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

Cover Art: a collage of photos of roses created by Talitha May, taken at the International Rose Test Garden in Portland, Oregon. Emerging from the lower left corner are roses in variegated colors: pink, white, yellow, red. The upper right corner and background of the image are burgundy, with "Peitho 27.1 Fall 2024" in a yellow sans serif font in all caps. May remarks, "The piece takes inspiration from a fragment by Ibycus in which she nursed a baby among rose blossoms as well as the ideas of rhetoric and context."

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Editor's Introduction

Rebecca Dingo and Clancy Ratliff

If we are being honest, this editor's Introduction is not easy to write. The day after the re-election of Donald Trump as president, Clancy texted Rebecca, "Not looking forward to writing this editor's intro" and Rebecca texted back "Right?!" A month later, we still struggle to process what this election will mean for our communities, our universities, and especially the members of our all our communities who are immigrants, of color, and trans. The re-election of Donald Trump as president along with his nominations for White House Cabinet demonstrate what the ACLU executive director, Anthony D. Romero describes as "a clear and present danger to our democratic norms, processes, and institutions." Although The Heritage Foundation has regularly in the past offered a policy plan and road map to a conservative government, Project 2025's nine-hundred-page conservative manifesto offers an extreme reorganizing of the Executive Branch and overall Federal government while also gutting the civil liberties of many already vulnerable populations. Even though Trump tried to distance himself from Project 2025 during his campaign, it is becoming clearer (especially as he nominates underprepared and extremely conservative members to his cabinet) that he is not in actuality distancing himself from this plan at all—which is what many of us suspected in the first place. Locally, both of us are hearing murmurs on our campuses about what the Trump president will mean for our institutions and the students and faculty who reside in them. We anticipate the defunding of the NEA and NEH as last time he was president but as Project 2025 lays out; we also foresee that federal funds will be withdrawn or not granted to universities who chose to protect its DACA and immigrant students from deportation that the new administration claims will happen or who continue to support DEI initiatives or who teach materials the administration might deem as inappropriate. On the Gulf Coast, we brace for the proposed closure of the National Hurricane Center and other forms of environmental harm. As Jen Wingard

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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).

in a recent private conversation with Rebecca suggested: just look to Texas. She went on to say that Texas is the pilot project for the nation in terms of neoliberal style deregulation, dismantling DEI, and cracking down on immigration. Due to Project 2025, Trump's concerning new cabinet, and Trump's racist, sexist, and fascist rhetoric, we write this editors' introduction in a state of uncertainty, instability, and fear. But all the same we look for moments of hope.

As a result of the election, on Rebecca's mind has been Antonio Gramsci's The Prison Notebooks. Gramsci wrote his groundbreaking book in prison and under a fascist regime. As a result, scholars have recounted that Gramsci himself had to create new words and suggest new understandings of concepts. He rhetorically crafted the term hegemony while arguing about a new civil society and the value of a passive revolution. While both of us are at times perplexed by our teenagers' new language and don't always fully understand their purposes and uses, perhaps this new language is important for current times. Perhaps they are creating new language and meaning that will be useful as Gramsci's was but for these times.

In the same vein of hope, rethinking, and retheorizing feminism this issue of Peitho, is timely. Even though all the content was written and accepted well in advance of the 2024 elections, in this issue, authors offer grounded methods that are applicable to what we as feminist scholars, faculty, and students may be facing in the near future as a result of this election. Nicole Tanquary's essay, "Tara Reade and the Case for a Feminist-Rhetoric Propaganda Studies" focuses on developing what she terms "feminist rhetoric-propaganda studies." Using the case of Tara Reade, who spoke out about President Biden inappropriately touching her and harassing her, Tanquary transparently walks her readers through what this method looks like. In doing so, she demonstrates the importance of close reading for ways in which, in Tanquary's case study, journalists work to frame readers opinions based on the evidence they include and leave out alongside their rhetorical choices. Through this method, Tanquary shows how audiences were able to deflect Biden's harassment of Reade in favor of supporting his run for President. This kind of micro-attention to how language, how and why a story is told, and what is revealed and left out, is going to be an important analytic skill for tracing fascist rhetoric.

In the jointly written essay, "Feminist Intersectionality: Two Writing Center Staff Renegotiating Identities in the Early 2020s" Naya Quintana and Xuan Jiang look at how writing centers are important parts of a university ecology because they can be spaces that establish communities for minoritized writing center staff. The study uses a collaborative autoethnography method to reflect on and share how the authors had to renegotiate their identities during the 2020 COVID pandemic. They noted how, due to their identities, they were at times vulnerable. They captured this experience by concretizing writing center staff members' voices in the essay. The essay ultimately shows how pluralized identities impact the writing center community and can deepen professional connections. This study reminds us that it is sometimes within everyday micro-spaces that small changes and challenges to the status quo can happen. As feminist scholars, it is important for us to attend to and make visible these times and spaces. WC staff's pluriversal identities impact WCs, and deepen the professional connection of WCs as feminized spaces, their services,

and their synergies ultimately for student success.

Melovee Easley and Elenore Long's essay, "Constructing Black Presence in Arizona's State Capitol Museum: Performing a Responsive Rhetorical Art in a Contested Site of Public Memory" demonstrates another way in which feminist rhetorical scholars can use feminist rhetorical and education practices to tell histories of racism in places where education materials about racism are outlawed. As the essay details, Easley was charged with the task of creating a museum exhibit about Buffalo Soldiers in a state where "proposed state legislation prohibited state-sponsored educational materials from referencing institutional racism (directly or indirectly)." Buffalo Soldiers were Black men who were recruited by the US military to help with Western expansion and to decimate indigenous communities. Drawing from Ibram Kendi, Easley understood the "cruel irony" of this practice and wanted to communicate it in the exhibit. Easley's task as a curator was to create an exhibit that would speak to students, children, adults across races about this complex history. The essay tracks the key rhetorical decisions Easley made to walk the fine line between telling and communicating the racist history without actually calling it out. It is this sort of careful crafting that rhetorical scholars will need to engage in these turbulent times.

This issue also features a Cluster Conversation on queer and feminist approaches to rhetorical surveillance studies: a timely collection of scholarship on surveillance (and sousveillance, and counterveillance) and technologies of surveillance as we go into 2025 and the next presidential administration. The editors, Morgan C. Banville and Gavin P. Johnson, do an outstanding job describing and connecting the individual pieces in the cluster, as well as contextualizing the larger area of surveillance studies; instead of our own introduction of the cluster, we urge readers to read their excellent introductory remarks.

Also in this issue are three Recoveries and Reconsiderations pieces. Rachael Mcintosh writes about her experience in the Slavery Documents Collection at the Eberly Family Special Collections Library at Penn State University. She thoughtfully situates her narrative of her encounter with the documents of enslavement in scholarship about archives and brings her own reflection on reading the papers into dialogue with issues in archival methodologies.

Andrew Fiss's piece also reflects on archival documents, particularly a composition book by Black professor Motta Sims. Sims taught home economics at various HBCUs, and her personal composition book integrates scrapbook creating and writing Written when Sims was a student, this artifact reveals the scientific knowledge in home economics, and Fiss notes the feminization of domestic science and its exclusion from STEM fields.

Alexandra Sladky's essay on "Iphis and Ianthe" shows us a new translation of Ovid's story that prompts a reconsideration of the complexity of Iphis's gender. The character Iphis was born a girl but raised as a boy and then betrothed to Ianthe. Sladky provides detailed explanations of particular translation choices in previous translations of Ovid, such as the word prodigiosus, and in the new translation by Stephanie

McCarter.

Tara Reade and the Case for a Feminist Rhetoric-Propaganda Studies

Nicole Tanquary

Abstract: Following the circulation of #MeToo in late 2017, calls for accountability drew attention to public figures - including politicians - who had potentially committed acts of sexual violence. This paper joins two currently separated disciplinary focuses, feminist rhetorical studies and propaganda studies, to theorize how US news media handle reports of politicians' sexual misconduct post-#MeToo. In performing what this combined feminist rhetoric-propaganda studies may look like, I approach a publication celebrated for its post-#MeToo investigative work, *The New York Times* (NYT), and analyze the 2020 case of US President Joe Biden and a former junior aide named Tara Reade. I argue that, despite the absence of any definitive evidence "proving" one side over another, the NYT consistently presents the case in ways that serve Biden's interests over Reade's, and works to insulate Biden from public accountability. In presenting this interdisciplinary study, I contribute to ongoing understandings of victim testimony post-#MeToo, while also shifting beyond the particularity of Biden and Reade to consider how a feminist rhetoric-propaganda studies might usefully inform how we study mainstream media representations of sexual violence.

Introduction

In 2006, African American and women's rights activist Tarana Burke used the platform of her organization *Just Be Inc.* to found the "me too" movement, dedicated to "let[ting] women, particularly young women of color … know that they are not alone" as survivors of sexual abuse (Burke 8). Over a decade later in October 2017, when actress Alyssa Milano incorporated "#MeToo" into a Tweet, the movement began to be recognized by larger US and international publics. From an initial politics of performing solidarity, Me Too[1] grew grew into a call for accountability, drawing into the spotlight public figures—including politicians—who had committed acts of sexual violence. In a *Washington Post* article titled, "How #MeToo has changed the D.C. power structure - so far," the authors strike a celebratory note about the effects of Me Too on US politics: "Fueled by rage and a surge of women naming those they say sexually harassed or assaulted them, the #MeToo movement has brought the swift downfall of many powerful federal officials over the past year,"

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1   In this article, I write "Me Too" *sans* hashtag to indicate the wider movement began by Burke; I use "#MeToo" when referencing the October 2017 Twitter campaign.

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going on to name nineteen persons as examples (Gerhart and Rindler 9).

In this way, Me Too achieved its goal of establishing sexual violence as a large-scale, systemic issue in the US, one worthy of redress. Yet in terms of its accountability efforts, Me Too's successes have been decidedly uneven. One of the more lurid examples is former US President Donald Trump. Despite a steady stream of women who came forward to recount instances of sexual harassment, assault, rape, and/or pedophilia - not to mention the leaking of the infamous *Access Hollywood* tape in which Trump discussed grabbing women "by the pussy" in acts of sexual conquest (Fahrenthold). Trump was successfully elected president in 2016, completed his four-year term without repercussion, and as of 2024 was reelected into office. Yet while Trump might be the most widely known example of a US politician who evaded Me Too-era accountability, he is merely one among many, including Brett Kavanaugh, Matt Gaetz, Keith Ellison, Tony Cárdenas, Tom Reed, and Joe Biden.

The fact that post-#MeToo call-outs were only *partially* successful in US politics indicates a need to study how, exactly, political elites engage in strategies of rhetorical evasion. Since public pressure (and implied support or rejection by voting publics) can be influential in fueling accountability, a necessary first step is to consider how sexual violence controversies are mediated in public discussion, and how we are variously encouraged to interpret politicians' and potential victims' accounts. While journalists have successfully achieved acts of public accountability in the Me Too era (for instance, the *New York Times* investigative reports into media mogul Harvey Weinstein, which helped to uncover decades of sexual predation [Kantor and Twohey]), it would be wrong to assume that media institutions act as neutral conduits of information. Even sympathetic handlings of victim testimony often carry the underpinnings of "rape culture," a term naming the deeply patriarchal logics that are upheld as commonsensical depictions of reality (Larson 2021). Such logics, as argued by Stephanie Larson, work to diminish empathy for victims of sexual violence by instead channeling public feeling towards victim doubt, or even more seriously, victim blame, while simultaneously working to contain victims' expressions of having been harmed. In order to account for how rape culture ideology is circulated and taken up by publics, we need to attend to how testimonies of sexual violence are mediated for reading audiences, and the subtle implications these mediations carry.

In an effort to track how venues such as the *New York Times* (hereafter NYT)[2] present victim testimony to reading publics, I take up a case that was widely reported on in May 2020, but resulted in little concrete change: Tara Reade, who spoke of sexual assault while working as a junior aide in Biden's Senate office in 1993. In approaching this case, it is important to note that I am not interested in proving the veracity of one person's narrative over another. Such an orientation would be problematic, given the frequent weaponization of doubt deployed against victims (Banet-Weiser and Higgins), as well as the inherent difficulty in "proving" an act of sexual violence that may have occurred decades earlier. Instead of supposed truth value, I focus on how, in the absence of any *absolute* evidence (and even with some corroboration of

2   I selected *The New York Times* due to its high circulation numbers in the US, and its alignment with #MeToo, for instance in publishing investigative work on Hollywood producer and serial assaulter Harvey Weinstein.

Reade's account), the NYT presented Reade in ways that discredited her character and offered a rhetorical cover for Biden.

In developing methodology to assess this interplay of representations, I utilize an area of literature that, while analytically useful, has not yet been put into conversation with feminist rhetorics: the study of propaganda. While colloquially the word "propaganda" in the US recalls associations with war discourse and cultural movements such as McCarthyism and the Red Scare, current scholarship argues that, as a practice, propaganda is alive and well in contemporary US politics (Oddo 2018). Moreover, this scholarship discusses how the mainstream media sources from which Americans glean information - the same sources that posture as objective presenters of truth - often serve notably propagandic functions that, in turn, insulate political elites from the possible consequences of their actions (Bennett; Herman and Chomsky). Using coverage of Biden-Reade as a test case, this paper argues that feminist rhetorical scholars can gain a helpful orientation towards news media via propaganda studies, leading us to rich interrogations of how news media texts may help to popularize the tenants of rape culture in US society.

I begin this paper with an exploration of propaganda studies and how it can usefully combine with feminist rhetorics. Then, collecting the coverage of the Biden-Reade case as it was published by the NYT, I deploy two propaganda studies-inspired methods (*recontextualization* and *framing*) to attend to the particular case of Biden-Reade. I argue that, far from presenting neutral depictions of actors and events, the NYT presents the controversy in ways that serve Biden's interests over Reade's. Via this analysis, and in arguing for a feminist rhetoric-propaganda studies, we shift beyond the particularity of the Biden-Reade case to consider how problematic patterns of representation continue to thrive in post-#MeToo news media.

Propaganda Studies and Feminist Rhetorical Studies

"Propaganda" as it occurs in a specifically US context has long been a topic of intellectual discussion (see for instance Edward Bernays' *Propaganda* book, written in 1928). Edward Bernays serves as an originator of this discussion, using his book - which drew from his influence on the modern Public Relations (PR) industry - to offer an understanding of propaganda as itself a neutral tool, one that could be used for good or ill. Later scholars, however, came to position propaganda as a negative and reality-obscuring force that unfairly bends the will of the masses, an association that continues today (Ellul; Marlin). While rhetoric circles occasionally offered comment (see, for instance, Henderson and Braun), most contemporary propaganda scholarship tends to have roots in communication studies (e.g., Jowett and O'Donnell) and/or critical sociolinguistics (e.g., Van Dijk).

Despite propaganda's long scholastic history, contemporary academics are not always in agreement as to what "counts" as propaganda, and theorizing definitions makes up the bulk of propaganda studies today. In a useful cross-comparison of scholarly definitions, John Oddo (2018) identifies several points of contention: whether or not propaganda's authors can only be institutional; whether or not propaganda requires

deliberate targeting of an audience for "a self-serving purpose" (16); and finally, whether or not propaganda requires a demonstrable intention to mislead or harm its audiences. In comparison to those he surveys, Oddo favors a wider scope as to what should count as propaganda, defining it as "mass-recontextualized and manipulative discourse that promotes the power of the Few while harming the interests of the Many" (36). The "Few," to approach propaganda from a feminist angle, can and should include powerful men who take sexual advantage of the subjects hierarchically beneath them, as well as the journalists who report on these cases for the public's general consumption. If such reports conform to (and assist in promoting) rape cultural logics that protect the interests of politicians over those of their potential victims, then journalists' reports act against the interests of the Many, and should rightfully be understood as propagandic in nature.

