethnic identity, but that she didn’t recognize his humanity in relation to her own. If we re-read the passage by inserting “human” into the place of “Lu,” the passage takes on a radically different meaning. This textual moment in which the universal human subject is conflated with the individual and indigenous subject is also a conflation between solidarity rights (both gendered and indigenous) and individual rights.

The final scene of the novel depicts Na Ga crossing the Chinese/Burmese border. Minzu tries to come with her, calling to Na Ga in the liminal space between the two borders:

“But who will look after you?” she says, sounding quietly practical now. I point in the direction of the Mizo and the Shan. “They will.”

“No, I mean like a...like a...sister.”

“You will,” I say. “But first you have to learn English, or better Burmese, so we can write to each other. Or I have to learn Chinese. What do you think is best?”

She considers this seriously, then says, “Anguish.”

“Minzu, I have to go now. I have to go.”

“But you’ll come back, Ma Ma?”

I mustn’t lie to her, I mustn’t make any promises I can’t keep. (261)

The final lines of the novel depict Na Ga and Minzu attempting to communicate but not quite connecting “*Never mind...* I am trying to mouth the words and semaphore at the same time.

I'll tell you later! Then I turn and cross the line" (261).

The solidarity between Minzu and Na Ga signifies a friendship and sisterhood that belongs in the liminal space—it is not tied to normative national discourses nor is it a kind of sisterhood that is founded upon a kind of second-wave, global feminist, liberatory discourse that ignores the structural inequities involved in any kind of border crossing. Rather, it is predicated upon a promise of transnational solidarity that may never be realized. It is akin to the notion of friendship articulated by Chowdhury and Philipose in *Dissident Friendships: Feminism, Imperialism, and Transnational Solidarity* wherein “to get to friendship, we would have to unravel our assumptions and clear the colonial and racial debris from our perceptual apparatus to see intimately and to become personal” so that “in friendship, then, is our resistance to the divisive and fragmenting lies of structural power; the seeds of global compassion, generosity, empathy and love; and the foundation of a world that works on behalf of life” (3). This notion of transnational solidarity also echoes Chandra Talpade Mohanty’s concept of transnational feminism as something that is defined by “mutuality, accountability, and the recognition of common interests as the basis for relationships among diverse communities...feminist solidarity as defined here constitutes the most principled way to cross borders” (Mohanty, *Feminism Without Borders* 7). However, Minzu and Na Ga also remake Mohanty’s definition of feminist solidarity since theirs works within the framework of global capital while Mohanty’s is fundamentally opposed to capitalism. Although a solidarity that operates outside of global capitalist structures is the utopian ideal, Na Ga’s friendship with Minzu in the most unlikely of locations suggests that transnational feminism must not ignore the economies of rights if it is to also promote human rights.

The novel represents a nuanced and complex subject of rights: one who at first seems only recognizable within the structures of neoliberal globalization and human trafficking, but who ultimately finds a kind of transnational feminist solidarity that complicates the economies of rights through gendered solidarity. At the end of the novel, standing between borders, the main character Na Ga turns toward Burma and her indigenous subjectivity while still keeping open the promise of transnational solidarity predicated upon a poststructuralist feminist promise. Leaving open this communication with the promise of the future recalls Wendy Brown’s suggestion that feminism should be predicated upon “[a] utopian imaginary that has no certainty about its prospects or even about the means and vehicles of its realization” (“Feminism Unbound” 115). It is this promise that can underwrite the discourse of women’s rights as human rights as they are embedded in and intertwined with global capital. Because “gender...cannot be liberated in the classical sense, and the powers constituting and regulating it cannot be seized and inverted or abolished” (Brown 112), both the feminist movement and human rights discourses, as discourses of critique and activism simultaneously, are both mourning a revolutionary promise predicated on an Enlightenment logic that never really existed. Recognizing the ways in which both discourses are always already embedded within and constructed by global capitalist structures of power that are subjugating is useful since it realigns the goal paradoxically toward a pragmatic normativity that cannot exit out-

side of the economy of rights.

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From Textual Subjects to Voracious Feminists: Rethink Constitutive Rhetoric

Weiming Gorman

Abstract: Based on a feminist reconceptualization of Maurice Charland's constitutive rhetoric, I analyze a teaching praxis within the framework of feminist rhetorical theories. I argue students transition to feminist positionality not only through textuality and identification but also rhetorical appeals of affective proof, invitational rhetoric, and rhetorical listening. Such learning practices engender community, dialogue, and emotional connection in the classroom, resulting in a perspective shift in some students. They are inclined to become feminist allies.

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Keywords: feminist rhetorical pedagogy, affective proof, invitational rhetoric, rhetorical listening, constitutive rhetoric

Introduction

In the fall of 2020, I taught an undergraduate rhetoric course on women, gender, and sexuality at an urban research university. This course was redesigned based on a project completed at a diversity in teaching faculty seminar organized by the provost in 2018. I was a faculty fellow in the seminar. Working closely with teaching consultants, instructional designers, and liaison librarians, I revised the syllabus, enhanced course content, and created new classroom activities and assignments that reflected the current state of women, gender, and sexuality studies in rhetoric and communication studies. With a year's preparation, I selected readings in the following categories: foundational writings by feminist foremothers, readings focused on the field of rhetoric, contemporary feminist advocacy in the U.S. and discourse of women around the globe. I compiled this reading list to expose students to materials that address the intersection of historiography, contemporary feminist advocacy and discourse of women around the globe so that students would have a grasp of the depth and scope of the rhetoric on women, gender, and sexuality. Upon the completion of my project, I sought to have this course designated as a general education course, particularly in the category of philosophical thinking and ethics, because I discovered that few courses in that category centered on women, gender, and sexuality. With the intention to reach a broad segment of students across the university, I endeavored to engage them in feminist and philosophical thinking and in the ethics of women's rights, gender justice and equity.

This research was conducted in a unique context. The university is in a metropolitan area, which is progressive and democratic in its political views. The university administration upholds diversity and inclusion. Most students come from the vicinity of the university or from the East or West Coast. In addition, the composition of the student body is another factor to consider because most students were white from middle class backgrounds. They tended to express liberal or progressive views. For this reason, I selected the readings from university press publications and academic journals which were liberal leaning. If this course was offered at a university in another region with a different demographic, the learning outcome may be different.

I subsequently taught this class in the Communication Department in fall of 2020.¹ The Communication Department¹ offered this course as an upper-level course and a general education (Gen Ed) course which satisfied the requirements of philosophical thinking and ethics, diversity, and global issues, as mentioned above. The class was cross listed with Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies

(GSWS) program at the university. The course's final enrollment filled thirty-four of the thirty-five offered seats and attracted nineteen communication/rhetoric majors. The remaining students came from other humanities, social sciences, and science programs at the university. According to the demographic information volunteered by the students, twenty-one self-identified as White, three as Asian American, four as Latino, one as African American, two as Chinese, one of African descent, and one of Middle Eastern descent. With regards to gender, thirty-three students self-identified as women and one student as a man.

Drawing from my experiences designing and teaching this feminist-oriented Gen Ed Communication Studies class, this paper considers what is an effective feminist pedagogy for students who, as Elizabeth Bell and Kim Golombiski term it, are in a state of "between-ness" (295)—not stalwart feminists, but sympathetic to feminist ideas, as evidenced by choosing to take a communication studies class focused on rhetoric, women, gender, and sexuality. What would be a desirable learning outcome for such students? Is a perspective shift toward feminist values and practices considered a favorable consequence? Or are there specific pedagogies a feminist teacher might apply so that those in between students would have a desire to become feminist allies if not feminists themselves?

For the purposes of this paper (and the class I teach), I define feminism as a movement to end gender inequality, as well as intersectional inequality including race, class, sexuality, and

1 Due to the pandemic, this course was offered remotely and recorded. After submitting my request to use students' writings and short excerpts of transcripts without revealing students' identity in my research, I received a clearance from IRB (Institutional Review Board) at the university. I also obtained the written consent of the students to use their work—their term papers—in this study. I chose these research materials to reflect the interface between rhetorical feminist pedagogy and students' engagement, the dynamic of a feminist rhetorical classroom, and students' subsequent perspectives shift toward feminist causes. The subsequent discussion of theoretical framework elucidates feminist rhetorical classroom practices.

disability (Crossley)². To achieve this end, feminists need agency to affect changes. Rhetorical scholars Sonja Foss and Cindy Griffin uphold values of equality, immanent value, and self-determination in rhetorical practices (364). Foss and Griffin suggest that within feminist rhetorical acts, women may claim they are legitimate rhetors and enunciate subject matters they deem important. Yet, feminists do not fight a lone struggle but must engage all those who feel an affinity to it.

Many feminist teachers emphasize critical reflection and exchange, civic participation aimed toward progress in hope for a more equitable future (Glenn 126), critical engagement over mastery, and they may be influenced by feminist scholar Charlotte Bunch's four-step pedagogical method: describing what exists, analyzing why that reality exists, determining what should exist, and hypothesizing about how to change what is to what should be (Bunch 251-253). This pedagogical approach has shaped generations of students into ardent feminists upon leaving the classroom, who subsequently joined the rank of their forebearers in the quest for women's rights, gender justice and equity. Yet, I argue students transition to feminist positionality not only through textuality and identification but also rhetorical appeals—*affective proof*, *invitational rhetoric* and *rhetorical listening*. This recognition is based on a feminist reconceptualization of Maurice Charland's *constitutive rhetoric*, which I discuss at length further below.

Important to this feminist rhetoric and communication studies class, feminist rhetorical scholars Lisa Ede, Cheryl Glenn, and Andrea Lunsford have argued for new ratios among *logos*, *pathos*, and *ethos*—*women*, *gender*, *race*, *class*, *sexuality*, and *ability*—be added to proofs, complicating the conventional wisdom of rhetorical theory (440). Feminist rhetorical practices stand in contrast to traditional rhetorical theory. While traditional rhetorical theorists often critique a “*rhetorical situation*” (Bitzer 217)—*exigency rhetorical strategies*, and *resolution*—rhetorical feminists insist on a critical theory of recasting rhetoric as a broad arena in which rhetors engage in a wide range of rhetorical behavior and demonstrate various rhetorical expertise and prowess (Royster and Kirsch 133). Jacqueline Jones Royster and Gisa Kirsch validate this feminist reconfiguration of proofs in their introduction of a new rhetorical feminist methodology. They contend that an interpretation of rhetorical artifacts is not final and conclusive but inclusive—as more elements are factored in, critical examinations can expand (Royster and Kirsch 19). In this perspective, inclusion of historical context, exigency, speech act, bodily experiences, and, more importantly, affect and emotion as extended objects of study leads to a richer understanding of rhetorical research and feminist approaches. In other words, a feminist rhetor persuades, motivates, mobilizes, and engages an audience beyond the singular goal of exigency resolution. Expanding further, Michelle Ramsey emphasizes the importance of context when analyzing feminist rhetors in various

2 On the first day of the class, I asked students to share why they took this course. They gave a variety of reasons. A few said they were feminists and wanted to take a class on women, gender, and sexuality. Some communication majors said that the Communication Department had not offered a course on women, gender, and sexuality in recent years and that they wanted a course with this focus. But more than half of the students took the course because it satisfied the University's General Education requirement of philosophical thinking and ethics.

time periods. By attending to context, feminist scholars can articulate how society defines women, contest that definition and create a new form of public vocabulary (Ramsey 363). Charlotte Hogg demonstrates the importance of context in her analysis of conservative women's rhetoric. She argues that rhetorical practices dismantle binary practices by "seeing or creating additional ones" (397). Likewise, David Gold analyzes how the binary vision of heroes and distractors impacted his students' examination of rhetorical artifacts. He observes that his students "often seek heroes . . . They may have difficulty in moving beyond an either/or lens in contextualizing the figures they encounter" (Gold 162). And finally, Celest Condit proposes the notion of "gender diversity" as an alternative perspective which envisions gender and identity as mobile, multiple affiliations that are formed through discursive interactions (9). As Condit, Hogg, and Gold make clear, it is urgent that feminists seek alliances beyond the narrow confines of advocates and dissenters in order to facilitate cogent change. Taken together, these scholars show how there are alternatives to a dichotomy in examining public discourse and that a multi-angle, fluid interpretation reveals the complexity and richness of this object of study. In rhetorical studies, how to engage subjects who occupy the in "between-ness" and who do not immediately identify as feminists has merited little attention. To address this gap, my research draws from these aforementioned feminist rhetorical approaches alongside a feminist reconceptualization of Charland's concept of constitutive rhetoric to examine, beyond the binary focus of feminist and non-feminist students, those students who occupy the in between. This study is an in-depth analysis of how students, who do not claim to be feminists but who support women's rights, made a transition towards alliance with feminist thoughts and actions. As a result, I offer a feminist rhetorical analysis of how these in between students make the transition from being uncommitted to feminist values, to being receptive to feminist stances, and to becoming feminist allies. I argue rhetorical appeals of affective proof, invitational rhetoric, and rhetorical listening play central roles in transfiguring some students' ideological orientations. In what follows, I draw from a qualitative study of my classroom to describe the strategies that have worked in a feminist rhetorical classroom, how the role of a feminist teacher enabled these alliances, the classroom's successes, and the rich variety of feminist rhetorical pedagogical approaches employed in the classroom.

Teaching philosophy

To begin and to foreground how I integrated feminist rhetorical concepts with a feminist reconceptualization of Charland's theory of constitutive rhetoric, I demonstrate how my teaching philosophy was informed by the premises of several scholars. Likewise, because most students had not expressed their positions in feminism, I reflected on how to engage them in the concepts of my course. When teaching a first-year writing class, John Duffy argues that mutual trust and honesty are the key to effective learning—students attend to differences of opinion and respect those with whom they disagree. Second, based on my conversation with the faculty of Gender and Women's Studies program at the university, I decided on a "student centered," discussion-based format so that students had a shared agency and authority. My pedagogy also drew from Tina

Chen's notion of employing an "ethics of knowledge," or not teaching students what to believe but helping students develop an ethical approach so that they make decisions that lead to belief (157). Chen's approach echoes feminist and sexuality studies scholar Adrienne Rich's vision of a superior university education in which the education is formed by "an ethical and intellectual contract between teacher and student [...] that must remain intuitive, dynamic, unwritten" (610). Rich reminds us that "we must turn to [that intellectual contract] repeatedly if learning is to be reclaimed from the depersonalizing and cheapening pressures of the present-day academic scene" (610). Cheryl Glenn elaborates on the ways superior classroom practices are made possible. She states, "Rhetorical feminist teachers embrace educational values that respect personal experiences, and encourage active engagement and collaboration, values that are imaginative, often liberatory, and can diminish the assertiveness, competitiveness and hierarchy that have long held the rein in the academy" (140). The guidance of those feminist scholars and teachers provides the underpinning of my feminist rhetorical pedagogical practices: creating a classroom in which trust became the foundation of the classroom culture; building a community in which students respected, validated, and supported one another; facilitating multilateral and dynamic discussions; and adjusting when necessary.

To stay true to this pedagogical approach, my role as a feminist teacher was central. Royster and Kirsch use "possibilities" as a lynch pin to envision the liberatory consequences of rhetorical feminist practices in impact and outcomes (109). On rhetorical feminist pedagogy, they argue that a teacher has the privilege and power of helping students to liberate themselves as thinkers and language users to "set in motion a process of 'casting bread on the water' and creating circles of responses" (109). On feminist pedagogy, Lesley Barlett imagines a feminist teacher's responsibility as "what we communicate to them, what we perform and what we hope will happen as a result of these performance." (97). Feminist rhetorical classroom practices present a case study to support their premise—that some students redefine their self-location and take a path of personal growth that extends beyond the classroom.

As a feminist teacher, I endeavored to facilitate such growth. I was not a mere observer but a facilitator who strategically guided the directions of students' conversations. For example, as part of the learning outcome for the course, I strove to inform the students of a feminist positionality through engagement, reflection, community building and mobilization. Based on my conversations with the faculty of Gender, Sexuality and Women's Study at the university, I concluded that most of my students were different from theirs—not ardent feminists but middle of the roaders, in between feminist ideas and feminist allyship. I faced a challenge: how to expose these students to women and gender issues so that they would be more receptive to feminist stances. I decided on several learning objectives. First, students would be encouraged to believe they were agents of change. For example, they read course materials of how many women negotiated gender inequality in the workplace so that they saw that they had a stake in learning and understand how they could engage in activism upon entering the workforce. Secondly, students

connected readings to their lived experiences so that they found learning engaging. For example, they learned about gender roles in relationships and marriages. When reading about how many women, though highly successful in their careers, were main caregivers in relationships or marriages, many students discussed how their grandmothers, mothers and other female relatives negotiated these challenges and how the students themselves had to mitigate these issues when they entered relationships or marriages.

Next, students were motivated to engage in feminist acts. For example, I selected a reading about how hashtag activism had raised public consciousness for gender justice, #Hashtag Activism: Networks of Race and Gender Justice, which informed the students of #YesAllWomen, #SurvivorPrivilege, #WhyIStayed, #TheEmptyChair, #MeToo and #GirlsLikeUS. These readings triggered heated discussions. Many students talked about how they retweeted hashtag activism to extend the sphere of influence to their peers and society at large. This way, I encouraged students to be aware that they engaged in feminist acts. Seeking common ground and building a community made the classroom more than a place for academic learning. It was, as Penny Burke and Sue Jackson note, “a place learners found a sense of belonging” (45). Students belonged because they had a voice, and they could discuss topics that mattered to them. The learning objectives of engagement, reflection, and community building illuminate how an epistemic turn could occur.

As another example, when we discussed how to be allies with transgender people, students were willing to share their firsthand experiences. Many knew people from their hometowns who had gone through a gender transition and recounted the ways their towns, schools, and fellow students responded. I affirmed their observations and posed follow-up questions to prod them to think in depth so that they came to see the implications of their thoughts and connected their observations with active themes of transgender rights movements, showing them how they could be allies of change against the growing national anti-trans movement. In keeping with the global perspective of this class, I encouraged students to share what they knew about the transgender rights movements in places outside of the U.S. The students in the class from Columbia, East Africa, Morocco, and China all told stories about transgender issues in their home countries. As a feminist teacher, I wanted to draw out their feminist thinking and show them how they could become agents and allies against anti-trans structures. This sort of open dialogue and pedagogy that centralized feminist principles described above made it possible for me to create a classroom environment where feminist constitutive pedagogy could take place because I did not emphasize logic, reason, linearity, or causality but rather lived experience, dialogue, and affect. The next sections show how, due to a feminist reframing of constitutive practices in the classroom, students were able to move beyond the in “between-ness” of feminism and toward feminist allyship.

Feminist Reconceptualization of Constitutive Rhetoric

Before moving on to show how feminist reconceptualization of constitutive rhetoric works

in the classroom, I show how and why it is necessary to ground constitutive rhetoric in feminist rhetorical theories. Charland's notion of rhetorical process signifies logic, reason, linearity, and causality, which amounts to what Lorraine Code calls a "single undisputed norm," (80) implicit in hegemonic rhetorical practices of "white, male, elite performances in public domains" (Dingo, Riedner and Wingard, 181). To complicate this model, rhetorical feminists argue that lived experiences, dialogue, and affect constitute an essential part of a rhetorical process. Glenn calls for an adjustment of rhetorical appeals so that emotion and experience balance logic and reason: "[Reshaping] the rhetorical appeals [includes] a reshaped logos on dialogue and understanding, a reshaped ethos is rooted in experience and a reshaped pathos values emotion" (149-150, italics mine). By reframing proofs, feminist rhetorical theorists take issue with theories such as constitutive rhetoric—conceptual realignment, the goal of rhetorical process, occurs not only through moral exhortations but also an ecology of dialogue, community building and emotional connection.

Indeed, I argue that, in a feminist rhetorical classroom, trust, sharing and solidarity between the teacher and students and among students lead to an intended outcome. Affective proof, inviting speaking and rhetorical listening—an integral part of identification process—result in a paradigm shift in some students.

Feminist rhetorical theory reframes traditional rhetorical theory. Many theorists apply Charland's notion of constitutive rhetoric to analyze rhetorically constructed subjects in political discourse. Charland's work is influenced by several theorists of political discourse. First, Charland incorporates Louis Althusser's notion of interpellation as the key process in production of ideology (133). In addition, building on Kenneth Burke's proposal in *A Rhetorical of Motives*, Charland identifies identification rather than persuasion as an efficacious rhetorical process. (134). Finally, Charland applies Michael McGee's concept of the people, a rhetorical vision an ideologue uses to unify their subjects. An ideologue preconceives an outcome in which subjects visualize themselves as the people: a collectivity eager to join the vision held out by the ideologue. With those theoretical foundations, Charland's constitutive rhetoric illuminates how a rhetorical subject transforms: through texts, then through identification, and, finally, through change. Change is not brought about by persuasion but through identification—an interpellation of subjects who enact what is ascribed in the text.

In Charland's vision, textuality is the first step to create a rhetorically constructed subject. Charland explains the textuality of subjects: "We cannot accept the 'givenness' of 'audience,' 'person,' or 'subject', but must consider their very textuality, their constitution in rhetoric as a structured articulation of signs" (137). Charland presents a case study to illustrate his point. He argues that Quebec sovereignty based itself upon the asserted and new existence of a rhetorically invented identity, "Québécois." That identity, and the collectivized people québécois, are interpellated as political subjects who undergo a process of identification. A subject is not persuaded

to support sovereignty. Support for sovereignty is inherent to the subject position addressed by pro-sovereignty rhetoric (Charland 134).

Though constitutive rhetoric traditionally analyzes political discourses, I contend that it can be applied to a classroom setting. First, in some academic institutions in the U.S., teaching practices reorient students' values and attitudes (e.g., diversity and inclusion) through the curriculum. A classroom is construed as a springboard in a student's lifelong journey of ideological orientation. Second, in a feminist rhetorical classroom, students are immersed in feminist theories and values, with the expectation that they will be champions and advocates upon leaving the classroom. In this regard, a classroom is analogous to an ideological process in a large political setting. Thirdly, in a classroom setting, the praxis of constitutive rhetoric results in evidence-based, measurable, and quantifiable indexes, which in turn informs feminist rhetorical pedagogy of how teaching impacts students' outlook both textually, through narrative hauling, and extra textually, through community building, affect and dialogue. Finally, this communication class of gender and women's rhetoric met a big challenge. Due to a mix of beliefs—while a few students were staunch feminists, other students were uncommitted to feminist causes—the feminist teacher strove to influence those middle road students. Constitutive rhetoric, through textuality, identification, and locus of action, is a useful basis, therefore, to analyze a rhetorical process in a classroom setting and observe how identification leads to a positionality shift.

Contemporary rhetorical scholars continue to engage constitutive rhetoric. Thomas Farrell argues that, as an intersection of theory and practice, constitutive rhetoric is valuable in its emphasis on collectivity, audience, and identity in the sphere of human history (327). Katja Thieme uses Charland's theory of audience positioning to analyze audience design in Canadian suffragist movements. Helen Tate counterargues the effectiveness of constitutive rhetoric in her study of a failed attempt by white lesbian feminists to form a feminist identity during second-wave feminism. In this perspective, constitutive rhetoric, with its focus on textuality, identification, and transformation, is pertinent to analyze positionality shift in rhetorical processes in diverse contexts.

Feminist Rhetorical Praxis

In examining each constitutive feature of the course, I critique Charland's theory via the lens of feminist interventions. In the first class, students read Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Sojourner Truth, Emma Goldman, and Simone Beauvoir. I attempted to accomplish threefold goals: 1) inform students of feminist foremothers' historical stances, which would undergird discussions throughout the course of the semester; 2) have students trace the origin of empowerment to its continuation and shift in contemporary times; and 3) help students understand how histories of rhetoric has informed social changes in contemporary times. These goals fit into Nan Johnson's model of social change of "articulation/definition, debate, institutionalization/cultural inscription and cultural upheaval, and back wave," which could start immediately or decades later (qtd. in Glenn 139). By

learning the historiography of feminist foremothers, students built referential points—appealing to a common frame of reference—which guided students’ perception of how feminist battles should be won. Feminist foremothers laid down the ideological framework of what position a woman should occupy in society: men were Self; women were Other who were subordinate to men in political, social, economic, and biological spheres; a woman’s struggle was overcoming being an Other and gaining equal footing with men. Reacting to the readings, one discussion question invoked heated responses from students: “Responding to Simone Beauvoir’s argument that a woman is an Other, how can you overcome being an Other?”

Students first identified the core value of feminism: overcoming being represented or positioned as an Other, as defined by Beauvoir. Students’ conception of overcoming an Other was to bring about changes in the real world. Their ideas were detailed: first, the students saw community as a source of strength. Several students argued that they should always back each other up. A student gave an example: if they saw another woman in an unsafe situation, they would not hesitate to come to her rescue. Furthermore, they advocated for an inclusive feminism—for women and men to be open to each other’s perspectives and seek common ground. Students saw solidarity, community and coalition building as building blocks of feminism, which would become the overarching themes in students’ shared outlook on feminism. Feminist pedagogy stresses a symbiotic relationship between identification and dialogue. Students “investigate their individual performances of self and voice, and they are ultimately invited to view and discuss those with their peers” (Gold 168).

The second referential point revolved around diverse perspectives on how to overcome being an Other—from the mundane to the noble. A student shared her perspective based on assignments she had completed for another class. When she read a fairytale, she interpreted the story as portraying symbolic values society placed on young girls: a woman could only have a blissful life if a prince charming had rescued her. She argued that such readings instilled in young girls the value that women were less worthwhile beings than men. Other students argued feminism should sprout from a more fundamental level—impacting youths in their formative years. Several students said that it was crucial to educate both girls and boys at an early age to instill in them feminist values and ward off the pervasive toxic masculinity, which Carol Harrington defines as “misogyny, homophobia and men’s violence” (345). Jennifer, an American student, noted:

By integrating early feminist education into academic curriculum among elementary and middle school students, young boys can learn the harmful effects of toxic masculinity and how to act in manners that do not perpetuate toxic masculinity. In doing so, society will establish inclusivity of gender equality and progression, which will teach boys and young men to recognize, reject and challenge simplified masculinity and to create cultural change.

Students' statements reflected a cross section of their diverse interpretations of the core feminist value of feminism. Overcoming being an Other can be as mundane as a critical reading of a class assignment or as noble as reforming early and secondary education. Despite differences of opinion, however, students revealed they were unified in their attitude in feminism activism: every act, no matter how big or small, counted as advocacy. A feminist could either be a steadfast feminist or one who engaged in a single feminist act. Everyday resistance and grassroots activism became a referential point unifying students who began class in various positions along the feminist spectrum.

Forming Identification

In this section, I will discuss how identification—the crucial stage of the transformation—occurred when students were exposed to feminist narratives. Charland argues, “Ideology is material because subjects enact their ideology and reconstitute their material world in its image” (143). Charland argues that, once interpellated, a subject will transition from a textual to a real-life position and participate in the ideologue’s ideological vision.

Students assumed the identity of textual subjects—positions rendered in texts they were exposed to—when they were introduced to value-laden feminist narratives. I selected readings in *Finding Feminism: Millennial Activists and the Unfinished Gender Revolution* by Allison Crossley (2017). Students related the readings to their everyday life experiences, and how they participated in feminist acts as college students. They read “Where Have All the Feminists Gone?,” “The Bonds of Feminism: Collective Identities and Feminist Organizations,” and “Can Facebook be Feminist? Online, Coalitional, and Everyday Feminist Tactics.” Sample discussion questions included: “Do you agree with Crossley’s argument that feminists of your generation focus on inter and intra solidarity?” “Do you agree with Crossley’s argument that there is a collective identity among your generation of feminists?” and “Are you an everyday feminist?”

Though sharing similarities with millennials, students claimed they belonged to Generation Z. In the younger students’ view, feminism was alive and well but unique to their generation. One student noted they did not want to be labelled as mainstream feminists but was adamant about adopting their own distinctive approach to carry out feminist causes, seeing themselves as everyday feminists who believed feminism should start at the grassroots level and occur in everyday acts. They endorsed Crossley’s descriptions of college students equating clothing, verbal expressions, and daily interactions with peers as feminist practices. Positioned as everyday feminists, they were receptive to texts that connected their conception of feminism to lived experience.

In an identification process, engaging in narratives where subjects are exposed to rhetoric in oral or written forms becomes a protracted and extended repositioning to feminist values and practices. Readers take up, negotiate, accept, resist, or ignore narratives (Guest 31). Transforma-

tion occurs when a reader “moves beyond a purely personal response toward a consideration of the [artifact’s] cultural and historical embeddedness, its broader meaning” (Kuhn 8-9). An ideological exercise, however, was not straightforward acceptance: students agreed with, doubted, or rejected values in the texts. It was the introspecting and critiquing that facilitated students’ progression to feminist positioning. In feminist theories, textuality entails not only self-knowledge but also activism and affect investment. Clare Hemmings describes epistemological knowledge, activism, and affective investment as critical stages: Empathy—extending one’s view beyond their subjective concerns and imagine the world through others’ eyes; agency—the ability to engage in acts of resistance; and affective resolution—willingness to be emotionally invested. Narrative hauling, wrought with critical reading, introspection, self-knowledge and affective investment, accounts for the positionality shift of some student to feminist stances.

Extra Textual Considerations

Identification is not a complete process without the underpinning of affective proof, invitational rhetoric and rhetorical listening. Charland’s process of interpellation is causal and linear. Yet, in this communication class on women, gender, and sexuality, I found that interpellation is more intricate—subjects are interpellated not only by the moral appeals but also the rhetorical ecology. As Kathleen Ryan, Nancy Myers, and Rebecca Jones note, feminist ecological ethē open new ways of envisioning ethos to acknowledge the multiple, nonlinear relations operating among rhetors, audiences, things, and contexts (3). In this perspective, gendered experiences—understood through affective proof, invitational rhetoric and rhetorical listening—situate an identification process in nuanced and complex ways, leading to a full understanding of the synergy of a feminist rhetorical classroom.

Consider first the role of affective proof in identification. Affective proof—personal is the political, solidarity and community building (Campbell)—becomes an integral part of the identification process. Leslie Hahner explains how intricacies of affective proof impact the identification process: “affective components of rhetorical address constitute preferred identities, which render intelligible subjectivities and the modes of identification to become objects of desire. [The] privileged subject finds comfort and agency in the space of advantaged identities” (160-161). Affect in a rhetorical process counter-argues the emphasis of hegemonic practices on logos and reason, whereby women seek affective proof as ways to practice rhetoric—emotion, personal narratives, and solidarity are often preferred, desirable, and effective ways to communicate with one another and the public. In this communication class, students supported one another, creating a community through discussions. Throughout the semester, there was a warm and respectful classroom culture. Jack, a male student, discussed the impact of conversations on him:

I believe the class discussions we had are the most effective way to learn and understand the issues presented. Listening to the stances of everyday people and educated

people made it so much more relatable. When we had the discussions, it allowed me to think of my mother, my sister and my girlfriend and it showed me a perspective that I was not listening to before. My vision for the future is simple: more conversations.

Jack's comment revealed the synergy among speakers, listeners, and the environment of community building. On why women's narratives are unique, Christiane Boehr argues that their voices "provide ways to explore how a person experiences the self in relations to surroundings, documenting the interplay of inner and outer world" (n.p.). The connection of the personal to the political is not lost on Jack. As a mindful and receptive listener, he resonated with these women's personalized narratives and connected them to his own lived experiences and world view. In this perspective, the personal is the political model intertwines what Boehr refers to the "I-voice," with the "You-voice," in a "relational environment" in which women (in my class, including a man such as Jack) grew together (n.p.). Affective proof—dialogues, community and personal is the political—played a key role in the identification process in this communication class on women and gender.