Popular understandings of propaganda regularly cast state institutions as the main authors of manipulative misinformation. Media venues, in turn, often present themselves as performing a fact-checking role, one meant to counter this misinformation. However, propaganda studies regularly implicates mainstream media as complicit with (and, in fact, active corroborators of) government propagandic campaigns. As one example, W. Lance Bennett and his collaborators dwell at length on mainstream US reporting in the lead-up to the Iraq War, in which news coverage was so uncritical of the Bush administration, and so willing to reify the administrations' version of events, that outlets such as the NYT later issued apologies to their readers (23). Yet as Bennett and his colleagues argue, this lack of critical coverage is not unique but rather business-as-usual. This is because the press has an ongoing dependence on government sources, which results in "[j]ournalists' propensity to fashion the news to the realities of power as defined by the officials they cover" (3). Edward Herman and Noam Chomsky, in a similar vein, point to the structural weaknesses of US media companies and how these weaknesses encourage the authoring of propaganda. These include news media's corporatization and dependence on profits, as well as the large-scale monopolization of media companies, pushing the media sphere towards homogenization of political narratives even as it forces small, independent presses to the periphery (xvii). Potential dissent to overarching political narratives--in this case, arguments against rape culture and the white cisheteropatriarchy it perpetuates--are denied coverage and effectively sidelined.

Some might point to the antagonistic relationship between the recent Trump administration and US mainstream news, and the consequent rise of fact-checking enterprises and an "adversarial press" (Karpf), as proof against US government-media complicity. Yet given the deep structural dependencies that limit the possibilities of *truly* investigative journalism, we cannot dismiss the ways in which media institutions create accounts that rhetorically serve a propagandic purpose.

One such purpose, I argue, is to protect politicians who engage in sexually violent acts from public repercussion. Sexual violence has of course had a long and painful history in the US, especially in considering marginalized populations such as enslaved women (see Jennings). Such histories cannot be divorced from the US political sphere, and in fact are *constitutive* of that sphere. We only need remember the existence of Sally Hemings, the woman enslaved, imprisoned, raped, and impregnated by Declaration of In-

dependence writer Thomas Jefferson (see Brown), to recognize sexual exploitation's foundational nature in US politics. This sort of violence finds expression today when politicians use their positions of power to take sexual advantage of those over whom they exert some sort of control.

Despite the long history of sexual violence in US politics, the socially-accepted norms of how such violence ought to be discussed have shifted in recent decades. At one time, sexual violence was considered a "private" matter that should not be brought up in the "public" venue of politics, and thus privileged men's discretion over possible accountability. Now, however, sexual violence is at least identified as a newsworthy concern and is thus open to the possibility of public discussion or even condemnation. The Me Too movement in its various expressions can be seen as a reinforcement of this trend, with an increased emphasis on holding powerful men to account, as well as cultivating solidarity among women who have faced sexual violence (though this solidarity is not unproblematic - see Allison Phipps' work for a discussion of what amounts to white women's cooptation of Me Too).

These expressions of sexual violence in the US, and the cultural responses to that violence such as Me Too, have been taken up for interrogation by feminist scholars across the rhetoric and communication disciplines. Stephanie Larson, for instance, considers the power of #MeToo in terms of the classic rhetorical trope of *megethos*, or the way that aggregation can generate force. That is, Larson argues, the sheer number of women who tweeted "#MeToo" offer readers a visceral sense of how widespread the problem of sexual abuse truly *was* (2018). In research that studies victim subjectivities, Mary Schuster explores the various rhetorical constraints that victims must face continuing into the post-#MeToo era. For instance, Schuster notes that "maintaining the identity of a victim often involves achieving credibility through corroboration of her story," such that when corroboration is not possible, the victim's experience is deemed unproveable and ultimately delegitimized (2).

Some of the feminist research into sexual violence has attended specifically to how that violence is constituted in media representations. Several scholars, for instance, have examined coverage about the Clarence Thomas and Anita Hill hearings prior to Thomas's appointment to the US Supreme Court. Despite the hearing's failure to hold Thomas accountable for his sexual harassment of Hill, Amy Black and Jamie Allen have argued that the Thomas-Hill hearing focused public discussion onto sexual harassment for the first time in the US, recasting it more concretely as an issue needing redress. Leigh Gilmore, meanwhile, takes a more negative view of the hearings, arguing that they are emblematic of "legally permissible and intertwining forms of racism and sexism" across both US media and politics (28).

Other feminist scholars have attended to the media industry itself and its various methods of expressing antifeminist ideology. Rebecca DiBennardo offers a useful cross-study of a particular print venue, *The Los Angeles Times,* to compare patterns within sexual abuse reports that involved children versus adult women. In the *LA Times,* DiBennardo posits, "Narratives about adult victims ... fram[e] them as responsible for their victimization and minimiz[e] their importance relative to child victims" (1). In a similar use of news frames

as an analytic, Paula McDonald and Sara Charlesworth explore how such frames tend to present "sexual harassment as an individualized problem of inappropriate employee behavior" rather than something systemic (95). Janet Bing and Lucien Lombardo, meanwhile, work to name and outline the frames by which media sources explain cases of sexual harassment to reading publics. Particularly helpful is their identification of an "initiator frame," which occurs when a text "focuses on the behavior of the alleged perpetrator rather than on the damage to the alleged victim, redefining the reported behavior as something *other* than harassment" (299, emphasis mine). Feminist research in rhetoric and communication, then, has already identified various problematic orientations to victims of sexual violence that are reproduced in US media.

When we survey both the extant literature on propaganda and the extant literature on sexual violence, perhaps the most significant gap we find is the lack of interdisciplinary dialogue taking place. Research on propaganda offers insights into how power is regulated via institutional unities of government and media, with media-consuming populations coerced into beliefs that serve the status quo. Feminist work in rhetorical studies, meanwhile, takes up examinations of political/cultural beliefs - the inherent superiority of (white, upper-class, cishet, abled) men - and how this logic is constituted in popular representations. Combining these similar, but separated, conversations allows us to investigate sexual violence as a systemic issue of control, one in which media campaigns have the ability to insulate men in power. Additionally, when feminist research *does* take up sexual abuse as done by US politicians, attention tends to be drawn towards politicians (such as Clarence Thomas, Brett Kavanaugh, and Donald Trump) who are more clearly identifiable as misogynists. In attending to the cooperative imbrications of government and media in maintaining rape cultural power relations, we need to expand our purview to politicians who mainstream media outlets treat more favorably. In this paper, I will examine the case of Joe Biden, whom during 2020 was often implied to be the hero that could save the US public from then-President Donald Trump.

In order to conduct this analysis, I next explain the combination of two approaches inspired by propaganda studies that, when taken together with theory drawn from feminist rhetorics, inform what we might call a feminist rhetoric-propaganda studies: *recontextualizations* and *frames*.

Recontextualizations and Frames as Feminist Methodology

In his book *The Discourse of Propaganda,* Oddo makes the argument that propaganda can be usefully approached via the analytic of "intertextuality." Intertextuality, as a theory often used in discourse analysis, attends to the fact that no single text or event exists in isolation but is part of a larger, contextual web, linked in a process of what theorists like Mikhail Bakhtin refer to as "dialogicality." As such, intertextuality attends to how we draw upon former texts in order to understand new ones, putting such texts into "dialogue" with one another (Bakhtin). This becomes significant to a feminist rhetoric-propaganda studies in that, when it comes to propaganda, "the desired response is not just acknowledgment but *repetition*" (Oddo 22, emphasis mine). Propagandic ideas gain their power via circulation. As such, media that is serving a propagandic purpose repeats certain logics (for instance, that of rape culture) across many texts, until those

logics become a normalized standard for reading audiences.

Embedded within intertextuality is the study of recontextualizations. *Recontextualization* speaks to how rhetors constitute representations of previous texts within new (con)textual moments. Oddo, drawing upon a quote from Bakhtin, argues that recontextualization "can be best thought of as a rhetorical 'tool for re-conceptualiz[ing] and re-accenting' prior discourse" (Oddo 130). "Recontextualization" therefore draws our attention to two complementary foci: *which* texts an author decides to call upon, and *how* the author constructs those texts within a new text. The first focus requires researchers to attend to references of previous texts or events, and how these previous texts/events are made present or absent.[3] The second focus requires us to attend to what is included or excluded at a micro-scale, and what sort of epistemic certainty we are encouraged to place in included texts. As an example of varying certainty, we could consider the difference between "She *said*" versus "She *claimed*" as a way to introduce a victim's testimony, and how this word choice affects how reading audiences will make their own interpretations of that testimony and how trustworthy it is.

Relevant to discussions of news media, and to recontextualizations more particularly, are *frames*. Frames are an analytical tool used across the communication disciplines, including rhetoric and discourse analysis, and often serve as a way to assess a reader's cognitive processing of texts. Paul Chilton, for instance, describes frames as "structures related to the conceptualization of situation types and their expression in language" (51). Essentially, frames are mental apparatuses that help us to make sense of our daily lived experiences, apparatuses that in turn are cued by the language we use. As George Lakoff explains, "All of our knowledge makes use of frames, and every word is defined through the frames it neurally activates," such that certain words call up corresponding networks of meaning (72). We might consider the terms "sexual misconduct" and "sexual assault," which could technically each be used to describe an incident of sexual violence. However, the change of phrasing would imply wildly different interpretations of that incident, and thus different frames for understanding, with "misconduct" being relatively vague and institutional, and "assault" connoting a sense of danger and harm to a physical subject. To draw a parallel to feminist rhetorics and in particular the work of Sara Ahmed, words can have a "sticky" quality to them in which meanings and affects attach over time (Ahmed) - in this case, "misconduct" and "assault" each have different sets of associated meanings. Selective word-use can thus encourage certain orientations towards the subjects involved, certain "frames of mind," even in the absence of explicit discussion.

The literature on propaganda posits that the more a particular word is repeated, the more a frame is reinforced, and the more it becomes normalized in public media, "strengthen[ing] the circuits for [a word's] ideology in a hearer's brain" (Lakoff 72). If a news outlet consistently uses "sexual misconduct" over other alternatives to describe an event of sexual violence, this offers readers a dominant way of thinking about the

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3   Say, for instance, a victim did an interview with a news outlet. A study of recontextualizations might ask: Do other outlets quote from the interview? *What* do they quote? Or are a victim's words made relatively absent from subsequent coverage?

event, one that (in lacking an acknowledgment of harm) serves the ideological interests of rape culture. This in turn works to diminish future alternatives. This is because, as Lakoff argues, alternative wordings that do not match dominant frames are unlikely to gain traction in public thought (73); to rephrase in Ahmed's words, they do not "stick." Of course, no scholar who studies ideologically-sticky framing-words would go as far as to say that language *controls* thought. However, as feminist rhetoricians know, language certainly *manipulates* thought, operating with different degrees of stickiness, guiding users towards considering a given subject in one way rather than another. Given that such manipulation is one of the defining features of propaganda, attending to a text's selective use of frames becomes a way to understand a text's functioning *as* propaganda... and in this case, an antifeminist propaganda, one that reinforces a white cisheteropatriarchal orientation to potential victims.

Because of its focus on the power of individual words and phrases, the study of both recontextual-izations and frames can be usefully combined with feminist rhetorical analysis that takes a close-reading approach. Together, this offers us a methodology that can be used towards a feminist rhetoric-propaganda studies. Below, I offer an example of what such an approach might look like in analyzing the case of Joe Biden and Tara Reade.

Tara Reade in the *New York Times*

2019 marked the beginning of the US Democratic primary campaign as a range of candidates, including Joe Biden, marketed themselves as viable alternatives to then-President Donald Trump. With campaign season came intense media scrutiny of the candidates. Reports began to appear in which several women (mostly anonymous) described Biden as engaging in "uncomfortable" actions, kissing and touching them without their consent and in ways they found personally demeaning (Flores). Upon seeing these other reports, Tara Reade, a woman who had worked for Biden in 1993 as a junior aide, decided to come forward and report her own experiences with Biden's "uncomfortable touching" in her local paper (The Union). Then in March 2020, Reade added to her initial account, speaking about an incident in 1993 that she qual-ified as more serious. As Reade recounts in a podcast interview, "He had me up against a wall... and, um, I was wearing a skirt... and his hands were on me, underneath my clothes. And... he penetrated me, with his fingers" (Halper). The NYT, as well as other media venues, began to incorporate Reade's story into their coverage of the ongoing election, particularly in April and May 2020.

To investigate the overall coverage of the Biden-Reade case in the NYT, I collected articles using search features available via ProQuest. Initially, I searched the name "Tara Reade" in articles published in 2020, while excluding more explicitly opinion-based article genres such as opinion editorials and letters to the editor. I did this because I was interested in analyzing the "hard news" texts that the NYT presented as neutral and objective retellings of Reade's story. This initial search resulted in 35 articles. Focusing only on Reade's name was, however, not ideal, as this excluded articles that withheld her name even while discussing her experience (for instance, "the woman who accused Biden..."). For that reason, I searched the terms "Joe

Biden" and "sexual" (to capture such phrases as "sexual assault," "sexual misconduct," etc.) while again limiting the search to hard-news articles published in 2020. This resulted in a total of 76 articles.

Combining these two sets of articles (which frequently overlapped with one another) offered a small enough collection to allow for close reading and attention to detail, yet still contained enough texts to identify larger-scale patterns of representation across the NYT's coverage. While not enough to launch a critique of the entire US political media system, this case study was meant to provide a starting point for investigating what a feminist rhetoric-propaganda studies might entail analytically. In attending particularly to recontextualizations and to the frames deployed by NYT writers, I sought to examine the potentially propagandic effects of media reporting on sexual violence, how readers are encouraged to interpret such cases, and how, if present, the implicated logics of rape culture may work to reify US politicians' power in the years following #MeToo.

The first and most immediate element of how the NYT decided to report Reade's story, at least initially, is how they describe the assault itself in graphic detail by paraphrasing Reade's own words. In an April 12 2020 article, the authors render the incident in the following way: "[Reade] told The New York Times that in 1993, Mr. Biden pinned [Reade] to a wall in a Senate building, reached under her clothing and penetrated her with his fingers" (Lerer & Ember). This visceral description of violation is fully accredited to Reade (she "told" the NYT), which creates a kind of distance; this is not a statement necessarily agreed to by the authors, but one they are merely relaying to their readers. Even so, the grammatical structure of the sentence positions Biden as an active perpetrator, doing something to Reade as an affected object, and thus figures Biden as a responsible party. The sexually abusive nature of the act is emphasized via the verb and prepositional phrase, "penetrated... with his fingers," as "penetrate" carries a strong sexual connotation that, in the absence of consent, becomes a viscerally unpleasant word to read.

The same description of assault reappears in other articles with roughly the same word choice preserved (e.g., Russonello and Astor), repeating and reinforcing this recontextualized version of Reade's story. Yet in some articles, a subtle replacement occurs that works to hide the presence of Biden's body in the event. In an article from May 2020, the prepositional phrase "with his fingers" is disappeared and replaced with the adverb "digitally": "... pushing her up against a wall in a Senate building and penetrating her digitally" (Glueck et. al.). While "digitally" can be understood as the adverbial transformation of "digit" (i.e., finger), in the era of the Internet, this word is far more often used to refer to online or technological contexts. "Digitally" itself is less likely to cue associations with "finger." In this way, "digitally" not only lacks the physical or spatial detail of the original prepositional phrase, but abstracts away the presence of Biden's body and its effect on others (i.e., Reade).

As coverage of Biden-Reade runs into May 2020, details of Reade's experience continue to blur, such as one article that recontextualizes the incident as Reade "accusing [Biden] of sexually assaulting her in a Senate hallway in 1993" (Bennet & Lerer). In this sentence, it is not the act itself, or the felt harm done to

Reade, that carries implied importance. Rather, the sentence structure privileges the accusation itself, and, via prepositional phrases, *where* and *when* the potential assault happened, as the details of primary importance. Regardless of whether the assault happened or not, such renderings disappear the potential act's visceral, bodily qualities, which frequently are the sorts of details that serve to connect a reader to a victim's experience in an empathy-generating way (Larson). Instead, Biden's potential actions are relocated to a prepositional phrase ("of assaulting her…"), implied to be *supplemental* information to the real action of the sentence, Reade "accusing."

It is worth dwelling on the verb "accusing," its noun "accusation," and the versions of this word that appear throughout many of the articles as "accuser"/ "accused." In his discussion of serial predator Bill Cosby, Jackson Katz notes at length the problem in referring to potential sexual violence victims as "accusers":

> "She -- or he -- is no longer the sympathetic victim to whom something horrible was done. She is now the one who is doing something to [the perpetrator] -- she's accusing him. It is her actions -- not his -- that become the object of critical scrutiny. And he is transformed into the victim -- of her accusation. Thus the use of the word 'accuser' effectively shifts public support from the alleged victim to the alleged perpetrator."

We might return to Bing and Lombardo's terminology of "initiator frame" to describe the shift that Katz identifies. Defining Reade as an "accuser" cues the reader away from a victim frame, with its "primary emphasis on the degree of harm or injury from the harassing behavior on the alleged victim," to one that instead privileges the potential *perpetrator's* point of view (297). Grammatically speaking, these variations of "accuse" also position Reade as an active doer of something (an allegation) and Biden as a passive recipient. Invoking this particular frame distances the possibility of Biden as an active doer of harm himself. Nearly all the articles in the NYT corpus reflect this language by introducing Reade as the woman who "accused Joe Biden of sexual assault" (Rutenberg et. al.). This recontextualization of Reade works to highlight the accusation itself as the "newsworthy" story, rather than the possibility of Biden being a sexual assaulter. This "accuser" frame may be occasionally dropped, for instance in phrases such as, "The former aide… told the New York Times…" (Lerer and Ember, 12 April 2020), which centers on Reade's perspective as a former employee who is now "telling" her story. However, the returns to Reade-as-victim are temporary, whereas Reade-as-accuser is frequently introduced at the starts of articles and thus functions as an establishing frame, shaping how we understand the entire series of events to be later described.

Perhaps the most striking feature of the NYT coverage on Biden-Reade is what is implied to matter in these recontextualized accounts, and how these included contexts impact our perception of Reade as an untrustworthy source. The NYT engages in hyper-scrutiny of every aspect of Reade's life so that we might better "understand" her later testimony. The most direct example of this is an article titled, "Tara Reade's Tumultuous Journey to the 2020 Campaign" (Rutenberg et. al.). The NYT published this article on the front of their print edition as well as online, with the online version including an audio narration and featuring over 1000

comments, illustrating both its wide circulation and its perceived importance at the time. The title suggests that Reade primarily matters for her effect on the 2020 election. However, the subsequent byline demonstrates just how closely every aspect of Reade's life is appraised, not in her own words but the words of others: "To better understand Ms. Reade, who accused Joe Biden of sexual assault, The Times interviewed nearly 100 friends, relatives, co-workers and neighbors, and reviewed court records and her writings." The collective work of this report (which covers everything from her childhood to her coming-out about the assault) presents Reade as a charismatic but ultimately suspicious woman. The authors cast doubt on, among other things, the education she lists on her resume, her work as an expert witness in court cases, and past financial disagreements with landlords and friends. Moreover, this untrustworthiness is linked to her previous narrations of sexual violence: "... there are the former friends [of Reade's] who describe how she spun her way into their confidence with her story of abuse and perseverance, only to leave them feeling disappointed and duped" (n.p.). The reader is left to draw parallels between these supposedly false abuse stories and Reade's testimony about Biden, and how she may have manipulatively "spun" the story. This serves to question Reade's motive in coming forward and the reader's potential sympathetic reaction to Reade, a reaction that must be guarded against unless one be similarly "duped." In this way, the NYT presents a Reade who is sticky with her own past, rendering every word that comes from her mouth inherently questionable.

The multitude of personal details recounted by the NYT also individuates Reade in a way that separates her from the larger Me Too movement, making her an easier mark for personal attacks. As feminist scholars have noted, isolation of particular victims serves to present instances of sexual violence as explainable via individual failings rather than a widespread issue of inequality (McDonald and Charlesworth). Because of Reade's morally gray character (as "proven" in the NYT's investigative biography), emphasizing Reade as a unique individual helps to shift focus onto how her testimony is *individually* questionable, rather than part of a systemic pattern; it is a propaganda that obscures the nature of societal inequality. We find this in how Reade's account of Biden is most often discussed in the singular, despite the existence of other women (such as former Nevada lawmaker Lucy Flores) who previously came forward to speak of Biden's exploitative behavior.

Separating Reade from Me Too also takes the form of explicitly distancing her from key Me Too figures. This is done by quoting women activists in their continued support of Biden (Bennett and Lerer; Lerer and Ember, 29 April 2020), as well as a particular article that focuses on Reade's rejection by "a leading #MeToo lawyer" (Lerer et. al.). This article recounts how Reade was initially taken on by Douglas Wigdor, the same attorney that brought successful litigation against perpetrators such as Bill O'Reilly and Harvey Weinstein. However, "only two weeks" after Wigdor began to represent Reade, he dropped her as a client. The article does include quotes from Wigdor insisting that he believed Reade's story and that the matter of her truthfulness was not the reason behind his leaving. However, the authors choose to recontextualize Wigdor's departure alongside Reade's "questionable" education and legal credentials, discussion of which takes up the bulk of the article; it seems significant that the article's online URL has the tag "tara-reade-credentials," implying that Reade is the true subject under judgment here. In personifying Me Too justice through the figure

of Wigdor, and in highlighting his supposed rejection of Reade's "credentials," the article serves to section Reade off from "legitimate" Me Too cases.

Questioning whether or not someone truly counts as a victim (or whether, instead, they are supposedly fabricating the harm for personal gain) has long been identified by feminist scholars as a way to delegitimize and ultimately dismiss victims of sexual violence (Gilmore; Larson; Schuster). While, ethically speaking, events in Reade's life beyond the potential assault should not dismiss the possibility that she was harmed, the NYT's coverage of her story works towards this conclusion. From the perspective of a feminist rhetoric-propaganda studies, this practice sets a disciplining precedent for other sexual violence survivors. Few people, after all, are comfortable with a public excavation of their personal lives if they come forward to report a traumatic sexual experience. The possibility of facing a media treatment similar to Reade's can become a reason *not* to speak out against powerful political figures; Reade said as much herself in a later interview (Kelly). Write-ups that engage in disciplining their potential victim subjects can thus serve as a protective cover for politicians.

Another recontextualized feature to appear across many of the articles (Bennett and Lerer; Glueck et. al.; Lerer and Ember) are prolonged descriptions of then-President Trump's *own* history with sexual violence allegations. In the Lerer and Ember April 29, 2020 article, we see the authors break away from the immediate situation to embed the following:

> [Trump] has been accused of sexual assault and misconduct by more than a dozen women, who have described behavior that went far beyond the allegation against Mr. Biden. [Trump] has repeatedly denigrated women over their appearance and intellect. The 'Access Hollywood' tape, in which he boasted about grabbing women's genitals, was released just weeks before his victory in the 2016 election.

The relevance-to-Trump developed here matches many of the articles in the collection, with most articles actively recontextualizing Reade's account according to the Trump-versus-Biden logics of the 2020 election.[4] Such detailed paragraphs of Trump's purported violence--and how this violence goes "far beyond the allegation against Mr. Biden," a phrase repeated in other articles as well--provides readers with a political comparison, positioning Trump, proportionally speaking, as the *real* threat to women. This in turn provides an explicit political incentive to distrust Reade's account and instead continue to support Biden.

In direct contrast to Trump's atrocious record with women's rights, and how NYT journalists detail this at length in articles that technically do not involve him, authors of the Biden-Reade coverage also

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4   A cursory search on *ProQuest* for NYT articles written in 2020 that included "Donald Trump" and "sexual" found 131 articles, compared to Biden's 76. While the NYT discusses some of his dozens of victims in the singular, most of these articles tend to present the victims in aggregate (e.g., "more than a dozen women…"), and/or highlight the *Access Hollywood* tapes above all else. In contrast to Reade, who was acknowledged but then discredited, Trump's potential victims tended to not be mentioned at *all* (a finding, also, of Schneider and Hannem).

frequently cite evidence of Biden's positive history of supporting women's rights. Several articles mention how Biden "championed the Violence Against Women Act," and helped "ma[ke] progress on fighting campus sexual assault" (Bennett and Lerer). In short, Biden, albeit still guilty of "uncomfortable touching," is presented as an ally whose possible misogyny is relatively benign and paternal, at least in comparison to Trump. What remains absent in these Trump/Biden recontextualizations is Reade's account of the assault itself. Despite the fixation on Reade's story, attention is paid primarily to the physical assault and the resulting "accusation"; no NYT journalists describe how the incident may have caused Reade trauma, and only rarely (see Smith as an exception) do writers quote from Reade directly, instead preferring paraphrases over which they can exert more rhetorical control. As a consequence, both Reade's voice and the figuration of her assault recede into the background, paling in comparison to the true matter at hand for readers with feminist inclinations: defeating Trump and removing him from the White House.[5] Given the widespread patterns in word choice and recontextualizations that together advance Reade as inherently questionable and Biden as inherently favorable, it is worth noting that some NYT articles do attempt a more critical orientation. One article dated to late May 2020 critiques how mainstream media handled the Biden-Reade controversy as a whole, titled, "Why Won't TV News Book Tara Reade?" (Smith). This article compares Reade's case to another (that of Juanita Broaddrick's potentially being raped by Bill Clinton in 1978) which was also denied TV coverage, and in this historical connectivity begins to gesture at the systemic, anti-victim nature of political news media. Smith's article is also one of the few to directly quote Reade, amplifying her own words and voice rather than merely appropriating her account. Smith strikes an overall sympathetic tone, arguing that, whatever her individual credibility, Reade deserves at least to be heard on mainstream news venues. In the article's byline - "The stakes are high for the media in the case of a sexual assault allegation against Joe Biden" - Smith even suggests the shared "stakes" (and thus the propagandic complicities) between news media and US politics. While this article was somewhat buried in the print edition (appearing on page A22), it enjoyed both audio narration and a high level of reader engagement, with 1451 online comments recorded at the time of research.

However, in writing this article, Smith chooses to direct his critique *outwards,* not at the NYT's own print coverage. This gives the implicit suggestion that the NYT, by publishing Smith, is above the faults discussed in the article. Throughout its intense coverage of the Biden-Reade controversy, after all, the NYT *also* did not publish an interview with Tara Reade or otherwise privilege her voice in their retellings of her testimony. Instead, nine days after publishing Smith's article, the NYT chose to narrate the intricacies of Reade's life primarily through the eyes of others, in ways that roundly challenged her character and thus her status as a legitimate victim (Rutenberg et. al.).

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5   What makes this a particularly complex situation is that there is some truth to such a stance. Trump normalized degradation of women in public discussion, had dozens of victims of his own, and put into power others who worked to shrink the rights that women had earned in hard-fought battles, such as how his Supreme Court appointees helping to overturn the federal right to abortions protected in *Roe v Wade.* Trump represented a very real threat to women's rights in 2020. However, this *still* does not offer a legitimate reason to neglect Reade's story, and the propagandic logic that we must tolerate "lesser" sexual violence in order to protect our rights is an insidious one that deserves to be unpacked.

As it stands, despite posturing as a Me Too ally, the NYT buried Reade's story of sexual violence once this story had outlived its rhetorical use. 29 out of 35 articles mentioning Reade's name are dated to April or May 2020; after this, Reade drops from the coverage entirely until four months later in September. In September, a small handful of six articles appear; yet these only mention Reade in passing, for instance in musing about whether or not Trump would invite Reade to sit in on one of the October presidential debates (Karni and Haberman). Again, the emphasis is not on Reade, but on her potential effect on the election--and once the election itself is done, so is the use value of Reade's testimony.

After the election's conclusion, even in articles in which a mention of Reade *would* make contextual sense, her name fails to appear. If one searches the term "Joe Biden sexual assault" on the NYT site, one finds such articles as, "Biden Overhauls Military Justice Code, Seeking to Curb Sexual Assault" (Shear). In this article, Biden is presented as a trail-blazing hero in matters of supporting sexual violence victims: "By signing a far-reaching executive order, Mr. Biden ushered in the most significant changes to the modern military legal system since it was created in 1950. The order follows two decades of pressure from lawmakers and advocates of sexual assault victims..." The assumption that such a write-up communicates is that Biden has listened directly to "advocates of sexual assault victims" and, based on their advice, overhauled an outdated military system in a victim-supportive way. Absent from the article is any reference to Reade, or to the other women who described Biden's uncomfortable touching and kissing; from this article alone, a reader could be forgiven for assuming that Biden was an unproblematic ally, rather than someone who potentially committed sexual assault himself. Whereas every detail in Reade's life is accounted for in how we should consider her narrative of assault, Biden's own sexual assault controversy is simply made not to matter.

Discussion

In this paper, I have used the NYT's Biden-Reade coverage as an opportunity to combine methodology and theory from both propaganda studies and feminist rhetorics, analyzing how sexual violence is handled in political news media. In the process, I theorized that a feminist rhetoric-propaganda studies can assist us in uncovering when news media advance rape cultural propaganda, which, in the absence of definitive evidence, works to protect politicians "accused" of some form of sexual violence. Taking up the NYT's coverage of Reade during the 2020 US presidential election, I applied an analytical focus inspired from propaganda studies that focused on recontextualizations and frames, attending to how others' words are (selectively) used, and what cues for understanding readers are encouraged to take. This allowed me to track how acts of sexual violence are represented and, frequently, delegitimized in the grander scheme of a propagandic politics-as-usual.

In my analysis, I show how the NYT articles and their handling of the Biden-Reade case together work to dismiss Reade as a victim worthy of being believed. Presenting Reade in an "accuser" frame with her own dubious history, recontextualized for the reader's judgment, implies Biden as the true victim that needs protection in the 2020 election against Trump. As feminist scholars regularly point out, the term "victim"

is often associated with helplessness and a lack of agency (Stringer). Yet in a victim frame, there is at least attention on the harm that may have been done, and a seeking to rectify that harm on the potential victim's behalf. The possibility of this sort of recognition was systematically denied to Reade in favor of Biden. Such Biden-supportive coverage was written in the absence of any "true" evidence, and in a way that served to insulate a career politician with an elite status within the US Democratic party. Even after the election, with the "threat" of Trump successfully removed, Reade's account remains absent from public discussion and poised to fade into obscurity.

In this way, the NYT coverage of Reade served an ultimately propagandic purpose of obscuring, silencing and standard-setting. Moreover, as rape cultural propaganda, it proved successful in prompting publics to reject Reade's testimony. Even in early 2020 (when the Biden-Reade story was still "fresh"), there were signs that the majority of the US public had already decided to dismiss her out of hand. Giovanni Russonello and Maggie Astor describe a 2020 election poll that came out shortly after Reade went public, which concluded that Biden's "lead over President Trump [was] growing nationwide even though most voters [were] aware of a sexual assault allegation against [Biden]." Moreover, even though 86% of voters polled were aware of Reade's account, only 37% "believed it was probably true" (Russonello and Astor). This is despite the absence of evidence that could definitively prove that Biden was innocent, and the existence of at least *some* corroborative accounts that supported Reade (see Saul and Lerer). Again, it is worth reiterating that this study did not approach the Biden-Reade case in order to declare innocence or guilt. Instead, I draw significance from the fact that, while neither side could be definitively proven right or wrong, media reports nevertheless gave Biden the upper hand by attracting readers' sympathy to him. The popularization of Me Too three years prior and its injunction to *believe women* simply was not enough to counter entrenchments of political power and their propagandic imbrications with news media.