Just as important as affective proof, identification occurred extra textually in relational ways. It was bilateral: speakers invited listeners to participate equally in the process. According to a record I kept, of the twenty-four students who attended this class in person, eighteen regularly participated in discussions. They listened to one another and took turns speaking their own minds or validating what their classmates had just said. Foss and Griffin note that "individual perspectives are articulated in invitational rhetoric as carefully, completely and passionately as possible to full expression and invite their careful considerations by the participants in the interaction" (367). To illustrate such invitational rhetoric, I include here a section of dialogue among a few students after I asked them to define feminism:

Olivia: I just wanted to go back to what Stacy was saying (who spoke previously) I really liked when she talked about equality in the workplace because it made me think of an experience that I had last September. I was in a math class and after the first class, the professor said I noticed there was only one other girl in class, so I just wanted to let you know that you can stay after class if you have any questions. One time, he made a comment that right now was a good time for a woman to be a math major because it was easy to get a job. They wanted diversity.

Denise: I agree a lot with what Olivia said. But I also want to add on that I feel like there is a disconnect of how some men think they can speak to women. They might mean well, but it comes out like, I know you are a girl. You are not as good as the rest of the class.

Lauren: Just going off what Olivia and Denise's experience. I wish you had that hind-

sight, [saying], hold on, why do you think I am not up to it. It is everyday feminist ideas to point out to those who say such things to you.

The students supported, expanded, and validated their classmates, acting like what Nina Lozano-Reich and Dana Cloud refer to as “materials equals” (222). Dialogue and mutual respect are the precondition of an invitational rhetoric. Students respected one another as they sought common ground, validated one another’s thoughts, and fully explored a topic they deemed important. The classroom culture of sharing and communityreinforced students’ outlook on feminism. Furthermore, the invitational mode of speaking encouraged by feminist pedagogy allowed students to “contemplate their standpoints as speaking subjects not just in the classroom but beyond: in society writ large” (Gold 169).

The multilateral relationships between the teacher and students and among students facilitated the metamorphosis of their self-knowledge. Kathleen Yancey notes, “We learn to understand ourselves through explaining to others. To do this, we rely on a reflection that involves a checking against, a confirmation, and a being of self with others” (11, emphasis in orig.). Sally Chandler describes the organic relationship between self and others: we are “observing the responses of other selves to one’s own words to gain a greater insight into one’s own identity” (19). Consider a student, Maria’s view on intergenerational feminism:

Before taking this class, I viewed older feminists as exclusionary and unwilling to accept new ideas. Through our discussions, I now understand that intergenerational feminism is an inherent and important critique of both past and present feminism.

Discussions enabled Maria to develop insight that the younger generation of feminists carried on the baton of feminists of previous generations. When feminist issues were examined in diverse angles, Maria reorganized her own framework. In the ecology of a feminist rhetorical classroom, students internalized feminist values and beliefs through multilateral learning, intellectual and emotional connection on their own and distinct path to a feminist orientation.

Feminist theorists further see nonverbal gestures as part of transformative process. Head nodding and body language also register as participation (Chandler 22). Listeners do not need to participate in audible conversations for silence to become increasingly “full, not void, of meaning” (Summers-Bremmer 652). Extending beyond physiological descriptions, feminist rhetorical scholars argue that listening is a conscious and radical performance. In his eloquent analysis of Audre Lorde, Lester Olson argues that listening is “active.” As a “complicit,” “a listener momentarily uses a speaker’s term for communication” (447). To illustrate Olson’s argument, take a listen to when two students exchanged their thoughts on gender equality:

Stacey: I feel like the goal of feminism is making sure that the sexes are equally valued. Female sex is less valued, and people just look down on it.

Denise: Some people view women as not equal to men. The biological women can bear children, but biological men cannot. I think women should be celebrated for (bearing children) and not getting punished for taking time off.

The exchange between Stacey and Denise validates the notion of rhetorical listening. Their communication was enthymemic: They shared the same premise that women and men ought to be equal. When Stacey made the claim that they were not viewed equal, Denise acknowledged her premise, supplied an example, and proposed a course of action. Stacey and Denise's tacit understanding of each other validates Krista Ratcliffe's notion of rhetorical listening as speakers and hearers "acknowledge both claims and cultural logics" (33).

The interplay of affective proof, invitational rhetoric and rhetoric listening sheds lights on the dynamic of a feminist rhetorical classroom. Identification occurs not only through narrative hauling—the project of traditional rhetorical theory—but also an ecology of dialogue, community building and emotional connections, the hallmarks of feminist rhetorical praxis. In this regard, feminist rhetorical theory reframes the traditional rhetorical theory.

Locus of Change

In an identification process, the locus of change is the goal. Charland notes, the subject "must be true to the motives through which the narratives constitute them, and thus which presents characters as freely acting toward a predetermined and fixed ending" (141). I argue, however, that in a feminist rhetorical classroom, Charland's designation of a path from a textual subject to a social agent was not a straightforward and clear-cut path for all subjects. For some students who self-identified with the ideological causes, the interpellation process enabled them to reassert their personality. Alice, a Chinese American student, who claimed herself as a staunch feminist, asserted that feminism was not a one-size-fits-all movement and should represent all women's voices. She noted:

It is crucial for us to address racist tendencies. Minorities lack representation in feminism because of its white centric ideologies. Feminism can contradict minorities in intersectionality, class, and culture. In the twenty-first century, where America is the most demographically diverse country, we must do a better job of spreading awareness to recognize different disparities and giving minorities a platform in the feminist movement.

The classroom culture of collective thinking and learning gave a minority student such as Alice a

public space to air her opinion. Her voice contributed to the diversity and complexity of critical reading of feminism. It was a teachable moment for other students—the majority of whom were white—to learn about a different first-hand perspective. When students were white and from the middle and upper middle class, they demonstrated a yearning for “universality” and “oneness.” Learning about the lived experiences of students on the margin opens alternative approaches to critical reading of feminist text (Lu 444).

For students such as Alice, this class solidified their feminist positionality. For other students, however, the transformation was more subtle—a perspective shift resulting in receptivity and openness. Jack, a male student, reflected on the impact of this class on him:

As the only man in the class, I often found myself having to put myself in others’ shoes or having to work to see alternative perspectives. In doing so, I found myself understanding issues that I had never understood before. Furthermore, I found myself flung into issues that I did not even know existed or had never taken up the time to research. Some of the most interesting topics to me in the class were the topics of women and men, the relationship that plays out between the sexes. As a man, and as someone with a strong group of diverse male friends, seeing both of their perspectives and women’s perspectives on some of the same issue fascinated me.

As a cisgender white male, discussions, community, and affect dislodged Jack from his privileged position of gender and power by reframing his conception of gender equity—seeing other genders and sexualities as occupying an inseparable space in his previous males only network. On feminist agendas to seek a united front, how do we define Jack’s new ideological orientation: is he a feminist coalition or an alliance? Why does the temporal distinction matter? Lisa Albrecht and Rose Brewer give an answer: while a coalition refers to “groups or individuals that have come together around a particular issue to achieve a particular goal,” alliances function through a “new level of commitment that is long-standing, deeper and built upon more trusting political relationships” (3-4). As a feminist “alliance,” Jack no longer feels a disconnect but an affinity to feminist causes. Furthermore, by making a commitment to attune to gender and sexuality issues, he underwent a paradigm shift. Jack’s story signifies how the rhetorical appeals of a feminist rhetorical classroom—dialogue, community, and affect—result in a conceptual realignment to feminist stances. On the notion of self-development, as envisioned by feminist teachers, students such as Jack emerged as “fully conscious, fully speaking, unique, fixed and coherent self... the voices of students can be continually negotiated and developed” (Gold, 170).

While Jack’s positioning to feminist orientation is evidential of a preconceived learning outcome, it tells a story about what feminism on some college campuses is about: it is not a lone battle fought by stalwart feminists but one that includes all those who are inclined to be alliances. As our students envision it, feminism should be open to all genders and sexes, including men:

dialogues are important, and seeking common ground and forming alliances are crucial. If some men have become open minded, receptive, and willing to listen to and engage in conversations, it is a substantive gain for a feminist cause. A feminist movement lifts women and all other genders and sexes, men included.

Conclusion

Charland's model of constitutive rhetoric signals identification as the key element to interpellation. Identification occurs when subjects step away from textuality to become social agents, as imagined by ideologues. Once becoming social agents, subjects act upon doctrines ascribed in the narratives. Constitutive rhetoric inherently points to reason, logic, linearity and causality, as predicates of hegemonic rhetorical practices.

In contrast, in a feminist rhetorical classroom, the identification process is more complex and nuanced. Reconceptualized rhetorical appeals— affective proof, invitational rhetoric, rhetorical listening—positioned students to feminist stances. Moreover, the path to interpellation was multidirectional: For feminist-minded students, the learning process is one of solidification of their identity. For other students, however, it is a perspective shift—becoming more open to feminism and feeling a desire to engage in conversation with different viewpoints. Rhetorical appeals of a feminist rhetorical classroom— affect, dialogue, community, and solidarity—result in interpellation of subjects in complex and multivariant ways.

For Other Faculty

I have the following thoughts for faculty who plan to teach a similar course. First, early in the semester, I encouraged students to define what constituted a feminist. Most students envisioned themselves as an everyday feminist—either staunch or in performing a single act. Building such a referential point unified students in different spectrums in their shared outlook on feminism, creating a community of positive learners. Students believed they had a stake in learning. Second, I focused on connecting readings with students' lived experiences so that they were both learners and teaching resources. For example, students read about and discussed hashtag activism and realized they engaged in feminist acts when they retweeted hashtag activism. Thirdly, I endeavored to create trust between the teacher and students, and among students, created a positive feedback loop in which students spoke, listened, and validated one another resulting in active and collective participation and engagement. Next, I strove to engage all students—female students, the one male student, students with global roots, and international students. I encouraged all of them to speak. Such an inclusion made conversations rich and interesting. Finally, when I found out about the ideological leaning of students—staunch feminists, sympathizers, and non-femi-

nists—I focused my energy on and made a commitment to motivate the middle of the road students, those who were willing to listen and participate in discussions. This pedagogical approach resulted in transitioning those students to feminist alliances.

I will offer this course in the spring semester of 2023. I intend to make the following changes: first, I will use inclusive languages when addressing the diverse gender orientations of college students in contemporary times. Second, I plan to add sequenced writing assignments, a decision informed by feminist pedagogical theories. Elspeth Probyn argues for “experiential” and “analytical” learning so that students theorize self as a double entity (21). Experience can testify to an “immediate facticity of being in the society” (21). But experience can be used to analyze the material conditions and posit ways to change those conditions (21). By incorporating analytical learning, students will elevate from experiential to analytical learning to theorize and conceptualize their understanding, as Charlotte Bunch envisions, to determine what should exist and hypothesize about how to change what is to what should be.

As more communication departments and other programs offer courses on women and gender topics, feminist teachers will face challenges on how to impact those students who have not yet taken a feminist stance and are middle of the road students. Therefore, these teachers need to engage that group of students and strive to move them to a feminist orientation. I hope my research serves as a touch stone to initiate further discussions on this important topic.

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Feminist Ethos and Global Food Systems Rhetorics on Campus

Abby M. Dubisar

Abstract: As an interview-based study of women students' ethos in relation to global food systems and university research on genetically-modified foods, this article illustrates the limits and possibilities for students' rhetorical actions that question their university's research practices. Its analysis shows how students' ethos operated in a range of campus contexts and illuminates how the students' ethos was both scrutinized and made possible by their gendered, student status. Attending more deeply to how students are positioned within the university contributes to rhetoric scholars' ongoing understanding of students' food systems concerns and the rhetorical strategies they deploy to question their university.

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I think students have an incredible responsibility and are needed to shift universities who tend to be conservative with a capital C in terms of their bureaucratic structures and their ability to change. Students provide energy of contesting the status quo.

-Gabrielle, sustainable agriculture graduate student

In *Rethinking Ethos*, Kathleen Ryan, Nancy Myers, and Rebecca Jones describe their approach as one that “acknowledges the dynamic construction of relationships within and across locations and between people as constituting knowledge and values. Ethos is neither solitary nor fixed. Rather, ethos is negotiated and renegotiated, embodied and communal, co-constructed and thoroughly implicated in shifting power dynamics” (11). Attending to ethos as negotiated and embodied is central in understanding how student ethos operates on university campuses. As Gabrielle comments in the epigraph, students are uniquely situated at their institutions to evolve its structures and practices.

My research is motivated by investigating the productive rupture of university narratives about food. I locate these ruptures in competing discourses that define students as simultaneously both novices and experts, imagine campuses as purported locations of open dialogue, and buttress public universities' claims about serving the public good. These competing discourses catalyzes the questions: what happens when students, specifically those who study food systems in their courses, ask their university to engage in public dialogue about university research on genetically modified (GM) food? How do students' rhetorical strategies and their feminist interventions

toward discussing how university research serves the public good threaten academic hierarchies and public universities' commitment to the "feeding the world" myth?

Informed by a feminist ecological approach to ethos that highlights how rhetors have used location and relationships to access agency in their rhetorical practices, I center the rhetorical actions of three graduate students in this article by analyzing interviews I conducted with them.³ These student-participants—Angie, Gabrielle, and Rivka—were all enrolled in an interdisciplinary sustainable agriculture program where they learned how power is distributed in food and agriculture research. I demonstrate for rhetoric scholars how the students' ethos shaped their approaches to engaging audiences on campus and beyond. To do so, I analyze their efforts to learn about their university's GM food research and host open dialogues about it.

My purpose in this article is to illustrate and analyze the limits and possibilities for students' ethos and rhetorical actions that question their university's research practices. I begin with two literature reviews: one on global food systems development rhetorics and one on feminist ethos in rhetorical studies. I then describe my method and the context that prompted the student-participants' questions about their university's research before turning to my analysis of the interview data, divided into three contexts for ethos: 1. Asking questions on campus, 2. Hosting open dialogues on campus, and 3. Engagement beyond the contemporary campus.

Ultimately, I argue that the student-participants crafted their ethos to invent rhetorical roles for themselves. These roles were informed by their feminist ideals and science- and social science-based expertise, enabling them to apply academic inquiry and feminist curiosity (Enloe) to their university's practices. My analysis illustrates how the student-participants mobilized their status as students to gather information about the GM food research on their campus and attempt to foster public discussion about the research project since their land grant university purportedly serves the public good. I also analyze student-participants' comments from the interviews on the impact of their gender to the ways they were interpreted and misinterpreted, showing that their ethos as students studying to be scientists and social scientists cannot be delinked from how their gender was read by audiences they encountered. Ultimately, I argue that the student-participants' ethos was both scrutinized and made possible by their gendered, student status.

Global Food Systems Development Rhetorics

Before we can fully understand feminist ethos in rhetorical studies, covering a selection of

3 Per my approved IRB protocol, participants chose to either use a pseudonym or use their first names. Following IRB protocol for this study also necessitates not including any information identifying the institution where the research took place. All participants were given an opportunity to conduct member checking and write a brief biographical statement, which I include the first time I quote from their interview. I interviewed two of these students in person in 2018 and the other student over the phone in 2019.

the extant scholarship on global food systems development rhetorics is necessary for context. My work follows in the feminist tradition of analyzing global food systems issues established by Eileen Schell, work that is invested in how agribusinesses enact top-down models of power that make living more vulnerable for already vulnerable populations. Schell shows how power shapes food infrastructure, creating “a system of trade that is unfairly weighted toward US interests” (“Vandana Shiva and the Rhetorics of Biodiversity” 44). Additionally, Schell illustrates how agribusiness’s “feeding the world” framing enables corporations to claim to solve starvation and hunger, but “the reality is that often [low-cost proteins] are dumped on international markets, preventing local farmers from selling their own products” (“Framing the Megarhetorics” 155). Such concerns resonate with the work of Rebecca Dingo and J. Blake Scott, who analyze how documentary film can showcase the systemic harms that world trade policies create for local food systems, specifically how policies that lead to U.S. powdered milk replacing Jamaican milk as the commodity consumed by Jamaicans bankrupted Jamaican dairy farmers.

Concern about top-down power hierarchies that reflect Schell’s work also shape Mohan Dutta’s analysis of how hunger is situated systemically, related to “top-down development interventions carried out by state-based policymakers and program planners” that reflect nation-state agendas (238). Rhetoricians play a role in understanding this systemic disempowerment. As Andrew McMurry describes, critiquing “the disabling rhetoric of the mainstream food security discourse” (554-55) contributes to addressing the dire consequences of global food shortages, including taking to task persuasive “feeding the world” myths (Schell, “Framing the Megarhetorics” 155).

GM foods also prompt concern. Because GM foods rely on the “transnational enterprise of scientists, regulators, corporations, producers, lobby groups, and other-than-human species,” (Gordon and Hunt 116) they thus get debated in ways that reflect science’s role in food systems, ethical issues regarding food justice and land use, alarm about corporate power, and scientific credibility (Hunt and Wald). Scholars in rhetoric address global food systems and the impact of industrial agriculture (Ryan; Wilkerson), as well as food systems issues such as food waste and colonization (Bernardo and Monberg; Cooks; Eckstein and Young; Gordon, Hunt, Dutta). Understanding the impacts and implications of such systems is important because of their tendency to “exploit human communities with seemingly wanton disregard,” (Young, Eckstein, and Conley 199) as well as food corporations’ disinterest in critically engaging the implications of food technologies they use (Broad 225). I thus contribute to these efforts to put forward “ethical and reflexive research practices that attend to...power dynamics, advocate for the sharing of knowledge in non-extractive ways and provide pathways for amplification that do not recreate inequalities,” joining other feminist rhetoric researchers with similar concerns (Gordon, Hunt, Dutta 6)⁴.

4 Per my approved IRB protocol, participants chose to either use a pseudonym or use their first names. Following IRB protocol for this study also necessitates not including any information identifying the institution where the research took place. All participants were given an opportunity to conduct member checking and write a brief biographical statement, which I include the first time I quote from their interview. I interviewed two of these students in person in 2018

Feminist Ethos in Rhetorical Studies

Scholars in rhetorical studies who have a feminist orientation to ethos inform my understanding of how rhetors persuade in patriarchal contexts. Such approaches draw on Nedra Reynolds's notion of location as the space of a rhetor's body, geographical location, intellectual position, and proximity to others (Reynolds 335-336, quoted in Ryan, Myers, and Jones 8). In addition, feminist ethos scholars point out the importance of location to relation (Ryan, Myers, Jones 9). Multiplicity is also an element of feminist ethos to which rhetoric scholars attend, including those working on environmental justice efforts, such as protecting clean water. Meredith Privott shows how Indigenous feminisms offer such understandings, drawing on Elizabeth Archuleta's "indigenous feminist ethos of responsibility" to analyze the rhetorics of Indigenous women water protectors in the #NoDAPL movement (90, 98). Privott puts forward the idea that feminist ethos engages "multiple points of authority and agency drawn from both tribally specific worldviews and knowledge from indigenous women's collective survival of and healing from colonial violence and trauma" (76). Paige Conley also understands ethos as multiple, "unmoored from any one, fixed identity" (188).

Part of this multiplicity and fluidity is understanding ethos as collaborative and communal. In Laura Micciche's description, "feminist constructs of ethos often emphasize collective identity and collaboration as significant to knowledge building and to the development of credibility," a conception of ethos that revises the rhetorical tradition's definition of ethos as embodied in an individual speaker or writer in isolation (175). Likewise, defying traditional rhetorical criteria and categories, including understandings of ethos, is part of how Joy Ritchie and Kate Ronald describe the selections gathered in their volume that anthologizes women's rhetorics as ethos that reflects multiplicity, including subversion, resistance, and difference (xviii). And feminist concepts of ethos also de-emphasize expertise in honor of learning. Julie Jung articulates this idea while describing Nancy Mairs's work on Alice Walker's writing: "feminist ethos [is] founded not on mastery but on something else—a willingness to go in search of" (25).

Beyond attention to location, relation, and plurality, power as a structure that must be accounted for is another aspect of feminist ethos to which rhetorical scholars attend. Mary Beth Pennington, for example, analyzes the ethos of contemporary environmentalist Judy Bonds by showing how Bonds publicly acknowledges where she stands geographically and culturally as well as use the relationships in which she is embedded to effect change, "creating a dialogue in the process about the ways in which existing power structures obstruct change" (169). Bonds's impulse relates directly to Gabrielle's comment in the epigraph. Likewise, feminist ethos in rhetorical studies pays attention to how rhetors find themselves positioned in power structures, taking their understanding of subordinate status as a catalyst to "craft a viable ethos for participation in a dominant public" (Ryan, Myers, and Jones 4). Public power concerns rhetoricians, as they

understand how publics and counterpublics are multiple and ever shifting. Thus, feminist rhetorical scholars who study ethos are especially attuned to how “women must understand that there are multiple publics and counterpublics and work to shift values determined by dominant publics” (Ryan, Myers, and Jones 9).

Student ethos is demonstrated by the student-participants featured here as they center the stated mission of their university to serve the public good, asking their university to practice the values it ostensibly lauds, and they thus confront the dominant values the university supports in pursuing GM research. The location of student ethos is key to note for these student-participants who were not only located on a university campus, but also impacted by being students who are necessarily reliant on campus relationships with faculty and administrators. These faculty and administrators had the ability to amplify or silence the student-participants’ questions and concerns. Additionally, the student-participants’ ethos as scientists and social scientists was moored and unmoored from their student identities, yielding variable success for their strategies. They used their student ethos to seek answers on their campus about the GM food research underway.

Methods

My study’s feminist orientation to analyzing the student-participants’ ethos is built into the study design in multiple ways: by centering and elevating the perspective of student-participants who worked to engage their campus communities and administrative leaders; by applying feminist curiosity about who gets to be heard and understood on campus; and by making apparent the hidden, un- and under-archived, and ephemeral nature of students’ impacts on their campuses. I adapt the term “feminist curiosity” from Cynthia Enloe, who invites researchers to study globalization by looking to how it shapes women’s lives (3, 247, 353). Additionally, for this article I align with Lauren Rosenberg and Emma Howes’s concept of how representation of research participants is a feminist issue. As they write, “a feminist ethos of representation as a commitment to continually examining the ideological lenses we use, acknowledging our different (sometimes conflicting) subject positions, and allowing our research participants to shape the work itself” (77). To honor participants’ perspectives while I conducted this interview study, I followed in the feminist tradition of writing studies researchers who “participate in a reciprocal cross-boundary exchange” (Glenn and Enoch 24). I designed my interview study featured here to center student-participants’ perspectives and invited them to shape the work through the direction they took our individual interviews as well as their contributions to member checking. The ideological position informing my work here is that the student-participants’ ideas deserve to be understood by wider audiences, as they were perhaps not fully listened to by those in positions of power at their university.

GM Food Research Context

Barbara George asks: “What happens when public participants, particularly those who must

navigate complex scientific and technical spaces, are able to more fully co-create knowledge about complex environmental risks in their communities? Might such literacies consider a more feminist, contextualized approach to knowledge making about environmental issues?" (255). These questions parallel the queries the student-participants posed to themselves and members of their campus community as they learned more about the GM food research taking place at their university by a food sciences faculty member, which I describe here. As public participants on their campus, they became invested in learning how the GM food research affected both the campus community on whom the GM foods under development would be tested—women students like them—and the communities off-campus who would purportedly eat the food being developed.

The context of the GM food study taking place on campus is important. The story begins in 2015 when Angie, a cisgender, heterosexual white woman currently living in the Midwest and working as a sociologist in academia, received an email with the subject heading "human subjects needed" from researchers at the university she, Gabrielle, and Rivka attended. The email's purpose was to recruit participants to eat GM bananas for a research study and the email opened by contextualizing the research as alleviating widespread vitamin A deficiency in Uganda, where cooked bananas are a popular food. These bananas that research participants would eat for the study were genetically modified, meaning their genes were edited, to produce more beta-carotene. That beta-carotene is converted to vitamin A during digestion. The recruitment email specified that research participants need to be healthy female nonsmokers between the ages of 18-40, specifying that they would eat a diet provided by the researchers, have blood drawn, and be paid up to \$900 total for their participation. Recalling her receipt of the email, Angie expressed regret that she did not consent to be a participant in the study, as doing so would have enabled her to gain more information about it, as a participant who would eat the bananas. When she initially received the email, she forwarded it to some of her friends, noting that this GM food research prompted a lot of questions, especially questions related to gendered global development and food systems. She wondered, "Why do we need a transgenic banana? Why are they only testing it on women these ages? Why are they paying people \$900?" Angie asked around among her friends in the sustainable agriculture program to find out if anyone else received it, and only one had, so they assumed the email was sent to a random sampling of women students.

Because of its focus on recruiting women only and its stated purpose of addressing vitamin deficiency in Uganda, Angie and some of her fellow students, including Gabrielle and Rivka, became curious about the banana study and its broader context. Their approach was collaborative and collective (*Micciche*) and they worked together to find out more. They began to research to try to discover other information about the study and ask questions, efforts that connect the student-participants' concerns with those of scholars in our field (Gordon and Hunt 115). Their research quickly showed that the Gates Foundation had provided funding for the GM banana development, which also contributed to the student-participants' concerns about how private fund-

ing sources can motivate university research.

The student-participants' concern and questions reflect and were informed by a wider context of resistance to Gates funding and the foundation's interventions in African agriculture. For example, the Alliance for Food Sovereignty in Africa (AFSA) and Community Alliance for Global Justice are two leaders of this critique. Recently, AFSA leaders Million Belay and Bridget Mugambe clearly state their position in the title of their op-ed, "Bill Gates Should Stop Telling Africans What Kind of Agriculture Africans Need," detailing how Gates has long informed Africans that their agriculture is "backward and should be abandoned." Belay and Mugambe show how African agricultural specialists themselves value agroecology, not technological intervention. As they chronicle, "the massive [Gates] resources...have had an outsized influence on African scientists and policy-makers, with the result that food systems on our continent are becoming ever more market-oriented and corporate-controlled." Likewise, in the open letter to Bill Gates that responds a *New York Times* op-ed (Wallace-Wells), a long list of food sovereignty and food justice organizations detail the inaccuracies and distortions of Gates's claims, invite him to "step back and learn" from those who are farming in African contexts (Community Alliance for Global Justice/AGRA Watch, Alliance for Food Sovereignty in Africa). The writers also request that publications like the *Times*, "be more cautious about lending credibility to one wealthy white man's flawed assumptions, hubris and ignorance." As they describe, centering Gates's perspective puts at risk the very populations who are practicing agriculture in Africa, a context from which Gates is far removed.

Beyond funding from Gates, the "feeding the world" trope also quickly surfaced in the student-participants' research into the banana study. This persuasive metaphor enables multinational corporations, as well as universities, to say that they help "save developing countries from starvation and hunger" and promote a rhetoric of concern and care for vulnerable populations across the globe (Schell, "Framing the Megarhetorics" 155). Such claims can justify colonial, top-down research design and practice that potentially disempowers vulnerable populations who may be made even more vulnerable by universities' interventions in global food systems. The IRB recruitment email that Angie described, for example, opened by claiming that cooked bananas play a central role in the diets of people in East Africa, asserting that the genetically modified bananas have been developed to alleviate vitamin deficiencies of these populations. This recruitment email thus invites potential participants to engage in this charitable cause by being the first humans to eat these bananas. The student-participants' questions arose from this framing and justification. In their research about the study, the student-participants could not find any evidence that these East African populations wanted this GM banana (or were collaborators in developing it), prompting curiosity regarding whether the banana study ignored or considered East African farmers' and locals' concerns about this food (George 256).

As the remainder of this article demonstrates, my interest in this case is in the ways the students used their ethos, specifically location- and relation-based strategies, to learn more about the GM banana research project. The public information the students could gather about the study caused alarm and, as Angie stated, the project was justified with “language and narrative in the media about hunger and solving hunger and feeding the world and helping Africa that some of us think is very colonial, racist.” The students were motivated to learn more about the study, especially due to its presence on their campus, the location where women students would be eating these GM bananas. As they came together to question their university’s research project, Angie, Gabrielle, and Rivka used locational and relational feminist ethos strategies to ask questions and engage audiences, building their rhetorical action from their position as students, on their campus.

Part 1: Asking Questions on Campus

In this section I analyze how students asked questions that reflected their curiosity and concerns. These student-participants counted on their ethos as curious students and researchers to be a pathway to knowledge and learning. Generally, students expect to be able to meet with faculty on their campuses, and, as the student-participants researched their questions about the banana study, they strove to rely on the local expertise of faculty and administrators conducting the study. The events described in this section show student-participants relying on their ethos in multiple and relational ways in order to ask questions, which occurred in the ways they attempted to and were able to meet with faculty and administrators.

Rivka was able to meet with the lead food sciences researcher. Rivka holds a PhD in Soil Science and now studies the efficacy of sustainable soil management practices, while teaching introductory courses in soil and environmental science. According to Rivka, this meeting took place in the faculty member’s office, but the faculty member told Rivka that she was unable to provide further details about the study and was reticent to talk at all. Perhaps this researcher felt uncomfortable speaking with a then-student who was not enrolled in her classes or her program. In Rivka’s terms, the faculty member’s response was surprising. This faculty member insisted that she was only responsible for one small part of the overall study—measuring vitamin A absorption in participants’ blood that would be drawn for the study—and thus she was unable and unwilling to comment on the overall study. For Rivka, such a justification for not discussing the study showed an avoidance of systems-based thinking about GM food development and its implications for global agricultural development. Rivka’s ethos as both a science student studying soils on campus and her personal affiliation with conventional agriculture, via her in-laws’ farm, made her the best student to send in for this interaction, in her estimation:

The reason why I went to talk to [the lead researcher] was that I felt I could relate to pro-GMO [genetically modified organisms] folks better than the others. I think a world where

GMOs are used safely and ecologically is a possibility, but the research just isn't there yet. Also, my husband's family owns a farm and they used to grow GMO corn. We also thought [the lead researcher] might be more willing to talk to a "soil scientist" rather than a "social scientist" or "sustainable agriculture" scientist. It seemed though that once we were seen wearing an activist hat, so to speak, some people couldn't go back to viewing us as scholars.

Rivka's description shows a rupture for relational student ethos in campus locations such as faculty offices, then, as her questions were not answered and considered potentially threatening. The boundary that Rivka identified between being a student-scholar and a student-activist was firm in this case, and she wagered that her identity as a scientist could traverse that boundary.

Eventually, the dean of the agricultural college where the lead researcher worked agreed to meet privately with a few of the students who had been asking questions about the banana study. Angie attended this meeting, which she found to be rather unusual. She described how she was told she could not record the meeting, which she wanted to do so other interested students could later listen to the information shared in the meeting. In this extended passage she describes how the meeting proceeded and the reactions she and other students received from the administrators:

It was the most bizarre twilight zone sort of meeting in there. Because they were trying to tell us we didn't understand science and trying to explain what science is, and [they said,] "We can't believe that students in the [agricultural college] would be saying the things you're saying." We're like, "Well, we're just asking basic research design questions. We can't believe you can't answer them." It was all this "feed the world" rhetoric, and at one point [the dean of the agriculture college] turned to me, and she said, "Have you ever even been to Africa and seen the starving children?" I said, "No, I have never been to Africa, but I have seen hungry kids. We have hungry kids in [our state]. I don't have to go to Africa to understand that our food system's broken." ...She was saying that she had [been to Africa and wondered,] Why would we refuse people a way to solve a hunger problem?

This meeting with administrators, in which the dean tried to frame the issues at hand in individual terms—such as by accusing Angie of not understanding hunger because she had not visited Uganda and looked at malnourished children—shows the administrator's attempt to avoid the students' actual questions, dismiss systems-based thinking, and instead enact a top-down, colonial dynamic for the research design.

The administrators positioned the students as naïve and uniformed on the gravity of the problem that the GM banana study would purportedly solve. While the students were somewhat

successful at even getting a meeting with senior administrators, the meeting showed how well the senior administrators could avoid students' concerns and hope for transparency about research design and ethics. Throughout this interaction, the possibilities for student ethos to operate effectively in a dean's office were not persuasive, as the students were positioned as threatening the status quo at the institution.