The results of this case study demonstrate the potential use of a feminist rhetoric-propaganda studies for those interested in feminist rhetorics, and fuels inspiration for next steps. We can, for instance, continue to explore representations among a more diverse range of media, across international contexts and accounting for a broader range of political figures. This is necessary as a means to test propagandic inclinations beyond the particularity of Biden and Trump; after all, journalists may have felt a personal stake in promoting Biden. Not only did Trump normalize vile expressions of racism, sexism, ableism, xenophobia, and classism in public discourse, he regularly attacked the press as "fake news," going as far as to identify journalists as "the enemy of the people" (Swan et. al.). Insofar as such statements question the very freedom of the press, many journalists took themselves to be under threat, and consequently adopted an "adversarial" relationship to Trump (Tanquary). In contrast, Biden was far less antagonistic to traditional journalistic standards. This begs the question: Is rape cultural propaganda most often utilized to promote journalists' preferred politicians, or can we find evidence of its use across a broader context? How else might rape culture be deployed for propagandic purposes? If nothing else, we need a combined feminist rhetorics-propaganda studies to more closely examine how potential victims' accounts are handled by news media in order to hold not just politicians, but also the media venues who report on them, to a far higher standard.

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Constructing Black Presence in Arizona's State Capitol Museum: Performing a Responsive Rhetorical Art in a Contested Site of Public Memory

Melovee Easley and Elenore Long[1]

Abstract: In this study, we track some of the key rhetorical decisions that underlie Melovee's professional contributions to the Buffalo Soldier exhibit at the Arizona State Capitol Museum. In exploring how her rhetorical education translated into performance, we attend to how rhetorical concepts contributed to her success. This study has four main parts. The first (Tracking Transformation) presents our methods for tracing evidence of rhetorical education at work. Then, after accounting for the political conflict in which the Buffalo Soldier exhibit was embroiled (section two, Rhetorical Crossover), the third section (Situating Melovee's Contributions) contextualizes the installation that Melovee was responsible for researching and designing within the exhibit at large. The fourth (A Deeper Dive) dramatizes the acuity and significant staying power of Melovee's rhetorical expertise, nurturing visitors' "critical imagination" (Royster and Kirsch) while producing panels for the now-permanent exhibit for one of the state's premier history museums.

Melovee Easley's first job out of college put her rhetorical education to the test. She was recruited to join a team at the Arizona State Capitol Museum as it undertook designing a new exhibit featuring Black soldiers' role in the making of Arizona. These troops earned the name "Buffalo Soldiers" from the Native Americans who observed them as tough and thick skinned, and difficult to stop. "[T]heir Indian counterparts," writes Jonathan Earle, "saw a resemblance between the hair of the Black cavalrymen and the hair of the buffalo, an animal many considered sacred" (93). Previously, as a college intern for the Phoenix Art Museum, Melovee had facilitated creative outreach initiatives for the city's youth, and the state capitol valued what she brought to the museum's efforts to tell more inclusive histories that would appeal to a broader range of visitors. Toward this end, making the topic of African American cavalry troops formed in 1866 accessible to the Museum's diverse range of visitors might seem challenging enough. That storyline might go something like this: Just as the Emancipation Proclamation ostensibly freed southern Black people, south-

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ern White violence against Black people soared and reconstruction efforts lagged, then fell apart, further restricting viable options for people of color to live a decent life. Black men enlisted in the military as one of the few available routes toward national belonging. But in *Stamped from the Beginning*, Ibram Kendi exposes the "cruel irony" embedded in US military efforts to recruit Black men to service for the purpose of western expansion: Black men were recruited to military service to "kill indigenous communities" on land White settlers sought to claim as their own (240). Given this cruel irony, to design the exhibit was to ask how to engage museum visitors - including the dozens of veterans, school children and policy makers who visit the state capitol each year - in these historical complexities? Further complicating matters, just as Melovee and her team had figured out their approach to the exhibit, proposed state legislation prohibited state-sponsored educational materials from referencing institutional racism (directly or indirectly) - ratcheting up the stakes for her rhetorical acumen. The team would need to rewrite the content to comply with the legislation while still staying true to historical records. How, then, to proceed? As Melovee observed: delicately.

In this study, we track key rhetorical decisions that underlie Melovee's professional contributions to the exhibit. In exploring how her rhetorical education translated into performance, we attend to how rhetorical practices contributed to her success. This study has five main parts. The first (Tracking Transformation) presents our methods for tracing evidence of rhetorical education at work. Then, after accounting for the political conflict in which the Buffalo Soldier exhibit was embroiled (section two, Rhetorical Crossover), the third section (Situating Melovee's Contributions) contextualizes Melovee's rhetorical decision making within the exhibit at large. The fourth (Conjuring Black Presence) and fifth (A Deeper Dive) dramatize the acuity and significant staying power of Melovee's rhetorical expertise, producing panels for the now-permanent exhibit for one of the state's premier history museums.

At the Arizona State Capitol Museum, Melovee's rhetorical acumen was in high demand. The museum's staff had recruited her to their team in their efforts to upgrade the museum's exhibits that address controversial topics in Arizona history, such as Japanese internment and civil rights. Staff members had seen firsthand that content could inadvertently trigger different, sometimes conflicting, visitor reactions. With Melovee on board, the team sought to improve the inclusivity and accuracy of existing materials and to introduce new multicultural exhibits. Since 2012, local historical organizations across the state had been actively wrestling with the racism that pervades their records, storerooms and archival practices, taking concerted efforts to better reflect the diversity of the state's constituencies (*AZ Archives Matrix Report* qtd. in Godoy). The director of Melovee's team circulated resources, including one Melovee recalls that was designed to help museums deliberately welcome LGBTQ+ visitors. As for Melovee, she describes her art as knowing how to read between the lines; how, that is, to detect rhetorical turns in museum content that could cause visitors to stop engaging with it. Through her undergraduate rhetorical education and other life experiences, Melovee had gleaned that any reader may shut down or get defensive when they detect unacknowledged editorializing, erasures, and other such rhetorical sleights of hand that, as Carolyn Miller puts it, "hide … the tools" employed to create the text they're reading (20-21). The visitors at the museum were no exception. Early on, Melovee saw that visitors - sensing such devices - could get angry, interrupt tours,

get defensive, even leave post haste. The staff had much to learn from these encounters. Attuned as she is to the politics of rhetorical uptake, how would Melovee participate in the construction of Black presence at the state capitol museum's Buffalo Soldier exhibit?

Today, the *Ready and Forward: Exploring the Legacy of the Buffalo Soldiers* awaits you as you round the east corner of the imposing neoclassical Arizona State Capitol Museum. The exhibit consists of three rooms, each connected by a standard threshold and walls with light fixtures that retain the building's early 1900s character. Panels, photographs and artifacts beckon visitors through the exhibit's doors. Among the exhibit's installations, Melovee was directly responsible for proposing, researching, composing and designing "Meet a Buffalo Soldier." The installation primarily features soldiers for whom historical records are relatively rich, thanks to their letters home, their memoirs and other books and writings. This essay focuses on a panel featuring a soldier for whom the historical record is far sparser: Cathay Williams.

Tracking Transformation

Following Flower's lead in *Outcomes of Engaged Education*, this study seeks to track how Melovee transformed her rhetorical education post-graduation. We have worked from the premise that Melovee's rhetorical education would be effective to the extent that it could support her pursuit of personal and pro-fessional goals, amid "the blooming, buzzing confusion" of an activity, where contradiction is not only likely, but a force that drives creative change (James qtd. in Flower, *Outcomes* 26). The starting point for our inquiry was ENG 205: Introduction to Writing, Rhetorics and Literacies, a requirement that Ellie taught in Melovee's major field of study. Here, Melovee and her classmates tried out methods for eliciting clues of readers' con-structive meaning-making processes - or "movies of the mind" (Elbow 85; Flower, "Difference-Driven" 321) - identifying where readers may find themselves having questions; testing competing hunches about where a line of argument is going; and drawing on personal experiences or importing cultural concepts and social ax-ioms to bring to life the drama of the text and to interpret complex situations (Higgins et al.). This call-and-response-and-call-again orientation to difference-driven public inquiry is the basis of what Ellie has termed a *responsive rhetorical art*, that "intense, collaboratively constructed give-and-take" of early rhetorical uptake "that calls a public into being and gets it on its feet" (Long 8).

A challenge for a responsive rhetorical art in general and Melovee's museum work in particular is to design content that can call readers to consider a text's experiential details on their own terms without overwriting them with prevailing cultural scripts or personal expectations. Consequently, we've been on the lookout for ways Melovee operationalized the intersubjective rhetorical sensibility practiced in ENG 205. But this likely wouldn't be a one-to-one transfer from class to the workplace, Flower reminds us. Rather, Melovee would have internalized relational, audience-focused composing methods from ENG 205 along with all the other concepts, practices and experiences that constitute her rhetorical education. Of interest, then, is how she transformed that rhetorical education to serve her own purposes.

The study entailed a series of cued-recall interviews, the transcripts of which basis for this co-authored piece. The first took place on August 17, 2022, in the museum itself as Melovee walked Ellie through the exhibit as it opened its doors; the other two, the summer of 2024 over Zoom. Methodologically, the initial interview holds important value, offering timely glimpses of Melovee's rhetorical know-how central to Flower's theory of rhetorical transformation: Melovee's "working theory" of content design (*Outcomes* 79). Though related to the stabilized and normalized version of rhetorical knowledge that gets tidied up for academic circulation, a working theory is a distinct mode of know-how that is decidedly more performative, intuitive, dynamic and often inchoate. (See Flower, *Outcomes* 63, 72, 99.) So periodically, we quote directly from Melovee's initial walk-through interview, as well as early articulations of her own "movies of the mind" to honor the lively rhetorical know-how that serves as the heartbeat of this inquiry (Elbow 85; Flower, "Difference-Driven" 321).

While co-authoring the study, we explicitly negotiated the sort of concerns addressed in *Stories of Becoming: Demystifying the Professoriate for Graduate Students in Composition and Rhetoric*. In addition, Thomas Catlaw's "What's the Use of Being Practical" proved instrumental, not only for dramatizing a thread of interdisciplinary scholarship that spans our two fields (public affairs and rhetorical studies) but also for commending a pragmatic side of academic theory that each of us found applicable to the distinct professional writing she does daily. Just as importantly, *Peitho*'s open-access transdisciplinary feminist mission inspired us to place this study in this peer-reviewed journal, one that Melovee could link to in her dossier and Ellie could assign in future public-rhetoric courses she teaches.

Rhetorical Crossover: Accounting for Political Conflict

Cedric Burrows's theory of rhetorical crossover illuminated the political conflict that Melovee found herself in the middle of at the state capitol museum. Effective rhetorical crossover entails "revamp[ing] how [historically white institutions] include and depict the Black rhetorical presence in their educational materials, visual images, and social discourses" (139). This work affords Black people "the ability to enter these institutions on their own terms … to face the world that taxes them, but with fuller and replenished selves ready for the future" (139). Quite literally, the buffalo soldier exhibit exemplifies rhetorical crossover. There's always been people of color in Arizona, but the state capitol museum has been historically a white museum. Through the exhibit, Black presence is crossing over into this historically white rhetorical space, making present Black people, specifically buffalo soldiers, in a state-sponsored public memory site that has previously prioritized white historical figures.

Here's the predictive punch of Burrows's theory: it anticipated the legislation, House Bill 2112, that interfered with the production of *Ready and Forward* at the AZ state capitol. The bill proposed prohibiting the "use [of] public monies for instruction that promotes or advocates for any form of blame or judgment on the basis of race, ethnicity or sex" (Section 2A). This proposal was part of a concerted effort across the US in the early 2020s to "ban … teaching or even discussing race, racial relations, and slavery" (Graff 5;

see also Faison). On the one hand, such "race-neutral" legislative efforts are as old as the history of the US (McMartin and Diaz, par. 1; see also Katz; Kimball). What distinguished legislative efforts this time was the amount of money behind the movement and how organized it was (Graff). Nationally, special interest groups provided language for state legislators to use to criminalize educational claims that racism is systemic–embedded in the country's institutions, laws, business practices, and governance (Crenshaw). Among the eight precepts HB 2112 sought to ban was "material that could cause an individual 'DISCOMFORT, GUILT, ANGUISH OR ANY OTHER FORM OF PSYCHOLOGICAL DISTRESS ON ACCOUNT OF THE INDIVIDUAL'S RACE, ETHNICITY OR SEX'" (Section B.6.).

Burrows's umbrella term for such legislation is whitesplaining: public discourse, in whatever form, that leverages power to deny and hide both white privilege and its intent to undermine what people of color need to flourish. As an example of whitesplaining, Burrows cites the retort "All Lives Matter" in response to the claim that "Black Lives Matter." As a political slogan "All Lives Matter" seeks to erase white racism by "ignoring the white power establishment" and "failing to detail the racist actions inflicted upon African Americans" (109). Burrows shows that the enthymeme refers not to all people as it alleges but, in fact, to the institution of policing responsible for so much brutality against Black and Brown bodies (122-24). Likewise, HB 2112 refuses to admit or acknowledge the effort white people in power have exerted to preserve that power and associated benefits. As a form of whitesplaining, HB 2112 protects white citizens from acknowledging ways they are implicated in historic injustices and continue to benefit from the country's racialized social structures. HB 2112 obfuscated the racist logic behind its ostensible intent to protect learners from civics lessons that may cause feelings of guilt or discomfort. Burrows's theory helped us trace ways that HB 2112 sought to preserve the dominant narrative that white actors make history at the expense of other histories that are also part of the founding of the state.

Even though the bill was engrossed in the House of Representatives - that is, never making it to the Senate or becoming actual law - the bill continues to destabilize public education. A few months after the bill was engrossed in the House, Arizona's secretary of education took formal efforts to implement the intent of the bill: "a hotline for the public to 'declare war' on 'inappropriate' school lessons that focus on race, gender and sexuality, and social-emotional learning" (Sullivan 90). In tandem with deleterious effects of the pandemic, the state's political hostilities directed at educators makes recruiting and retaining Arizona public school teachers a state-wide crisis (Wolfe). Because Melovee and her team were creating material for a state-sponsored educational site, their content for the exhibit had to be rewritten to avoid racialized language - substituting the term "Anglo" for "White," for instance - while accounting for a tense history recruiting recently freed Black people to the military and then pitting them against Native Americans in the founding of Arizona. Even though the secretary of state was no fan of the bill, and even though the bill never became law, the museum designers were still asked to comply with it. Anything less, this line of argument cautioned, could attract public attention and foment support for the far-right candidate who would be running against the secretary of state for governor on a platform that would cut funding to public education.

Situating Melovee's Contributions

Melovee's own rhetorical decision-making unfolded in relation to several distinctive features of the exhibit, including the following:

- features that map implication through figures - a contribution of the team at large;

- features that support public talk, including talk among youth of color - another contribution of the team at large; and

- features that conjure the lives of individual soldiers - a contribution distinct to Melovee.

Together, these features help distribute the communicative burden for making visible to visitors complex moral and political fallout of state violence embedded in western expansion. The distribution of this communicative burden is especially important in light of Burrows's argument to public workers to mitigate the Black tax that people of color are too often made to pay when white people go about revamping their institutions (126-31).

Mapping Implication through Figures

Figures throughout *Ready and Forward: Exploring the Legacy of the Buffalo Soldiers* help visitors to map western expansion through figures. In *Implicated Subjects*, public-memory theorist Michael Rothberg explains, "A figure … serves as a trope for describing a contingent, shifting, and socially constituted position in that world" (199). Rothberg studied effective public-memory sites commemorating lives lost to state violence in Rwanda, Germany and the US. His project explicates art installations that conjure - make present - implication, "our debts and responsibilities to people both near and far" (xv) … "for the deeds carried out in the name of their nation (17). Several panels and artifacts map for visitors the relations among key figures in the making of Arizona's state history:

- *the figure of the Indigenous peoples*, including the O'Odham and Piipaash, whose land the museum occupies; this figure is also invoked, for instance, through references on various panels to the Cheyenne, the Plains Indians, the Apache, and the Lakota.

- *the figure of the buffalo soldier* undertaking the country's multi-faceted nation-building efforts on the heels of the Civil War. The panels depict the Buffalo Soldiers, for instance, escorting the US mail service, protecting settlers, and settling labor disputes among miners.

- *the figure of the white settler* whose presence pervades panels throughout the room, with references, for instance, to westward expansion, manifest destiny, the US mail service, the National Park service, and mining - projects which buffalo soldiers protected, and all of which served settlers' interests.

- *the figure of the nation-state*, as well as the state of Arizona as an extension of state power - again served by the labor and lives of buffalo soldiers and at the cost of Indigenous people's lives.

The panel on the Indian Wars from 1866 to 1890, for instance, explicitly addresses the recruitment of Black soldiers to the military to remove and kill Indigenous people in the name of nation-building.

Panels about the national parks trace how western expansion imperiled open spaces–thus both launching the conservation movement and its legacy of national parks, on the one hand, and its racialized campaign rationalizing the forceful removal of Indigenous peoples from their lands, on the other. Positioning figures' relations to one another in this way, the exhibit maps what Rothberg theorizes as the *implicated subject* and *complex implication*. Where the legacy of the settler in western expansion occupies the position of the implicated subject, "inhabit[ing] the machinery of political violence, economic exploitation, and ecological devastation" (200), the figure of the buffalo soldier occupies the position of "complex implication," which Rothberg defines as "the experience of occupying positions that align one both to histories of victimization and to histories of perpetration" (91).

As this overview indicates, a multi-pronged tension is built into the rhetorical life of the exhibit's panels. Indigenous Americans are among the museum's constituents. This state-sponsored public memory site has a responsibility to do right by them and their ancestors, including making visible ways that westward expansion, racism, and conservation have reinforced the country's genocidal campaigns (Powell). Through the mapping of figures, the exhibit's design team invites visitors to consider matters of implication that House Bill 2112 sought to take off the table. Doing so, the exhibit offers the possibility of mapping "otherwise matrices" such as those that Rachel Jackson (Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma) traces in "Decolonizing Black and Indigenous Dispossession." Referencing "relationships and alliances between African and Native American peoples," Jackson interprets the political conditions to which buffalo soldiers were recruited as a history of colonized place that "spatializes race, coupling not only indigenous loss of life and land and black slave labor, but also the struggles of indigenous and black peoples to resist" (78).

Mapping implications is just a first step. Like Jackson, Rothberg argues that actual transformative public memory requires more robust self-other relationalities than the handy, yet reductive victim-perpetrator binary affords. More expansive relationalities are necessary to transform guilt and privilege into productive qualities. "The ultimate point" of such mapping, concludes Rothberg "is not to dwell on or in implication, but to transfigure it": to "open … the self to others …" (201). Rothberg terms this social capacity *transfiguring implication*. In her position at the museum, Melovee was similarly attuned. In relation to the complex array of relationships the full exhibit makes visible, our focus here is on what Melovee saw herself doing. Her rhetorical strategies for creating Black presence are particularly illuminating.

Supporting Public Talk, Including Talk Among Youth of Color

"Talking in museums," writes Adam Gopnik in "The Mindful Museum," "is one of the things that make them matter" (qtd. in Greer and Taylor 74). Additional features of the exhibit were strategically placed along the tour path to foster conversation among young people even as those same panels made available to older visitors the tragic history behind the country's national parks. For instance, eye-level to young elementary school children, several panels feature innovations and achievements in hopes of sparking conversation. "The Ranger Hat" is one of those panels. With an eye-catching image of Smokey the Bear looking the visitor

in the eye to say, "Only You," an excerpt from the "The Ranger Hat" panel reads as follows:

Figure 1: A bear in a hat and holding a shovel tells the viewer, "Only you [can prevent forest fires.]" Photo taken at the museum by Elenore Long

Buffalo Soldiers are credited with introducing the Montana Peak ranger hat, or the "lemon squeezer hat," a known symbol of the U.S. National Park Rangers…. The Buffalo Soldiers discovered that pinching the four symmetrical quadrants of their hats helped to shed rain away from their heads. When the first park rangers started their service, the practical hat was kept as part of their uniform.

Another panel features the all-Black 25th Infantry Regiment Bicycle Corps, a unit of buffalo soldiers called Iron Riders. As the "Iron Rider" panel explains, they biked from Missoula, Montana, to Yellowstone National Park, and also the 1900 miles across the Rocky Mountains to St. Louis, Missouri.

Figure 2: Eight soldiers stand astride bicycles atop a glacier. Reprinted with permission from Montana Historical Society

The bicycle unit attracted great attention wherever they stopped and even had their own press detail. … The Buffalo Soldier expeditions are some of the first documented events of mountain biking in U.S. history.

For young visitors, the panels convey the accomplishments of ingenious outdoorsmen, including damn impressive mountain biking. It was important to Melovee that the exhibit convey this sheer impressiveness. In our walk-through interview, she explained why: "Buffalo soldiers were a big part of the existence of national parks. They worked to build roadways and to maintain the parks. They actually rode horses and bikes through parks and were stewards of the parks." It was also important to her that the exhibit convey the larger historical context sensitively, with attention to how the telling of that history could affect those learning it. In our walk-through interview, she continued: "The history of the national parks is also very tragic. So, there's a lot of responsibility in exposing the youth to sensitive topics and how that could

impact their perception of themselves, especially young African Americans or any youth of color."

In light of this responsibility, Melovee researched how to explain challenging histories, including histories that involve racial tensions and discrimination, in ways that won't keep creating that narrative of limitation - a concern that also motivates Jackson's and Rothberg's scholarship. She credits the professional organizations to which she belongs, including the Smithsonian Museum and the Museum Association of America, with offering useful methods. In this context, research became a process of doing a lot of deep dives into how to make history accessible. Once the exhibit opened, Melovee's position included guiding tours to visitors, including youth. In that role, she taught them about some of the ugly things in US history. As the two of us walked through the exhibit, she commented: "They have so many questions, and they really want to understand, 'Who am I in this state? Why did this happen?'" In this role, she mused, engaging such questions became "the most challenging part of my job."

Conjuring Black Presence: "Meet a Buffalo Soldier"

Figure 3: Portrait of a Black soldier in full military regalia. Photo taken at
the AZ State Capitol Museum by Elenore Long

The five panels that Melovee researched and composed for the "Meet a Buffalo Soldier" installation are the only panels in the exhibit that conjure the personhood of individual soldiers rather than figures. Each depicts a soldier whom she selected for the installation, including a portrait as well as several concise paragraphs dramatizing key dimensions of the soldier's life. The significance of Melovee's approach is ontological. Slavery specifically and racism more broadly deny the very ontologies of people of color (Maldonado-Torres). To counter this violence, Burrows commends practices for constructing Black presence in historically white institutions that affirm Black personhood on the individual Black person's "own terms" (139). It's this grounded attention to the humanity of Black people that they name for themselves in relation to the rich African American rhetorical tradition that, Burrows argues, holds the greatest promise for effectively revamp-

ing historically white institutions. Similarly, Melovee strove to create with visitors something of the real-life distinctiveness of the five soldiers - yes, referencing their roles as soldiers, but also their individual humanity, an achievement especially significant given the insidious ways whitesplaining in general and HB 2112 specifically denies ways institutional racism would undermine the capacity of people of color to thrive. Dedicating the final section of this article to the Cathay Williams panel, here we analyze the panels of the four men whom Melovee selected to feature in the installation: Henry Flipper, Corporal Isiah Mays, Chaplain George Prioleau, and Colonel Charles Young.

One strategy Melovee used to conjure Black presence was to pair the textual panels with artifacts of the actual soldiers. For instance, the full uniforms of Charles Young and George Prioleau are displayed in the glass cases, almost gazing back at the panels, sharing the story of the once-living soldiers who wore the navy and decorated fabrics. Since the museum actually has Young's jacket and his shoes, it made sense to Melovee to bring that material into the story. That way, people are not only reading his biography and story, but they're also encountering traces of his life in visual and literal ways - as if to say, *This was a <u>real</u> soldier*. In some cultural traditions, people are buried with their items and their objects because they contain their essence. So, the installation's combination of textual biography and artifacts moves into an in-between space where the legacies of the soldiers continue to live.

Another strategy for creating Black presence was Melovee's use of the first person. For museum studies scholars, writing in someone else's voice, often from mere traces of evidence, inevitably requires nuanced judgment (Greer and Grobman). This judgment must bridge the premise of history as a scientific discipline - dedicated to the systematic study of "collective enterprises" - and the truths of individual stories encoding personal memories that cannot be corroborated (Popkin 50; see also Lee). Such renderings, then, also carry the ethical imperatives to avoid appropriating someone who is no longer able to set the record straight or flattening someone who lived a fully dimensional life (Rogers and Jacobi). The strategy also has the potential to convey tremendous vibrancy (Page and Rotunno).

So attuned, Melovee read all the primary material she could get her hands on, from the soldiers' letters, briefs, memoirs, autobiographies, biographies, and interviews, as well as secondary sources. She then synthesized her sense of each soldier - conjuring the distinct tone and register she had experienced while reading the soldier's own writing. During our initial walk-through interview, Melovee explained:

> Take Charles Young, for example. He had a very eloquent writing voice. He has a medal of honor and he did some very profound things in the calvary to really support the country. From reading his biographies, I knew he was empowered by his position, and he was very proud to be a buffalo soldier. And he also experienced a lot of injustice and a lot of prejudice. So I decided, *I don't want to talk about him, but I want to resurrect his voice, because I feel like that would create a strong emotional connection. He could speak to us that way.* I felt that keeping that distinct tone of his would help empower the youth, or whoever was reading the panel to be proud of being a person of color.

At the bottom of each panel, Melovee complemented her biographical rendering with a direct quotation from the respective soldier. The quotation at the bottom of Young's panel reads: "The thing then to be desired above all others is confidence in one's self." Across this and the other panels, Melovee's goal was to enliven visitors' senses of these men as teachers and smart people who understood deep and complex matters.

As for Young, so, too, the others. Their presence in the military was regularly met with systemic contempt. And the panels unfold in relation to this evidence. Though honored for his military service, for instance, Mays was denied a military pension for his service: "I became poor and ended up at the Arizona State Asylum for the Insane until I eventually died in 1925 at the age of 67." Similarly, Henry Flipper served with distinction ("I became known as the highest-ranking Buffalo Soldier stationed in the West") but was also the subject of a smear campaign for which he was dismissed from the Army in 1882.

The panel featuring Prioleau documents his condemnation of the military system which he had loyally served. The panel explains that having fallen ill to malaria before he could ship off on a military campaign to Cuba, Prioleau served as a recruitment officer in the South. There, the panel reads, "I was shocked by the amount of inequality I witnessed." From that point on, he refused to recruit Black men to the US military, an institution he had previously valued as a site for Black social mobility. As Melovee puts it, "My stance was, *Let's engage the history honestly.*"

Nurturing Movies of the Mind

Given that most museum visitors wouldn't access the archival resources that helped Melovee bring the soldiers to life for herself, Melovee's aim was to provide sufficient historical details to help span this distance. One line of inferential reasoning attends to timelines contextualized in the panels. Along these lines, one movie that Melovee conjured goes like this:

> *I'm pretty sure Henry Flipper was at West Point while Charles Young was there doing what he was doing. From reading Flipper's autobiography, I know that when he went through the cadet training, he faced very similar hostility referenced in Young's panel. I can only imagine that they were also influencing each other and communicating with each other. And I'd almost imagine, potentially, Flipper confided with Charles Young regarding his experience.*

In another such movie of the mind, Melovee conjures a scene in which Young offers encouragement to young Black men who, like him, faced institutional racism:

> *I could only imagine off script the conversations where Young is telling the new recruits: "They're going to doubt you 'cause you're part of the Black community. Don't let those things get to your head. Don't ever let someone say you're not enough. Always challenge. Always rise. Keep going. Strive for excel-*

lence." These are some of the things that some of the more distinguished, I think, African American people had to embody and teach to the youth. So I'd imagine he was probably a very empowering teacher and commander to other African Americans.

The panel's biographical information serves as grist - what can actually be known about the men - with which visitors are invited to imagine something of the soldiers' actual lives. Such evidence-based imaginative conjurings complicate a one-dimensional stereotype of military brawn, and they build more accurate representations of the country's educational and military institutions from which the soldiers sought belonging.

A Deeper Dive: Spurring Visitors to Engage Critically and Imaginatively with a Scant Historical Record

Concepts from feminist historical rhetoric help amplify and explain the rhetorical decisions that Melovee made to write the fifth and final panel in "Meet a Buffalo Soldier" recognizing Cathay Williams, the only known female buffalo soldier. The primary materials available for the men in the installation were substantial, providing resources for deciding how to conjure something of each man's personality and life story for the panel dedicated to him. But for the fifth soldier featured in the installation, Cathay Williams, the historical record is far more scant - a single newspaper interview and a couple of medical records. Additionally, the soldier's very legitimacy in the military is a matter of some controversy, having disguised her gender in order to join the army. Given that women were prohibited from joining the military at the time, the disguise, some argue, is inherently deceptive and thus should disqualify her from inclusion as a buffalo soldier, and (the argument goes) would certainly justify the military's decision to deny her disability pension. How, then, to precede? This question is indicative of a research problem driving contemporary feminist scholarship (Davis; Enoch and Jack; Fredlund, Hauman and Ouellette; Gaillet & Bailey; Gordon), including rhetorics of museums and memorials (Vaughn and Dayton): How to amplify the lives and voices of "women who are no longer alive to speak directly on their own behalf"? (Royster and Kirsch 71). The disciplinary language Jaqueline Jones Royster and Gesa Kirsch have provided researchers for dealing with gendered archival erasures, silences and gaps helps us see Melovee addressing a somewhat similar predicament as a writer of public memory, even though she hadn't read Royster and Kirsch prior to writing this article.

Figure 4: A painting featuring a soldier in a blue uniform. Photograph taken at

the museum by Elenore Long.

In *Making the World a Better Place*, Royster turns to archives from the same era of US history as that of the buffalo soldiers - immediately prior to, during and directly following the Civil War. Royster observes that for the Black formerly enslaved southern women following the war, "managing their own lives" was itself a sociopolitical feat marked by risk-taking in the face of limited life-options (5). For any women of the nineteenth century, these issues were "cloaked in invisibility and silence" (5-6). But for southern African American women, in particular, Royster points out, "the obfuscations and silences were even more complex" (6). Here, Williams's decision to disguise her gender to join the Army takes on socio-political significance. As Melovee insisted throughout this project, it's hard to fathom the degree to which Williams's exercise of sovereignty, as the creator of her own fate and gender, relied on her capacity to defy the normative expectations of the categories that powerful individuals and popular opinion assigned to her.

Critical Imagination: A Research Practice for Holding in Check Three Reductive Interpretive Impulses

In the face of gendered archival silences and prevailing patriarchal attitudes, any of us, according to Royster and Kirsch in *Feminist Rhetorical Practices*, are susceptible to three mutually reinforcing tendencies that predictably interfere with the researcher's ability to engage fragmentary or otherwise limited historical material. First, prevailing "conceptual frameworks" can keep us from engaging "what may be more in shadow, muted, and not immediately obvious." (76). Left to their own devices, these orthodox "anointed assumptions" can frame what we expect to find in the archive and what we take it to mean (72). Museum exhibitions aren't immune from this tendency. Darlene Clover, Nancy Taber and Kathy Sanford warn that "patriarchy's epistemology of mastery" that infuses "visuals and narratives of exhibitions," carries deleterious social consequences if not interrogated and deconstructed (143). Capitalizing this tendency, for instance, is Sarah Bird's fictional account *Daughter of Daughter of a Queen* that romanticizes Williams as the gallant progeny of regal African ancestry. Such mainstream characterizations of Williams have everything to do with construction of Black presence. Burrows exposes the cost that too much rhetoric crossover exacts on Black people: reconfiguring "features that make the Black rhetorical presence unique to become nonthreatening to white

audiences" (19). Not succumbing to this pressure presents its own challenges when, as in the case of Cathay Williams, traces of that person's historical presence are particularly scant.