This meeting also prompted comments from Angie related to the students' ethos being interpreted as threatening. Her thoughts on this issue transitioned into addressing gender and gendered ethos specifically. She described her perspective by stating, "We're not talking about bombing a building, throwing pig blood on anyone. We're just asking questions. What if we were all asking questions? We're not doing anything wrong." Angie also mused that maybe hosting open dialogue on campus and being transparent about research practices was more threatening to the upper administration than any potential physical threat. As Angie said, "maybe that would have been less threatening to have done something to the [lead researcher's] lab than to bring Vandana Shiva to campus and fill the [largest lecture hall on campus] with people to hear her." Shiva's identity as a well-known leader who questions globalization and persuades citizens across the globe to pay attention to the issue of biodiversity made her a fitting speaker for the students to invite, as her interest in prompting people to pay attention and ask questions aligned with theirs (Schell, "Vandana Shiva and the Rhetorics of Biodiversity" 32). The latter event is what the students did, hosting Shiva to foster open dialogue and conversation in public ways. Angie described the importance of practicing a student ethos that questions the institution's practices and how doing so is not threatening:

You're articulating [questions about the study] very well, and I hate to use this word because this is so gendered, too. We're presenting a rational case. We weren't being really emotional. I think people *should* be really emotional about these things, but it looks like nothing radical was my point. If you google [our response to the GM banana study] out of context, [and] you're not part of the story, nothing we did looks very radical.

Thus, to Angie and her fellow students, part of their surprise at the administrator's reactions came from how they treated the students as though they were taking radical political action, not simply asking questions about food systems. The senior administrator, by invoking starving children, created her own emotional appeal that accommodated her avoidance of questions about the actual study taking place, positioning the students as uncaring and alienating them from the administrator's framing of the institution as a benevolent entity. This strategy aligns precisely with the way that scholars who attend to global development rhetorics have predicted (Dingo and Scott 5), replicating persuasive development discourses that are mobilized by assumptions about the goals and effects of food development projects.

The student-participants planned and hosted a teach-in, an idea arising from their desire to create public opportunities for the research study to be discussed openly. At various times these terms were used by students to describe this event: panel, dialogue, teach-in. All of these terms reflect the rhetorical, location-based goals of the student-participants, to host a public discussion on campus that anyone could attend. Prior to this public conversation, the concerned students and upper administration had published op-eds and other articles about the study. In these written publications, student-writers relied on their relational student ethos to ask questions about their own university's practices, inform public audiences about the study, and invite them to ask similar questions. However, writing op-eds and responses did not accommodate the type of interaction and learning that the student-participants hoped could take place. They wanted their land grant university to be a space where public discussions about research ethics can and should take place. They felt like two separate conversations were taking place in these written conversations and wanted to evolve the discourse, joining perspectives together for discussion.

Gabrielle is a social scientist who studies climate, gender, and socially just agrifood systems and now directs a national program for women in agriculture for a U.S. nonprofit. She described the exigency for the teach-in event and students' intentions to open up conversation about the biotechnology context of the research. As she said, "A lot of the narrative around the study was about 'feeding the world' and helping poor African women and starving babies and this sort of colonial framework, in my perspective, and it wasn't really about [the question of:] are GMO's the best solution to the problems that they're seeking to solve?" The intention of the public dialogue was to address such questions. Gabrielle detailed how she and her fellow students designed the event. She said, "At the time, we tried to recruit a broad base of support from folks with different perspectives," creating an intentionally diverse panel of experts who identify as pro-biotechnology as well as those who question it, and views in between.

The students invited the lead researcher and the dean of the college that housed the lead researcher's department, asking for their involvement or for representatives who could speak to their perspectives. Angie described their response: "They didn't want to take part in our panel. Their claim was that they didn't have any part in planning the panel, so they didn't want to take part in it." Angie recalled one brief moment when it seemed like they would participate, but they wanted to bring seven to ten people. The students responded by asking, "Would one or two from the [agricultural college] like to take part in this, talk about it?" The students' goal was to have one or two experts from this college because they were aiming for a balanced panel that held different perspectives. Once the students asked for one or two people to come instead of seven to ten, they received a response that no one from the researcher's lab or senior administration was coming. Like the op-eds in which the agricultural college dean praised the food science researcher and reified the status quo, this response to the panel invitation showed a lack of openness or investment in public dialogue that they did not plan. In the op-eds, according to Gabrielle, the students claimed that the university should be a place to have a dialogue about biotechnology and not shy

away from controversial topics. The students called for a “reasoned approach,” in Gabrielle’s terms. She said, “We wanted to actually have a public conversation.” It was clear that the senior administration and lead researcher were not interested in having such a conversation unless they had planned it. Ultimately, none of the individuals who defended (and wrote op-eds about) the pro-transgenic banana perspective agreed to participate. The students went forward and hosted the teach-in.

The event took place on campus and featured a variety of perspectives. Experts included a philosophy professor affiliated with the sustainable agriculture program who does work on ethics and food. According to Gabrielle, he created space on the panel to ask what an ethical relationship with research looks like when it includes humans and the food system. And he led the attendees to discuss what are the ethical considerations that do not cut off research before it starts. Angie summarized his contributions as well. The students were asking questions such as: Why are university time, university faculty, and university students being asked to be take part in a study for which there is no response to how is this serving public good? And from Angie’s perspective this last detail really bothered people because, as the philosophy professor articulated, so many studies could be shut down because researchers may not yet know how they benefit the public good. While all academic research may not benefit the public good, as a land grant university, research conducted at this school purported to do so.

Another panelist was a social sciences graduate student from Uganda. As Gabrielle described, “He brought his perspective having done community feeding programs and education around nutrition, his thoughts on the transgenic banana, because the focus of the banana [research study] was on Uganda in particular [and] because the banana is such an important nutritional food source. [It is] a staple crop that folks rely on.” Rivka recalled this student’s perspective on the panel as well and how significant it was to have a person with knowledge of Ugandan food issues as a speaker. Rivka described that this student had been “doing social work in Uganda with children who had malnutrition and he felt the banana wouldn’t help because the reason for the malnutrition was diarrhea.” As the Ugandan student described, the malnutrition was caused by parasites in the water, as Rivka recalled. So, an effort to increase nutrients, through biotechnology like the transgenic banana, may help a little bit, but the underlying problem was actually parasites and other diseases. Rivka summarized this Ugandan student’s point: Ugandans in affected communities need clean water and a water system that does not introduce pathogens.

Overall, the students were able to host the public conversation, even if those most directly involved in the study and those defending the study most ardently did not attend. The students noticed, however, that a representative from the administration did attend as an observer. Gabrielle noted that this person, who works for the agricultural college administration, watched from the side of the room. He also showed up at a different event when students delivered a petition to the university president. This person’s presence signifies the university’s surveillance of the

student event and administrators' interest in knowing what happened at the event without participating in the public conversation or being subject to questions and discussion in a public forum. To read this occurrence as part of the context of student ethos shows the power of student ethos to gain attention from the university, even if administrators did not take on the participatory role in the public forum that the students hoped they would. In the end, their relational and location-based ethos as students who were able to hold a public conversation on campus that featured experts fulfilled its goal of engaging a transparent and open conversation on biotechnology, research ethics, and transparency.

Another notable detail from that evening is that a pro-biotechnology scholar from a different American university delivered a lecture on campus that night. The student-participants questioned whether this was a coincidence or if the agricultural college deliberately planned this pro-GM food expert to speak on the same date and time as their event, a notion I cannot confirm but that seems plausible. Angie saw this event as both possibly coincidental but also likely an event the senior administration planned to have a competing event to attend and host instead of participating in their event. If Angie's theory is true, the organizers of the lecture were intentionally propping up the expertise of a faculty member from a different institution that affirmed their institutional position over the open dialogue hosted by students at their own university. This competing lecture event could have also captured the attention of campus audiences interested in biotechnology, splitting the available audiences, and leading to fewer people in attendance at the students' event.

Part 3: Engagement Beyond the Contemporary Campus

As the epigraph quotation from Gabrielle illustrates, she felt an obligation to engage with her campus and evolve her university beyond the status quo, helping it become the public good-serving institution it claimed to be. Public audiences took note and the students' ideas gained traction off campus, which was validating. Angie said that she noticed on her campus that exercises in critical thinking were not active. She described the student-led actions to create spaces for critical thinking, which were supported by organizations beyond campus, such as non-profits and community groups who defend food sovereignty and food justice:

As students together, we had to create that space [for critical thinking and discussion] together because it didn't exist in our classes, it didn't exist elsewhere on campus, and we were really hungry for it the more we found out. Then we were encouraged by local groups, by local communities, by national communities, and so we felt supported. I'd say we even felt encouraged.

The off-campus encouragement validated the student-participants' concerns and broadened the range of audiences paying attention to them, as people who are also concerned about biotechnology and food systems praised the student-participants for their critical thinking about

their university's research.

While this outside encouragement was motivating, the student-participants still found it essential to address the context of their campus and learn about the history of student engagement there so they could show that the questions they were asking were not new or extreme, but instead built on a campus tradition of students questioning the status quo. This evidence also gives historical credence to Gabrielle's point in the epigraph. In this extended passage, Angie described the history they saw themselves continuing, enfranchised by a speech by a former university president:

We went back into the archives...and found President [X's] speeches from the early 70s, late 60s to students when...students were engaging in political protest on college campuses. He was saying that the university should be a place for this. There was a speech that he gave on the [central campus] grounds to students who were protesting the war in Vietnam. He was saying...that the university should be a space for that and that it should always be a space for that, and that's part of a university, defining what a university is. We would use that a lot [in relation to discussing the banana research]. It wasn't that we were politicizing the university. The university has always been political. Different leadership at [our university] have taken different approaches to it. Instead of trying to silence it or quiet or attack it, saying students have this right.

The students supported one another by using this university history, from the perspective of its highest administrator, to normalize students asking questions and interpreting their university as a space where political conversations take place.

Like Angie, Gabrielle addressed how political conversations should be normalized on contemporary college campuses. She said, "I think a university, if I had sort of my druthers, a university's role would be to create as much space as they can for difficult conversations. For debates. For critiques." These debates and critiques should include self-reflexivity, enabling institutions to question and consider their own role in delivering good research and science. Gabrielle continued, "[Universities] should be receptive to the critique of students. I think what happens often, is that institutions maybe, like pay lip-service to that but they don't actually create a mechanism by which students can actually engage in that. I think they're often seen as [temporary, as:] well, you're going to be leaving. Or like, we'll give you a little bit of recognition, but we're not actually going to change how we do anything." Because students' presence on campus is time-bound, student ethos is seen as temporary and ephemeral, not substantial in position or longevity.

The university's reticence, in Gabrielle's estimation, increased the public support they received. As she said, "Funny enough, that whole issue with the transgenic banana became more of an issue because the institution was so negative in their response to us. Because they

wouldn't participate in our teach-in. If they had come to the teach-in, and we had a good dialogue, I don't know, it might've fizzled out."

As publics beyond campus heard about the students' concern, some attention was not positive. For example, Angie used social media to amplify her perspective and the work of her fellow students, which put her in the position of facing criticism from pro-GMO activists and trolls. An open records request was submitted for her emails after she graduated, as the GMO lobbyist submitting the request suspected she and the other students were being paid to address the banana study, which they were not. Because Angie was a student at the time, practicing extracurricular student ethos to ask questions of her university, her student status meant the university did not have to hand over her emails, by law. As she communicated with the university lawyer who received this request, she learned more about the protected legal status students hold in these contexts. Facing this open records request, which was issued as a threat, also led her to think about how such open records requests are being weaponized against students and those questioning dominant publics in attempts to silence them. Another reading of the university's refusal to turn over Angie's emails could be that the university does support students who question university practices or at least uphold students' rights to their protected status as students with email privacy. Overall, continued awareness of how students' interactions with publics come with unanticipated consequences must remain as a concern, as such engagement can be threatening.

Conclusion and Reflection on Role of Gender

The complexity of student ethos cannot be over-stated, as its overlapping implications based on relationality, location, and multiplicity all played a role in the student-participants' approaches and the outcomes of their actions. In reflective comments about the choices and strategies they used on campus, student-participants attended to the role that gender played, as women students were the most visible people asking the public questions, and what they may have done differently. Gabrielle wondered how differently they may have been interpreted if men in science programs had been the most vocal among concerned students. She noted that positioning a white man as a spokesperson has been a strategy for building ethos and gaining legitimacy, harnessing normative patriarchal ethos. Instead, as she said, the approach of the student-participants was "a more classically feminine role of creating dialogue." They built their strategies, in Gabrielle's description, as aimed to share ideas, communicate with one another, and develop goals together to create a more socially just research program at their university, reflecting feminist notions of ethos.

Because all the student-participants featured here graduated and moved on to careers where they use the interdisciplinary expertise fostered in their sustainable agriculture program, they continue to think about how their ethos operates in contexts beyond their campus. While their concerns regarding GM food development and research ethics now take different forms, they nevertheless draw upon lessons learned from their response to the GM banana study. Some

of them advise students on campuses across the country on extracurricular activities related to public science, such as the movement to divest college campuses from fossil fuels. Angie, now a tenure-track faculty member, commented on how the women administrators at her alma mater held powerful positions that affirmed the status quo of the institution. She said, “Women have a lot to gain by acting in a patriarchal system in ways that are valued by the patriarchal system... That’s how you get tenure.” In her teaching and research, she continues to work toward supporting transparency and feminist, ethical research that serves the public good and invites public comment.

This study prompts further questions, including: How do individuals both on campuses and beyond educational institutions work toward better dialogue on GM foods and global food systems? The experiences of the student-participants here led them to distrust the administrators familiar with the banana study and disidentify with their university. Further, they began to question why the faculty teaching their food systems courses seemed disinterested or uninvested in addressing the implications of their university’s GM food research practices and interventions into global food systems since faculty did not vocally join the students in asking questions. Thus, faculty can take the student-participants’ perspectives to heart and consider why and how teaching and research can critically engage the food systems research underway on their university campuses. For example, in their conclusion of their study on scientific source credibility and goodwill in public understandings of GM foods, Hunt and Wald call for more research “to parse the different ways particular antecedents contribute to public responses to new biotechnologies” (983). These antecedents include attitudes toward food systems’ links to capitalism, government, and corporations, all which rhetoric scholars could locate on their campuses, in collaboration with students. Doing so can contribute to the growing work in feminist rhetoric and ethos related to food and agriculture, expanding methods that are collaborative and communal. As Micciche describes, “feminist methodologies [are] sensitive to situatedness, empathic connections to research subjects, and a view of knowledge as always partial and in process,” approaches that essential to our research, especially as the planet warms and food systems face new constraints and challenges (175).

Taken together, Angie, Rivka, and Gabrielle’s experiences illustrate how a feminist ecological ethos invites recognition of the impacts of contexts and relationships to shape how ethos is mobilized. Scholars engaged in global food systems rhetorics and feminist studies can teach cases like this one and invite their own students to draw implications from the student-participants’ experiences as well as continue to notice and address how GM food research on university campuses is framed and justified. The efforts of the student-participants featured here, informed by multidisciplinary approaches to sustainable food systems and ethical biotechnology food research, made the most of spaces and places where students can access information and communicate their perspectives on campus. Paying attention to students such as those featured here creates pathways for opening “new ways of envisioning ethos to acknowledge the multiple,

nonlinear relationships operating among rhetors, audience, things, and contexts” (Ryan, Myers, Jones 3). All three student-participants spoke about the broader question of what a university should be and how it should serve as a productive space to host discussions about food systems, a welcome space for student ethos applied in a wide range of ways. In every instance the students thought it was obvious and should be assumed that the university, as a place of learning, would host such conversations in open, public discussions. The students-participants’ stories help us to appreciate students themselves as deeply invested in prompting universities to be transparent in their research through consideration of students’ questions that center the public good.

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Cluster Conversation: Feminist Internet Research Ethics edited by Kristi McDuffie and Melissa Ames

Cluster Editors' Introduction: Defining A Feminist Approach to Internet Research Ethics (Again)

Kristi McDuffi & Melissa Ames

Abstract: This introduction presents several norms that have emerged through Internet research discussions over the past years and outlines best practices as a set of agreed upon norms that primarily emerge in writing studies, rhetorical theory, and feminist media studies, to set a foundation for scholars doing related work. These practices can be used concurrently with heuristics that are outlined by the Association of Internet Researchers and scholars such as Buck and Ralston. As opposed to these heuristics, which are questions that researchers can use to guide their decision-making on particular projects, this list is meant to orient researchers toward current thinking in feminist Internet research ethics.

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the Composition Classroom (2018), and the Computers & Writing Proceedings (2018); and articles in The Journal of Dracula Studies (2011), The Women and Popular Culture Encyclopedia (2012), The High School Journal (2013), The Journal of Popular Culture (2014), Feminist Media Studies (2017), Pedagogy (2017), and First Monday (2021).

keywords: ethic of care, feminist research methods, Internet research ethics, mentorship, positionality

Entering the Conversation

In 2018, Kristi and Melissa submitted a research article to a feminist media journal. We thought that our study on live tweets accompanying the 2017 Women’s March on Washington was an exigent analysis of affect in hashtag feminism. However, we received a scolding review that criticized our research ethics. Our anonymous reviewer was appalled that we included tweeted images in our analyzed findings and thus did not protect our study participants. We were surprised and hurt; we were trained in research methods and included images to allow the feminist activists to represent themselves in their own words. But we swallowed our pride and dug deeper into Internet research ethics. Upon talking with other scholars and reading interdisciplinary research, it was clear why we were confused. Standards varied across disciplines and institutions. Articles modeled different practices throughout publication venues. Ultimately we published our piece in another journal (McDuffie and Ames) with greater protections on images, using suggestions outlined by Amy Bruckman, and this experience inspired us to create more conversations around Internet research ethics in order to improve other scholars’ experiences. This cluster conversation therefore presents a variety of approaches to Internet research ethics through a feminist lens, beginning with this introductory piece that outlines best practices in feminist Internet research ethics.

After this introduction, our cluster conversation continues with a piece by Cam Cavaliere and Leigh Gruwell, “Developing a Feminist Mentorship Praxis for Digital Aggression Research,” which serves as a model for the type of mentorship we are advocating for. In this article, both the mentor and mentee address the challenges that digital aggression research poses to researcher safety and offer suggestions for feminist mentorship practices to enhance our emotional and physical well-being.

Next, in “Researching on the Intersectional Internet: Slow Coding as Humanistic Recovery,” Wilfredo Flores draws attention to the problematic colonial conditions of traditional research practices and offers a revised methodology that allows for more care when working with marginalized communities. Flores details a strategy called slow coding, a multilayered process that allows more space for antiracist analytic strategies to be drawn upon throughout the research process.

The next three pieces in this cluster conversation build on Amber Buck and Devon Ralston’s “Heuristic for Reflective Research/Data Collection” by extending the framework to new spaces or mediums to continue challenging ourselves as ethical researchers of online spaces,

communities, and texts. Hannah Taylor’s contribution, “Beyond Text: Ethical Considerations for Visual Online Platforms,” discusses her research experiences with two image-based social media projects (the online conference *Braving Body Shame* and the sexual health education Instagram page The Vulva Gallery) in order to reflect on her own research practices and demonstrate a feminist research ethic of self-reflexivity. In “Towards Best Practices for Podcasting in Rhetoric and Composition,” Charles Woods and Devon Fitzgerald Ralston examine the research methods of *re:verb: A Podcast about Politics, Culture, and Language in Action* podcast. They offer guidance towards best practices based on feminist principles and methods for podcasters podcasting in rhetoric and composition. In the final work in this triad, “A Private Conversation in a Public Place: The Ethics of Studying ‘Virtual Support Groups’ Now,” Nora Augustine explicates ethical quandaries that arose from one agency’s attempts to implement a Zoom-based confidentiality policy in its support groups during Covid-19, showing how rapid uptake of this platform introduced new ethical conflicts. Combining the apparent privacy of face-to-face group meetings with the ambiguous publicness of online communication, she argues that Zoom support groups illustrate the extent to which our understandings of “virtual support groups” have changed since scholars first started researching human subjects on the Internet—and therefore how much our ethical considerations must change, too.

Our cluster conversation closes full circle with a piece that returns to traditional mentorship – but from the very initial stages: the classroom. Gabriella Wilson’s “Teaching Digital Feminist Research Methods: Polluted Digital Landscapes and Care-ful Pedagogies” explores how instructors can use feminist methodologies in teaching digital research methods, especially in an era of contaminated rhetoric and disinformation. This piece discusses pedagogical best practices and approaches to teaching ethical digital feminist research methods in the first-year composition classroom and beyond.

Best Practices in Feminist Internet Research Ethics

To provide a foundation for these thoughtful pieces interrogating research ethics from a feminist perspective, we present several norms that have emerged through Internet research discussions over the past years. It has been difficult to identify consensus within Internet research ethics because online practices (and the study thereof) remain dynamic spaces for legal, business, academic, and personal jurisdictions. Furthermore, different disciplines approach Internet research ethics from various epistemological stances. Also contributing to a lack of consensus is the delay of institutions, such as IRB and graduate schools, in updating to keep up with contemporary practices in online research. Therefore, we take this space to outline best practices as a set of agreed upon norms that primarily emerge in writing studies, rhetorical theory, and feminist media studies, to set a foundation for scholars doing related work. These practices can be used concurrently with heuristics that are outlined by the Association of Internet Researchers (Ess and AoIR; Franzke et al.; Markham and Buchanan) and scholars such as Buck and Ralston. As opposed to

these heuristics which are questions that researchers can use to guide their decision-making on particular projects, this list is meant to orient researchers toward current thinking in feminist Internet research ethics.

IRBs Provide Insufficient Guidance for Internet Research

Although Institutional Review Boards (IRBs) have governed academic research for decades—along with legal concerns like copyright, FERPA, and HIPAA—IRBs provide insufficient guidance for Internet research. Elizabeth Buchanan, for example, explains that her early inquiries into Internet research ethics “problematized standard notions of respect for persons, justice, and beneficence”; because these principles were originally based on a biomedical model of research, they “do not transfer easily to internet research” (Buchanan et al. 271-272). IRBs have largely been concerned with physical and emotional harm that arrives through interactive and private information-based research, and thus have not taken ownership of research using public data online. Such research is either treated as exempt or waived.

The feminist Internet research community, however, demands a higher standard. Amber Buck and Devon Ralston explain that sharing “social media data (public or not) outside of its originally shared context may bring with it potential problems,” especially for communities of color (3). Rosemary Clark-Parsons similarly claims that “just because a user consented to publishing a message publicly on Twitter does not necessarily mean they have consented to having that message published in other contexts, such as an academic journal or news story” (Buchanan et al. 266-267). Research asking online users about their preferences supports these findings: James M. Hudson and Amy Bruckman found that “individuals in online environments such as chatrooms generally do not approve of being studied without their consent” (Hudson and Bruckman 135).

Despite this knowledge, there is no easy way to implement this advice; it is often impractical to obtain informed consent in online environments (Hudson and Bruckman 135). Implementing feminist principles of care and situated knowledge (franzke et al. 66-67) will help researchers balance their research goals with the personal agency (Clark-Parsons in Buchanan et al. 266) of their research participants.

Online Data Is Human Subjects Research, Not Textual Research

Although online research data sets are more and more often being treated as “big data,” defined in innumerable ways, feminist Internet researchers demand that online information be treated as human subjects research rather than textual research. Textual research—whether it’s one piece of writing or thousands of discrete data points—is still data composed by or about humans. Research must be built from a feminist practice of situated knowledge (franzke et al. 67) and cannot be excised from its context. Morrow, Hawkins, and Kern write that official guidelines to

Internet research often treat “online users and researchers as disembodied and disconnected from places and relationships” as if “researchers can somehow ethically categorize the subjectivity and vulnerability of online users” (536). Understanding online research as human subjects research maintains that material connection to both participants and researchers.

Furthermore, feminist Internet research ethics maintains that online users should maintain rights over their information and online productions, including having a say in how it might appear in a research context. Rosemary Clark-Parsons often studies marginalized populations and aims to give her research participants agency and ownership over their personal information (Buchanan et al. 267). Stephanie Vie agrees and advocates for asking research participants about their level of comfort with identification and other options in a research project (Buchanan et. al 275). When it is not possible to obtain consent and consult with research participants, however, these conversations turn toward minimizing harm.

Feminist Internet Research Contests Traditional Notions of Public and Private Spaces

Although feminist Internet research ethics contest the notion that online public posting equals consent to research, Internet research complicates the very definition of “public.” Here are a few ways that thinking about “public” Internet research has evolved.

- Researchers have long since studied online communities where the researchers themselves were active participants. This is mostly based on (historically face-to-face) ethnographic principles that researchers get to know the communities they are studying. But when extended to online spaces, this practice can be a privacy violation because they are studying spaces where they have unique access due to their own interests, histories, or identities. In these instances, transparency and consent become concerns because the data is not, in fact, public. Similarly, researchers should not assume that they have the right to research in spaces where they have gained access to an online space that was not otherwise open-access (i.e. requires logins, paywalls, group membership, etc.; see, for example, Haywood’s decision to not study a Facebook group after contacted (32)). It still may be prudent to conduct such research, but with more forethought and justification to address such privacy measures (see, for example, Dadas’s approach to studying Facebook groups).
- Researchers study ephemeral data and it is not always clear what rights they have after an initial collection period. For example, researchers may not be aware that some social media sites require researchers to delete posts if they are deleted by the users. Ultimately, a feminist approach to Internet research ethics that prioritizes research participant agency undoubtedly creates more labor in refreshing data sets.

- Defining research participants can be challenging. For example, in Lauren E. Cagle's work on strangershots, she defines the research participant as the person who appears in the image, not the person who took the photograph or video. It may be difficult to identify that person, let alone contact them, and a similar situation may arise in a quoted tweet or other type of social media. Yet other types of data may have no identifiable author at all, such as memes. Given the wide range of privacy issues here, a situated approach is even more important to these authorship challenges.
- Accuracy is difficult to verify in public spaces. William L. Wolff interrogates the viability of conducting online research when so many spaces are overwrought with bots, fake user accounts, and misinformation. He asks, "what expectations of privacy do bots, trolls, and racists have?" (Buchanan et al. 264). Although Internet research ethics has traditionally encouraged caution, Wolff explains that in the current AI landscape, researchers may need to be more concerned with whether their data was even written by real humans (Buchanan et al. 265). Internet researchers will thus need to balance accuracy in their data sets with participant privacy.

Feminist Internet Researchers Should Protect Participant Identities

When it is not possible to obtain informed consent and ask for participant preferences, researchers should protect participant identities to the furthest extent, and especially through publishing practices. This guideline is a part of a feminist research ethic of care (Franzke et al. 66; Dieterle), which outlines that an ethic of care toward participants, researchers, and affected communities should guide feminist research practices. An ethic of care in research means going beyond minimizing harm to actually taking responsibility for how our research might affect our participants (Dieterle 8), and seeing the research process as a reciprocal relationship.

Although informed consent is preferable, there are situations where it is not plausible or practical (for example, hundreds of users who contributed to a widespread Instagram campaign would be unlikely to respond to requests through Instagram about a research study). In these cases when there is still justification for doing the research, scholars have outlined a number of strategies for protecting participants, such as using pseudonyms, blurring out identifying features in images, altering quotes to reduce reverse searchability, and even only representing data in aggregate (Bruckman; Buchanan et al. 274-274, 280; Dieterle 6). Researchers can balance these options with the situated context of their studies and an ethic of care. For example, in our edited collection on hashtag activism (Ames and McDuffie), a number of contributors chose to include the identities of popular, verified Twitter users because they were already public figures. Researchers also agree that protecting participants' identities is even more vital when the subject or the participants themselves are more at-risk.

It is possible that hiding participants' identities can reduce their agency. For example, Bassett and O'Rierdan worried that anonymizing LGBTQ participants was an act of further marginalization and silencing (244), and we similarly worry that hiding the activists we study dishonors their intentions. Nonetheless, the current consensus in feminist Internet research studies is to conceal participants' identities without explicit consent to disclose identities in research publications, especially in an online culture rife with abuse.

Feminist Internet Research Ethics Call for an Interrogation of Researcher Positionality

It is now a common, and even vital, practice for researchers to consider their own relationship to the data that they collect and analyze (from anywhere, and especially online) (Morrow, Hawkins, and Kern 533). Throughout past studies, a scholar may or may not have discussed how they relate to their research depending on the context of the study. Perhaps a researcher explained how they came to be a part of a particular online community, or disclosed what inspired their commitment to a cause. Now, however, this kind of interrogation is expected in order to understand how our own positionalities—and the positionalities of our research participants—frame our studies and impact the outcomes. Interrogation is particularly important when a researcher seems distant from the study or when a research population is vulnerable.

Engaging in relevant theories can help with examining positionalities and power dynamics. For instance, Constance Haywood theorizes how Black feminist values can be applied to research methods to create a Black feminist ethic of care to enact community values, recognize participants' activism, and minimize harm when studying Black online communities (41). Another example is Caroline Dadas, who enacted transparency about her own identity in a queer methodological framework for studying the discursive construction of marriage equality on Facebook.

Interrogating researcher and participant positionality helps us be reflective researchers, which is an important feminist value (Morrow, Hawkins, and Kerns 533), and this reflexivity extends to reciprocity. Rosemary Clark-Parsons advocates for feminist practices of reciprocity toward research participants, such as making research results publicly accessible to participants so that the research benefits participants and related communities, in addition to researchers and academic institutions (Buchanan et al. 267). Stephanie Vie extends reciprocity to the co-creation of research projects when possible, including co-authorship of research publications (Buchanan et al. 275). Interpreting and innovating reflexivity and reciprocity are likely areas of growth for feminist Internet research ethics.

Feminist Internet Research Ethics Protects Researchers

An ethic of care in feminist research includes protecting scholars who are at a risk of harm by conducting their research. Brought to the forefront by happenings such as GamerGate, digital aggression research (research that examines problematic happenings, such as homophobic or racist discourse online) opens up researchers to being targeted, such as through flaming or doxxing. These researchers might already be at risk, as they are more likely to be female-identifying and experiencing emotional duress from the content of their studies. In response to this risk, Derek M. Sparby argues that “it is an ethical obligation for us to protect ourselves as researchers and humans” (45), and that this feminist ethic of care toward researchers should be considered early in the research process (51).

In our edited collection (Ames and McDuffie), we saw an ethic of care realized when an author chose to be published as Anonymous so as not to risk the unwanted attention of a known Twitter bully. Sparby makes suggestions for enacting self-care as an act of self-preservation, such as using a flexible research timeline (54), as well as enacting self-protection, such as making intentional decisions about publication venues, citation practices, and online identities (56). In this cluster conversation, Cam Cavaliere and Leigh Gruwell build on this framework and their own experiences conducting digital aggression research to describe mentoring practices that can help protect researchers who do this work.

Supporting Each Other

While it will always be difficult to derive precise rules for any particular Internet research project, especially when a feminist approach prioritizes the context of the research and being responsive to participant and researcher needs, the best practices outlined here present shared norms as identified by feminist Internet researchers in recent literature and our own experiences. Furthermore, heuristics outlined by other scholars provide a variety of questions that researchers can use to guide their decision-making processes as they go (see Franzke et al., Buck and Ralston; and Taylor, Woods and Ralston, and Augustine in this cluster conversation).

In addition to providing more transparent conversations on feminist Internet research ethics within writing studies, rhetorical theory, and feminist media studies, we also argue for more mentoring and training of such ethics, particularly within editorial practices. For example, we endeavored to provide developmental and supportive feedback to contributors without assuming prior knowledge about these best practices. In our edited collection on hashtag activism (Ames and McDuffie), we developed and shared our intended standards for ethical research methods and related publication practices, and we provided editorial feedback intended to guide and protect scholars and their participants. We also listened to our authors about their choices and supported them, such as advocating to the press to include certain images. In turn, we learned from our contributors and enacted their findings and recommendations in our own work. Some scholars will think our protections unnecessary, while others will think that we did not go far enough.

Nonetheless, we aimed to balance participant confidentiality with our social justice research goals to amplify online activism. And we did our best to protect our authors from criticism, although that will surely come. Most importantly, we tried to treat our fellow scholars with the kindness and respect at the heart of a feminist ethic of care that should be extended to each other as scholars, as well as research participants and relevant communities. While standards for a feminist approach to Internet research ethics will continue to evolve, a feminist ethic of care to training and mentoring for Internet research ethics should be at the forefront of these discussions.

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Developing a Feminist Mentorship Praxis for Digital Aggression Research

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A researcher interested in the anonymous imageboard 4chan faces mental duress—loss of sleep, relationship difficulties, dejection—after spending time in a community that sees them as “subhuman” (Sparby 46).

A PhD candidate, working on her dissertation studying women’s experiences of online harassment, experiences a flood of threats and aggression via email and Twitter while trying to recruit participants (Gelms, “Social Media”).

A scholar seeking to understand the GamerGate⁵ debacle finds herself reading through racist, sexist, ableist chat logs that feel “dehumanizing,” as they target many of the identities she herself inhabits (Kelley and Weaver 7).⁶

These are real experiences recounted by writing studies researchers studying digital aggression. Notably, at the time of these incidents, all were also women-identified and early-career. Digital aggression, which we define as a broad range of behaviors ranging from insults to sexual harassment to threats of violence, usually meant to silence and/or intimidate its targets, has become an increasingly critical issue for internet users, and researchers have accordingly worked to understand why digital aggression happens and how we might curtail it. Yet these researchers—particularly those with (multiply) marginalized identities—often find themselves the target of the very harassment they are studying. How, then, might we support researchers as they undertake this crucial, and sometimes dangerous, work?

5 Gamergate, which erupted in the late summer and early fall of 2014, began with an allegation of unethical video game reporting: a female game designer was (falsely) accused by an ex of sleeping with a gaming journalist in exchange for publicity for her new game. These charges quickly morphed into an all-out attack on prominent female game developers and critics, who faced violent threats and public exposure of their home addresses (also known as doxing).

6 We offer our thanks to these researchers, who provided permission to describe their experiences here.

We have faced this question, together and separately, as digital aggression researchers. Leigh has been researching digital aggression since she began writing her dissertation in 2014. Since then, she's explored how toxic digital publics can undermine public writing pedagogies as well as feminist research methodologies (Gruwell, "Writing"; Gruwell, "Feminist Research"). She's also experienced harassment as a researcher (Gruwell, "Feminist Research"). Cam is just starting out as a researcher of digital aggression after feeling drawn into this important research from the mass amounts of hate they witnessed others face online during the pandemic and growing up with social media. After taking Leigh's research methods class, they felt inspired to join the network of researchers like Leigh who are doing this work but didn't know where to begin or the dangers involved. As Cam began their research, we both began to wonder how to ensure a safe and productive research environment. Mentorship, we realized, was a crucial tool in this process.

In this article, we argue that the unique safety concerns and affective dimensions of digital aggression research necessitate innovative approaches to mentorship. Feminist mentorship practices specifically can provide a valuable framework for supporting digital aggression research. Because it values collaboration (Gaillet and Eble; Godbee and Novotny; VanHaitsma and Ceraso), seeks to undermine power inequities (Fishman and Lunsford; Kynard), and centers around an ethic of care (Ribero and Arellano; Sparby), we argue that feminist mentorship can be a powerful mechanism to help digital aggression researchers navigate a particularly challenging research environment.

We will begin by defining digital aggression as a threat not only to internet users, but also to digital researchers. Although there are risks to doing this research, we insist that this work is necessary to work towards safer and more equitable online spaces for everyone. We will then argue that feminist mentorship can function as a resource to help sustain and support digital researchers. Drawing on our own mentorship relationship as more experienced (Leigh) and more novice (Cam) digital aggression researchers, we will provide considerations for both mentors and mentees and address the specific difficulties that digital aggression research poses to mentorship. We'll conclude by suggesting that feminist mentorship practices in digital aggression research might offer the discipline an opportunity to reimagine research ethics altogether.

Digital Aggression and the Threat to Researchers

Digital aggression can be hard to define, and covers a range of behaviors from name calling, doxing⁷, sexual harassment, and physical threats (Jane; Mantilla; Vogels). While 41% of American internet users have experienced some form of online harassment, according to a 2021

⁷ "Doxing" is when a user (or users) make others' personal information (such as home address, employer, phone number, etc.) public, usually with the intent to frighten or threaten the target.

Pew report, the risks of digital aggression are especially amplified for women, people of color, queer people, and people with disabilities. These vulnerable users experience digital aggression more frequently and experience its most severe and violent forms (Gardiner et al; Lenhart et al; Vogels).

These behaviors result in real harms: targets of digital aggression report experiencing sometimes intense feelings of emotional distress and danger (Lenhart et al; Vogels). Because it can happen in any online space from comment sections to social media to professional listservs, digital aggression also undermines efforts to build more equitable, inclusive digital publics. Digital aggression often elicits silencing and exclusion, as its targets self-censor and remove themselves from unsafe platforms (Cole; Gelms, “Volatile Visibility”; Lenhart et al). Users who are most likely to experience digital aggression—women, people of color, queer people—may simply choose to not participate in these spaces. The result, then, is that digital aggression often serves as a tool to enforce patriarchal, racist, and other exclusionary visions of the internet.

No digital aggression researcher is immune from these threats, as the opening vignettes illustrate. Importantly, however, researchers’ identities matter when it comes to researching and experiencing digital aggression: because we know women, queer folks, people of color, and other marginalized populations experience digital aggression more often and more severely, researchers with these identities face additional risk. As a result, note Brit Kelley and Stephanie Weaver, “some research methods and practices will not be available for some researchers with regards to some researched groups, and in some cases, the researcher may be accruing personal risk in coming forward with their research” (6). Indeed these risks are present at every stage of the research process: as researchers’ experiences show (Gelms, “Social Media”; Vera-Gray), recruiting participants can invite harassment and threats. Analyzing or coding racist, sexist, and other offensive texts can also result in mental distress (Kelley and Weaver; Sparby). Researchers of digital aggression must also carefully consider where and how to publish and publicize their work. While researchers often hope their work will reach a wide audience, for researchers of digital aggression, this can lead to additional risk, as hostile readers may be able to locate their published work, which often includes institutional affiliation as well as email and mailing addresses and sometimes even social media handles (Gruwell, “Feminist Research”; Sparby).

But why do this work if there are so many dangers in doing so? Despite its risks, we feel that digital aggression research is necessary to build online spaces that are safer for everyone, especially those with marginalized identities. This kind of research doesn’t just “call out” particular individuals on their bad behavior, it also identifies patterns of hate and aggression and the structures that support it. Abuse of any kind can lead to silencing of victims, and we as digital aggression researchers want victims to have a voice in both our research and in their own online spaces. Bridget Gelms (“Volatile Visibility”) discusses the importance of detailing the stories of victims of online harassment, writing: “...when we...sanitize the experiences of the abused, we create a

functional cloaking mechanism, keeping the realities of what women experience online out of sight” (182). By sharing the stories of those who have been harassed and abused, we let others know they aren’t alone and use real life experiences to inform our active choices about designing the kind of digital world we want to exist in. Even though we can’t control what happens online, we can help shift and scaffold the digital environment we would like to exist in. In order to do so, we need to report and take note of abuse online when we see it and carefully research the patterns, beliefs, and designs that drive digital aggression.

Feminist Mentorship

The obstacles presented by digital aggression create an especially challenging research environment for novice scholars and may ultimately dissuade them from undertaking this important work. Researchers are beginning to recognize the risks that researchers and participants alike may face, and have started to generate valuable methodological approaches that are attentive to digital aggression (Franzke et al.; Gelms “Social Media”; Gruwell “Feminist Research”; Sparby). Yet these difficulties are still in many ways unique and unfamiliar to those outside this research area, necessitating more systemic support structures beyond individual methodological considerations. Feminist mentorship practices, we suggest, can ensure the sustainability of digital aggression research specifically because they so often center practices that can successfully combat digital aggression, including collaboration, awareness of power inequities, and an ethic of care.

Writing studies has a robust tradition of feminist mentorship, even if we have seen little explicit evidence that it is being used to guide the work of digital aggression research. This scholarship has found that mentorship is especially critical in ensuring the success and safety of marginalized scholars (Ballif, Davis, and Mountford; Okawa; Ore, Wisner, and Cedillo; Ribero and Arellano). Mentorship, in other words, is perhaps most beneficial to those scholars most likely to be impacted by digital aggression. Indeed, this scholarship suggests that mentorship of women, BIPOC, queer folks, and others traditionally excluded from academia can work to transform the patriarchal, white supremacist foundations of the academy entirely. Instead of “shaping the scholar to the white dominant academy,” these approaches recognize the necessity of “transforming the institution into a space that values minoritized ways of knowing and being in the world” (Ribero and Arellano 337). Digital aggression researchers—most especially those who are minoritized in some way—face a particular challenge: academic and digital spaces are often hostile to their presence, yet their presence is necessary to ensure diverse and equitable spaces. Feminist mentorship can help alleviate this tension, creating not just much-needed support systems for digital aggression researchers but working to undermine the structures of exclusion that render them necessary in the first place.

Traditionally, academic mentorship has centered around a hierarchical master-apprentice

paradigm. Feminist mentorship, in contrast, seeks to undermine this authoritative model by encouraging more collaborative approaches (Gaillet and Eble; Fishman and Lunsford; and Ryan). Several researchers argue for the importance of seeking mentorship from peers, such as Pamela VanHaitsma and Steph Ceraso's "horizontal mentorship" or Ana Milena Ribero and Sonia C. Arellano's "comadrisimo." Beth Godbee and Julia C. Novotny describe the collaborative spirit that drives feminist mentorship as one that "privileges relational aspects [and emphasizes] mutuality" (179). These approaches are particularly well-suited for supporting digital aggression researchers, as scholars have emphasized the need for "[digital aggression] researchers to create community and belonging with others" (Sparby 54). Feminist mentorship seeks to develop mutually beneficial partnerships, working to create the "community and belonging" Derek Sparby argues is necessary to sustain digital aggression researchers.

This emphasis on collaboration is not a naive one, however; it is rooted in an acute and constant awareness of power inequities. While many feminist mentorship relationships may emerge between peers (Morris, Rule, and LaVecchia; VanHaitsma and Ceraso), mentorship between differently situated scholars—such as a more experienced and more novice scholar—still presents important learning opportunities for all involved. Given the power inequities that mark many mentorship relationships (even among peers in an academic hierarchy), feminist mentorship seeks to explore these differences as important opportunities to learn from one another and identify shared values and beliefs (Madden and Tarabochia; Okawa). As Kathryn Gindlesparger and Holly Ryan note, "dialogues about conflict and tension in feminist mentoring relationships" can serve as "productive sites of transformation rather than ones of shame or guilt" (67). Because digital aggression researchers often find themselves researching spaces or communities that are hostile to them (Gelms "Social Media"; Gruwell, "Feminist Research"), feminist mentorship's constant interrogation and negotiation of power can equip researchers with the necessary analytic tools to construct ethical and responsible relationships with those they study while also remaining vigilant to potential risks.

It is this attention to both power and collaboration that gives feminist mentorship its keen interest in care. Feminist theorists have long advocated a politics centered on an ethic of care, which sees political transformation and justice as an interpersonal project (Gilligan; Noddings). Care is a means of achieving solidarity under what bell hooks calls the "white supremacist, capitalist, patriarchal class structure" (18). In feminist mentorship, then, this ethic of care demands "support for both the personal and the professional" (Gindlesparger and Ryan 62), even as such support can entail significant (often institutionally unrecognized or supported) emotional labor (Madden and Tarabochia; Ore, Weiser, and Cedillo). Care is perhaps especially crucial for digital aggression researchers, given the risks this work presents to both their professional and personal lives. To counter these effects, Sparby presents a "feminist ethic of self-care,"⁴ which offers several important strategies to protect physical safety and emotional wellbeing. We suggest, however, that feminist mentorship can also cultivate the ethic of care necessary to safeguard digital aggres-

sion researchers.

Feminist Mentorship in Practice: Supporting Digital Aggression Research

Feminist mentorship practices, we have shown, are particularly well-suited to support the messy, often dangerous work of digital aggression research. But what might this look like in practice? What, for example, should mentors know about how best to preserve the physical and emotional welfare of mentees? What kind of support might mentees request from their advisors, and how might they ask for it? What is the role of institutions in supporting these kinds of mentorship structures? How can mentors and mentees best attune themselves to the inequities that fuel digital aggression? Mentorship relationships emerge from the experiences and identities of each individual; each mentorship configuration is therefore unique and specific. Here, we present heuristic guidelines for digital aggression research rooted in our own experiences not because we believe these considerations to be universal or definitive, but in hopes they can serve as a model to support others who want to do this work within their own mentoring relationships.

Cam

While I had grown up on social media and been witnessing digital aggression myself since I was a pre-teen, I was wildly unsure of where to start my research once the opportunity was presented to me. I had no idea that research like this existed, and I was constantly doubting my abilities and methods as a novice researcher. I was also concerned, as I was somewhat aware of the dangers of this research, but unsure of the realities of the situation. While I was often thinking about the safety of the users of the various sites I was studying (Twitter, Instagram, and LMSs/ other educational platforms), and was often thinking about ways to keep future participants safe, I was hardly factoring myself into the safety equation.

Once I began fielding my questions to Leigh and seeking out her advice, and unknowingly to me, beginning a mentoring relationship that aligns with the history of feminist researchers in our field, I began to realize how precarious doing this research really was. As we continued to work together throughout my Master's program, we both began to see a somewhat untrodden path in terms of mentorship for digital aggression researchers. The experiences that I had with Leigh have informed my guidelines that follow.

- **Be realistic about the potential dangers (physical, mental, and emotional) of digital aggression work.** The first thing that Leigh met me with in our mentoring relationship was honesty. Before I even began the work on turning an in-class proposal related to digital aggression on Twitter into a workable research study, she asked me to attend a CFSHRC panel in which she and other digital aggression researchers detailed their experiences doing this work. The panelists, including Leigh, Bridget Gelms, Vyshali

Manivannan, and Derek Sparby, spoke to the negative and unsafe aspects that might come with doing this work, including being harassed, stalked, and mocked online for researching, calling out, and analyzing the abusive behavior of others online. The dangers that one faces in doing this work are embodied in a physical, mental, and emotional sense. As Sparby notes, this kind of work requires researchers to think ahead, several steps ahead, at all times, in order to avoid harassment or abuse for our work, which still might not prevent abuse from happening.

- **Emphasize the safety of the researcher before they begin drafting their research methods/projects.** A researcher's methods of data collection will greatly impact how the researcher should approach their safety methods, as Leigh advised me when I began my project. As I was attempting to solicit participants through my own, personal social media accounts, Leigh advised me to lock down and delete any private information about myself that might give away anything relating to my location or other highly sensitive information and privatize accounts that I wasn't attempting to solicit participants through. Safety doesn't just relate to data, however. As Sparby writes (54), digital aggression researchers need to keep in mind their own mental health and take breaks, if possible, when researching content that is mentally and emotionally taxing. Of course, not all researchers will have the privilege to fully retreat (for example, those whose identities make them a constant target for digital aggression or those who have little agency within productivity-centered institutional timelines), but creating boundaries around this kind of research is essential to ensure both physical and mental well-being.
- **Real-life examples are the most helpful in priming researchers for what to expect.** The panel that Leigh had me attend gave painfully realistic expectations of what can happen when one researches harmful online practices. Reading articles and keeping up to date on research in this growing subfield, it is easy to see that most doing digital aggression research take this work very personally and very seriously, often detailing their personal experiences and the effect of their positionalities on the research they do. The examples of this work (mostly done by marginalized people) have greatly impacted me and given me valuable lessons that I will move forward with when doing this work. While qualitative or narrative evidence is not always as respected in our field as quantitative evidence, to me, the stories of the researchers that came before me are extremely helpful and impact the steps I am taking into doing my own research.
- **Mentees cannot be adequately mentored through one-size-fits-all methods.** As every mentor and mentee are different, it is safe to say that all mentorship relationships are personal and specific. Other kinds of mentees who differ from me might have different concerns. As a white, queer person, I understand that I hold a place of privilege as well as precarity online. Other mentees, particularly those who are women of color or

queer people of color, might have different needs due to the rates at which people of color are more readily harassed in online spaces.

Leigh

Despite my experiences with digital aggression—both as a researcher and a target— I felt unprepared to support Cam’s own research in this area. As Cam described their proposed project, I felt excited, because I knew how important this work would be in describing and curtailing harassment of queer women on Twitter. Yet, I also had concerns about Cam’s safety and well-being. Cam had taken a research methods class with me, which included significant attention to digital methodology, but little of this scholarship is attuned to the risks of digital aggression. As Cam began their project then, I found myself drawing on both my experiences of digital aggression as well as my knowledge of feminist mentorship practices to begin to define the values that drove our work together. The guidelines I’ve outlined here have grown out of our relationship.

- **Help researchers understand the risks at every stage, from data collection to publication and beyond.** I was worried about how I could be honest and transparent about the challenges of this work without dampening a novice researcher’s excitement. I determined that being honest with Cam would enable them to best assess the potential risks they faced. I shared articles from digital aggression researchers about how to recruit participants safely and we discussed the future of the project. I asked Cam to consider how and where to share their work: do you want to publish in an Open Access space, or share your work on social media? Indeed, some researchers of digital aggression have intentionally chosen to publish their work behind paywalls (Sparby 56), but even this measure doesn’t always protect researchers. While there are good reasons for choosing these kinds of options, they also carry additional risk. This transparency helped Cam make informed decisions about how to continue with their research.
- **Point to protective practices and resources.** As they began their work, I encouraged Cam to audit their digital identity to ensure it is as private and secure as necessary (Sparby 56-7). It was important for me to highlight the many community supports available to Cam, which is why I worked to introduce them to other digital aggression researchers and shared valuable resources for targets of digital aggression such as [Crash Override](#) and [Speak Up and Stay Safe\(r\)](#) in case Cam did encounter difficulties we could not address together. Finally, we discussed the possibility of seeking institutional resources as needed, such as a VPN for additional privacy or even alerting campus authorities and/or local police should any aggression escalate to credible threats (Sparby 60).
- **Recognize how power inequities may shape your experience.** I am a straight, cis

white woman who has recently gained tenure at an R1 school: I know I possess a great deal of power (at least in the academy). I was quite aware of how unequally positioned Cam and I were, and I wondered how I could help them conceptualize and navigate potential risks while we inhabit different identity positions. I knew my experiences as a user and researcher of Twitter, for example, were very different from theirs. It was thus critical to acknowledge our differences and use them as a starting point for conversations about research plans. As our positionalities have changed over time, our relationship too has evolved, and this dynamic reflection helps us better understand each other and the different approaches we may take to digital aggression research.

- **Build a flexible, rhetorical approach to research.** While internet researchers have long argued for the value of a rhetorical approach to research (McKee and Porter), I knew, from both my own and others' experiences, that digital aggression research often requires a flexibility beyond that of most research scenes. The unique circumstances of digital aggression research mean that methods may change (Gelms, "Social Media"), a researcher may need to step back for frequent breaks, or may need additional time to locate an appropriate publication venue (Sparby 55-6). While it is undoubtedly difficult to account for the messiness of digital aggression research, I still sought to help Cam develop a research plan that understood the kind of flexibility digital aggression demands and encouraged them to consider contingencies and anticipate possible delays.

Our ongoing mentoring relationship has provided an important location for reflection on our ever-evolving scholarly identities. Cam feels that they have gained a stronger sense of self as a feminist researcher and are more aware of the importance of safety for all involved in the research process, including the researcher. Leigh, on the other hand, has more fully realized the transformative power of mentorship, which can foster new methodological approaches that work to create more inclusive digital spaces as well as diversify disciplinary knowledge-making practices. Together, we hope our experiences can prompt other researchers to explore the possibilities that mentorship presents for supporting not just digital aggression researchers but all researchers who navigate inequitable or hostile research scenes.

Toward Sustainable Research Mentorship

Many questions remain about digital aggression research, especially regarding mentorship structures and their relationship to research ethics. The reality is that such research introduces unprecedented challenges to mentorship practices broadly across our field. This work can actively harm researchers' mental, emotional, or physical health and, as a result, mentorship centered around digital aggression research is precarious, forcing hard questions of individuals, the mentorship relationship, and the discipline as a whole. Digital aggression research, then, calls us to critically and carefully scrutinize the important, if often unexamined, ways that methodolo-

gies inform individual mentorship relationships and practices. We argue that feminist mentorship offers valuable principles to support digital aggression researchers, as its emphasis on collaboration, interrogation of power relationships, and interest in self-care helps researchers navigate digital research environments marked by exclusion, hostility, and danger. The guiding principles and suggestions we have offered here are meant to encourage other researchers to enter this increasingly important research area.

Yet we hope our work here does not end with digital aggression researchers. While this work is in some respects uniquely dangerous, especially for marginalized researchers, we believe that nearly all meaningful research is risky in one way or another. We thus conclude by encouraging the field to reflect on its mentorship practices. Mentorship can not only alleviate the various difficulties and harms that individual researchers may face, but it can also reframe research ethics altogether, as it calls attention to how thoroughly questions of identity and power are woven into our research. Feminist mentorship is but one means to this end, and we remain optimistic about mentorship's potential to support the kind of transformative research that will build not just a more equitable internet, but a more equitable world.

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Researching on the Intersectional Internet: Slow Coding as Humanistic Recovery

Wilfredo Flores

Abstract: This article discusses the implications of doing research on the internet, particularly in relation to colonial violence and whiteness. The author proposes the concept of slow coding as an approach to recognizing the complexity of human experience on the internet—via the concept of the intersectional internet—and to developing appropriate research questions and other research project considerations in for recovering human identity on the internet apart from colonial practices of research. Grounded in relational concepts, slow coding involves insurgent approaches to researching in online spaces as an act of recognizing joy in online communities and protecting it from being co-opted by the academy.

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keywords: Digital Cultural Rhetorics, Intersectionality, methodology

Introduction

I write this article to you on one screen, and you, reader, view it on another, a transmission I invoke here to highlight an embodied digitality that suffuses my points to come. The impress of my keyboard keys indexes movement across networks—digital and otherwise—that both captures my bodily movement and sequences it across our infrastructural milieu. The springs of my keys as my fingers travel across them ferry meaning to you across space and time, and there you are—somewhere on the other side of light-based fiber optics, data servers cohering our networked lives, a router powered at planetary expense, the person who plugged in the router in the first place, the radiant technology of Wi-Fi seemingly inhering our connectivity. This small collection you make of me here (and I am collecting you, too) that is, this arrangement of bodies and technologies—deceptively simple—belies the theoretically dense conceit that at the core of our interaction are bodies that have become embodied: upcycled, translated, and communicated

in some socio-corporeal manner (Bratta and Sundvall; Bates et al.; Johnson et al.).

Using this storied invocation of my body (and, really, yours too), I demarcate a conceptual aperture and advance two heuristic axioms that underpin this conversation piece. First, I highlight the material conditions of our meeting here amid this cluster in *Peitho* to foreground a methodological stance toward digitally mediated settings, accounting for complex human identities, technologies, and practices, as well as their commensurate effects on our work as internet researchers—in essence, the ways we collect each other through storied interactions in online settings. Second, I foreground the idea that identity and technology are co-imbricated amid the respective imperial and anticolonial projects of humanness (Brown)⁸. With this techno-identive interplay, I argue for refreshed research practices that account for “digital bodies, [that] either virtually produced or augmented, complicate traditional perspectives of embodiment” (Bates et al.).

To account for embodiment in research methods, I offer a methodological approach to doing digital cultural rhetorics research called *slow coding*, a qualitative research practice of better attuning ourselves to the intersectional internet, a term used by Brendesha M. Tynes and Safiya Umoja Noble to indicate “an epistemological approach to researching gendered and racialized identities in digital and information studies. It offers a lens, based on the past articulations of intersectional theory, for exploring power in digital technologies and the global Internet(s)” (“Introduction” 3). In so doing, I contend that we square our analytical potency as internet researchers driven by feminist ethics against white supremacist configurations of research as a practice and the humans we research as a colonially marked, epistemological category. Such a move resonates with Jennifer Sano-Franchini’s call for more research on online spaces that focuses on the everyday rhetorical-relational work of foregrounding community in relation to marginalizing forces that *accounts for* and *disrupts such forces*. Disruption, then, serves as the *modus operandi* for slow coding across the full breadth of this article.

I therefore advance slow coding as a research practice grounded in the intersectional internet, affording researchers an approach to working ethically in the ebbs and flows of oppression while allowing for meaningful engagement with the effects of colonization on precarious groups of people. Slow coding as a qualitative research practice adheres a slow, deliberate intentionality at the pre-coding and coding stages of a research project (Saldaña), actively centering the oppressive context that led to the data itself (in my case, tweets) and configuring analysis to disrupt the identified oppression. Given that it comprises the pre-coding and coding stages, slow coding consolidates these stages and facilitates the researcher reviewing their data while they collect it

8 Here, I mean to render the human as conceptual parameters by which we cohere history, culture, whiteness, colonialism, and cisheteropatriarchy to what we think of as the prototypical human user of the internet (Brock). Indeed, André Brock highlights how the internet functions as “a social structure [that] represents and maintains white, masculine, bourgeois, heterosexual and Christian culture through its content” (1088). The internet, then, amid the varying tales that comprise its cultural import, is a mirror to the project of humanness—a conceit I intermingle within the critical vantage of my thinking in this piece.

and shortly thereafter, creating analytic memos that respond to the colonial context of the data, reviewing any accompanying meta-data to understand the geographic history at the fore of oppression, learning the identitive particularities of the people who comprise the data as a departure from a typified research subject wherein anonymity is whiteness. Perhaps most importantly, slow coding requires particular research questions that are attuned to the settler colonial machinations of how oppressions are wrought, particular stances grounded in anticolonialism, and the time needed to do meaningful work beyond the publishing timeline that entraps many of us.

In what follows, I outline how research as practice has been wrought from colonial enterprise (Absolon; Tuhiwai Smith), with commensurate epistemological implications in the ways we research people using technology (Benjamin). These humanistic configurations in turn inflect a typical internet-based research project via our methodologies, including what the site can be, who the participants are, and what the data comprise (Gallagher). To fully articulate slow coding, a research practice that works in relation and opposition to these colonial conditions, I share my own research experiences illustrating the deep care required of working with marginalized communities, starting with respectful observation, moving toward ethical engagement and gathering, and then culminating in antiracist analytic strategies that allow the data to story itself and tying online life to the offline oppressions. In this way, I offer suggestions for each step of the multilayer process that stacks into a research project: who the participants are, where the research site is, what the rhetorical-relational data comprise, and the other ingredient strands that mesh into such a project.

Researching on the Internet: Colonial Contexts and the Need for Anticolonial Options

Colonial conditions set the stage for both our meeting on your screen and the array of practices that led to this moment. Research, despite our best intentions, comprises the colonial conditions by which *research as a practice* emerged, perpetuates, and now functions (Absolon; Tuhiwai Smith). Indeed, research hinges on “maintaining the status quo and supporting the evolution of societies that reward some people and inhibit others. Research can be used to suppress ideas, people, and social justice just as easily ... than it can be used to respect, empower, and liberate. Good intentions are never enough to produce anti-oppressive processes or outcomes” (Potts and Brown 260). That said, I follow the lead of cultural rhetoricians whose purview constellates across the colonial tensions within digital studies (Edwards; Haas) and embodiment (Johnson et al.). Slow coding thus proceeds from the simple conceit that research is a sticky consolidation of inquisitive acts derived from the history and now nefarious machinations of settler colonialism as it shapes both research and the internet, combined in the form of internet-based research projects (Powell).

Homing in on digital technologies, the internet itself is a colonial project (Amrute; Simmons). For all the good it can and does foster, the internet today comprises a corporatized,

platformed architecture that actively suppresses marginalized groups of people: “everything from representation to hardware, software, computer code, and infrastructures might be implicated in global economic, political, and social systems of control” (Tynes and Noble 6). Notably, Nicole Marie Brown highlights the algorithmic nature of the assembling, so-called objective computational forces that “expose how power in decisioning is being organized within the social world” (56). In this way, the very algorithms that organize the data researchers collect—especially white researchers—perpetuate whiteness. Further, beyond the function of the internet, digital infrastructure itself serves mainly as settler colonial expansion for colonial metropolises, with communicative thresholds expanding across the world and worsening climatological conditions (Edwards; Haas).

However, I do not want to wallow in the saturnine conditions of research and the internet in this piece, as doing so performs a disservice to the kinds of questions we might ask within our purview as internet researchers. Moreover, as mentioned above, to perform slow coding is to ask preemptively the kinds of research questions grounded in anticolonial intent that work in contradistinction to colonial purpose. Amid the above considerations that underpin slow coding, an attunement to happiness, joy, well-being—community—serve as a critical departure from colonial research practices; in other words, rather than generally asking, “How is harm being perpetuated to this marginalized community?” we might ask, “How is this community keeping itself safe in the face of harm out in the world—and what can I do to foster better care?” In pivoting to this question, the slow coder must attune to communities that bring the fullness of their lives—the struggles and triumphs—to digital spaces in a manner that resonates with the offline oppressions that weave together a daily milieu; in other words, we must configure our projects to operate on the intersectional internet.

Asking Anticolonial Research Questions: Researching on the Intersectional Internet

Considering the flattening effect of conducting research on the internet (that is, the identitive baseline that casts a datapoint as a mere utterance with little lived context), the use of social media as a force for good reveals a schema for revising the internet as an intersectional network through which the on-the-grounds work of identity politics might be enacted (construed from the lineage of Black feminist thought; Collins; Tynes, Schuschke, and Noble). For Tynes and Noble, digital intersectionality is a concept at the juncture of potential and control “in the form of both analytic strategy and critical praxis, as a resource grounded in the offline and online subjectivities of participants” (26). The intersectional internet instills an attunement to Black life on the internet via Black feminist thought (Collins) and Black feminist technology studies (Noble, “Future”), revealing cracks in the hostile, algorithmic terrain of the internet wherein marginalized users upcycle the tools at hand to meet and to counter both their oppressors and oppressions. As an analytic strategy, digital intersectionality foregrounds identity and all of its import, especially for Black users of the internet; as critical praxis, it requires attuning research projects to the concept of the intersectional internet.

The intersectional internet serves as a mutinous framework, revealing how Black and other people of color live, play, and organize online around and against the offline violence they face and the online violence that are the algorithmic forces that center whiteness. It also serves as an antenarrative of the internet, which becomes a tool for empowerment despite colonial histories. Indeed, “from its earliest articulations, intersectionality has not only been used in scholarly work and teaching but has also been used as analytic strategy and critical praxis directed at social and political intervention” (Tynes, Schuschke, and Noble 35). In this way, slow coding as an approach to asking anticolonial research questions departs from the colonial research configuration and attends to “individuals’ intersectional vantage points on topics allow for a fluid exchange of ideas and beliefs” (Tynes, Schuschke, and Noble 36). For me, slow coding was an emergent practice I developed via perspectives in Indigenous methodologies (Gaudry; Tuck and Yang), my own intention on centering the needs of my community as a queer Chicano, and time afforded to me at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. Thus, I created my dissertation project—an interrogation of the social media practices of queer and trans BIPOC on Twitter—by first asking research questions steered in part by the considerations I outlined above. In other words, I posed research questions that could be used to craft a project contingent on social justice that squared the focus of the project against the oppression itself, while also attending to the commensurate work via my disciplinary training and my intent on taking my time (a luxury, to be sure, but one I was afforded because of the COVID-19 pandemic).

My research questions were: “*What are the rhetorical practices of queer and trans Black, Indigenous, and People of Color who tweet about their sexual health practices online? How might these practices be ethically integrated into public health outreach?*” I spotlight identity and community enrichment with these questions, each serving as a framework for building the actual research project itself. In creating a research project, the slow coder must ask an anticolonial research question that highlights the context of the digital spaces in which research is conducted. To that end, I highlight the anticolonial utility found within the concept of the intersectional internet. Given that the intersectional internet as concept upcycles a cadre of critical perspectives on digital technologies, sociotechnical processes, digital-material labor conditions, and the identive capacity of social media platforms, research questions that allow for slow coding must function in contradistinction to colonial configurations of internet-based research. In this way, slow coding becomes a solution—and I stress the indefinite article here—to conducting research on a data set that comprises groups of people using the internet in a manner consistent with anti-oppressive research (Potts and Brown).