Second, researchers' own personal values can interfere with our capacity to engage with women from the past who, evidence suggests, held values we ourselves would find objectionable. Royster and Kirsch urge feminist researchers to "look more systematically beyond our own contemporary values and assumptions" (76). In "(Re)telling the Times: The Tangled Memories of Confederate Spies Rose O'Neal Greenhow and Belle Boyd," Patricia Wilde documents the tendency to rewrite history to align with our own values. Too often, Wilde writes, contemporary biographies of Greenhow and Boyd "omit or mitigate the strong proslavery positions that are featured within their memoirs. As a result, these retellings create tangled memories …" (303). This tendency is evident, too, in how Cathay Williams has been represented in the country's larger cultural imaginary where non-fiction human interest stories about Williams construct the arc of the article to uphold the military's decision to deny Williams her pension (Blanton; Harris). From this defense, one such article adjudicates Williams's character as "wily" and "deceptive" (Blanton par 19). In discussing these characterizations, Melovee stressed how important context is for evaluating characterizations of Williams as deceptive. In the south at the time, deception abounded. A lot of newly freed people did not know whom to trust. In that time period, they could be walking among friends, and all of a sudden, a so-called friend is leading them to another plantation. In a charged moment of collaborative composing, Melovee told Ellie: "Things like that happened! So yeah, I can't be fully in their shoes. Yes, to retell history is a challenging thing. But there's no fact that says she was a deceptive person. She went through the medical examination somehow. I don't know how, but she did."

A third tendency is presentism, overextending contemporary concepts that may not fit historical women "within their own cultural contexts" (76). Women's and Gender Studies scholar David Gold describes the challenges with presentism that undergraduates identified when editing Wikipedia pages featuring women rhetors. For instance, concepts of literacy and intelligence were different for suffragette activist Carie Chapman Catt than the student writers, dissonance they had to deal with to update the Wikipedia page they were editing about Catt. But presentism doesn't preclude contemporary engagement with women of the past. Critical imagination for Royster and Kirsch includes asking, "How do we make what was going on in their context relevant or illuminating for the contemporary context?" (20).

To counter these interpretive tendencies while piecing together scant historical material, Royster and Kirsch commend the research practice of critical imagination. Critical imagination deliberately puts in conversation (a) existing historical material and (b) the interpretive meaning-making process. That is, the practice approaches drawing inferences in the face of a limited historical record to be a creative - that is *imaginative* - interpretive act; and simultaneously, an activity to conduct deliberately - *critically*. The practice puts a check on the above three tendencies through hypothesis building. In returning for this study to the Note to Visitors that accompanied the Williams panel, Melovee traced evidence of something similar afoot in her approach to Williams's panel - afoot including in Melovee's efforts to reframe the tendency

toward presentism (tendency 3).

Melovee's Take on Educated Guessing as a Check on Interpretive Overreach

I (Melovee) enacted my own version of critical imagination regarding Cathay Williams and tried to encourage this practice among visitors. Royster and Kirsch explain: "We use critical imagination as a tool to engage, as it were, in hypothesizing, in what might be called 'educated guessing,' as a means for searching methodologically, not so much for immutable truth but instead for what is likely or possible, given the facts in hand" (71). In deciding how to approach the panel, I can now see myself engaging then in what Royster and Kirsch call "educated guessing." To start, consider this excerpt from the panel featuring Williams:

> *I was born in Independence, Missouri in September 1844. My father was free, but my mother and I were enslaved on the outskirts of Jefferson City, Missouri.*
>
> *In 1861, around the beginning of the Civil War, Union soldiers seized the town. Although I was no longer bound to slavery at the plantation, I still hd limited freedom and was forced to serve in a military support role for the Union Army.*

Instead of concluding for visitors that Cathay Williams was a "rough" or "determined" woman, I invited them to construct their own representations of her character and fill in the blanks by considering the historical details that illustrate the specific contexts of her life, such as growing up in a slave environment in Mississippi, the timeline of her life story, her personal accomplishments, and challenges.

Two educated guesses then shaped much of what I wrote to follow this section of the panel. The first was geared toward the historical record itself: the wager that Williams made to survive as a newly emancipated previously enslaved person also, poignantly, took a tremendous toll on her body. In other words, her survival strategy - what she did to manage her own life - also undermined her very survival. This educated guess shows up in the following excerpt of the panel:

> *Williams: I didn't join the Army to become a hero, rather I did not have much coming from slavery and I needed a way to survive in society. Despite the racism and lack of proper resources, I marched through Kansas and New Mexico to be stationed at forts assigned to protect settlers.*
>
> *The military took a toll on my body. … In June 1891, I completed a pension application citing the medical disabilities caused by my military service. I suffered from neuralgia, diabetes, and all my toes were amputated. But my pension claim was rejected on February 8, 1892, alleging there was no disability present and that my service in the Army was illegal. …*

In this section of the panel, I hoped Williams's significant medical injuries, reported as a result of her military service, would speak for themselves. Likewise, the direct quote at the bottom of the panel ("I wanted to make my own living and not be dependent on relatives or friends.") stands on its own. The quote from her interview with the *St. Louis Daily Times* conveys a powerful yet plain wisdom that felt genuine, and I didn't want to stray from that.

In form and function, this first educated guess is closely tied to my second hypothesis - this one geared towards how visitors might encounter Williams (that is, encounter her Black presence) via the panel. My hunch was that visitors would be more likely to engage with Williams on her own terms if I were to craft the panel around verbs - factual actions of Williams and those actions' consequences - rather than descriptive adverbs or adjectives that suggest a judgment about her character. Consider, for example, the verbs we have underlined in the excerpt below:

> *Throughout the Civil War, I mostly <u>cooked</u> and <u>cleaned</u> because that was all that I <u>was permitted</u> to do at the time.*
>
> *Five years later, on November 15, 1866, I <u>enlisted</u> in the U.S. Army despite the prohibition against women. I <u>listed</u> my name as William Cathay and <u>told</u> the recruiting officers that I was a 22-year-old cook. After <u>passing</u> a physical examination, I was determined fit for duty.*

My choice of these verbs ("cooked," "cleaned," "enlisted," etc.) attempt to direct visitors to consider what "choice" may have been like for Williams. Throughout the panel, I wanted to encourage patience and attentiveness from visitors who may be hearing her story for the first time. I wanted visitors to engage with Williams's own life circumstances, rather than assuming that, as a visitor, their primary role in reading the panel is to adjudicate whether or not she should have disguised herself to join the army, or whether she deserved her pension. No need to embellish the story. It's already more than enough without sensationalizing it or romanticizing it. The panel gets people thinking, imagining and asking their own questions, What? Why? How did Williams get past the health check?

The tendency toward presentism (tendency 3) that Royster and Kirsch caution against is also a concern I addressed in the Note to Visitors for the "Meet a Buffalo Soldier" installation. Below is an excerpt from the note's section about the Williams panel. The underlined passage anticipates that some visitors may expect the museum's content designers to have interpreted Cathay Williams from a contemporary lens of gender diversity. The passage also highlights my reasons for not having done so - while also acknowledging the relevance of Williams's life story to the contemporary moment.

> *Note to Visitors: … Private Cathay Williams introduces a unique perspective that challenges the limiting status quo for women and African American women in the 1860s. Her story engages in modern LGBTQ conversation by supporting the visibility of gender and sexual minorities—including transgender or questioning people. By sharing her story in the first person, there is an absence of the pronouns him or her. Whether Cathay wished to identify as a male rather than female has not been explicitly confirmed by her or in any of the research that was uncovered while writing the biography. Also, <u>it is unlikely that she had access to concepts and terminology that supported new ways of perceiving and identifying with gender in the 1860s.</u>*

The political environment surrounding the museum heavily influenced the decision to include the note for visitors. The other designers and I recognized that many of our visitors would include legislators and interest groups involved in policy making. Given the increasing relevance of LGBTQ issues in policy and social culture, we felt it was necessary and externally valid to explicitly address how the Cathay Williams panel engages with these topics. Our goal was to provide contextual transparency regarding the use of gender in Cathay Williams's story, situating the past scenario within a present cultural understanding.

Royster and Kirsch note "the need to resist overidentification and romanticism by sustaining reflective, reflexive, dialectical, and dialogical habits of inquiry that function to keep our critical perspectives always in gear" (78). Through the Note to Visitors, I wanted visitors, likewise, "to keep" their criticality also "in gear." But, as Royster and Kirsch insist, this criticality doesn't sanitize our relationships with the past, but rather asks us to consider more thoughtfully how and on what terms we engage with it. As Patricia Bizzell notes in the foreword to *Feminist Rhetorical Practices*: "'Critical imagination' also enables hope for the future, to visualize what could and should be and thus to find the energy to work for it" (x).

Ellie's Take on Critical Imagination Transfiguring Implication

As Rothberg's *Implicated Subjects* attests, when socio-political realities are complex, when life and death are at stake and on scale, one tendency is to draw lines, to pit us against them, and to adjudicate blame. It's tempting to seek clear lines that would somehow let ourselves off the hook and alleviate our own discomfort. Vital matters of financial reparations and land restitution fall outside the purview of this study, but the rhetorical demands of creating more just public institutions do not. In the context of the full exhibit, Melovee's "Meet a Buffalo Soldier" installation in general and the Cathay Williams's panel in particular invite visitors to open themselves to others in ways that could transfigure implication. The panels ask visitors to hold socio-political complexity in a taut but agile stance that refuses to simplify complexity by ceding to facile us-vs-them way of thinking. Melovee designed the installation to entice visitors to experience the possibility of other ways of relating. With and for young people, in particular, she holds that histories and circumstances can be complicated and troubled, and we can still recognize one another's personhood. If we can do that - if we can open ourselves to possibility with and for one another, including by creating surprising encounters

where different ways of relating are momentarily possible - then there is something about that initial encounter, that surprise, that says, *If <u>this</u> is momentarily possible, then such encounters, such surprises, might be momentarily possible <u>again</u>, and maybe for longer, and maybe more often, and maybe in ways, as these encounters do, maybe in ways that change us*. As Flower's *Outcomes of Engaged Education* reminds us, the repertoire she transformed to pull off this rhetorical feat is evidence of her rhetorical education at work.

Conclusion

Melovee's case offers rhetoric and writing studies a glimpse of the creativity, care and persistence it can take to produce a public memory site in a politically charged climate. The team's iterative design process took several years of feedback and reflection before securing final approval. The case also shows that constructing Black presence at the Arizona State Capitol Museum involves drawing visitors into the fraught systems in which Black people have sought belonging in the US and the hostilities they have encountered as a result. For instance, Melovee has Flipper speak beyond the veil to set straight the record against him: "In 1976 the Army Board for the Correction of Military Records concluded that my conviction and punishment was 'unduly harsh and unjust.' … In 1999, I was pardoned by President Bill Clinton who recognized the injustice and acknowledged my lifetime accomplishments." And when some administrators at the museum urged eliminating Williams's panel from the installation to avoid controversy, Melovee persevered. In our walk-through interview, she recounted:

> They're like, "Should we include her?"
> And I'm like, "Yes. Yes."
> And they're like, "Okay. But, like, do we have to?"
> To which I replied, "Yes - because it's so important. It's relevant now.'"

The "Meet a Buffalo Soldier" installation also underscores the value of an astute working theory for undertaking such artful rhetoric. After all, the similarities between Melovee's working theory and the practice Royster and Kirsch term critical imagination aren't simply evidence of Melovee's efforts to apply their theory. Rather, what's similar are the demanding rhetorical tasks that Melovee, on the one hand, and Royster and Kirsch, on the other, gave themselves in the face of archival silences and erasures, and the rhetorical acumen they accessed to do so. Melovee's case calls learners – myself (Ellie) included - to figure out how to transform what we've done before into what we need to do now, and to develop our own critical metacognitive frameworks for doing so again.

Looking back, it's easy for me (Melovee) to see that many people who visit the Arizona State Capitol Museum may not anticipate learning about the buffalo soldiers when they first walk through the doors of Arizona's historical capitol. Drawing on W.E.B. Du Bois, Burrows commends revamping historically white institutions so that the people of color who enter them "may do so on their own terms … to face a world that taxes them but with fuller and replenished selves ready for the future" (139). This is one reason why I am committed to creating Black presence in historically white institutions. Some individuals may delib-

erately seek out museums dedicated to buffalo soldiers, such as the Buffalo Soldiers National Museum in Houston, Texas, or the Fort Huachuca Buffalo Soldier Museum in Yuma, Arizona. However, many others may not prioritize encountering this history through specialized museum visits. Instead, they will have the opportunity to encounter this important history in broader, more mainstream institutions, like the Arizona State Capitol Museum. Exhibits like *Ready and Forward*: *Exploring the Legacy of the Buffalo Soldiers* makes this part of US history accessible to such visitors.

I remember being a tour guide, leading large groups of students straight to the historic House of Representatives as soon as they entered, explaining to them how Arizona became a state and who wrote its constitution. The students were often critical yet curious about our history. Were women involved? Was there slavery? Are you the president? Some days, I would be either flattered or flattened by their remarks. However, as a Black female, I understood that my professionalism in sharing this history, often for their first time, provided a new framework for children to perceive people like me as knowledgeable and powerful political figures. To some, especially the younger groups, I might as well have been the governor, had they not known any better. That is why, when writing for the Buffalo Soldier exhibit, I recognized what was immediately at stake and what I could make if I invited the youth's critical imagination to be involved - a catalyst for social change.

Developing tour paths that meet K-12 standards was a major objective of the museum, yet keeping students engaged in the tour path was often a hurdle. They engaged best when they could touch or interact with artifacts, answer hypothetical questions, and imagine themselves as part of history. While there are notable museums that create child-friendly exhibits designed for imagination, our historical museum lagged behind those modern technologies. My goal was to create an exhibit that engaged youth in a new way. I wanted children to walk through the exhibit, ask questions, and feel inspired and empowered to see themselves as part of a nation built alongside Black heroes rather than defined by Black slavery. I particularly aimed for young Black children, who were the least represented, to perceive their history on those walls from a new and more empowering perspective. Why? Because I believe change starts with the youth, they are the future of culture. Childhood experiences can shape how we mature and make adult decisions.

During my recent studies in public administration, I came across a theory that cultural change often precedes policy change. In other words, cultural shifts are the first indicators of potential policy changes and, therefore, a potential positive impact. The museum, situated in a space relevant to policy creation, ironically highlights how close culture and policy are. I'm not claiming that this exhibit will directly change policy or become a major cultural phenomenon; its potential impact is more subtle. If a few students remember walking through it and feel inspired to contribute to something bigger than themselves, it can shape an entire generation. You see, these Black students, who might otherwise feel unsure of their place among their peers, can see themselves as makers of American history. In such cases, policy change becomes possible.

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Feminist Intersectionality: Two Writing Center Staff Renegotiating Identities in the Early 2020s

Naya Quintana and Xuan Jiang

Abstract: Writing Centers (WCs) can establish communities where peer tutors collaborate on projects and initiatives that lead to their professional and academic development. Positioned as both students and professionals, peer tutors are able to foster connections with their students as much as with other tutors and WC administrators. That being said, the perceptions of peer tutors and WC administrators on themselves, their writing, and their positionality merits further exploration in WC scholarship. While current research exists exploring this matter, it is important that WC staff continue to contribute their individual experiences and intersectional identities to this larger conversation so that feminist and antiracist work can produce up-to-date and contextualized impacts on WC policies and practices. One particular niche to advance the aforementioned scholarship is to speak up about the unspoken intersectional identities of minoritized WC staff through a feminist lens.