Collecting, Pre-Coding, Coding: Slow Actions and Deliberate Capture

After creating research questions that facilitate slow coding, we can proceed to the construction of the project, the ethical considerations, the data collection, and then the interpretive framework (with the latter two components comprising slow coding as a practice itself). In

essence, slow coding represents an attention to the fact that digital expressions of life are not merely communicative instances, but rather extensions of life online. Thus, we can use methods of capture and interpretive frameworks to understand the stories the data are saying; that is, we can investigate how the range of human experience translates to takeaways that matter to the questions we pose in the first place when conducting research. To that end, I offer an example of building a substantive research project that was my dissertation, offering salient examples and considerations that springboard from slow coding as a methodological approach. I detail the actual methods of enacting the project to the act of parsing the data and then coding it.

In working on my dissertation, I followed Heidi McKee and James Porter in *The Ethics of Internet Research: A Rhetorical, Case-Based Process* and “Digital Media Ethics and Rhetoric,” taking a multi-stage approach to research: 1) data collection, 2) pre-coding, which involved slowly reading through the tweets in an extant archive (gathered using methods below), excluding those that were retweets and from organizations, clinicians, providers, or other public health officials (i.e., applying exclusion criteria), and pre-coding those relevant to the research project to derive thematics; and 3) coding them to establish three case studies based on these themes that reveal how users showcased their own sexual health literacy in relation to the topics at hand.

Collection

Using an insurgent appropriation born from Indigenous methodologies (Gaudry; Tuck and Yang), I adapted internet- and social media-based methods for gathering and analyzing the data. Thus, tweets were gathered as data using an automated, self-populating Twitter Archiving Google Sheet (TAGS), a system developed by Martin Hawksey that uses Google Sheets’ functionality and Twitter’s then-open API to conduct a keyword search across public Twitter users. This search began fall 2018 and continues, refreshing every hour until I am locked out. The keywords used were the hashtags #PrEP and #Truvada, and these were used to attune the data collection to users talking about their sexual health in relation to ongoing changes surrounding medication, culture, and health. These keywords were also selected because they have been prominent in the cultural milieu of queer and trans people of color since the advent of new HIV-prevention medication. Tweets collected through the TAGS system were aggregated in a Google Sheets document, along with usernames, user-made bios, timestamps, avatars, and locations (when available). For the hopeful slow coder, proceeding from data collection continues to attend to a research project’s dimensionality, adhering epistemic parameters to standard protocol in the follow ways: understanding that research is a practice mired in colonial processes (discussed above), responding to how anonymized data defaults to whiteness because of the manner by which a human user of the internet is construed, and attending to the organizing algorithms of the internet (which privilege white sensibilities).

Pre-coding

My collection methods captured much meta-data for the datapoints gathered—perhaps too much, which initiated my slow approach and led me to cohere this process as slow coding. I was therefore able to use the meta-data to cross-check that the cultural content that users generated and frequented in their discrete Twitter feeds related to the topic at hand and their identity (i.e., checking to see who the user is and what they talk about online—learning who they are and what their life is about; though, of course, information associated with Twitter accounts is not always accurate). In creating slow coding as a digital cultural rhetorics methodological practice, I made the important but complex decision to not anonymize the data collected; identity is integral to internet and technology use, as I touch on above, and anonymizing the data would lead to poor conclusions regarding my research questions because cultural and racial identity is vital to answering the research questions in the first place.

That said, I presented the data in the dissertation—and subsequent publications—in a manner that only recounts identitive aspects of users as derived from contextual elements, including general locations (e.g., Atlanta featured heavily in my data as it is often called the Black queer capital of the world), other tweets, biographic information, and photos that were not of the user but posted (typically memes). I did not nor will I ever use Twitter usernames, show avatars, or use any other identifying information in my writing, stewarding users' data by using password-protected hard drives to store data gathered. The stewardship I enacted requires, again, the creation of a project that cannot function without care and deliberation in mind. In this way, I was able to approach the necessary messiness of approaching consent when working with semi-public data, users who did not respond to direct messages, and the general unwieldiness that accompanies social media platforms as research sites. Of course, no approach will ever be perfect, especially regardless of IRB approval (as in my case, wherein my project was deemed exempt)—but again, care and deliberation and substantive protection protocols must be derived.

Because my data collection was self-populated as users' generated content, I created a copy of the overall archive and effectively ended data collection for the dissertation in June 2020. From this document, I began pre-coding by following my inclusion/exclusion criteria, focusing solely on non-specialist posts in the data collection (i.e., posts from non-medical experts). To conduct pre-coding, with a collection of about 300 individual tweets and relevant posts and media after culling, I carefully read through each, highlighting ones that sparked an interest and were seemingly related to the research questions. During this stage, I also expanded on some tweets, delving into the conversational context in some cases and storing these tweets for further investigation. I also included analytic memos left in the form of comments on specific cells containing interesting tweets, and they were later factored into analysis. When this stage was completed, included tweets and their accompanying meta-data were compiled in a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet and manually entered into Dedoose, a qualitative coding software.

Coding

Slow coding entails a close attention to intersectional theory as it pertains to online life, and in pushing against the textual notion of anonymized data—which voids those meaning-rich cultural expressions of daily life online—I used pre-coding to lead into more comprehensive coding in line with constructing grounded theory. Following a two-cycle approach (Saldaña), I derived three overarching themes across the data that showcased three contextual factors that garnered the most attention on Twitter. Following Johnny Saldaña, and as part of the first cycle of constructing a grounded theory, holistic coding was used as it “is applicable when the researcher already has a general idea of what to investigate in the data . . . [which can be] preparatory groundwork for more detailed coding of the data” (119). In this round of coding, then, I analyzed the selected tweets and accompanying meta-data, which I construed as experiential data that fleshed out the tweet given that they formed contextual vignettes for conveying information. As such, in this initial coding stage, I derived initial codes such as HUMOR, EDUCATION, and CRITICISM, among others, based on an assumed purpose of the tweet in relation to the colonial conditions writ large. With these initial codes, I then moved to the second round of coding.

With axial coding as the second cycle, I prioritized “properties (i.e., characteristics or attributes) and dimensions (the location of a property along a continuum or range) of a category” (Saldaña 159). As the follow-up to the first cycle of coding, axial coding allowed me to dwell in those “components [of] the conditions, causes, and consequences of a process—actions that let [me] know ‘if, when, how, and why’ something happen[ed]” (Saldaña 159). In other words, axial coding affords an interconnected approach to data, including parsing through tweets related to the specific utterances gathered in the finalized data set and then constellating them amongst each other and the broader forces at play that led to the specific instance of the tweets. Thus, through this round of coding—which I spent months doing to fully flesh out the case studies I eventually derived—I was able to derive codes based on the contemporaneous events, cultural complexities, and oppressive forces tied to them that led to the tweets themselves. With the coding and memos, I derived three thematics (i.e., community health practices wrought during the HIV/AIDS crisis of the 1980s and 90s, ad hoc networks for sharing information on insurance and healthcare providers, and countering capitalist biomedical systems), which were then used to construct the case studies comprising the project. I was only able to create these case studies by taking my time, and how I went about collecting the data and coding them might take more time than it would otherwise, but this deliberate slow research was necessary to facilitate my commitment to anticolonial research within a digital environment.

Conclusion: The Ethics of Slowly Learning an Internet Life

The researcher and the research subject, site, and project intermingle histories of colonial violence that demand more, slow, thoughtful attention from us. As such, slow coding entails a

deliberate approach to building the project itself, including the ethics underpinning the work itself. In my case, I grounded my work in a relational ethics tied to a theoretical framework grounded in Indigenous concepts of relationality, which steered my analysis of tweets amongst broader forces of oppression, directly shaping the remainder of my methodological considerations (Arola; Riley-Mukavetz; Wilson). I also followed the Association of Internet Researchers' ethics of internet research (Franzke et al.), asking myself how data would be traceable and if it could be potentially harmful to the Twitter users when published and whether identifying information was required. Thus, relational ethics set the parameters by which I stayed with the data, simmering in the complex lives of people taking to social media to talk about a critical facet of their lives. Then, via slow coding and the layers of considerations above stacked up on one another, I set out to learn about online lives and let them story my dissertation project.

Here, at the end of this piece, I foreground this centrality as a deep, epistemological requirement of slow coding as a practice. If you cannot build a project made for slow coding, then build a different project. I will say, though, that much of what I have found in the data via this process is joy—the bliss of queer and trans people of color being in community despite everything in the world, including the technologies that bring them together, tearing them down. This joy is precious and requires much of us as researchers. I hope that what slow coding offers is a glimpse into working in the ebbs and flows of the liminal spaces that lets community be what it is—joyful work that rescinds the wickedness too often central to how the world works.

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Beyond Text: Ethical Considerations for Visual Online Platforms

Hannah Taylor

Abstract: This article considers ethical decision making and privacy for a visual social media landscape and poses important questions for Internet researchers to consider before and during the research process. This author models self-reflective research practices by looking back on their own research practices in regard to two image-based social media projects: the online conference Braving Body Shame and the sexual health education Instagram page The Vulva Gallery.

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Keywords: agency, embodiment, visual rhetoric

This conversation cluster comes out of two exigencies, both concerned with changes in internet research. As scholars of digital research ethics note, things change quickly in the digital sphere, which requires the field at large and individual researchers to enact reflexivity on our practices. Second, much of the current research focuses on text-based social media platforms, like Facebook and Twitter, that are easily scraped and collected at a mass scale. With the lessening popularity of Facebook and Twitter and the rise of TikTok and Instagram, which are far more image-based than their predecessors, researchers need to revisit their practices to be better attuned to the popularity of image-based social media. This does not mean reinventing the ethical considerations but thinking about them perhaps on a smaller scale for more image and video-based platforms. As the 2019 Association of Internet Researchers guidelines note, there is no universal research ethic for online research, particularly where privacy is concerned:

given the range of possible ethical decision-making procedures (utilitarianism, deontology, feminist ethics, etc.), the multiple interpretations and applications of these procedures to specific cases, and their refraction through culturally diverse emphases and values across the globe – the issues raised by Internet research are ethical problems precisely because they evoke more than one ethically defensible response to a specific dilemma or problem. Ambiguity, uncertainty, and disagreement are inevitable. (AoIR)

In keeping with the inevitability of ambiguity, I follow Katrin Tiidenberg when she suggests that “instead, an approach that reimagines ethical decision-making as a deliberative process that enables enacting beneficence, justice, and respect for persons on a case-by-case basis is increasingly recommended” (6). Like Leysia Palen and Paul Dourish, I am conceptualizing priva-

cy as a boundary regulation process when they write that “privacy is not about setting rules and enforcing them; rather, it is the continual management of boundaries between different spheres of action and degrees of disclosure within those spheres” (3). Because of the increased disclosure that comes along with posting images online, the implications for privacy, sharing, and researching are heightened. This article considers ethical decision making and privacy for a visual social media landscape. It is important for scholars to ask: How are privacy and identity conceived of differently on primarily visual social media sites? What do internet researchers need to consider differently on visual platforms? What is at stake with embodiment in internet research?

In the following section, I discuss some of the previous questions that scholars have engaged in regarding research online before suggesting a framework for the ethics of online privacy in an increasingly visual social media landscape. Namely, I propose a series of questions that scholars can ask themselves before and during the research process in order to address ethical and values-aligned research studies utilizing visual data. As people put more and more of themselves online, it is important for scholars to continue revising our tactics of protecting both our identities and the privacy of our participants. To do this, I discuss my research experiences with two image-based social media projects: the online conference *Braving Body Shame* and the sexual health education Instagram page The Vulva Gallery. Finally, I reflect on my own research practices in order to demonstrate a feminist research ethic of self-reflexivity.

Approaches to Privacy and a Heuristic for Image-Based Platforms

The dynamic world of social media research requires scholars of many backgrounds to think critically about their research practices. This conversation contribution is less concerned with what happens in cases of automated data collection and more about the situations where the identity of the research subject is the focus of the research. Scholars across disciplines use internet research to look at language and social action. As Amber Buck and Devon Ralston note, writing studies professionals use internet research to discuss student writing practices, digital rhetorical practices, participate in digital ethnographies, and more. It is important within all of these contexts to consider “who is conducting that research, how communities are represented, and how that data is collected and distributed are key concerns for writing researchers and point to the need for considering critical digital literacy in research ethics” (Buck and Ralston 3). Buck and Ralston provide an excellent heuristic for reflective research and data collection. I build on this heuristic by providing further considerations for video and image-based media, while also demonstrating a process of reflection that is necessary for ethical engagement with social media research. Although using someone’s words in research carries risk, attaching a face and body to that information is even riskier, particularly with the rise in deepfakes and identity fraud.¹ Scholars have begun to discuss how to protect the privacy of individuals when their identities are easily searchable—such as when their name or likeness is contained in a post—and IRB has measures to address this risk. IRB also attends to voice and image included through interviews and videos.

But now, scholars must update our approach to address voice and image in online data collection.

Buck and Ralston's exploration of key considerations is the jumping off point for this discussion, which formulates four questions for scholars to consider: 1) *Who owns the post?* 2) *What is the network of the user?* 3) *How is the user engaging with their own privacy?* and 4) *What are my research values?*

Buck and Ralston thus encourage us to question who owns the posts, where they can be shared, and how the presence of a researcher complicates those two questions. These questions are further complicated depending on the positionality of the social media users. Stephanie Vie explains that "it's critical to consider as researchers whether and how to share and recirculate those stories, particularly when they're being shared by individuals from vulnerable populations" (262). Lauren Cagle speaks to researchers' positionality and asks scholars to consider their agency and engage with participants about... where participants' information falls along the "public/private continuum"(7). In other words, scholars have to consider their role and consider the implications of further sharing posts from participants whose consent was not given.

The public/private continuum is complicated on social media, where images often travel beyond intended audiences. Social media platforms often collapse audiences, "making it difficult for people to use the same techniques online that they do to handle multiplicity in face-to-face conversation" (Marwick and boyd, "I Tweet," 120). As a result, even if a poster is sharing private information, they may not have the intention of a broad, public audience. This can be especially true on sites like Instagram and TikTok where popular "Explore" pages and "For You" feeds send content to a wide range of people. These types of platforms ask users to have a less defined audience, making ethical research more complicated. Researchers need to consider the ethical implications of shifting audiences to an academic space by including posts in their data set. When people post images or videos online, it is highly unlikely that they imagine a group of academics discussing their posts. For example, if a person posts a political rant online for their friends and family, they may not envision that a researcher of political rhetoric would engage with them, nor present their work to another group of researchers. In cases where informed consent is not possible, such as one of the case studies I discuss later on, it is key that researchers consider what is at stake for posters and their identities. Therefore, asking *Who owns the post? Is the owner different than the original poster? What are the implications of sharing this image in a different context than its intended space?* can lead to greater contemplation and ethical engagement with online data. It is true of both text and image posted to social media that users' posts often travel beyond their intended audience. With images, and the potential implications of likeness being shared, researchers need to consider ethics beyond the original poster's desire and broaden thinking to focus on networks.

One way to complicate engagement with visual posts is to consider the role of networked publics in digital research. danah boyd defines networked publics as “spaces constructed through networked technologies and imagined communities that emerge as a result of the intersection of people, technology, and practice” (Marwick and boyd, “Networked Privacy,” 1059). Alice Marwick and danah boyd take up this concept and note that viewing privacy beyond a binary will allow for a community-based approach to information sharing, rather than an individual one. In this conception of privacy, networks are negotiated between changing audiences, “social norms, and technical affordances” (Marwick and boyd, “Networked Privacy,” 1064). To illustrate this concept in action, consider Michael Zimmer’s discussion of a research team looking at Facebook accounts of college-students. Despite the steps taken by the team to protect the users’ privacy, the identities of those in the database were easily discovered. Zimmer contends that had the researchers adopted a more networked view of online information, they could have better shielded the participants from discovery. This view of privacy allows scholars to further nuance their approach to information published online. In some cases, as Zimmer points out, users set specific restraints to limit who sees through the social media platform itself. Some platforms, like Tik Tok, are designed to have a more expansive networked reach. In the case of Zimmer, lack of attention to the power of networks allowed for the identities of individual participants to be easily found. Contrastingly, Alice Marwick and danah boyd looked at the privacy of teenagers and their posting online. They found that teenagers saw privacy as a matter of boundaries, primarily consisting of trust and context. They argue that “conceptualizing privacy as networked highlights the difficulty involved in defining or even understanding social contexts, as they are co-constructed by all present and shaped by the affordances of the social technology in play” (“Networked Privacy,” 1063). The key difference between these approaches is that Marwick and boyd centered the teenagers’ understanding of privacy and their knowledge of their own networks. Therefore, they were able to approach the participants based on social contexts that the teens were already aware of and comfortable in. Additionally, considering networks has the potential to protect research participants because it makes researchers more aware of the many ways that privacy can be breached across a variety of contexts. Therefore, scholars should ask themselves: *Who does the users’ network include? How is the network potentially impacted by the platform they are using?*

The emphasis on network also raises the question of identity. Often, researchers will come to a specific online community because of the identities of the communities they are studying, so they must be mindful of the cultural implications of online engagement. Privacy is culturally situated. For example, Catherine Knight Steele discusses how Black communities may share public information online but intend for it to remain within that discourse community like a type of oral cultural community (116). Sharing social media information outside of its intended socio-cultural situations can put marginalized communities at risk of harm. As Zimmer notes, “merely having one’s personal information stripped from the intended sphere of the social networking profile and amassed into a database for external review becomes an affront to the subjects’ human dignity and their ability to control the flow of their personal information” (321). Therefore, it is important to

view each post in terms of the users' cultural experience and ask: *Am I interacting with a culture that might define privacy differently than I do?* This question may not have an obvious or clear answer but demonstrates that researchers should engage in some reflexivity about the assumptions we bring to the question of privacy.

Beyond these more subject-focused questions, an ethical approach to research should acknowledge the role of the researcher. *How am I defining my own ethical engagement? How are my values as a researcher reflected in my process of researching?* For example, as a feminist researcher, it is important for me to center the lived experiences of my subjects. I subscribe to a feminist ethics of care that is both “a value and a practice, both affective and cognitive” (Tidénberg 7). It requires researchers to be mindful of power dynamics and ask sticky questions of representation. This approach to research ethics necessitates a reflective process where individuals can confirm that I am interpreting their experiences and intentions correctly. In the absence of this possibility, it is necessary for my analysis to be careful and supported. The work of feminist research is not simple—there is emotional labor present in care-based ethics, and an approach that prioritizes individual autonomy and experience is not always the most effective for a research project that aims to be more generalizable. It is important, however, for researchers to establish their individual value of ethics beyond the pragmatic concerns of IRB.

I began this conversation by noting that the landscape of social media is constantly changing. At our current cultural moment, it is difficult to say what online research will look like in a few years' time. Therefore, any approach to internet research ethics needs to be flexible and self-reflexive. In the following section, I detail my experiences working with two datasets shared in visual formats and the ethical considerations I undertook while doing this. I use my work not because it is exemplary, but because I believe it is important that researchers are transparent in their practices, even when we might make different choices in the present. It is this amount of self-reflexivity that will lead to ethical engagements with internet research.

Case Studies: Braving Body Shame and The Vulva Gallery

To demonstrate these guiding questions in action, I will discuss two research projects, one finished and one ongoing, that helped me shape this approach to researching social media images online. The Braving Body Shame conference first took place in the spring of 2020 and featured speakers from a variety of backgrounds. The conference was virtual and took place over a week. I was initially drawn to the conference because of the explicit focus on embodiment and shame, and I analyzed the various ways that participants in the conference described their experiences of overcoming shame. I examined nine video interviews from actresses, activists, dancers, and students who discussed their feelings of shame and how they have worked to move past it (Taylor). This study initiated my interest in internet research ethics as I had to consider my use of these videos for the purpose of academic publication.

The second case study I discuss involves the Instagram page, The Vulva Gallery. The page features illustrations of people's vulvas with their stories of embodiment and acceptance. Though the posts do not feature individual's faces, they often include their name, information about their family, friends, and locations, and unique experiences that could threaten anonymity. Both of these research sites were places where participant experiences were already grouped together on an online platform, so I knew that the individuals had agreed to have their information shared beyond their immediate followers or network. This does not, of course, as discussed above, assume that the individuals imagined that their materials would one day be the center of research studies.

Who Owns the Post?

In the case of Braving Body Shame, the conference owned the posts. In my analysis, I did not link to the speakers' platforms outside of the conference, aiming to honor their wishes about where and how their information is shared. However, my ethical considerations did not end there. Despite the fact that the conference was open, the participants in the Braving Body Shame conference mentioned explicitly that their content was not aimed at academic audiences. In fact, the organizers state the misconceptions in academic research as the exigency for their entire conference. During my writing and review process, this tension came up fairly frequently. The home page of the conference still states:

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 less academic-focused. (Braving Body Shame).

The conference organizers felt that academic discussions of body shame often removed the lived experience of individuals, favoring generalizable and quantitatively driven information. How did I, then, as a researcher, justify researching a group whose stated exigency was to move away from academic audiences? More importantly, how would I protect their likeness as I worked to analyze it? First, I ensured that my research goals aligned with the conference goals – to focus on the lived affective and embodied experience of people experiencing body shame. Second, the speakers encouraged viewers to share the information widely, without any caveats about academic research. I was never able to reach the conference organizers after trying several times throughout the research process. Third, I only studied video interviews that had been shared beyond the conference (see explanation in next section).

With the Vulva Gallery, I had a different experience. It was much clearer how to protect the identity of participants, partially because the posts were already anonymous. The images were illustrations, therefore protecting the likeness of the individuals, and I could protect their privacy by following the example of the page. The Instagram page and gallery owned and posted the image,

and therefore the reach was broad. The participants submitted their own images for the purpose of education and empowerment. For example, the About page on the website states that “*The Vulva Gallery* is an online gallery and educational platform celebrating vulva diversity, aiming to improve sexual health education and opening up conversation about topics that are still being stigmatised.” The educational purpose behind the postings reveals that the audience is intentionally broad. The participants agreed to have their images shared via a popular social media site and are aware that the audience they may be reaching is larger than their individual follower-base. Beyond considering ownership, looking at the networked publics of the posts allowed for more nuanced analysis of ethical considerations.

What Is the Network of the User?

Beyond the specific audience of the individuals, it is important to consider the broader networks that they engage, specifically with how their posts are distributed based on platform affordances. In the case of Braving Body Shame, the audience was not markedly different from the network of the participants, at least at first. The videos were originally posted on a website for conference purposes only and required a password to access. After the conference, however, the videos were posted on YouTube with the consent of the participants, according to the conference organizers. This move made me feel more confident in my use of the data, as it was clear that the participants consented to their talks being shared beyond the initial audience of the conference. I initially received feedback from my article reviewers that I needed to more clearly justify why I was using this information at what seemed against the wishes of the conference organizers. I explained that each of the individual participants posted their videos. For analysis, I only drew from YouTube videos that had been highly circulated and suggested high public engagement. Some of the more popular participants had tens of thousands of followers and linked the videos to their Instagram feeds. Because these were public figures, the question of ethics was less about protecting their identities and more about considering the agency and decision-making of the participants. Had the videos only existed on the Braving Body Shame website, I do not think I would have proceeded with my research. Furthermore, the networked of speakers expanded far past conference attendees because the speakers employed the affordances of the platforms. Speakers shared clips of video interviews, spliced together parts of their talks, and re-shared both to their feeds and stories on Instagram. Again, this intentional public reach gave me confidence in including these materials in online research.

Similarly, The Vulva Gallery used the affordances of Instagram to expand the network of people who see the vulva illustrations. My engagement with these posts was also about honoring the intention and agency of the participants. According to the owner of the site and illustrator, Hilde Atalanta, the participants submit their own images and stories to be published on both the website and Instagram. The individuals are not directly connected to the page through tagging, so their direct exposure to the network of the page is limited unless they comment directly on

the post itself. The Instagram page had already done the work of considering consent and network, meaning at the very least that participants knew that their images would be shared to a public space. However, as other scholars note, this was not informed consent to participate in my research, begging the question of the benefits of doing this research and potential harms for participants. The Vulva Gallery fills a similar gap in popular sex education as it does in academic research—there are very limited discussions of diverse bodies in health education and related scholarship. Academic research on visual representations of female body parts, especially sexual organs, is primarily focused on harm. This research adds an empowerment focus. In addition, my research goals aligned with the purpose of the gallery—to introduce narratives of diverse bodies into sexual education. These factors gave me confidence that I was honoring participants' intentions and not introducing more harm than they were already exposed to.

How is the User Defining Their Own Privacy?

Beyond an analysis of the network that the information was shared in, it is important to consider how the individuals consider their own privacy. In both cases I discuss, I was studying diverse populations that were united by a common identity or experience. This, however, did not ensure that each individual person considered privacy in the same way. Within the context of *Braving Body Shame*, the participants were part of marginalized and multi-marginalized communities. Each speaker experienced some level of discrimination based on their size, and many experienced oppressions related to their race, gender, ability status, or sexuality. Though participants primarily discussed body shame, this affective experience was never fully separate from their other experiences of shame. Each of the speakers noted that they wanted to share their experiences of body shame so that others' experiencing shame and people perpetuating shame can learn from their experiences. They consented to the videos being posted for conference participants and then for the public at large. I did not engage with any material about the subjects outside of the video interviews in an attempt to maintain the amount of privacy that they agreed to.

Following my experience with *Braving Body Shame*, I closely considered the potential harm and how the participants considered their own privacy for Vulva Gallery participants. The Vulva Gallery is a pseudo-anonymous site; most of the stories contain first names and identifiable information such as location and experiences that are unique. However, this information was presented on Instagram and the gallery's website. I chose to not include any of the images of vulvas or stories that could be identifiable in my research, favoring quotes that contributed to a thematic analysis. The identities of the participants were hidden aside from what they chose to reveal in their narratives, making it difficult to discern if they thought about privacy differently based on cultural differences. Still, by consciously working to not introduce harm and considering individuals' definitions of privacy, researchers can work toward more ethical online research.

As I described earlier, my approach to online research is grounded in feminist research ethics, and as I walked through the above questions before determining whether or not to finish and start these projects, I made it a priority to ground my analysis in the lived experiences of participants. I centered both the *Braving Body Shame* conference participants and Vulva Gallery posters' goals in my work and withheld any impulse to critique, instead prioritizing how they publicly framed their personal experiences. As may be evident from my detailing of this decision-making process, the ethics felt clearer in the Vulva Gallery than *Braving Body Shame*, despite the fact that the former contains more private information. This clarity is in part because of the nature of the public information and partially because I refined my approach to ethical considerations.

These guiding questions are not a comprehensive list of things to consider, but they do provide a heuristic for examining the ethical implications of researching visual platforms. Because the posts are more embodied, the researcher should carefully consider the material consequences of their research. By asking these questions before engaging in research, scholars are more likely to treat participants with ethics and care.

Conclusion, or a Moment of Reflexivity

In an attempt to honor my feminist research ethic, the writing of this conversation contribution has made me re-evaluate my own orientation to participants' privacy and the value of my work. Particularly, I was much more aware of my research ethics in analyzing the Vulva Gallery because of the questions posed by reviewers during the process of first publishing the piece on the *Braving Body Shame* conference. I did not receive formal training in online research, and so my initial question, analysis, and consideration left out the negotiation process that is privacy setting. This is perhaps an argument for more training on online research ethics in graduate school, and more broadly an example of a feminist research reflection that interrogates decision-making. I would have likely considered a different set of questions if I had been thinking about the agency of the participants beyond availability of the Body Shame video interviews. This reflective process will facilitate my ethical research decisions in the future, as well as model processes for interrogating the complicated relationship between participants' privacy, agency, and networked engagement for other researchers.

As many researchers have expressed, wading through the constantly changing landscape of social media requires a re-evaluation of research processes. The set of questions I propose is just one example of the many ways that researchers can approach their ethical considerations, and I invite scholars to build upon this heuristic in establishing best practices for digital research on visual materials. Like Buck and Ralston, I acknowledge that "issues of privacy and surveillance are fraught and always changing on social media platforms" (10). The relationship between public information online and privacy concerns will continue to blur and following a feminist ethics

of centering the experiences of individuals is one way to honor the complexities of the platforms and people we study.

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Towards Best Practices for Podcasting in Rhetoric and Composition

Charles Woods & Devon Fitzgerald Ralston

Abstract: As research across disciplines abandons a sole print focus and recognizes the importance of podcasting for making meaning and understanding the world, scholar-podcasters in rhetoric and composition create podcasts that extend the field's reach to new audiences and impact research trajectories. In this article, we expand the "Heuristic for Reflective Research/Data Collection" (the Heuristic) posited by Amber Buck and Devon Ralston to examine the research methods of *re:verb: A Podcast about Politics, Culture, and Language in Action* podcast. We offer guidance towards best practices based on feminist principles and methods for podcasters podcasting in rhetoric and composition.

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Keywords: feminist methods, online research, podcasts, podcasting

Introduction

The turn towards multimodal composing in rhetoric and composition has inspired researchers and practitioners—including in the sub-field of computers and writing—to create and circulate various scholarly digital genres including blogs, documentary films, videos, and podcasts, which are available online. Many of these projects continue to increase in views and downloads each year and are emerging as popular digital spaces for scholarly discourse and academic research across disciplines. The podcasters producing *Pedagogue*, *Rhetorcity*, *The Big Rhetorical Podcast*, and *re:verb: A Podcast about Politics, Culture, and Language in Action* (*re:verb*), among others, have demonstrated that podcasting in rhetoric and composition is a sustainable, legitimate method of knowledge creation and circulation⁹. The affordances of podcasting and podcasts—and thus, listening—coalesce with feminist research values, including narrativity, collectivity, inclusivi-

9 1 Podcasts have been awarded prestigious awards in the field of rhetoric and composition, including the Michelle Kendrick Outstanding Digital Production Award presented by Computers and Composition and the John Lovas Award from *Kairos: A Journal of Rhetoric, Technology, and Pedagogy*.

ty, accessibility (Ratcliffe; Ratcliffe; Royster and Kirsch; Ceraso; Ceraso; Hocks and Comstock; McGregor; Easter and Marquardt; Woods and Wood). In this cluster conversation, we argue podcasters should use feminist research methods in developing their podcasts, including: enacting collective knowledge making, prioritizing stories as a site of that knowledge, and creating best practices for podcasters in rhetoric and composition, which includes valuing collaboration, accessibility, and feminist citation practices. In this article, we interrogate the research methods of a single podcast as an example of this argument and suggest that further research on podcasts be conducted to further develop this scholarly conversation.

Podcasts maintain the potential to “shift the ecosystem of scholarship so that new forms of thinking become possible” (McGregor). But podcasters must think through their research methods when developing a podcast that will extend across multiple arenas simultaneously. Podcasters do not rely on the guidance of editorial boards unless they are directly associated with an academic journal or organization, nor do they rely on traditional peer-review infrastructures that support content quality through scholarly oversight. How, then, do podcasters choose who to cite in show notes and which sources to lean on for audio clips for topics which reach academic and public audiences? Each podcaster or team of podcasters determines their own approach to online research as well as how to balance scholarly expectations with the expectations of wider audiences. How do podcasters archive audio data amid expanding ethical concerns as policies for different platforms, software, and cloud-based technologies impact the privacy and confidentiality of recordings? Each podcaster creates their own methods of data storage and destruction without explicit guidelines. We offer advice on how podcasters can negotiate these complex questions using feminist research methods to develop their projects and hope this cluster conversation piece leads to larger discussions about podcasting in the field.

The Association of Internet Researchers (AoIR) updated their ethics guidelines in 2019, which researchers can use as an interdisciplinary guide to ethical online research. Since individual understandings of research ethics vary, the “under-construction” foundation of research methods for podcasters remains an issue as their methods are emerging, increasingly networked, and, in many cases, undocumented. This murkiness leads to questions such as: do podcasters performing interviews sift through various qualitative data (e.g., subject-specific bibliographies and author biographies) online before booking guests? If so, how do they perform it? Do podcasters consider how the “prevalence of the digital in rhetoric and writing affect[s] the questions we ask, the methods we use to answer these questions, the knowledge we make, and the teaching practices we employ”? (VanKooten and Del Hierro 3). Furthermore, digital rhetoric scholars have considered the issues researchers face when moving feminist practices online, asking: “how should feminist researchers handle the politics of location, interpretation, and publication when working in increasingly networked and mediated online spaces?” (McKee and Porter 170)¹⁰.

¹⁰ McKee and Porter draw on the work of Gesa Kirsch in *Ethical Dilemmas in Feminist Research: The Politics of Location, Interpretation, and Publication*, SUNY Press, 1999.

Technofeminists were correct that profound technological achievements like the Internet did not “make it any more possible for women to find virtual landscapes for re-inventing and re-representing themselves” (Blair and Takayoshi). This is true of all technologies, including podcasts. Yet, the collaborative nature of podcasts avails itself to a more equitable “negotiation of the power dynamics at play with redressing access biases and reimagining more just technology design” (DeVoss, Haas, and Rhodes). Podcasts could lead to more robust, diverse, and accurate narratives of and about the field. However, unless podcasters pay careful attention to their research methods—and utilize feminist research methodologies—then “more traditional mass cultural representations will have simply found a new home in a new medium” (Blair and Takayoshi). Therefore, podcasters should apply Digital Black Feminist¹¹ approaches by “centering voices and thoughts of community members across non-academic and academic spaces,” (Haywood 34) as they offer spaces for “engagement with complicated histories and complex arguments” (Steele 16) as a way of establishing equitable podcast research and production.

Accordingly, feminist scholars performing research in digital spaces have focused on online research methods by theorizing about podcasts (McGregor; Tiffe and Hoffman); composing with sound (Comstock and Hocks; Rodrigue and Stedman); designing for accessibility (Butler) and considering the implications of big data (Buck and Ralston). Amber Buck and Devon Ralston describe a “Heuristic for Reflective Research and Data Collection,” (the “Heuristic”), a multipronged approach that serves as an ethical guide rooted in reflexivity for researchers collecting data online. We believe the Heuristic can serve as a prototypical guide for podcasters that helps them work toward establishing best practices for producing podcasts outside the purview of journals, which follow editorial standards. Our work here moves towards such practices informed by the Heuristic to provide guidance in podcasting. To illustrate feminist values applied to research methods and podcasting, we examine *re:verb*.

Expanding the Heuristic to Account for Podcasting

re:verb launched in 2018 and is produced by a team of podcasters, including Alex Helberg, Calvin Pollak, Sophie Wodzak, and Ben Williams. The primary focus of *re:verb* is on American culture, and recent episodes have focused on artificial intelligence (AI) and writing, pronoun usage in the public sphere, and the films of Jordan Peele. *Re:verb* demonstrates that developing a podcast is more than just uploading a sound file to an RSS feed: a podcast includes producing and editing audio, running a website and social media management, and creating digital artwork to promote episodes. Analyzing these aspects of *re:verb* reveal how podcasts are a feminist research method and examining how podcasters think about research ethics further highlights podcasting as a feminist method.

Technofeminist researchers often emphasize digital ethics due to the intuitive usability and growing prevalence of tools to collect data from Big Technology companies (Markham, Tiidenberg,

11 Catherine Knight Steele’s *Digital Black Feminism* (2021) traces the history of Black feminist technoculture in the United States through blogs, tweets, and social media posts to critique algorithmic racism, influencer culture, and other forms of digital aggression.

and Herman; Mehlenbacher and Mehlenbacher). Additionally, feminist scholars are considering how bodies are impacted in the act of digital making. Trisha Nicole Campbell makes the case for what she calls “a practice-based model for beginning the process of [digital] empathy” where she analyzes the experiences of recording voices and the labor involved in sound editing and learning audio platforms and describes how “digital recording technology enlists our bodies in speaking, but also listening, and in speaking and listening simultaneously” (“Digital Empathy”). Podcasting is laborious. However, the value of making collective knowledge more mobile and accessible compels us to view podcasts and podcasting as worthwhile.

There are many approaches to guide digital research methods (see VanKooten and Del Hierro), but they are not usually about podcasting. This includes the Heuristic, which is designed as a feminist methodology concerned with how privacy is conceived among different communities who may be unclear about how online researchers use public data (e.g., data scraped from Twitter). Yet the Heuristic is primed for expansion for podcasting since it focuses on a primarily image-heavy and text-based platform, with podcasts introducing the sonic mode. In the following table, we utilize the Heuristic to examine *re:verb*'s research practices and demonstrate how to expand the Heuristic to account for the practice of podcasting.

<p>Heuristic Research Questions</p>	<p>Applied to <i>re:verb</i></p>	<p>Questions for Podcasters</p>
<p>What are you studying?</p>	<p>What is <i>re:verb</i> podcast studying?</p> <p>Meaning making in American culture. Emphasizes analysis on culture, but not solely focused on the American political arena, and includes popular culture. <i>re:verb</i> makes their focus clear in the tagline, which is centered on the website and the cover image seen on podcast apps. Additionally, the “About” section of the website includes information about the creators, <i>re:verb</i>’s purpose, and how it fits into the scholarly landscape.</p>	<p>What is the topic of the podcast?</p> <p>How does your podcast enter into or extend scholarly conversations on its topic?</p> <p>How is a podcast useful for researchers, instructors, and students who are interested in this topic?</p> <p>Are you positioned, ethically, to enter into ongoing conversations on this topic?</p>

Heuristic Research Questions	Applied to <i>re:verb</i>	Questions for Podcasters
<p>Who are you reaching?</p>	<p>Who is <i>re:verb</i> podcast reaching?</p> <p>Listeners in rhetoric and composition. Other listeners include general audiences, undergraduate and graduate students, podcast browsers who are educated or want to be educated on the topic.</p>	<p>How does the podcast merge academic and public discourse?</p> <p>How does the content of your podcast, including the guests booked, topics covered, and projects promoted, center traditionally marginalized voices?</p> <p>What different protections (e.g., closing comments, protecting anonymity) do you utilize to protect guests, particularly those from marginalized positions, from potential harassment?</p>
<p>What are you collecting?</p>	<p>What is <i>re:verb</i> podcast collecting?</p> <p>Sound files, online images, and listener data. Podcasting platforms allow data collection about listener demographics, downloads, website hits, etc.</p>	<p>What do you want to know about your audience? Why?</p> <p>Are you following Intellectual Property (IP) guidelines for collecting media online to develop the podcast?</p> <p>How does listener data influence the development of your podcast? Does your podcast project need IRB approval to account for transparency about the data you are collecting?</p>

<p>Heuristic Research Questions</p>	<p>Applied to <i>re:verb</i></p>	<p>Questions for Podcasters</p>
<p>What are your study's boundaries?</p>	<p>What are the limitations of <i>re:verb</i>'s podcasting research?</p> <p>Primarily sonic modes can be limiting for expanding podcast listenership. Temporality is crucial since <i>re:verb</i> comments on American culture. Additionally, <i>re:verb</i> must account for podcasting research (e.g., booking, sound editing), including labor concerns and constraints of podcasting tools and platforms.</p>	<p>Are you being reflexive in acknowledging your own limitations as a researcher as your attitudes and opinions change over time?</p> <p>How will you maintain the sustainability of the podcast as research ethics evolve over time?</p>
<p>Are you complying with all terms of service (including tools being used)?</p>	<p>Is <i>re:verb</i> podcast complying with all terms of service (including the tools being used)?</p> <p>Listeners can inquire to <i>re:verb</i> podcast to learn about their compliance practices via links on their website and social media pages.</p>	<p>Have you considered the complexity of complying with all terms of service, even beyond the primary podcast hosting platform?</p> <p>Are you complying with the terms of service of the third parties that web-based podcasting tools (e.g., Spotify), website platforms (e.g., WordPress), and social media accounts engage?</p>

Heuristic Research Questions	Applied to <i>re:verb</i>	Questions for Podcasters
<p>What about ephemerality?</p>	<p>How does <i>re:verb</i> podcast handle ephemerality?</p> <p>Access to episodes could change or <i>re:verb</i> could stop recording and publishing episodes. Their podcast or website host platforms could close. For the podcasters producing <i>re:verb</i>, reactions to specific contexts; feelings, ideas, opinions might change over time.</p>	<p>Have you considered how to maintain an archive of your podcast so you and your collaborators can write about what you produced, and researchers can analyze what was created?</p> <p>Are you collaborating with other podcasters and their students in research studies</p> <p>as a method of building community?</p>
<p>Is there an opportunity for participants to respond to your analysis?</p>	<p>Is there an opportunity for participants to respond to <i>re:verb</i> podcast?</p> <p><i>re:verb</i> listeners can interact with the podcast on various social media platforms, including Twitter and Facebook. Additionally, a form and comments function are available on the “Contact” page of the website.</p>	<p>Are you creating an open dialogue by inviting critique of your podcast?</p> <p>Do you provide clear instructions to listeners about the ways they can engage with your podcast?</p> <p>Is your podcast accessible, including transcripts of episodes, alt text for online images, and a website compatible with screen readers?</p>

<p>Heuristic Research Questions</p>	<p>Applied to <i>re:verb</i></p>	<p>Questions for Podcasters</p>
<p>How are you representing the context of circulating information?</p>	<p>How does <i>re:verb</i> podcast represent its context?</p> <p><i>re:verb</i> publishes show notes with each podcast episode as a way of demonstrating the scholarly context of their content. The podcasters introduce interviewees, scholars, and scholarship, during episodes. They provide a bibliography and links to accessible transcripts for listeners on their website. Additionally, <i>re:verb</i> produces different categories of episodes, including “re:joinder,” “re:blurb,” and “re:read.”</p>	<p>Are you being reflexive about how your podcast exists among other scholarship in and beyond research in rhetoric and composition?</p> <p>Are you practicing ethical citation by emphasizing where references (e.g., hyperlinks, show notes) for your project are located for audiences who want to learn more about a topic or trace the scholarly or cultural conversations?</p>

Heuristic Research Questions	Applied to <i>re:verb</i>	Questions for Podcasters
<p>How are you representing participants and their data?</p>	<p>How is <i>re:verb</i> podcast representing interviewees, scholarship, and online media?</p> <p>It is unknown if <i>re:verb</i> producers allow interviewees and guests input on editing or if the podcasters retain final cut. Citations are included in the <i>re:verb</i> show notes on their website as are links to online resources for sound files (e.g., news outlets, YouTube). Photographs and images of interviewees and guests accompany the podcast artwork (e.g., thumbnail).</p>	<p>Are you establishing ethical standards for collaboration (e.g., conducting interviews, inviting contributions) with a foundation in feminist editorial practices?</p> <p>How do feminist citation practices guide who you cite in your podcast?</p> <p>How will you amplify references to the scholars, scholarship, and other projects you cite?</p> <p>Which style guide works for the content of your podcast?</p>

The first few questions in the Heuristic (What are you studying? What are you collecting?) are foundational for all research studies, especially for feminist researchers. Podcasts prove useful in providing vocal space to amplify feminist topics and research (Tiffe and Hoffman). The questions developed in the third column (“Questions for Podcasters”) expand the Heuristic to account for feminist values like reflexivity and community. For example, reflexive podcasters constantly negotiate their limitations as scholars who balance multiple research projects, teach several classes, and serve their department on top of maintaining a personal life beyond their job. Additionally, the complex technical elements of learning about innovative podcasting technologies and the newest recording software can compound the pressure podcasters feel to produce quality content that feels like research. As such, it is laborious and time-consuming for a scholar, who is also a podcaster, to balance all these roles and stay current on topics in the field, let alone beyond it. Together, these questions provide a robust framework for podcasters to create ethically aware work.

Toward Best Practices for Podcasting in the Field

In this section, we work toward establishing best practices rooted in feminist values for podcasting in rhetoric and composition through analysis of *re:verb* podcast. As explained earlier, podcasters working in the field have demonstrated sustainability proving the digital genre is a

valuable way of making and circulating collective knowledge. *re:verb* is a model podcast to use to analyze how feminist research methods can be central to a podcast's evolution and sustainability because we understand *re:verb* as podcasting with feminist tenets in mind, even if implicitly, as evidenced by its approach to different aspects of podcasting, including collaboration. Thus, best practices for podcasting in rhetoric and composition must amplify collaboration (as described above), value accessibility, and utilize feminist citation practices.

re:verb's attention to accessibility involves using high contrast design (white text on a black background) for episode thumbnails. And while red is a component of the overall color palette for the podcast, using white text contributes to readability. Providing thumbnails with guest photographs for certain episodes on the website makes it easy for audiences to quickly gauge the content of each episode. Clicking on the title of the episode or the thumbnail hyperlinks the audience to an episode-specific page featuring show notes detailing the context of the episode more thoroughly, and highlighting information about the guest. Additionally, *re:verb*'s show notes include a list of citations for each episode and a link to a transcript (if available) that is compatible with a screen reader.

re:verb includes transcripts for most episodes. For some episodes (like the *re:joinder* series) a transcript is not provided. Access to the digital transcription tools can be tricky for grassroots podcasters depending on funding, recording methods, and content. However, providing a transcript is a best practice for an accessible podcast, many of which include interviews with scholars, activists, and other subject-matter experts. Interview podcasts are a popular format in the field and individual podcasters develop their own interview techniques over time. Yet there are some interviewing methods which align with feminist approaches to qualitative research, including providing questions to guests beforehand and offering a collaborative approach to developing questions. This approach allows for interviewees to address concerns with or provide additional information to podcasters. Such collaboration contributes to a better conversation and provides a structure for the episode that acknowledges appreciation for the guest's time and labor.

A component of citation practices, and thus a best practice for podcasters, is building ethos by introducing guests using official titles and institutional/organizational affiliations, as well as by offering an overview of their research and professional accomplishments. *re:verb* hosts introduce guests and establish rapport early in each episode, allowing space for full responses. The podcast website draws attention to episodes featuring interviews by highlighting guest names both in the episode title and on the thumbnail and including either photographs of the guest or information about their most recent publications. But what protocols are in place for protecting collaborators from dissenting or hostile audiences of a podcast? Establishing methods to protect the identity of collaborators in advance of interviews is an essential component of cultivating a vocal space. Identifying scholars—particularly feminist scholars—participating in polarizing and politically charged debates can lead to concerns about privacy and retaliation. Thus, podcasters must caution col-

laborators that they will identify their voices and institutional affiliations in their introductions and that audio metadata could detail geo-location, leaving them in a potentially vulnerable situation. Indeed, while these concerns for research collaborators seem new because the podcast remains an emerging digital genre, they mirror the concerns that feminist scholars writing about justice and equity have faced and continue to face.

Reflexive podcasters should practice inclusivity as they consider how their podcast exists among other scholarship in and beyond the field. Since podcasts reach audiences beyond traditional academic venues, podcasters should center diverse and even polarizing perspectives which challenge authoritarianism and hegemony. Thus, who a podcaster chooses to cite matters. Sara Ahmed explains, “Citation is how we acknowledge our debt to those who came before; those who helped us find our way when the way was obscured because we deviated from the paths we were told to follow” (17). Podcasters have the opportunity to offer a space for uncomfortable topics and must acknowledge the potential vulnerabilities of their guests. This inclusive approach amplifies attention to names and pronouns as well as a consistent awareness for citing trans scholars without using deadnames (Thieme and Saunders, 84).

Practicing inclusivity means conveying a willingness to be an accountable source for scholarly debate. One way podcasters can think through what it means for a new venue to join ongoing scholarly conversations is through citation practices. *re:verb* provides “Works and Concepts Referenced” for each episode using APA documentation as well as hyperlinks to contextual resources and information about where audiences can find a collaborator’s scholarship, including their books, articles, and digital work. This practice demonstrates awareness of the positionality on the part of the *re:verb* team as they create worthwhile collaborative opportunities. As podcasts try transition to publishing venues that consistently include credible academic discourse in our field, and across disciplines, it will be important for podcasters to engage with their audience via direct messaging, email, and website contact forms as these forms of communication offer more immediate dialogue than traditional academic venues (e.g., books, articles). Although best practices will evolve over time, these tenets can provide a foundation to guide podcasters in the near future.

Conclusion

Rhetoric and composition has embraced podcasting as a valuable method for composing and circulating knowledge in the field. Podcasts and podcasting are popular now, but inevitably new digital tools will be created that press scholars to rethink the kinds of multimodal projects that can best advance the field. As mentioned earlier, while podcasts like *re:verb* continue, and new podcasts debut, questions about research ethics will require further attention. For example: how do listeners incorporate ideas from *re:verb* into their own scholarship? How do podcasts influence research trajectories? And what methods do podcasters employ to perform research as a project

evolves? The best practices outlined in this cluster conversation serve as a foundation on which future podcasters can work to answer these questions as they develop their podcasts.

But there are other aspects of podcasts and podcasting for future podcasters to consider. For example, how can a podcast count as scholarship? How can podcasts help scholars fulfill tenure and promotion benchmarks that require them to explain how and where their work has been amplified? Podcasts are valuable scholarly contributions that deserve attention during tenure and promotion review because they have the potential to be cited more often than journal articles behind paywalls. Additionally, we encourage podcasters to choose topics substantiated by current rhetoric and composition research. And we hope podcasters choose engaging topics with the potential to merge public and academic discourse. For *re:verb*, their focus on the intersections of culture and rhetoric maintains an immediacy that allows for commentary on cultural moments, including those related to social justice, and invites intertextuality across genres and mediums.

In this article, we have offered guidance that podcasters can take up and use practically throughout the development of their podcast. We have expanded the Heuristic, originally focused on social media sites like Twitter, to account for podcasts as we work toward best practices anchored by feminist principles and methods for podcasting in the field. There is enormous flexibility in the Heuristic's guiding questions, and podcasters can return to them throughout the lifespan of a podcast project. Indeed, we hope they do as we understand practicing reflexivity as a best practice for podcasters. Ultimately, this approach embodies a feminist praxis that acknowledges an awareness of a podcast's and/or podcaster's positionality and demonstrates collaboration through sharing knowledge of trends and research interests currently defining rhetoric and composition.

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A Private Conversation in a Public Place: The Ethics of Studying “Virtual Support Groups” Now

Nora Augustine

Abstract: This essay argues for a reexamination of Internet research on virtual support groups in light of major shifts in these groups' functions over the past decade, specifically the greater amounts of agency for strategic self-concealment/exposure that evolving technology and social norms afford to virtual support group members. This discusses a case study focused on the explosion of synchronous, video-based support groups (e.g., on Zoom) in the United States during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 and beyond. Combining the apparent privacy of face-to-face group meetings with the ethically ambiguous publicness of text-based online communities, Zoom support groups effectively highlight the extent to which our understandings of “online support groups” have changed since scholars first began to research human subjects on the Internet—and therefore how much our ethical considerations must change, too.

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keywords: support groups, internet research ethics, Zoom, domestic violence, confidentiality

I feel compelled to give disclaimers whenever I speak to friends or family about my research on support groups for survivors of domestic violence. I always quickly clarify the circumstances that led me to this work. I want them to know the agency in my research is one where I have personally volunteered as a support group facilitator for nearly seven years—and it's also one where I was previously a client, giving and receiving support in groups just like those that I now lead. Anxiously, I assure others that I would never share identifiable information about the clients I serve or their experiences of abuse with any audience, for any reason, without those clients' knowledge and consent (which I do not wish to seek). Above all, it seems crucial to express that I never imagined conducting research on this agency when I first came into contact with it. It was only after five years of volunteering that I became interested in studying support groups, and that interest proceeded from the hope that rhetoricians like myself might find new ways of lending their specialized skills to non-profit organizations.

Needless to say, these disclaimers are meant to convey that I am acting ethically in my

research—or at least, that I am trying very hard to do so. Investing significant amounts of time, energy, and care back into a community that once did the same for me, I assume a deeply personal mission to “do good research without doing bad things” (Cagle 1). And according to some research ethics scholars, perhaps my choices have been acceptable. In a discussion with Heidi McKee and James Porter regarding her research on medical support groups, Laurie Cubbison opines, “the participant observer needs to establish some street cred... You really need to establish yourself in the community even before you start doing research” (Cubbison qtd. in McKee and Porter 100). Out of context, Cubbison’s statement could seem superfluous: most academics would discourage barging into a community utterly unknown to the researcher and launching a project devoid of any prior contact with potential subjects. Doing so would be deemed intrusive, arrogant, or deceitful, whereas the ability to “develop a relationship over time with participants” was once “a necessity for qualitative researchers (i.e., field research) in traditional social research” (Hall et al. 251). But importantly, what these scholars are discussing is not quite traditional research, but rather research on the Internet—in particular, on content drawn from message boards, listservs, social media posts, and the like. Though they are far easier to access than in-person groups, these Internet communities ironically raise far more ethical conundrums for some researchers who intend to study them.

Throughout the 1990s, increased access to the Internet among the general populace offered unprecedented opportunities for human connection and communication. For individuals who have endured some of the most traumatic or stigmatizing experiences known to humankind—for example, childhood sexual abuse, intimate partner violence, self-harm/suicidality, and so on—the ostensible anonymity and global scope of online communities provided an especially appealing alternative to face-to-face resources. Drawing on culturally available models of supportive communication, Internet users adopted the phrase “online support group” (or “virtual support group”) to refer to a vast range of communities and services enacted among members of various vulnerable populations. Meanwhile, eager to amplify the voices of trauma survivors and situate their experiences within broader systems of harm, scholars also began to study such communities with great enthusiasm—generally availing themselves of raw data in the form of members’ lengthy self-disclosing text posts.¹² Ethicists have expressed concern about the risks of studying online communities for about as long as such research has been conducted (Frankel and Siang 1), yet recent work by rhetoricians indicates that we are still struggling to conceptualize “the public nature of ‘public’ data” (Buck and Ralston 2). Greatly exacerbating this struggle is, of course, the enormous gap between the rate at which “socio-technical systems” transform and the rate at which we can systematically analyze those transformations (Nissenbaum 5).

In this essay, I argue for a reexamination of Internet research on virtual support groups in

12 . Indeed, as is noted in my own autoethnographic research on support groups, studies of web-based communities may be overrepresented in the current scholarly literature precisely due to the comparative practical and ethical difficulties of studying a traditional (confidential, closed membership, face-to-face) support group (Augustine 74).

light of two major socio-technical shifts in recent years: first, the significant changes in most Internet users' relationships to video teleconference technologies (e.g., Zoom) during the COVID-19 pandemic; and second, the resulting changes to the concept of a "support group" as it is understood by vulnerable populations in a post-pandemic age. Clearly, evolving technology and social norms are greatly diversifying the range of online activities we still collectively refer to as "virtual support groups," highlighting the need for a more nuanced analysis of these groups' distinct modalities, the complexity of the self-concealment/exposure they afford, and their resulting epistemic potential. Driven by my experiences as a facilitator of both in-person and virtual support groups for survivors of domestic violence, I built a case study around the explosion of synchronous, video-based support groups in the United States from March 2020 onward. Specifically, I explicate several ethical quandaries that arose from one agency's attempts to implement a Zoom-specific confidentiality policy in its support groups, showing how rapid uptake of this platform introduces new conflicts between core values that are usually compatible. Combining the apparent privacy of face-to-face group meetings with the ambiguous publicness of online communication, Zoom support groups illustrate the extent to which our understandings of "virtual support groups" have changed since scholars first started researching human subjects on the Internet—and therefore how much our ethical considerations must change, too.

Researching Internet Communities: Ongoing Ethical Debates

Most scholars would condemn infiltrating and studying a face-to-face support group without participants' knowledge, yet for virtual communities, the temptation to do this is so strong as to warrant lengthy reflection and ethical debates. Why is this so? For many academics, researching an online support group is exempt from ethical review because the content of such groups is "already public" (Zimmer 313). In other words, it is open for use by anyone on the Internet—the group is easily locatable via search engines, requires no special credentials or identity verification for membership, and (crucially) may be hosted on a platform whose Terms of Service agreement clearly states that users' posts are accessible to the public. Collecting information shared in these groups, then, would be comparable to taking notes on conversations overheard in a "public square" (Kaufman qtd. in Zimmer 321; Bromseth 38) or radio or television show (McKee and Porter 83), and posting a message to potential subjects would be like posting a flier on a bulletin board in a community center (Carrion 444; Opel 188). On the whole, the persuasiveness—and pervasiveness—of the notion that Internet users waive their rights to privacy when using public platforms is so potent that Helen Nissenbaum has christened it "the normative 'knock-down' argument" (114).

Arguments that exclude publicly posted internet content from the purview of Institutional

Review Boards (IRBs) often function as enthymemes, resting on an unspoken assumption that anything public is basically “fair game” for academic research (McKee and Porter 2; Zimmer 323). Nonetheless, modern Internet research ethicists increasingly reject the “public/private dichotomy” as a basis for ethical decisions (Nissenbaum 90), holding that this binaristic view neither reflects humans’ actual perceptions of privacy nor successfully protects them against harmful research methods—even if said methods are fully legal and IRB approved.¹³ Indeed, Dawn Opel summarizes a prevailing position on institutional ethical standards: “[*legality*] is not the whole of ethical research practice, in much the same way that IRB approval does not mean that a researcher has always acted ethically” (183, emphasis in original). Annette Markham and Elizabeth Buchanan similarly problematize the term “human subject” as it is applied in/out of regulatory frameworks, rather directing scholars’ focus to “concepts such as harm, vulnerability, personally identifiable information, and so forth” (6). For these scholars and others, analyzing one’s research design involves a multiplicity of factors beyond the sensitivity of information or its public/private status, and such analysis must be done “using a complex process that weigh[s] these variables contextually” (McKee and Porter 87). Not only is a study’s ethicality not evaluable through a simple binary of ethical/unethical, but it also does not exist on one single continuum of ethical/unethical, and its placement on a wide range of continua cannot be judged solely through theoretical means. Instead, the most recent version of the Association of Internet Researchers’ (AoIR) widely adopted guidelines for ethical research stresses the importance of developing methods “from the bottom up” in a “case-by-case approach” while avoiding “a priori judgments” about what is or is not appropriate (franzke et al. 4).

In accordance with aline shakti franzke et al.’s endorsement of “ethical pluralism” and the many divergent “judgment calls” this approach may produce (6), the AoIR’s ethical guidelines have repeatedly embraced the idea that “*ambiguity, uncertainty, and disagreement are inevitable*” (Ess qtd. in franzke 6, emphasis in original; Markham and Buchanan 5). Given that both the Internet and its users are constantly changing, scholars cannot possibly account for the infinite number of factors that ever have or ever will affect the ethicality of Internet research—they would be shooting at a moving target. Hence, Markham and Buchanan indicate that a “process approach” to ethics “highlights the researcher’s responsibility” for making decisions “within specific contexts and ... a specific research project” (5). While scholars must “consult as many people and resources as possible,” it is clear that their individual values will inform the harms they are willing to risk in order to produce new knowledge (Markham and Buchanan 5).¹⁴ In light of ample research showing online communities’ aversion to being studied (Hall et al. 250; Hudson and Bruckman 135; King 122; Markham and Buchanan 13)—as well as common-sense awareness that groups discussing

13 . For further discussion of the public/private binary construct (and limitations thereof), see Buck and Ralston 3; De Hertogh 493; Hudson and Bruckman 129; King 126; Markham and Buchanan 6; McKee and Porter 77; Mukherjee 206; Opel 181.

14 . McKee and Porter speculate, for instance, that even if an academic community’s own Internet posts were being dissected in unflattering research, “Some AoIR researchers who are staunch advocates of a free use policy will no doubt stand by their convictions, swallow hard, and say, ... ‘the researcher has the right to do that’” (McKee and Porter 9).

“socially sensitive” topics are especially keen to limit their membership to “only others that understand, respect, and support their situation” (King 126)—it seems distinctly important for scholars researching virtual support groups to clarify “what greater benefit justifies the potential risks” of their methods (Markham and Buchanan 11).

A feminist approach to Internet research ethics helps scholars contextualize their choices at every stage of a research project, empowering them to reflect on their individual standpoints while also exploring and valuing a multiplicity of other perspectives. Though it’s apparent that “There is not one single tradition of feminist history” nor “just one discourse” (franzke et al. 64), several principles have emerged as characterizing a feminist approach to Internet research. Among other qualities, scholars have valued a feminist “ethics of care” (Cagle 7; franzke et al. 66; De Hertogh 485; Luka et al 22; Markham 37); standpoint theory and situated knowledges (Cagle 12; Carrion 443; franzke et al. 67; Luka et al. 22; Markham 37); maximally contextualized research choices and data (franzke et al. 69; Luka et al. 26; Markham 37); transparency about method/ologies (Carrion 443; De Hertogh 485; franzke 66; Luka et al. 30); reflexivity throughout the research process (Carrion 446; frankze 69; Luka et al. 23; Markham 37); and reciprocity and beneficence towards the community one is researching (Cagle 7; De Hertogh 495; Hall et al. 250; franzke et al. 71). Underlying all of these values is a mentality that “tilts ethical decision-making toward the needs, expectations, and wishes” of the community under study (McKee and Porter 93). Realizing that the responsibility for making good judgments ultimately falls to individual researchers, feminist approaches compel us to “[put] ourselves in vulnerable and often messy positions, where each researcher looks her or his own biases in the eye” (Luka et al. 31).

Case Study: Zoom Support Groups

Current scholarly discussions of Internet research often underscore—if not conclude on—the notion that ethical guidelines must evolve over time to meet new challenges presented by new conditions of the socio-technical systems we are studying. For example, Markham and Buchanan stress that the 2012 version of the AoIR’s ethical guidelines was developed “in an effort to recognize and respond to the array of changing technologies and ongoing developments” (e.g., greater use of smartphones and social media) that had drastically changed the landscape of Internet-based research since the publication of the first version in 2002 (2).¹⁵ Likewise, the development of increasingly sensitive Internet search engines since the late 1990s clearly problematizes the use of exact quotations from internet communities in past research: McKee and Porter inquire, “Did the discussants in the newsgroups in the 1980s and early 1990s envision the powerful search engine capabilities of Google and the like making their posts easily traceable?” (83). Nevertheless, few existing studies delve deeply into one specific, ongoing socio-technical transformation and its implications for ethical decision-making in the future. In what follows, I

present a case study on video-based, synchronous support groups that convene via the popular video teleconferencing platform Zoom, explicating how the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic have impacted Internet users' relationships with video teleconferencing technology and, consequently, popular understandings of the term "support group."

Under what (if any) conditions is it ethical for a scholar to study communications that occur in the context of a Zoom meeting for some vulnerable populations? While there is no easy answer to this, it is certain that individual scholars' responses—the approaches of which they will approve—are guided in part by their perceptions of the Zoom platform. For many Internet researchers, one of the most important factors affecting the ethicality of a project is its "venue"—the specific online platform they are visiting and their beliefs about its purpose, user base, Terms of Service, social norms, and so on (franzke et al. 16, 18). For instance, McKee and Porter share Yukari Seko's reflections on her research on blogs by self-harming/suicidal authors, observing that "concern about the status of a blog" strongly influences her methods (96). Seko states: "If I think of [blogs] as the letter for the editors, I don't have to get any informed consent, but if I think of it as personal conversation, I have to get informed consent... it's totally related to my articulation of blog" (qtd. in McKee and Porter 95-96). Generally speaking, if a scholar perceives a publicly-accessible Zoom support group as indistinguishable from an open Alcoholics Anonymous meeting at their local church, they might make ethical decisions that favor their right to study this group. Conversely, a scholar who perceives a Zoom support group meeting as similar to a group therapy session at a local mental health clinic will come to quite different conclusions. Some crucial questions for those interested in researching virtual support groups, then, must be, "What *is* Zoom?" and "Who or what is Zoom for?"¹⁶

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the average American would have perceived the Zoom platform—if they had heard of it at all—as a video teleconferencing tool used for professional, utilitarian purposes when an in-person meeting with one's colleagues was unfeasible. Events on this platform probably would not have been "fair game" for academic research, if for no other reason than that opportunities to join a Zoom call you weren't personally invited to were decidedly rare. Precious few scholarly articles had been written about Zoom, and even fewer had explored its utility in collecting data (and the ethics thereof).¹⁷ Yet in early 2020, Internet users' relationships to this platform seemingly transformed overnight. As reported in *The New York Times*, Zoom's daily user base skyrocketed from ten million pre-pandemic to three hundred million in April 2020 (Isaac and Frenkel). In addition to enabling some individuals to work and attend school from home while

16 . Naturally, a speaker's choice of whether to refer to what happens on Zoom as "meetings," "calls," "sessions," "e-conferences," or so forth is an indication of their perceptions of this platform. Pooja Talukdar, for example, uses all of these terms over the course of her analysis of Zoom-based legal mediation services.