The authors of the current study - a WC peer tutor and a WC administrator - employ the collaborative autoethnography (CAE) method in their own distinct voices to reflect on and share lived experiences of renegotiating their often vulnerable or contradictory identities, during the turbulent times of the early 2020s. In doing so, the authors concretize WC staff's voices about navigating their intersectional identities, affirm how WC staff's pluriversal identities impact WCs, and deepen the professional connections of WCs as feminized spaces, their services, and their synergies ultimately for student success.

Keywords: intersectional identity, writing center, feminism, collaborative autoethnography

Introduction

As extensions of the classroom, Writing Centers (WCs) are critical to student success, advocacy, and sense of belonging, as WCs combat norms within academic discourse while fostering opportunities for academic growth for all students. These students include women, people of color, and non-native English speakers who are often underrepresented in and excluded from academic scholarship. WC spaces provide students with a dependable community of peer tutors who recognize the students' identities and work in their best interests. Furthermore, the peer tutors are often positioned "at once part of the student body and part of academic structure," allowing them to forge emotional, motivational, and synergic bonds across disciplines with their students (Namakula and Prozesky 40). That being said, their viewpoints on themselves,

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attitudes towards writing, and approaches to position themselves warrant further exploration to expand this continuously evolving conversation within WC scholarship.

Hence, the current study: the authors, who are a female WC tutor, Naya, and a female WC administrator, Xuan, at a large urban Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI), will employ the collaborative autoethnography (CAE) method to reflect on and share their own lived experiences of renegotiating intersectional identities, when the COVID-19 pandemic and other humanitarian crises further complicated the early 2020s. Both authors come from very distinct backgrounds, experiences, and levels of expertise, imbuing their narratives with the value of being able to draw connections with others and build dialogues around how WCs can be diverse and equitable spaces. As such, they have chosen the CAE method, given its merit in conversations surrounding intersectionality, feminism, and community-building during this unprecedented time (e.g. Roy and Uekusa 384). Following Roy and Uekusa's two central components of CAE, self-reflection and collaboration, the authors start with their respective self-narratives and self-reflexivity. Then, based on these reflective texts, they develop dialogues of inquiry where they further retrieve and analyze their experiences and reflections as collaboration (384-385). By taking this approach, the authors contribute to the larger conversation regarding intersectionality, feminism, and inclusivity in WCs and broader academia. It should be noted that the authors do not claim that their experiences are more valuable than anyone else's, but rather that their perspectives can contribute to this larger conversation, help nurture feminist pracademic communities and provide helpful insights for more inclusive WCs.

Additionally, it is important to note that the two authors' voices come across distinctly in both story and style. This detail also contributes to the overarching methodology of this study, particularly in relation to the utilization of the authors' narratives as counterstories. Prominent scholars within feminist rhetoric and writing studies at large have justified this mode of writing, arguing that, "by writing in their two voices they can begin 'interfering with modernist expectations of coherence' in order to expose how personal and professional lives are interconnected" (Barron and Grimm 55). Thus, we actively choose to write in our distinct voices, featuring translingualism and transnationalism, so that we can disrupt the rigidity of writing expectations and other "rules of racial standing under white supremacy" (Condon and Faison 6), while also illustrating how our individualized experiences intersect.

This article adds to the ongoing feminist call to advocate for staffs' pluriversal identities and their positionalities within university curriculum, research, as well as praxis in WCs. The significance of this study is tri-fold: to further advance WC research by introducing collaborative autoethnography, to legitimize WCs' story sharing of identity pluriversity and renegotiation - in particular that of minoritized and excluded individuals - and to contribute to the ongoing feminist scholarship with its connection to WC staff and their intersectionalities.

Theoretical Framework

The authors in the current study use the WC scholar - Bitzel's Multi-Dimensional Identity (MDI) - as its conceptual underpinning; MDI frames personal, sociocultural, and professional identities that are interrelated and mutually informing (2). The figure below visualizes the intersections of identities (Bitzel 3), revealing the complexities of interacting and overlapping categories in identities.
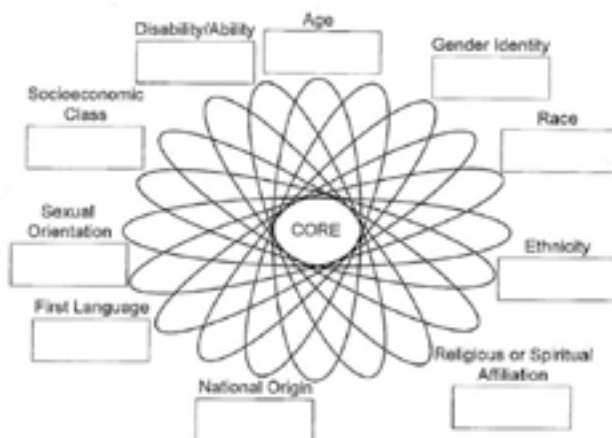

Figure 1

Multi-Dimensional Identity (MDI) Diagram

The authors also adopt a feminist approach in highlighting the sharing process of their stories, "as a site of knowledge" (Stenberg 47). The feminist MDI aligns with WC culture as the space encourages individuals to share and counter stories, overlap and overwrite narratives, explore and reflect languages (Green 257), disturb and disrupt the dominant structure (Blair and Nickosen 3), as well as include underrepresented dimensions to challenge "the (problematic and gendered) historical narrative" (Heinert and Phillips 256). Combining MDI and a feminist approach into an intersectional framework, the authors agree with Ribero and Arellano on such a framework "that attends to asymmetrical power relations and challenges hegemonic forces" (341).

Regarding details of challenging hegemonic powers, WCs have been an ever-growing site to practice linguistic justice and embrace cultural differences. Scholarly, WC literature has progressed its scope in advocating to decolonize WCs (e.g. the Writing Center Journal's special issue edited by Hutchinson and Perdigón), in order to interrogate intricate entanglements in WCs in writing and beyond (e.g. Praxis 2024 issue about emotions and other aspects of needs from diverse student writers). Professionally, many WCs have diversity statements on their websites that are accessible to the public, conducting and inviting professional development focusing on transculturalism and transnationalism, and reminding people of their positionality as welcoming sites of expanded academic interactions. Practically, many WCs contextually practice code-meshing and translanguaging in their daily tutoring sessions and host tutor-led engagement activities for students, such as conversation circles in multiple languages, creative workshops, and others blending educational purposes with recreational contents (e.g. Peña et al.). All of them join forces to challenge the standard language and academic norms and reconstruct the complexity and pluriversality of WCs as a horizontal

ecosystem of faculty, students, and peer tutors.

In addition, counterstories are also at the crux of this paper's theoretical underpinnings. Academia has historically been a place of structure and rigidity, with many policies, curricula, and "best practices" being rooted in the experiences and teachings of white, English-speaking men (Greenfield 35). These rules and restrictions often limit the expression and recognition of other identities that lie outside of those in power, including those coming from different racial, ethnic, gendered, and linguistic backgrounds. WCs are spaces that can be considered a haven for story- telling, intersecting personal experiences, and language practices that disrupt exclusionary norms, ultimately promoting the advancement of antiracist policies and practices (257). This can be attributed to the unique positionality of WC tutors, often having their own individual identities, linguistic placements, cultural characteristics, and counterstories that deviate from white, male, English-speaking Standards. As a result, counterstories can thrive in this setting, "help[ing] members of outgroups form communities" while "also shin[ing] a very bright light on the power and privilege that comes with the dominant story" within the larger academic space (Green 259). It is in this way that the promotion of counterstories in WC spaces can promote intersectional connections between personal narratives, promote the open expression of individual identity, and challenge traditional notions of race and identity through writing practices (Green 260).

This paper further emphasizes that intersectional identities are not fixed or constant, but instead fluid and dynamic. Echeverri and her colleagues shared their experiences as academics and how they renegotiated their intersectional identities across borders. This intersectionality is referred to as "the overlapping effects of race, class, gender, national origin, dis/ability status, and so on" (Green 260). Such an emphasis would help explain the geopolitical shift between individuals' belonging "to majority and minority groups in different contexts" (Echeverri et al. 1796). Besides individuals' renegotiation of their multiple identities as acts of transnationalism (Echeverri et al. 1796), the authors in the current article would like to contextualize such renegotiation at WCs, including the practice of translingualism (Canagarajah 40).

WCs, being relatively microscopic spaces, are regarded as feminized mainly because of their staff "who perform feminized labor and service" (Heinert and Phillips 255) and the nature of the work "associated with feminine qualities" (Payne 284). But WCs can also be spaces of legible tensions when "the tidy operation of tutoringgenre, argument, development, sentence clarity, and grammar gets upended by perceptions, preconceived notions, and power dynamics - by compelled disclosure of identity formations such as those that accents or belief systems represent" (Denny et al. 5). For instance, there may be an initial assumption that peer tutors would position themselves with authority and power, subjecting a student's writing to the rigidity that comes with Standard English. However, we propose modeling the dynamic between WC tutors and students after Canagarajah's study of translingualism, so that WCs can become communities that welcome negotiated language varieties and practices like code-switching and code-meshing (65). In doing so, WCs can foster intersectional collaborations and provide a place where multifaceted identities can be shared and counterstories engaged.

We would like to foreground aforementioned changes across time, especially in the early 2020s. The temporal context is meaningful for the authors' lived experiences, as the COVID-19 pandemic and other humanitarian crises have increased and intensified the authors' practices of identity renegotiation and critical reflections on feminist intersectionalities.

Collaborative Autoethnography as the Chosen Method

Autoethnography as a research approach, focuses on narration (graphy), culture (ethno), and self (auto) (Ellis et al. 273) or Self+ Culture+ Writing (Jackson and McKinney). Through narratives, researchers explain how they respond to their own circumstances in certain ways and how their sociocultural contexts have shaped their perspectives, behaviors, and decisions. Researchers' lived experiences become data as it "expands and opens up a wider lens on the world, eschewing rigid definitions of what constitutes meaningful and useful research", while also helping "us understand how the kinds of people we claim, or are perceived, to be influence interpretations of what we study, how we study it" (Ellis et al. 275). Thus, autoethnography is especially useful when it comes to identifying and understanding "personal experiences with(in) the discipline or practices related to language and representation, literacy, writing, teaching writing, studying writing/writers, being a writer" that are rooted in a wide array of factors such as gender identity, age, race, ethnicity, and economic standing (Ellis et al. 275; Jackson and McKinney 11). The various factors mentioned above can help researchers identify different patterns across time, spaces, and geopolitical contexts, while also fostering a greater understanding of how these patterns can impact how research is perceived and conducted within writing and writing studies (Jackson and McKinney 11), challenging "the (problematic and gendered) historical narrative" (Heinert and Phillips 256).

Building upon autoethnography, Collaborative Autoethnography (CAE) allows researchers to critically analyze and reflectively interpret their data. CAE enables us to be participants; the research process of CAE is interactive so that each voice is closely examined in a similar way that counterstories are. Our study was strengthened by employing CAE, as it combined collaborative and critical views with individual perspectives through self-reflexivity and feministic collaboration (Roy and Uekusa 388).

Using researcher reflections and analyses, this study harnesses personal experiences as data. Thus, our data collection started with individual stories provoked with initial key words such as our upbringing, cultures, linguistic journeys, educational backgrounds, working experiences, and interpersonal communication, and continued with written reflections of our intersectional identities. This initial stage was inspired by MDI as the theoretical framework, existing literature in writing studies and WC studies, and our own instinctive curiosity, and led to fruition of individual trajectory and self-reflectivity via a feminist lens. When meeting virtually, we shared our notes and gradually peeled back the layers of our intersectional identities from the surface to approach the core via - feministic, dialogic, relationship focused, and inquiry-based conversations (Cox and Riedner 15). Our approach through these consecutive meetings aligned with Cooper's way of crediting intersectionality as a noun - an account of personal identity and power (385) - and a verb, metaphori-

cally peeling the onion or "lifting the veil" (393). By sharing and snowballing our individual experiences, we were not only able to identify how our experiences intersect with one another, but also how these intersections are reflected in and shape who we are within the WC and academia as a whole. The whole process of cross-inquiry and self-reflectivity has definitely articulated the connections of our identity and positionality in the WC, tracing the origin and impact on the WC as a pracademic ecosystem.

The analysis stage, which simultaneously overlapped with the data collection of our own stories, involved more critiquing and "peeling" through cross-inquiries and self-reflectivity. We critiqued the necessity and meaning of those personal accounts in order to not only keep our different experiences and distinct voices more salient, but also to make sure to feature the themes of translingualism and transnationalism in the context of our WC. This stage involved trimming or deleting some accounts and highlighting and fleshing out others in the manuscript. These prioritized and finalized intersections directly relate back to the implementation of the authors' counterstories throughout this study, promoting feminist rhetorical practices in the WC and larger academic writing practices.

Physical and Temporal Contexts

The WC where we work is located down the hallway shared by two other centers. On a busy first floor of the university library, the WC serves over 10,000 tutoring sessions in person and online per year, free for the 56,000 students in this Hispanic Serving Institute (HSI). It has also used student-favored social media to promote their free services and events to students. As an expanded academic space, the WC has operated on the same budget for over 10 years, notably in the early 2020s when the inflation rate was historically high. This WC, like other WCs and university offices, has experienced staff loss and has raised its hourly pay from $10 to $15 for undergraduate peer tutors. Even among expanded academic spaces, WCs are perceived to belong to non-STEM fields and, thus, are not considered to be top priorities compared to STEM oriented academic spaces. This WC is not alone in terms of its financial concerns; some WCs were closed before COVID-19 due to budget cuts or other structural arrangements (e.g. Zhang). During COVID-19, more financial burdens overwhelmed universities and their expanded academic spaces, including WCs.

The WC tutors are contingent part-time university employees and many of them are commuting students who regard their tutoring jobs as their primary source of income. In the early 2020s, many of the WC tutors who lived with their families faced hardship, including the unemployment of their family members, extra child or adult care for their families, and a higher cost of living. Their pressures also included the higher taxing of their emotional labor when student writers were also impacted by the aforementioned factors.

Findings

Through the conceptual lens of feminist MDI (e.g. Bitzel; Blair and Nickosen; Green; Heinert and Phillips), the two authors connect with the current literature and share their intersectional identities and exigent positionalities below, weaved in with self-narratives and self- reflections. They both agree with Roy and Uekusa in that "self-narratives of their experiences during the pandemic as a rich source of qualitative data for further delving into the socioeconomic, political and cultural impacts of the pandemic" (383). They also affirm that the WC community allows students to contribute their different funds of knowledge, whether it be from their homes, personal relationships, or beyond. These knowledge bases ultimately shape how student writers convey and interpret meaning in their work.

Authors' Exigencies as First Layer of Findings

Naya, a Cuban-American woman, experiences fluid, sometimes conflicting aspects of her own identity. These struggles manifest in clashes between English and Spanish or in adopting Cuban traditions in an American setting. Often times, Naya resists the rigid "professional" American English standards that are so central to many literature courses, using code-switching and slang throughout her work as her way to retrace, rewrite, and reshape the history of immigration, cultural and linguistic negotiation, or historical and existing conquest (Canagarajah 40; Gilyard 285). This local liminal cultural space in which she dwells has heavily influenced her current academic study as a Master's student at the HSI, as well as how she views the rigidity of academia in her job as a WC tutor. Her position as a student and tutor - a learner and expert - allows her to occupy the WC as an extended academic space in which she understands students' struggles while also trying to help them achieve their academic ambitions (Namakula and Prozesky 40).

Xuan graduated from the university's PhD program as an international student and was excited to return to work at the university WC as an international employee. Fully aware of her identities at the HSI and subconsciously trying to 'remodel' the space, she brought greeting posters in multiple languages - one saying "Hello" and one saying "thank you" - placing them on her door and in her office. The posters recently got a response from an anonymous visitor who added a sticky note with a new or corrected version of "Hello" to the original part of Korean expression. Noticing many of the WC staff in a parallel position to her underprivileged intersectionalities, she has continuously contributed to the WC to be more inclusive, collaborative, and progressive. She has introduced scholarship including translingualism and international scholars as part of her class readings. Besides this, she has also created a WC Curriculum Vitae to record and celebrate every achievement of their creative and academic writings, in all the languages they used in drafting. During the COVID-19 pandemic, she helped invite university units - some also considered as extended spaces - to the WC's staff meetings, which coached WC staff on coping, being mindful about genders and pronouns, and working with students with disabilities.