17 . One of the most highly influential recent collections of essays on Internet research ethics, Michael Zimmer and Katharina Kinder-Kurlanda's *Internet Research Ethics for the Social Age* (published six years after Zoom's founding), contains zero mentions of Zoom. This is not a flaw in the book, but rather a reflection of Zoom's relative importance to Internet users at this time.

quarantining, Zoom became a primary site of many people's social lives. With just the click of a weblink, it suddenly became possible to join public-facing, widely attended Zoom events hosted by businesses, schools, non-profit organizations, governments, and more any day of the week. Although Zoom's security features soon formed the basis of its appeal for many users (Talukdar 167), to this day, it is not uncommon for Zoom events to be entirely open and accessible to the public. In sum, what was once a fairly niche tool for private professional calls became, quite abruptly, a necessity for people of diverse identities to participate in public life. And public it is: even when hosts take precautions to prevent "Zoom bombing," or disruptions from unwanted/uninvited parties, the possibility of an attendee surreptitiously recording sound, video, images, and text chats is always present

When the COVID-19 pandemic hit the southeastern United States in March 2020, I was one of the most active facilitators in the support group program at a domestic violence agency near my university. As was the case with most non-profit organizations in this era, the staff was obliged to adapt their services into an online format with very little time or prior experience to calibrate their choices. Following global trends, they moved all support group meetings to Zoom. Given the relative accessibility of this online space and the urgency of keeping confidentiality while working with survivors—some of whom could be in serious danger if their information is unprotected—my supervisor and I soon recognized the need to implement Zoom-specific policies. Drafting our first "Zoom Support Group Confidentiality Agreement," a supplement to the "Support Group Participation Agreement" clients always sign before joining a group, was theoretically simple. We sought to identify all possible threats to confidentiality on Zoom and specify how clients should avoid them. However, as we gained more experience with running virtual support groups, these policies received frequent edits and expansions. The guidelines also proved difficult to enforce, highlighting unexpected tensions between confidentiality and other agency values such as client empowerment and access. To capture the ethical complexity of working with this population on this platform, I offer three basic conflicts we encountered with questions we asked ourselves:

Where should group members physically be while attending these meetings via Zoom?

- Are there any cases in which it is not preferred for members to attend via Zoom from home?
- If a member cannot attend via Zoom from home, what alternative locations are acceptable? Are members permitted to attend meetings from their car, their workplace, their school, a park, a café/restaurant, the library, a friend or family member's home, etc.?
- What locations are absolutely unacceptable for attending meetings via Zoom?
- Are members required to stay in the same location for the entire duration of the meeting?
- What measures should members take to ensure that their location is not under audio/

video/other forms of surveillance?

Who should group members be with while attending these meetings via Zoom?

- Are there any cases in which it is not preferred for members to attend alone?
- If a member cannot attend alone, how much space and/or substance (walls, doors, etc.) should separate them from others in their environment?
- What sort of people can be nearby while members are attending meetings via Zoom? Are members permitted to attend meetings in the general vicinity of their abuser, other family members, friends, roommates, colleagues, classmates, fellow patrons, etc.?
- If a member is a caregiver for children, can they tend to those children during Zoom meetings? If yes, is there a maximum age/developmental stage after which this is not acceptable?
- What measures should members take to ensure that people in their environment cannot hear/see the meeting, including the members' own contributions?

What audio/visual information should group members share during meetings?

- Are there any cases in which it is not preferred for members to have their cameras and microphones turned on at all times?
- If a member cannot keep their camera and microphone on at all times, is there a maximum amount of time they are permitted to have either one turned off?
- Are members permitted to obscure information about who/what is in the room with them by (e.g.) using a virtual or blurred background, positioning themselves against a corner or wall, playing background music/other noise, communicating solely via chat text, etc.?
- What obligation do members have to inform the group if they are attending the group under circumstances that threaten confidentiality?
- What measures should members take to ensure that their microphones and cameras are not exposing sensitive information (their full name, home address, occupation, etc.)?

The questions above are difficult to answer, but even if answered through group policies, they are quickly eclipsed by even thornier questions about each policy's relative importance, the harm entailed in violating it, and the harm entailed in enforcing it. Put simply, someone must decide when (if ever) a group member who doesn't follow the group's confidentiality policies should therefore be removed from the meeting. Such an action is undeniably extreme, but at present, it is inherent to Zoom's features that the risk of confidentiality breaches is high and the capacity for any single meeting attendee to prevent such breaches is low. In the absence of substantial data about the dangers of Zoom and/or a professional code of ethics for their position, those who wish to study Zoom support groups may hope the strictest approach to confidentiality will yield the most ethical research. Unfortunately, it isn't clear that this is the case, particularly when such an approach requires the distressing loss of some members' access to the group for the sake of as-yet-unknown gains.

Widespread use of the Zoom platform since 2020 has greatly complicated the ethics of working with vulnerable populations in online spaces. Although in earlier parlance, the phrase “virtual support groups” often signified text-based, asynchronous, and anonymous communities—and traditional support groups were in-person, synchronous, and comparatively vulnerable (revealing a physical self, name, current location, voice, etc.)—these descriptions no longer hold for groups convening via Zoom. While attending a meeting on this platform, a user can choose to share their real-time image, voice, background/location, non-verbal emoji “reactions,” and/or screen in addition to text posts, thus presenting fellow attendees with far more personal information than was possible in earlier online communities. On the other hand, users can also choose *not* to share this information, retaining much more agency to self-conceal than in traditional support groups. As a result, Zoom support groups not only challenge binaristic views of online communication as strictly public/private; they also challenge binaristic views of communication itself as strictly online/offline. The ethical objective of maintaining confidentiality while working with some communities on this platform is therefore thrown into conflict with another, similarly valued objective of benefiting that community by facilitating their access to valuable resources. Whereas confidentiality is sometimes considered a condition of access to social services, empowering persons to speak freely (e.g., give and receive support) about sensitive subjects, here one of these core values must be prioritized at the expense of the other.

The Zoom platform is, by definition, an online technology. Yet as Franzke et al. presciently note in the 2019 version of the AoIR ethical guidelines, it is now “hard or even impossible to separate online and offline life,” because “the world, our work, private and public is already frequently depending on the use of the Internet” (68). Ultimately, the fact that Zoom is simultaneously public and private—and the power to toggle between various dimensions and levels of on- and offline-ness is in users’ hands more than ever before—seems to be a defining characteristic of this platform, causing significant clashing between ethical values that are closely associated in other contexts. As the boundaries between online/offline activity grow ever more complex in years to come, future research on virtual support groups might be more transparent about the researcher’s methodological ambivalence and the decision-making processes through which it was resolved. Perhaps someday, Internet research ethicists will withdraw from the online/offline dichotomy as a basis for ethical choices much like they already have with that of public/private.

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Teaching Digital Feminist Research Methods: Polluted Digital Landscapes and Care-ful Pedagogies

Gabriella Wilson

Abstract: This article explores how instructors can use interdependency, reflexivity, transparency, and unlearning when teaching digital research methods to encourage students to assess the larger context under which fake news, disinformation, and polluted rhetoric are occurring. Further, feminism's attention to emotions and affect offers students material ways of exploring the both the political and emotional polarization that is plaguing the United States at the current moment. This essay shares the author's own teaching experiences in a writing classroom and offers pedagogical approaches to teaching ethical digital feminist research methods.

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keywords: disinformation, misinformation, fake news, feminist pedagogy, emotions, digital ethics, research methods

Introduction

After the 2016 U.S. Presidential election, scholarship on disinformation, misinformation, and fake news exploded in rhetoric and composition (Cloud; McComiskey; Skinnell). With journals like *Enculturation* publishing special issues on the subject, offering ways of meeting the chaos and toxicity online, it's clear the field feels a responsibility to address fake news. Much of the scholarship has focused on media and information literacy as key tools for mitigating the influence of disinformation and misinformation (Lockhart et al.). However, as more scholarship turns its attention to disinformation, misinformation, and fake news, it's become evident that these manipulative rhetorics have always existed and been used to further white supremacist, racist, ableist, and sexist claims (Boler and Davis; Kynard; Mejia et al.; Dolmage). Given the material and discursive power that disinformation and misinformation hold and the way that they reflect "a system working exactly as designed" to further capitalist and white supremacist aims, this article will explore how feminist methodologies offer one way of teaching students to traverse the "polluted landscape" of digital information (Phillips and Milner 6).

A growing concern in digital rhetorics over nefarious uses of technology and the weaponization of digital spaces highlights the importance of teaching students about the broader context behind disinformation and misinformation claims online (Ridolfo and Hart-Davidson). The saturation of disinformation and misinformation within public discourse across historical periods sug-

gests the need for pointed awareness of information disorder and material analysis of its broader context in the writing classroom (Mejia et al.). As manipulated and fabricated information, disinformation and misinformation represent what I refer to as polluted information throughout this article. Polluted information is information that has been manipulated, fabricated, or exaggerated in some way; this can be intentional or not. I use polluted information because it moves away from considerations of intention inherent in analyses of disinformation (fabricated information spread intentionally) and misinformation (fabricated information spread unknowingly), allowing students to focus more on the digital circulation and ethics of polluted information. Like many others in the field, I view this political and cultural time as a “rhetorical watershed moment in two ways: first, there has been a shift in the way that powerful people use unethical rhetoric to accomplish their goals; and second, there has been a shift in the way that public audiences consume unethical rhetoric” (McComiskey 3). Given that polluted information can be traced throughout history – especially as it has been used to disenfranchise marginalized peoples – Bruce McComiskey’s discussion of the shift highlights how digital rhetoric plays a role in the circulation of polluted information today, emphasizing the virality of disinformation and the ease of spreading misinformation on social media sites.

Over the last few semesters, I’ve taken time to hone and design an introductory research methods class taught in a writing department with an inquiry focus on disinformation and misinformation, creating activities to break down the process of engaging in feminist digital research. Hoping to draw students’ attention to the ways that polluted digital information intersects with larger ideological beliefs, I stressed the necessity of ecological approaches to research that accounted for messy processes and listening for gaps and silences. I asked students to engage in reflexive writing about their research and research process; I also asked students to interrogate their positionality and how it informed the kinds of biases and situated knowledge that informed their understanding of the world (Haraway). Most of all, to counter the neoliberal nihilistic energies circulating, I was intentional about centering care in the classroom through spatial design and the ways that I asked students to engage with information and material (Brown; Motta and Bennett). In what follows, I will provide examples of the ways that I used feminist research methods and methodologies to engage students in thinking about disinformation and misinformation.

In many ways, and as the vast scholarship about disinformation and misinformation suggests, writing studies is already primed to provide students with the tools necessary to navigate the polluted landscape of digital information (Carillo; Duffy; Lockhart et al.). There is also notable scholarship about how feminist methods and methodologies offer ways of teaching students to trek through contaminated and polluted rhetoric (Roher; Ringrose; Burke and Carolissen). This article explores how instructors can use interdependency, reflexivity, transparency, and unlearning when teaching digital research methods to encourage students to assess “the impact of the broader context within which objectionable phenomena such as ‘fake news’ are occurring” (Braidotti 57). Further, feminism’s attention to emotions and affect offers students material ways of exploring

the current “context of polarized emotionality and the crisis of truth characterizing current U.S. politics” (Boler and Davis 76). Informed by this scholarship, this piece explores pedagogical approaches to teaching ethical digital feminist research methods.

Polluted Information and Digital Ethics

While various terms such as disinformation, misinformation, fake news, post-truth, and malinformation have been used to frame the current false, misleading, manipulated, and fabricated rhetoric circulating online today, as noted above, I rely on the term polluted information to discuss manipulative rhetorics after Whitney Phillips and Ryan Milner. Phillips and Milner argue that polluted information “allows us to...focus instead on how the pollution spreads, why it was allowed to spread, and what impact the pollution has both at the initial waste site and, later, downstream” (5). Shifting to a focus on polluted information creates space for students to think ecologically about how “the material conditions of which these social forces [polluted information] are a part can help to ‘explain why certain views, and not others, gain social currency’” (Mejia et al. 112). Considering how, why, and the impact of circulating polluted information creates space for students to acknowledge the various digital influences, like algorithms, within digital landscapes that shape the dissemination of disinformation and misinformation and allows for exploring and analyzing the ideologies and emotions undergirding and supporting the circulation of fake and misleading claims. It also encourages students to consider the deeply held beliefs and ideological frames that support various disinformation and misinformation campaigns while paying attention to the ways that this information is strategically conveyed through misleading and false claims tied to larger racist histories. For instance, I’ll often use anti-CRT (critical race theory) campaigns to demonstrate to students how the manipulative, misleading, and false information propagated about critical race theory is steeped in deep stories about white supremacist ideology, revisionist history, and anti-blackness that spreads through social media and influences education policy.

It’s imperative to approach digital polluted information through a nuanced perspective that acknowledges the root social narrative undergirding manipulative and misleading rhetoric; this nuanced perspective must note how emotions are tied to the deep stories people believe. Jason Vincent A. Cabañes uses Arlie Hochschild’s conception of “deep stories” to think through how digital polluted information propagates social narratives that dictate “the stories that people tell themselves about who they are, what values they hold, and, ultimately, what their place in society is” (437). Considering the intertwinement between deep stories and personal belief, deep stories evoke intense emotions that are easily manipulated by crafted rhetoric designed to shock and anger and are bolstered by algorithms and bots specifically designed to elicit emotional responses from users. As Megan Boler and Elizabeth Davis note, while emotions have always played a pivotal role in politics and media, “there has been a shift in *awareness* of emotions as a determining factor,” especially regarding the ways digital technologies manipulate emotions (*italics in original* 75). Yet feminist rhetorical practices and ethics have always been aware of the role and centrality

of emotions in rhetoric, suggesting that feminist methods and methodologies are primed for navigating disinformation and misinformation.

Attention to the ideology and emotions behind polluted information, its circulation, and its material impact is important for understanding the broader influence and interdependent relationship between polluted information and its circulation across digital spaces. Stressing that a feminist ethic of care would acknowledge that people are more than digital data, recognize that data/claims require “attention to human meaning-making, context-specificity, inter/dependencies, temptations, as well as benefits and harms,” and contextualize one’s perspective as situated knowledge, a feminist ethic of care offers ways of contending with ecological understandings of disinformation and misinformation (franzke 70). Drawing on a history of scholarship about feminist ethics of care, “Feminist Research Ethics” in *IRE 3.0* makes a case for ethically engaging in digital research. The authors stress that an ethic of care centers on situated knowledge, relationality, reciprocity, and interdependency. Importantly, an ethic of care acknowledges a broader, interdependent context by analyzing digital research from an internal and external perspective as well as through the “relationships between the research project and the subject community that is involved” (franzke 69).

Feminist Methods and Digital Research

In what follows, I reflect on the overarching digital feminist ethics I emphasized in an introductory research methods class with an inquiry focused on disinformation and misinformation. This was the second course required in a two-part introductory writing class sequence. Through various assignments and lessons, I asked students to think seriously about disinformation, misinformation, and fake news in various genres and forms. The main assignment asked students to compose written and multimodal projects that they would include in a portfolio reflecting their research process. Students were asked to identify a conspiracy theory or piece of polluted information, compile and analyze sources connected to the polluted information, trace the circulation of information across various primary and secondary sources, and reflect on their research process. The portfolio assignment was meant to help students develop a comprehensive research process they could use during academic research and when confronted with information online. I encouraged students to view research as a messy and iterative process requiring transparency and reflection and emphasized the interdependent webs constellating various networks to circulate polluted information. While I’ll review some of the activities I created to teach students about digital feminist ethics through an ecological perspective, I want to take a moment to reflect on how feminist pedagogical approaches are central to teaching students in our current context. Given feminist pedagogy’s attention to countering neoliberal individualism (Stenberg) and imperial desires (Ahmed; Chatterjee and Maira), feminist pedagogy offers “a tool to understand and stop the violence while building toward a liberatory politics” (Rohrer 578). Feminist pedagogy’s attention to systems of oppression and its adherence to moving beyond traditional notions of objectivity and

authority demonstrate why it offers a way to contend with polluted information.

Teaching students about disinformation and misinformation using a feminist pedagogical approach opens space for students to think critically about knowledge production, interdependency, and emotions as valuable assets. Encouraging students to interrogate knowledge production and reflect on the pedagogical decisions structuring their education, feminist pedagogy attempts to renegotiate power dynamics in the classroom, giving students more autonomy and agency over their education. This is beneficial when teaching students about polluted information because it allows them to think critically about individualism, expertise, and power structures. Students can interrogate whose knowledge is deemed legitimate, disrupt notions about elitism, question institutional authority, and claim their own expertise and situated knowledges (hooks). Moreover, feminist pedagogy's attention to emotions in the classroom encourages students to consider the ways that emotions function as "part of what makes ideas adhere, generating investments and attachments that get recognized as positions and/or perspectives" (Micciche 6). This view of emotions as generative sites of inquiry motivates students to consider how emotions and situated knowledge influences the reception of polluted information. Drawing on the personal, students can grapple with the ways that emotions influence the ways they understand and grapple with knowledge. This is especially central to helping students navigate polluted information, given the ways deep stories are enveloped in larger interdependent webs marked by deep, emotionally charged beliefs.

Reflection

Feminism's commitment to the personal in research necessitates reflexive writing encouraging students to consider their identity, beliefs, and values in relation to their research. Heidi McKee and James Porter explain that feminist research methodologies must be critically reflexive "about one's own position, gender, and status," transparent about "making the process and constructed nature of research visible to multiple audiences," and flexible about making "adjustments in the project, to modify a project protocol as needed to make it more careful, reflexive, dialogic, and ethically rigorous" (155-156). These practices easily translate to conducting ethical digital feminist research, as evidenced by various articulations of feminist digital research that include feminist principles like reflexivity, interdependency, messy research, transparency, and an ethic of care.

Reflection plays a key role in negotiating disinformation and misinformation because it gives students the time to consider a broader context and perspective in addition to grappling with how their positionality and biases might influence their perception of certain claims. Incorporating reflective prompts and questions into research assignments and activities that asked stu-

dents to consider their research process and methods, I taught students about research processes using Gesa Kirsch and Jacqueline Jones Royster's idea of strategic contemplation. Kirsch and Royster argue that strategic contemplation encourages deliberately "taking the time, space, and resources to think about, through, and around work as an important meditative dimension of scholarly productivity" (21). Throughout the course, the reflective questions I posed asked students to consider their biases and how those perspectives may shape how they understand information. To encourage students to reflect on their research critically and to emphasize that "reflexivity [is] a process, [and not] an isolated event," I asked students to complete research journals (see Figure 1) as they engaged in in-depth research regarding the polluted information they identified (Gruwell 89). Pushing students to consider their positionality, bias, and process, I asked them to consider their emotional responses to polluted information and think critically about how they analyzed the information they viewed in their journals. As Judy Rohrer points out, "historicizing our locations and relations is antithetical to neoliberalism's flat pluralism and post-truth populism's singularly aggrieved (mostly white) victimhood" (585). By asking students to reflect on their emotional responses and thoughts throughout the research process, I hoped to illuminate how emotions and situated knowledge can shape the ways polluted information circulates.

Students affirmed that engaging in active writing about the process of research helped them to think more critically about the kinds of sources they were using and the deep stories circulating within and through their sources. Using research journals to trace process and emotional responses throughout proved generative for students who found themselves easily persuaded or manipulated by misleading polluted information. Students who found themselves convinced by polluted information identified moments where they were easily persuaded or manipulated and could dive deeper into the beliefs informing their responses as a result. This allowed students to interrogate their experiences and bias and consider how polluted information relies on emotions.

- 4 Research journals, organized in whatever way works for you. Submit them as one document entitled "Research Journal Unit Two"
 - These journals should combine all of the planning, data collection, reflection, and analysis you have done for your specific topic of inquiry throughout the unit. You should map the steps you took during your research and any reflective
-
- thoughts that came up during your research. Remember that emotional responses to research are valid and should be included in the research journal.
- Each journal should be about 100-200 words. These can be bullet point lists or summaries of your research. You should submit at least 4 research journals. They don't have to be fully fleshed out, formal writing pieces. But they should reflect your research process and reactions/emotional responses to information.

Figure 1. Research Journal Assignment Sheet Excerpt. Image description: a screenshot of a prompt given to students that

reads, “4 Research journals, organized in whatever way works for you. Submit them as one document entitled “Research Journal Unit Two”

- These journals should combine all of the planning, data collection, reflection, and analysis you have done for your specific topic of inquiry throughout the unit. You should map the steps you took during your research and any reflective thoughts that came up during your research. Remember that emotional responses to research are valid and should be included in the research journal. Each journal should be about 100-200 words. These can be bullet point lists or summaries of your research. You should submit at least 4 research journals. They don't have to be fully fleshed out, formal writing pieces. But they should reflect your research process and reactions/emotional responses to information.

One student even used this information to create a social media campaign countering polluted information on social media, using various sounds, filters, and effects on Tik Tok to compose a video that refuted a particular conspiracy.

Messy Research

Feminist methods and methodologies also embrace messy research, unlearning, and failure as key ways to navigate “seek[ing] knowledge in [a] social world where things are often elusive and multiple” (Luka et al. 28). When approaching research about polluted information, then, I encouraged and modeled for students messy research practices that required constant revision and citation mining, encouraging them to research across genre and medium (see Figure 2). I demonstrated various stages of the research process for students, actively reflecting and tracing research dead ends, ineffective keyword searches, and my emotional responses as I modeled. For instance, researching various primary sources circulating around the PizzaGate conspiracy theory offers generative sites of analysis for considering digital research with students. Given that PizzaGate is an older conspiracy, some original sites of analysis around the conspiracy have been removed from the internet. Language and social media rhetorics around the conspiracy have also changed and evolved, meaning that hashtags that once worked to identify conspiracy rhetorics around PizzaGate may no longer contain relevant information. Exploring the evolution of conspiracy rhetorics around PizzaGate emphasized for students how failure and dead ends in the research process can be used generatively. Ultimately, how I modeled the research process through conspiracies like PizzaGate encouraged students to recognize that digital research necessitates flexibility and an appreciation of picking apart messy threads that span temporal frames and public/private divides.

Digital spaces are constantly in flux—posts are deleted every minute, trending pages update by the second, and algorithms use your location to construct search results—so students must account for these intricacies and complexities as they research. Given the instability of digital research sites, I emphasized messiness over clarity with students to reflect the intricacies of digital research. I didn't want “students to imagine they must always be clear; [rather, I] want[ed]

them to imagine what is possible—and that they are possible” (Holmes and Wittman 35). To help students think deeply about their research engagement, I asked them to reflect on their research and writing process in their assigned research journals, where they analyzed and discussed their process and emotional responses to research. Afterwards, I designed an in-class activity providing space for students to intentionally reflect on their research and refine their practices as they re-searched based on failures they encountered, as reflected in the image to the right.

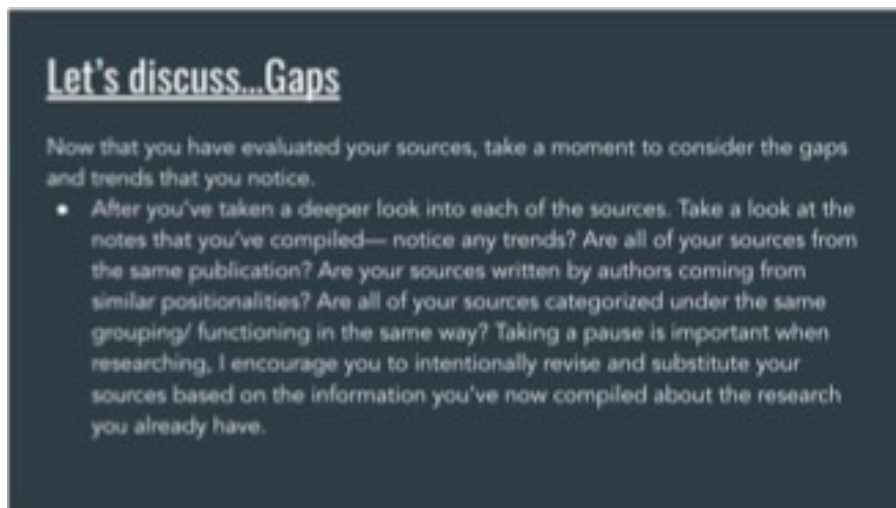


Figure 2. Activity Reflecting on Research Sources. Image description: a screenshot of a prompt given to students. It reads, “Let’s discuss...Gaps

Now that you have evaluated your sources, take a moment to consider the gaps and trends that you notice.

After you've taken a deeper look into each of the sources. Take a look at the notes that you've compiled—notice any trends? Are all of your sources from the same publication? Are your sources written by authors coming from similar positionalities? Are all of your sources categorized under the same grouping/functioning in the same way? Taking a pause is important when researching, I encourage you to intentionally revise and substitute your sources based on the information you've now compiled about the research you already have.”

Creating space and designing activities for students to reflect intentionally on their process encourages them to dive deeper and to “counter faith in a naive and transparent social world, to work with empirical material in a way that pays attention, simultaneously, to language, bodies, and material conditions, to present a mix of interpretations versus seeking consensus, both finding patterns and opening up closures, [and] to show the problems with all efforts to represent reality” (Lather 10). In turn, students are more attuned to listening to the gaps and silences that might exist in the research, allowing them to identify the broader context and pay attention to the harm caused by polluted information about marginalized communities that are often not given a dominant voice in digital spaces or research. In fact, many students discussed how intentionally paus-

ing and revising their research process and sources enabled them to dig more deeply into the materials they found and pushed them to consider their topic from different perspectives. Asking students to engage deeply with a localized and contextualized research process and methods creates ways for them to consider the specific material and discursive influences shaping particular digital claims, creating space for students to consider ideological truth claims that hold material power (see Figure 3).

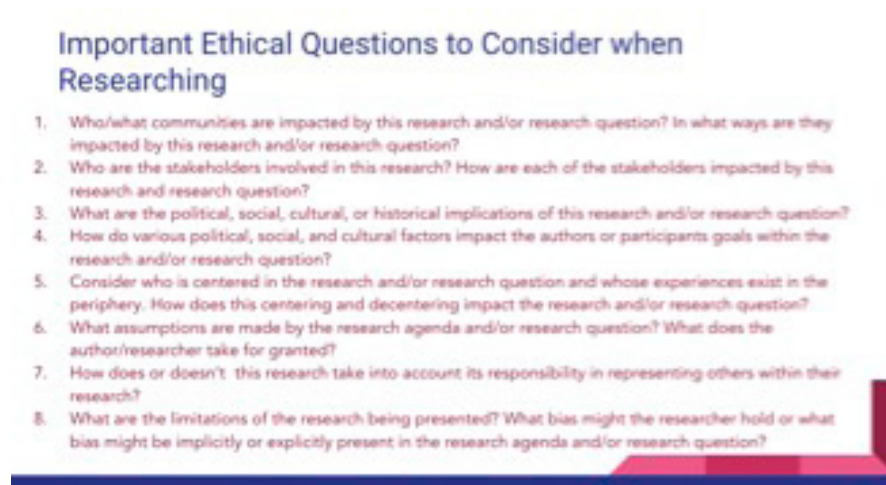


Figure 3. In-Process Ethical Research Questions to Employ. Image description: a screenshot of a prompt given to students. It reads:

Important Ethical Questions to Consider when Researching

1. Who/what communities are impacted by this research and/or research question? In what ways are they impacted by this research and/or research question?
2. Who are the stakeholders involved in this research? How are each of the stakeholders impacted by this research and research question?
3. What are the political, social, cultural, or historical implications for this research and/or research question? How do various political, social, and cultural factors impact the authors or participants goals within the research and/or research question?
4. Consider who is centered in the research and/or research question and whose experiences exist in the periphery. How does this centering and decentering impact the research and/or research question?
5. What assumptions are made by the research agenda and/or research question? What does the author/researcher take for granted?
6. How does or doesn't this research take into account its responsibility in representing others within their research?
7. What are the limitations of the research being presented? What bias might the researcher hold or what bias might be implicitly or explicitly present in the research agenda and/or research question?

This allows for contemplation of the ways that “lively— rather than simply [messy]— data,

involve[s] ongoing negotiations of power relations” (Luka et al. 32). This is especially generative for students considering disinformation and misinformation because it enables them to explore polluted information from different perspectives to understand its persuasive effect on different audiences better.

Situated Knowledge

Situated knowledge can help students gain an approach to digital research that considers a broader context of practices and interdependent networks that bolster polluted information. Situated knowledge is central to developing a feminist ethic of care when approaching internet research because it “insist[s] on the embodied nature of all vision and so reclaim[s] the sensory system that has been used to signify a leap out of the marked body and into a conquering gaze from nowhere” (Haraway 581). Before asking students to engage in research, I encouraged them to consider their research stance and positionality and its role in their research process. Developing a research stance that considers the research process and ethical research practices emphasizes identity’s role when processing information. Asking students to pay attention to the situated knowledge shaping polluted information draws attention to “identity relative to a constantly shifting context, to a situation that includes a network of elements involving others, the objective economic conditions, cultural and political institutions and ideologies, and so on” (Alcoff 148). Attention to situated knowledge and positionality is central to contending with disinformation and misinformation because it illuminates the ways that polluted information is contingent on deep beliefs held by individuals that hold material force and cause material harm (Hochschild).



Figure 4. Considering the Impact of Research Stance. Image description: a screenshot of a prompt given to students. It reads,

"Research Stance

Now that you've garnered a good understanding of the research process, ethical questions to consider when conducting research, your own research habits and evaluation methods, and crafted a collage to describe your research passions, it's time to develop a research stance. Your research stance is a statement that you abide by as you engage in any kind of research. From the posts you see on Instagram to the articles you're assigned in your courses, how do you intend to approach research through an ethical and ecological framework, in line with Phillips and Milner. As an example, my research stance might read something like the following: 'When I conduct research I will intentionally seek out diverse perspectives, check my sources for accuracy, and consider who is impacted by my research. To enact these principles, I will read more than two sources on a topic, I will look at how an author's positionality/standpoint might impact the research agenda, and I will consider the larger sociopolitical and sociocultural impact the research may have.'

In my class, I continually asked students to reflect on their positionality and situated knowledge; we engaged in various reflective and embodied writing assignments that asked students to consider their values and how their positionality may influence those values. I also encouraged students to think deeply about the kind of content they watch, read, and hear throughout the day, noting how that content influences their beliefs and knowledge. One of the first major assignments that students completed was a strategic reflection. The assignment asked students to think about their positionality and how their identity and experiences may influence their way of seeing the world. To prepare students to write their strategic reflection, I designed various lessons that defined positionality and standpoint while asking students to respond to reflective writing prompts about their lived experiences, identity, and values to better understand how they assess information. I framed this assignment through Milner and Phillips's conception of a "you are here" sticker that would enable students to more critically consider new information they encounter in light of the information and knowledge they already possess. I provided students with guided free write prompts, as reflected in the image provided, to help students build their "you are here" framework.

While drawing students' attention to how their emotions, positionality, and situated knowledge influence the interpretation of polluted information, I also discussed ecological considerations of interdependence with students. To do so, I incorporated a conversation around Sandra Harding's standpoint theory to reinforce ways of considering how students are positioned in the world and how that positioning "directly influences what's visible to that person, which in turn directly influences what they know" (Phillips and Milner 20). With this in mind, I asked students to consider what kinds of frames they hold based on their standpoint, paying particular attention to the ways race, gender, sexuality, class, and disability might influence the kinds of frames that students believe to be true. We then expanded the discussion to consider how systems of power and oppression play a role in constructing these frames, drawing attention to the broader material-discursive and historical frames that shape how disinformation and misinformation are interpreted and supported. This attention to broader context especially helps students to understand

how individual actors function within a larger interdependent web of networked human and more-than-human relationships.

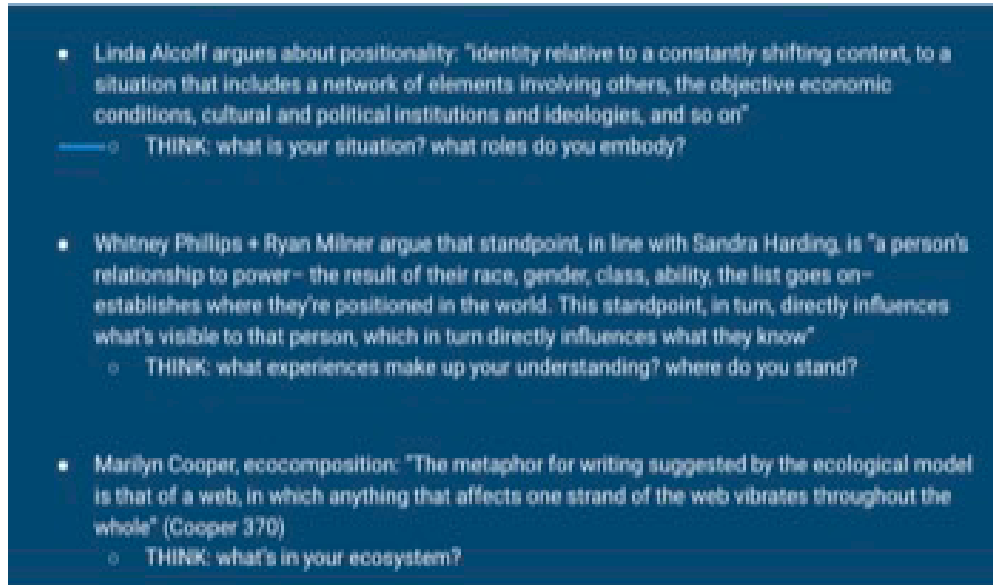


Figure 5. Scholarship & Questions to Guide Reflection on Positionality in Research. Image description: a screenshot of a prompt given to students. It reads:

Linda Alcoff argues about positionality: 'identity relative to a constantly shifting context, to a situation that includes a network of elements involving others, the objective economic conditions, cultural and political institutions and ideologies, and so on'

THINK: what is your situation? what roles do you embody?

Whitney Phillips + Ryan Milner argues that standpoint, in line with Sandra Harding, is 'a person's relationship to power—the result of their race, gender, class, ability, the list goes on—establishes where they're positioned in the world. This standpoint, in turn, directly influences what's visible to that person, which in turn directly influences what they know'

THINK: what experiences make up your understanding? where do you stand?

Marilyn Cooper, ecocomposition: 'The metaphor for writing suggested by the ecological model is that of a web, in which anything that affects one strand of the web vibrates throughout the whole' (Cooper 370)

THINK: what's in your ecosystem?

Conclusion

Given polluted information's adherence to broader racial and capitalist histories, it's particularly important that students are taught to examine and analyze the material-discursive, human, and more-than-human influences that support disinformation and misinformation online. Through feminist methods and methodologies like teaching messy research, emphasizing reflective praxis throughout research, and valuing situated knowledge, writing instructors can contend with polluted information in ways that move beyond fact-checking and information literacy. Rather, attention to emotions and historical forces illuminates the intensity of polluted information online, where bots and algorithms bolster disinformation and misinformation. Teaching students about the broader context of polluted information and demonstrating the interdependent webs and relations en-

meshed in these claims helps them understand the harm disinformation and misinformation causes, especially to marginalized people. In turn, this encourages students to reflect critically on their everyday actions and online interactions, especially because feminist ethics of care highlight the necessity of reflecting on how individual actions operate in a larger ecosystem, stressing the importance of interdependency and reciprocity for students.

Future research on polluted information and feminist methods and methodologies might focus on how a feminist ethic of care can help to grapple with how bots and algorithms exacerbate and reinforce polluted information online. More work is also needed to determine how instructors might address far-right extremist views in the writing classroom as they navigate disinformation and misinformation. Feminist pedagogical theories on addressing differences in the classroom offer generative and potentially transformative theoretical frames for beginning some of this research.

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Book Reviews

Book Review of *Utopian Genderscapes: Rhetorics of Women's Work in the Early Industrial Age*

Maria Ferrato

Abstract: This review outlines Michelle C. Smith's *Utopian Genderscapes*, highlighting her bi-fold contributions to the field of feminist rhetorics. Firstly, her research purpose, which is to shed light on the rhetoric surrounding the communities, welcomes novel future research about intentional communities' rhetoric. Secondly, her methodological scaffolding, which is the utilization of material rhetoric to explore historical ecologies of gender, provides a methodological blueprint for feminist rhetors to utilize.

Maria Ferrato is a Master's student in the rhetoric program at Carnegie Mellon University. She is interested in neoliberal rhetorical strategies of politicians, organizations, and the media about the American K-12 education system.

Keywords: Material, ecologies of gender, historiography, feminist research, archives

Utopian communities, which are often inspired by particular religious or social beliefs, are intentionally designed communities built outside of mainstream culture. These communities were common during the nineteenth century in the United States before developing a dangerous, cult-like reputation. Because of this developed reputation, society typically dismisses discourse or in-depth analyses about these communities. Michelle C. Smith, in *Utopian Genderscapes: Rhetorics of Women's Work in the Early Industrial Age*, reframes our view on these utopian communities, which she calls intentional communities. Smith implores us to investigate the communities' societal contributions via the study of the rhetoric within and about them—regardless of the characteristics, actions, and perceived success of the communities¹⁸.

¹⁸ The following review comes from an awestruck novice with great respect and admiration for Smith's work. Indeed, this book was my first experience with a book-length rhetorical analysis. Additionally, because my background is in professional writing, it was my introduction to the concept of material rhetoric and the term "ecology" being used outside of biology; my fascination and consequent hyper-fixation on these concepts should be disclosed.

Smith conducts a case study of three intentional communities (Brook Farm in West Roxbury, Massachusetts, active 1841–1847; the Harmony Society in Economy, Pennsylvania, active 1804–1905; and the Oneida Community in upstate New York, active 1848–1881) to investigate industrialization’s far-reaching implications for gender, class, and race that permeate all aspects of society but are best gleaned in perceptions of labor. The book, comprised of five chapters, three of which are analyses on the specific communities, does a wonderful job of analyzing how the communities’ rhetoric reflected and contributed to America’s gendered view on labor in the nineteenth century and how these views evolve over time and across spaces.

To inform this case study, Smith draws from archived letters, books, and documents from the three communities. Smith utilizes material rhetoric to articulate ecologies of gender stemming from the communities. Put differently, Smith traces the web of gender implications (spanning time and space) caused by industrialization, using a case study and a material rhetorical lens to do so. Because she views the construct of gender as complex—woven into spaces, bodies, tasks, and objects—Smith traces the ecological presence of gender in both linguistic texts and material objects. Smith explains that “an ecological approach to gender is its view of the production of gender as dispersed and contingent,” which Smith believes is an approach that articulates “the productive convergence of and tension between material and feminist rhetorics” (7). Drawing from scholars like K.J. Rawson, Jenny Rice, and Diana Coole and Samantha Frost, Smith explores how lived experiences are impacted and shaped by material developments, like the wealth of machinery developed during industrialization that altered the labor industry (Smith 7, 166).

Smith’s contribution to the field of feminist rhetorical studies is thus bifold. Firstly, her research purpose (to shed light on the communities’ rhetoric) welcomes research about stigmatized historical individuals/communities that society dismisses. Smith challenges us to look beyond the tainted reputation of historical individuals/communities to recognize their rhetorical power. Secondly, her methodological scaffolding, which is the utilization of feminist and material rhetoric to explore ecologies of gender, provides a blueprint for feminist rhetors to utilize. Feminist rhetors who investigate rhetoric of the everyday and/or historical rhetorical movements (as scholars like Sarah Hallenbeck have modeled), will find Smith’s blueprint of exploring ecologies of gender across time, space, bodies, and objects extremely informative.

After outlining her methods and contributions in the first chapter, Smith moves into her body chapters, which entail three separate studies of mid-nineteenth-century intentional communities in America. In chapter two, Smith discusses teleological rhetoric within Brook Farm, focusing on the domestic lives of women and the teleological rhetoric of “housework” present at Brook Farm. Smith argues that Brook Farm proved that America’s understanding of “housework” solidifies woman’s purpose. Smith explains this by analyzing Brook Farm’s constitution, which states that women would be able to choose what work they did at Brook Farm, in comparison to the letters written by members and visitors, which state that women were only performing “house-

work.” The juxtaposition between the intention and the reality of the community shows that Brook Farm fell short of its goal to let women choose whatever jobs they wanted. Women, stuck performing “housework” at Brook Farm, which was perceived as “drudgery,” thus developed business-like rhetoric to elevate “housework” to the then-desired status of industrial work, creating work schedules, using business style and diction in their writing, and designing power-hierarchies.

In chapter three, Smith discusses rhetoric of exceptionalism used to describe Gertrude Rapp, the granddaughter of the leader of Harmony society, and the effect that rhetoric had on Harmony women. Rapp ran the silk operation at Harmony and was well regarded within the silk and business fields—a triumph for a woman at the time. This prompted society to write exceptional rhetoric about her, which created a new, unrealistic expectation for women. While the outside discourse about Rapp seemed like it would benefit Harmony women, giving them the chance to follow Rapp’s forged path, the internal rhetoric at Harmony shows otherwise. Women, in fact, were still relegated to “housework” despite this woman leader achieving success. In addition to the rhetoric of exceptionalism, Smith also discusses Rapp’s utilization of scientific and professional rhetoric to pass as a man in order to be taken seriously in her field.

In chapter four, Smith discusses rhetoric of choice—or, more astutely, the illusion of choice—within Oneida, focusing on the reproductive lives of women. While trying to advance reproductive rights, Oneida elided the roles of “mother” and “worker” by elevating motherhood into a job that one could specialize in, complicating the rhetoric of gendered labor and perceived choice. In society outside of Oneida’s community, mothers were looked down upon if they worked; in Oneida, workers were looked down upon if they mothered. This is seen via the rhetoric of John Humphrey Noyes, Oneida’s leader, who believed that women should be “female men” who work as much as men and don’t fall victim to philoprogenitiveness (love for one’s children). Noyes’s rhetoric is presented in contrast to the rhetoric of the Oneida women, who write about their struggle to balance motherhood and work. While the women of Oneida wanted equal opportunity to work, they did not want to lose their opportunity to mother in the process.

These body chapters are interesting, thorough, and informed, making readers wonder if rhetoric can ever elevate “housework” out of the trenches of “drudgery,” and what equity in the home could (or should) look like. Building on a foundation laid by scholars like Jordynn Jack, Jessica Enoch, and Nathan Stormer, Smith explores the ecology of gender stemming from these symbols and materials of housework, priming readers for the conclusion, which briefly explores how this ecology has extended into contemporary symbols and materials of housework. These chapters thus serve as an example of how to bypass historical communities’ stigmatized reputations to uncover their rhetorical power. It makes one wonder: what are we missing by *not* exploring these and similarly stigmatized communities? Additionally, these chapters, which explore concepts like tokenism and reproductive rhetoric, are an example of how future researchers can implement Smith’s lens (i.e. paying attention to the ecology of rhetoric’s effects on gender through time,

space, bodies, symbols, and objects) when interrogating society's relationship with gendered phenomena.

Smith's fifth and final chapter addresses future researchers, leaving them with three main pieces of advice. First, Smith compels rhetoricians to use the term "interactionality" instead of "intersectionality" to better explain how different identities work in conjunction with each other rather than simply overlapping. Readers familiar with Karma Chavez's *Queer Migration Politics* will recognize this term, which Smith uses to call for work that illustrates how gendered phenomena (like the gendered views of labor explored in this book) "often deepen and cement divides among women of different socioeconomic classes, races, ethnicities, religions, and educational backgrounds" (147). Second, Smith undermines the illusion of choice within rhetoric about gender, inviting scholars to do the same to highlight the injustice as a first step to remedying it. Third, Smith encourages researchers to question the rhetoric of failure surrounding intentional communities, attending to the nuance in order to conceptualize the complexity of gendered norms. *Utopian Genderscapes*, as perfectly encapsulated in the conclusion, calls for rhetoricians to reclaim intentional communities' rhetorical and societal contributions (and, by extension, other stigmatized communities' similar contributions) using the methodological framework Smith provides.

Smith's research opens a floodgate of topics to investigate by calling for research that bypasses retrospectively instilled negative perceptions of historical societies. *Utopian Genderscapes* also informs researchers about how to analyze the evolution of gendered constructions of labor—and other phenomena—across time and space. By studying America's rich history of intentional communities and analyzing ecologies of gender by employing material and feminist critiques, Smith lays a solid foundation for future rhetoricians, showing them how to find rhetorical significance (symbolically and materially; across time, space, bodies, and objects) in previously overlooked communities.

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Review of *Ethics and Representation in Feminist Rhetorical Inquiry*

Lane Riggs

Abstract: Which rhetorics are collective? What documents count as evidence worthy of an archival collection? How do we speak for women rhetors without violating their narratives? These questions are considered in *Ethics and Representation in Feminist Rhetorical Inquiry*. This collection considers feminist archival research and its representation of (selective) histories and rhetorics by drawing on previous scholarship, studying ignored rhetors, and questioning issues of access across geography, time, and space. To do so, the authors advised researchers “rescue, recover, and reinscribe” women’s rhetorical work, especially rhetorical work done by women who have been historically and repeatedly dismissed by archivists and researchers.

Lane Riggs holds a degree in English from Midwestern State University and a Masters in English Literature and Language from St. Mary’s University. She is currently a PhD student in the Rhetorics, Communication, and Information Design program at Clemson University. She is in her third year of study. Her research interests are in the digital humanities, social media literacy, Mexican American identity, and border rhetorics. Her research attempts to combine these interests by researching how social media (re)establishes and (re)shapes Mexican American identity.

Keywords: feminist rhetorics, archival research, methodologies, archival access, archival listening, memory work Which rhetorics – if any – are collective? What documents count as evidence *worthy* of an archival collection? How do feminist archivists or rhetors speak for women rhetors without violating their narratives? These questions are considered in *Ethics and Representation in Feminist Rhetorical Inquiry*, edited by Amy E. Dayton and Jennie L. Vaughn.

This collection considers feminist archival research and its representation of (selective) histories and rhetorics by drawing on previous scholarship, studying ignored rhetors, and questioning access issues. While examining previous scholarship, authors consider ways to ethically and compassionately advance methodologies in current research. This collection thus encourages future research on forgotten or unknown women rhetors by utilizing established feminist rhetorical methodologies, offering personal research experiences for analysis and reflexivity, and demonstrating practical approaches to address or answer questions of ethics and (re)presentation.

As feminist and archival researchers, many of the authors draw on Jacqueline Jones Royster’s and Gesa E. Kirsch’s theoretical frameworks and make their impact specific to their research. Authors share theoretical frameworks and common methodologies, such as Royster and Kirsch’s four key terms (critical imagination, strategic contemplation, social circulation, globalization) and Krista Ratcliffe’s rhetorical listening. Because these frameworks are shared, each author answers specific questions via the ethics, representation, and interpretation that arise when researching historical subjects.

Since Kirsch and Royster challenged scholars to ask new and different questions of multi-dimensional voices situated across geography, time, and space, they advised researchers “rescue, recover, and reinscribe” women’s rhetorical work. This collection extensively used the three “R’s” to reveal micro and macro histories: those of Native American women, Black women, activists, psychiatric patients, translators, and garment workers.

The collection’s twelve chapters include historical subjects unable to speak for themselves or historical subjects who disrupt neat categorization. Chapters in the collection are grouped by prevalent chapter themes (such as emotion, issues of access, and silenced archives). Most chapters invoke foundational terms in feminist and archival research, such as the idea of “archival listening” and memory work. This collection also introduces new terms such as rhetorical violence, or the harm done to narratives by a researcher’s scrutiny, interpretation, or translation.

Dayton and Vaughn assemble chapters with similar themes, though many have multiple themes and could be grouped differently by readers. Because of this, Chapters 1 and 2 are grouped together as they question the relationships between writers and subjects. In Chapter 1, Reva E. Sias studies Black schoolgirls who were denied a voice. Sias views her research through an Afrafeminist ideological perspective. As she explains, “[Afrafeminism] offers a more nuanced and shared space for African American women as the subjects of study” (24). Afrafeminist theorists can then remember the diverse lives of unknown African American schoolchildren and ethically re-story their lives and voices. In Chapter 2, Sara Hillin details her challenges representing African American aviators. Hillin “eavesdrops” on narratives by female aviators. Although Hillin studied aviatrixes like Bessie Coleman and Willa Beatrice Brown, she had to carefully consider whether to similarly study Amelia Earhart, since Earhart is the focal point of women’s achievements in early aviation. Hillin suggests researchers “overhear” their personal research and representation biases.

In chapter 3, Elizabeth Lowry focuses on displays of emotion, particularly anger, in women rhetors’ writing. Since women have traditionally been expected to downplay anger, Lowry suggests scholars implement an openness to explore and validate this emotion. This chapter assesses narratives by Indigenous women such as Lucy Thompson and Zitkala-Sa and how their narratives channeled “appropriate” anger. She writes, “Recognizing and respecting a writer’s anger means joining in her indignation, agreeing that she has been wronged, and acknowledging that she is exhibiting an entirely rational response to her situation” (68). For these women rhetors, anger is a way to build bridges. Lowry proposes that their anger is instructive *as well as* inviting.

Hillin and Lowry both connect their projects to “archival listening,” a term created by Jessica Enoch and Elizabeth Ellis Miller in chapter 4 to reflect rhetorical listening as it relates to archives. Enoch and Miller build their framing around Krista Ratcliffe’s *Rhetorical Listening*;

therefore, archival listening is a way to listen to details within an archive, especially when those details are complex or negative. They write, “Archival listening means reflecting critically on the disappointment we may feel in the archive, opening ourselves up to what we see as a rhetor’s flaws and failures, and thinking carefully about our historiographic responsibilities and our subject’s rhetorical performances” (72). Enoch and Miller ask how to best ethically represent historical subjects that (might) disappoint more contemporary or progressive researchers due to the subject’s complicated or discriminatory politics. Enoch and Miller’s research revealed their historical subjects’ troubling characteristics. For example, Miller’s research on Sarah Patton Boyle revealed that Boyle, while a white liberal advocating for Black rights, occasionally displayed racist and sexist attitudes. The authors note: “Ultimately, archival listening positions us to take into account our subjects’ flawed humanity, to explore the systems of power that invited and cultivated their rhetorics, [and] to acknowledge the complexity of a rhetor’s life” (86).

Chapters 5 and 6 explore access and ownership by exploring texts of incarcerated girls and hospital patients, respectively. In these chapters, Laura Rogers, Tobi Jacobi, and Caitlin Burns consider who can or should tell a subject’s story and how to tell that story with justice and compassion. Jacobi and Rogers map the personal documents of a troubled fourteen-year-old girl named Lila. Within this chapter, the two reference Patrick Berry’s concept of the contextual now: or, how researchers layer present ideologies and concepts over historical events. In Chapter 6, Burns explains that since archivists and owners of the Bryce Hospital collection have limited outside access to records, they may have inadvertently erased the histories of patients at the psychiatric facility. Burns agrees many of these marginalized, vulnerable populations should be protected, but also demonstrates how this protection *is* an act of silencing. As she writes, “the impact of these actions in this specific situation results in the silencing of the voices that are being protected” (113). In the case of mental institutions, narratives written by hospital superintendents or doctors *are* the accessible materials, and limiting access erases patients’ narratives completely. Both chapters consider who gets to decide when or how to tell a story and which voices may be subconsciously (or consciously) erased in the process.

Chapters 7 and 8 suggest ethnographic approaches to archival research. Some historical subjects have living descendants that may form relationships with archivists or researchers. In Chapter 7, Vaughn explores the relationships she formed with living relatives of her research subject. She echoes Royster’s *Traces of a Stream*: “[we] have an ethical responsibility to the descendants of our subjects to represent their ancestors with respect and dignity” (qtd. in Vaughn 128). These relationships created a living archive that revitalized her research experience. Chapter 8 considers narratives that were hidden to protect women in workers’ unions. Jane Greer looks at writings by working-class women detailing their experiences at the Donnelly Garment Company and notes that she had to resist comfortable narratives and her own conflicted appreciation of such rhetoric. She thus advises researchers to let the records of the past speak for themselves.

In Chapter 9, Gracemarie Mike Fillenwarth describes critical imagination as a way of seeing what is in an archive and what is not. Royster and Kirsch created this term in *Feminist Rhetorical Practices*; following in their steps, Fillenwarth suggests looking at women's rhetorical work, collectively. Within her research, she seeks to explore how women's writings "came into being as a result of collective, collaborative interactions and rhetorical practice" (167). As a researcher new to the field of feminist rhetorics, I admired how many chapters, and especially Chapter 9, applied existing concepts in feminist rhetorical inquiry to the exploration of collective feminist narratives.

In juxtaposition to chapter 9, Kathleen T. Leuschen and Risa Applegarth draw on the method of memory work and explain how it "highlights the politicized potential of memory as a mechanism for intervening into contemporary scenes of inequality" (177). Leuschen and Applegarth study personal memories of activism and activists' published or unpublished narratives in chapter 10. But because some of these narratives are unpublished or missing in archives, research into these narratives – and the probing questions and requests that come with them – may be a form of rhetorical violence. This worry is also considered in the next chapter.

In Chapter 11, Cristina D. Ramirez suggests that translation – the translators themselves, the translated language, and what is lost in translation – reveal "the multiplicity of power struggles that accompany translation" (202). In one example of lost meaning, Ramirez recounts Wright de Kleinhan's speech "La lectura," wherein the informal *vosotros* form is used. In this speech, the feminine form of *vosotros*, or *vosotras*, is used to address a female audience. Yet, in translating the work into English, *vosotras* was replaced by the neutral "you." Therefore, this feminine-oriented speech is assigned a different meaning and may have been studied or placed within a vastly different (or exclusive) context.

Wendy Sharer suggests in Chapter 12 that more diverse voices should enter rhetorical discussions and produce theoretically rich projects. Sharer presents an opportunity for this in *Peitho's* "Recoveries and Reconsiderations" section. In this section, contributors can join rhetorical conversations without time-extensive research: the goal is instead to "introduce readers to resources for ongoing consideration and further discussion" ("New Peitho Feature"). Because of this, many feminist and archival researchers who may not have the time or institutional backing to complete extensive research can still join academic conversations and hopefully, bring their varied voices to feminist rhetorical projects.

As a graduate student interested in Indigenous and Mexican American identity, I found Chapter 3 especially engaging due to Lowry's writing choices and feminist historiographic perspective. Lowry's writing was energetic and ethical. Not only did Lowry recognize her subject's anger, she affirmed it. After reading these narratives, I hoped I would encounter more angry, righteous narratives by previously disempowered women in my own scholarly research.

Each chapter encourages additional research and a closer look at existing (and hidden) archives and materials. Many of this collection's scholars recommend others change the (re)construction of archives to include those who have been historically and repeatedly dismissed, such as the psychiatric patients in Chapter 6 or the female garment workers in Chapter 8. As evidenced in most chapters in this collection, many archives are bereft of marginalized women due to their narratives' displacement, archival restrictions, or simply neglect. Furthermore, the authors recommend discussing the collection's research outcomes and processes. By doing so, the authors open their feminist rhetorical research to (more) ethical and methodological questions as well as more diverse researchers.

It is up to readers and researchers to listen to and carefully consider these narratives through archival listening, memory work, and refraining from rhetorical violence in an attempt to recognize a rhetor's reclamation of agency. This collection sparks more discussion and encourages further sharing of research built on significant feminist rhetorical methodologies, like that of Kirsch, Royster, and Ratcliffe. Additionally, it adds to these methodologies by suggesting ways to examine feminist rhetorical research ethically and compassionately. Though other readers such as myself may not know when or how to join a feminist rhetorical conversation, this collection and *Peitho* advise that the first step is to ask, "Who is missing from this (rhetorical and narrative) conversation?"

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Review of *Body Work: The Radical Power of Personal Narrative*

Ellen O'Connell Whittet

Abstract: A review of *Body Work*, memoirist Melissa Febos's newest craft essay collection, dismantles several of the prevailing ideas around both writing and teaching personal writing. Although this is not a traditional craft book, *Body Work* works to legitimize the genre, and makes a case for the vitality and unique potential of asking students and others to write their personal narratives.

Ellen O'Connell Whittet is a continuing lecturer in the Writing Program at UC Santa Barbara. She studies creative nonfiction, media, dance writing, arts writing, trauma, and community writing. Her memoir, *What You Become in Flight* (Melville House), was published in 2020.

Keywords: queer studies, feminism, creative nonfiction, memoir, autoethnography

Body Work, memoirist Melissa Febos's newest craft essay collection, dismantles several of the prevailing ideas around both writing and teaching personal writing. The book's particular interest is memoir, and Febos clarifies in her Author's Note at the beginning of the book that this is neither manifesto nor manual, nor is it "a craft book in the traditional sense." In fact, in this review, I argue that it's not really a craft book at all; I came to it hoping to find pedagogical inspiration, but without exercises, tools, frameworks, or prompts, I instead found permission to take my own autobiographical writing more seriously, and further justification to encourage my students to do the same. Indeed, I would not assign this entire book to a class of undergraduate writers, though I plan to assign the first essay, "In Praise of Navel-Gazing," to help beginning writers think through the place of memoir in an academic setting. But it did legitimize the genre, which often feels like it needs defending in institutional contexts, and makes a case for the vitality and unique potential of asking students and others to write their personal narratives.

Febos's own positionality as writer of this text is explicit. Readers who are familiar with Febos's first three books, *Whip Smart*, *Abandon Me*, and *Girlhood*, will see *Body Work* as an expansion of her work as a queer, feminist writer and teacher and a former sex worker with substance use disorder. By borrowing from fields including philosophy, ethics, feminist theory, religion, and disability studies and applying much of her research to her lived experiences, she makes the case that writing is "integrated into the fundamental movements" of her life, "political, corporeal, spiritual, psychological, and social."

I came to *Body Work* as a feminist teacher of writing and rhetoric who has published a memoir as well as an extensive body of creative nonfiction. Over a decade of teaching memoir to

university students has led me to a series of questions about best practices to teach writing and collaborating when it centers trauma, questions which I brought to my reading of *Body Work*. I often wonder, how do instructors encourage students to write about difficult personal experiences? How do instructors create an environment that fosters safety and vulnerability in personal writing? What ethical issues might arise? How do we evaluate these stories?

I'd argue the collective trauma of the recent past-- the pandemic, various prejudices, the mental health crisis, and the myriad ways in which late-stage capitalism have made post-college prospects more uncertain--are major motivations for students to continually fill creative writing classes across college campuses. My writing students have turned increasingly to processing their most painful experiences through writing. This ability to collapse material with interpretation and perspective, and to act as both researcher and subject, allowed students a proximity to their own writing and research that made for more emotional, engaged writing. In 2021, Jackson and McKinney published a new edited collection on autoethnography in writing studies which discusses the use of autoethnography in the writing classroom as both a research method and a legitimate way of knowing. When students learn to write as autoethnographers, which is to say, "as both subject and researcher" of their own work, "they both produce and analyze the data, thus closing the gap in interpretation between a subject's and researcher's perspective" (Jackson and McKinney, 7-8). Autoethnography is recently emerging as a methodology of feminist rhetorical research, as can be seen in Peitho's pages: Sarah Keeton's "Tracing the Past to (Re)imagine the Future: A Black Queer Pedagogy of Becoming" and Tracee Howell's "Manifesto of a Mid-Life White Feminist Or, An Apologia for Embodied Feminism."

In *Body Work*, Febos zeroes in on the question of *why* we have this urge to write our personal narratives at particularly challenging times, and how our own stories can help us heal.

The most significant aspect of Febos's craft book is her focus on whose stories are silenced, and how various hegemonic forces contribute to this silencing. The strongest chapter, also her opening, "In Praise of Navel-Gazing," focuses on the ways in which victims of trauma and storytellers and writers from marginalized backgrounds are particularly harmed by the dismissal of memoir. Febos cites Dian Million's article "Felt Theory: An Indigenous Feminist Approach to Affect and History," in particular Million's "case for remembering and understanding the impact of Canadian First Nation women's first-person and experiential narrative on white, mostly male mainstream scholarship." That *felt experience*, Febos points out, is "a collaboration between colonization, racism, and sexism, which all understand the political power of rich stories and their threat to existing colonial social structures." In other words, by resisting the stories of lived and felt experience, culturally and institutionally, and minimizing that particular form of meaning-making, we are participants in resisting justice.

Febos herself initially resisted memoir, reluctant to write her own story of sex work (the sub-

ject of her first memoir, *Whip Smart*). She braids her own decision to write her personal narrative with an examination of her wholesale dismissal of the genre to explore her own initial decision to censor herself, and who would have benefitted from that erasure. In Sarah Minor's *Creative Nonfiction* essay "The Braided Essay as Social Justice Action," Minor asserts the braided form of this style of writing allows choices to soften their rigid and often binary ideas. "Metaphor helps challenge the stultified pathways of our neural networks and test the elasticity of thought. Two ideas. One time. The brain resists new ways of thinking, but resistance is an important political tool." Febos's dedication to the braided form of essay writing allows her to connect herself to the rest of the world through her research and makes a case for personal narrative to resist the idea of "navel gazing."

Febos draws our attention to sex writing in Chapter 2, "Mind Fuck," by giving an example of an exercise she uses to get her students to think about how they write sex, and then lists her "unrules" for writing sex scenes. "In the world of your writing, no sex is a punchline unless you make it one," she writes. "There is no marginal erotic unless you sideline it" (67). Her call to action, to rethink the rules we have learned about our own sexuality and proclivities, asks readers to think not only about their writing about their sex lives, but about their sex lives themselves, to rewrite various scripts we have inherited about what pleasure might look like. This essay is the closest to a traditional craft essay in *Body Work*, since Febos details not only *why* we should write better, more authentic sex, but also *how* we might do this.

Febos dedicates Chapter 3, "Big Shitty Party: Six Parables of Writing About Other People" to one of my students' favorite topics: how to write about others in our personal narratives. Febos says this is the most common question people ask her, too, and her response, "that there are no living people in [her] work, only characters" is a process of "radical reduction." She decides to use her own experiences writing and publishing to demonstrate how others might develop "their own moral compass around the issue" (81). While she reaches a thesis I disagree with—that the "radical reduction" of other people in her work makes them characters rather than real people (after all, there may still be real people who live with consequences of being written about in memoir)—I'm persuaded by her argument that "cruelty rarely makes for good writing" (84), and that the memoirist's necessary focus on self is an ethical positioning.

In Chapter 4, Febos is most successful at using other writers to build her own argument—something she excels at in her other books—rewriting a line from Robert Gibbs's *On Ethics* to craft her thesis: "Writing is learning go know yourself again, to find your own agency in the actions you have committed" (132). She calls on thinkers from Jewish philosopher Maimonides and poet Natasha Tretheway to anti-racism activist Resmaa Menakem, to situate writing as a sacred and spiritual act, full of possibilities for confession, healing, and transformation. By the time the writing finds an audience, "the writer's relationship to the past is irrevocably changed. The writer is changed" (139). The act of writing, as Febos experiences the process, has the power to

change the life of the writer.

David Mura published *A Stranger's Journey* in 2018, a series of linked essays arguing for more deliberate and critical awareness in the complex issues surrounding racist habits of thought and craft in memoir writing as well as racist literary representations, much like Febos argues here for readers and writers of memoir to break some of their conditioned responses to memoir. Febos asserts there is room for stories that readers might want to read, and that writers want to write, and writers must rewrite the scripts around the importance and power of personal narrative on both an individual and societal level. I hope this review shows how researching *why* personal narrative benefits students, rather than *how* to teach it, can enrich conversations in the field, and bring creative nonfiction into center ring. The book's ideas have certainly validated my own ideas of personal narrative's primacy in many of my classes, making it just as important for my pedagogy as my own scholarship and life.