We claim that our exigencies can help shape the WC into a more feminine, reciprocal, and brave

space. We also want to acknowledge in the following sections that our lived stories of shaping this space involve vulnerability and emotional labor at "the heart of the study" (Jackson and McKinney 11).

Cross Inquiry for Self-narratives and Self-reflexivity as the Second Layer of Findings

We shared our voices but also learned about each other's experiences with critical examinations in our virtual meetings. While having a comfortable space between us and "peeling" the layers of data, we still felt vulnerabilities and emotions, both of which can potentially be overlooked within the literature. The shared feelings and follow-up narratives challenged "the (problematic and gendered) historical narrative" (Heinert and Phillips 256) and referenced Cox and Riedner's article about "two women-identified labor conscious institutional workers" (17). The following scenes, enriched with conflicts, contradictions, and emotional labor, are outcomes of our cross-inquiries. They are inspired by Payne's suggestion to "take emotions seriously" (295), as a way to protest the biased narrative which has devalued the emotional labor of intersectionally minoritized populations for decades (Heinert and Phillips 256).

Cultural Conflicts in Naya's Experiences

One of the distinct aspects of both authors' positionalities within the WC stems from their culturally diverse backgrounds. In Naya's experience, her cultural background is a medley that has been a source of confusion for her as a second-generation Cuban-American born in Hialeah (Miami), in a community of working class Cuban immigrants. Having spent the majority of her youth with her religious Cuban immigrant grandmother, she grew up speaking Spanish as they went door-to-door preaching in the streets of East Hialeah. This little Cuban enclave is what Naya considers to be her home: the Spanish, the neighbors' chatter filled with Cuban slang, the salsa music at night. This was as close to Cuba as she had ever been - and maybe ever will be. That being said, it comes as no surprise that the minute Naya had to step out of that little Cuban bubble and into a Pembroke Pines elementary school located in Broward County, with a predominantly white population, she was faced with a completely different world from what she was used to.

Naya remembers her first day of kindergarten in vivid detail; her little pink and white Sketchers, the starchiness of her pleated uniform skirt, and the weight of her school supplies stretching the fabric of her My Little Pony backpack. She remembers the excitement and fear of the prospect of meeting other children her age, making new friends, learning new things. The fantastical image that she painted in her mind, however, was quickly tainted once she stepped into those intimidating school doors. It was not long before Naya had to write her first English sentences introducing herself to her teacher and classmates. Although Naya knew some words in English, much of her thinking took place in Spanish - and so, she struggled with the task. Called to the front of the class to finally read what she had written, she fumbled with the words and all that she could produce was "broken English."

As a consequence, her teacher gave her poor marks on Naya's efforts and had a discussion with her parents about her "lack" of "proper" English. It was obvious after that moment that Naya's Spanish was not welcome here; this was English territory now. Although she was too young to understand much beyond this, what was taking place in that moment was an exercise of dominant, exclusionary language practices - all disguised under the term "Standard English." Laura Greenfield explores this idea of "Standard English" as:

> The belief that 'Standard English' is an inherently superior language has been used to justify pedagogies that insist upon the teaching of only 'Standard English' in writing classrooms and writing centers (and indeed across the curriculum). Such pedagogies, when built upon this faulty assumption, implicitly privilege a racist view of history rather than an intellectually sound understanding of linguistic phenomena (38).

This usage of "Standard English" is one that showed itself from Naya's very first day of school and would inevitably continue to permeate itself in all levels of her education until her very last. Looking back on Naya's youth, while her parents had indeed taught her English in tandem with her grandmother's Spanish lessons, she felt more comfortable speaking in her mother tongue. It was not long before her Spanish suffered from the process of learning English. Naya remembers her grandmother's desperate attempts at salvaging her Spanish, administering make-shift Spanish lessons in her elegant cursive script. She remembers fighting to wrap her tongue around the tilde in mañana and struggling to roll her r's in carro. However, her grandmother's efforts faded away as Naya was singled out by both her teachers and fellow peers for her accent and grammatical slip-ups. In going through this challenging and confusing time, Naya quickly understood that she was different - culturally and linguistically. She was expected to split herself into two and engage in bilingualism, speaking Spanish only at home and English only at school, a practice that Greenfield argues has been a part of a historically exclusive system of inequality that paints "Standard English" as the language of "success" (Greenfield 43) and the others as the opposites. The "American way" reigned supreme in the classroom when it came to both teacher-student and peer-to-peer dynamics; a system that ultimately excluded cultures, languages, and perspectives that deviated from the dominant, white, male, upper-class standards, akin to the "rules of racial standing under white supremacy" (Condon and Faison 6). Feeling pressured to embrace the "American" way, while also being encouraged by her grandmother to hold on to her roots, Naya found herself in an ongoing internal and external battle between her Cuban and American heritage.

Naya's introduction to higher education opened a door to a world where the expression of her linguistic and cultural perspective was not only welcomed but encouraged. Studying at the HSI, Naya has been able to participate in writing projects that not only engage in translingual practices, but also tap into her own personal and renegotiated cultural narrative. These wonderful experiences have inspired Naya to further explore Cuban-American identity in her Master's thesis, as well as carry what she's learned into how she tutors students at the WC. Given the diverse student body at the HSI where both authors work, many students come into the WC with a native language that is not English. Much of their writing is critiqued by their professors because of their "poor English," which Naya has approached with a conflicted attitude. Why

are these students viewed as intellectually and linguistically inferior because they do not write in the English Standard? In Naya's eyes, their languages and perspectives are just as valid, an attitude that has permeated through how she engages with these students. Maintaining a balance with meeting a professor's linguistic expectations and encouraging the students to continue negotiating how they use language in their own way, Naya has molded her tutoring style in such a way that it actively critiques the dominant systems at play in the American education system, which resonates with the power of counterstories (Green 257- 260).

Naya's Creation of Connections with Student Writers

The ways in which Naya has negotiated her personal attitudes towards translingual practices and cultural differences through her tutoring have ultimately allowed her to foster deeper connections with her students (Canagarajah 40). One facet of her duties that is an exemplar of this is her role within the WC's Graduate Writing Mentorship Program (GWMP). The GWMP is a joint program sponsored by the HSI's graduate school and hosted by the WC, in which a single graduate writing tutor facilitates weekly three-hour-long meetings with a group of roughly ten students each semester. These graduate students typically work on high-stake, long-term writing projects: theses, dissertations, project proposals, journal publications, and so on. The purpose of this program is to provide a designated period of time and community for these students to work on their critical writing projects, that they would not otherwise have in the midst of the obligations posed by their everyday lives. During this three-hour block, students have the opportunity to have 15-minute one-on-one sessions with their program facilitator to discuss their current progress and establish attainable goals for subsequent meetings. This is all done in order to encourage and engage with productive writing habits that bring these students to their ultimate goal - whether that be graduation, publication, or presentation.

Naya has personally facilitated seven separate cohorts across the 2021-2024 Spring and Fall semesters. During her time as a GWMP facilitator, she has managed to foster a sense of camaraderie with her students. Many of her students, like Naya, are first-generation college students and come from a diverse background of cultures and languages that differ from the white, American, middle-class, English standard (Jiang et al. 34). Much like the majority of her GWMP students, Naya's positionality as a woman has also played a major role in the connections she has been able to foster with her students through shared experiences as women navigating academia. Since Naya is a commuter to her university, she faces added familial pressures and issues that also demand her immediate attention. This makes it difficult for Naya as she tries to balance her home- life with her work as a graduate assistant. As such, she has been able to directly relate to the plight of her students, given that she was also a student herself, working towards her Master's degree in English Literature while also trying to balance all of the other factors outlined above.

As a graduate assistant, Naya can relate to the financial issues experienced by her students, as many of them are also teaching assistants struggling to get by. This comes as no surprise, considering that 58% of college students across the country work on-campus jobs, with 55% being financially independent and 42%

living in poverty (Lederer et al. 15). All of these everyday struggles have become even more complicated as a result of the recent Covid-19 pandemic (Lederer et al. 15). Samuel Shelton, a fellow teaching assistant, touches on similar shared experiences during the pandemic, stating that "we are exposed to worsened/ing forms of neoliberal, capitalist exploitation, isolation from support systems, emergent obstacles to degree completion, and unexpected responsibilities in our lives" (36). Much like Shelton, Naya and her GWMP students share the same experiences. Despite being fortunate enough to hold positions as teaching assistants, there were obstacles and issues that ultimately affected the experiences of them as both laborers and students.

Additionally, Naya's academic program required her to write a thesis. Furthermore, she was also encouraged to actively engage in other writing projects like publishing and conferences in order to gain experience by the time she entered the job market. These requirements offered Naya a deeper understanding and sympathy for her GWMP cohort, as they were all working on projects of similar difficulty and significance to her own. In this way, Naya has established a feminist dynamic with her GWMP cohort in which she "do[es] not hold [herself] as superior to [her] students in a hierarchy of academic proficiency," and thus "resist[s] the positionings inherent in deficit discourses," instead emphasizing "a more horizontal power dynamic" (Namakula and Prozesky 46). In establishing a balanced relationship with her cohorts, Naya viewed herself as equal to her GWMP students, many of them being multilingual female writers with similar struggles and experiences.

Coming from a place of linguistic diversity can create challenges in many academic spaces, especially where Standard English is the norm. Because any sign of linguistic diversity is labeled as "imperfect English" in academia, many professors will equate these deviations from the Standard with a lack of intelligence, thus delivering poor marks for the use of multifaceted languages or non-Standard Englishes (Greenfield 35). Naya resonates with her GWMP students in their shared struggles with navigating their individual linguistic identities and the rigidity of language posed by white-dominated academic Standards.

Overcoming this similar thread of hurdles, Naya and her GWMP students have been able to foster an open dialogue rooted in empathy, respect, and even friendship (Jiang et al. 36). This can be seen in the weekly observation logs that Naya updates after each GWMP session (see fig. 2), with personal identifiable information removed:

Figure 2: Snapshot of Excel Sheet Containing Student Graduate Writing Mentorship Program Log[1]

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1   The first column outlines the date, the second column describes the student's current progress, and the third column de-

In just these few sessions, both the progress the student had shown throughout the program and the relationship formed between Naya and the student, are clearly outlined. What is particularly worth noting is where Naya and the student were able to bond with and relate to each other when it came to overcoming certain hurdles in regards to both of their writing processes. Naya specifically remembers the long two-hour sessions beyond GWMP during her tutoring hours that she would spend with this student revising her dissertation each week; at the time, Naya was also in the nascent stages of drafting up her own Master's thesis, as well as a potential journal publication. She often found herself saying "I get how you feel" and "me, too!" whenever her student laid out her stresses about new critiques from her major committee member or editorial revisions on her publication manuscript. Despite their different fields and levels of education, Naya was able to utilize her own personal experiences and tutoring style in order to better guide the student towards their writing goals. This, once again, is reflective of the unique positionality that Naya has within this diverse academic space.

In light of Naya's stories, it is important that we take note of peer tutors' professional disposition towards student writers, not only linguistically or cognitively, but also emotionally. Hence, their emotional labor correlates with student writers' emotions. Tutors are likely to vary in their emotional engagement and labors; some tutors, particularly tutors of color, may experience more emotional labor than others (Hynes 215). This observation aligns with "critical consideration of intersectional identities" as key to building mentorship (Ribero and Arellano 340), which is apparent in Naya's experiences outlined above and will be further confirmed by Xuan's experiences that follow, as a WC administrator of color.

Xuan's Self-healing by Making Connections

What Xuan has done is a self-healing process to get rid of her own negative thoughts about the various losses and challenges in her life, intersecting with gender, race/ethnicity, nationality, and other factors affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and geopolitical crises between, but not limited to, the U.S. and China (Echeverri et al. 1796). Coming from a working-class town in China, she has developed perseverance and resilience over the years of fighting hardship with her parents. Such growth has enabled her to see positivity within negative contexts. However, she still values a space where she feels comfortable sharing her vulnerability and absorbing others' bravery.

The year of 2020 marked Xuan's most vulnerable year. Before she went to sleep on Monday in April 2020, she received a WeChat (similar to Facetime) call from her younger brother about a truck accident her parents had in China. Xuan's mom passed away on the spot and her dad was sent to ICU in a hospital. Devastatingly hopeless and sleepless overnight, Xuan shared the message with her WC supervisor Tuesday morning. Receiving condolences and support, Xuan was excused from teaching or working that day. But she still did, and even met a student 10 minutes before the class as they had scheduled. Xuan recognized that this was all unfolding in the last few weeks of the Spring semester and her mom would have hoped that

scribes the student's goals for the following week.

Xuan pulled through for her students during this critical point in the semester. That pre-class meeting with the student created a moment and space for Xuan to share the news with her student and compose herself for most of the class, though she had swollen eyes and a damaged voice. It was later found out that Xuan could not go back to China because of the dissonance of the COVID-related policies, the geopolitical tension between the two countries, and the skyrocketing price of the U.S.- China flight tickets. Holding a working visa as an international employee, Xuan failed to attend the funeral to say good-bye to her mom, and was only able to visit her family three years later.

This particular email (see fig. 3) was sent to Xuan from the student in the meeting who went on to become a WC tutor a year later, on the same date of losing her mother. This email itself shows that the WC space, physically, virtually and spiritually, has been built and maintained with safety, feminism, and humanities. The content encompasses feminist love and a community rooted in sisterhood for Xuan who is not just a professional, but a mother and daughter. And as the last paragraph in figure 3 shows, the WC staff took action in supporting a cause to help certain individuals with minoritized intersectional identities. This was an action-oriented response to Xuan's call for support in an op-ed after the Atlanta shooting occurred in March 2021. Xuan called for high education support to demystify the ongoing objectification imposed on and potential threat to individuals who look like Asian women (Jiang). This outcry was Xuan's message of sympathizing with the victims and worrying about her own situation, as well those of her daughter and others like them.
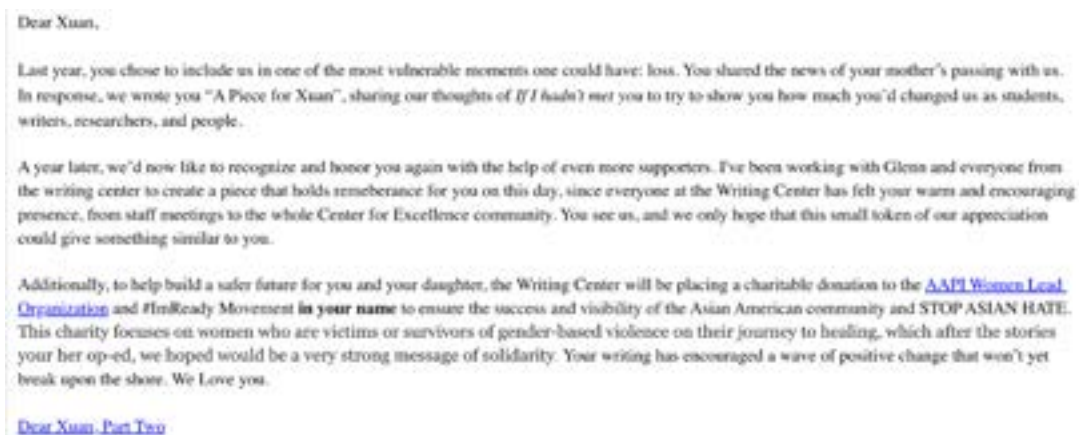
Figure 3: Excerpt from an email received in April 2021

The whole email showed the WC's great understanding and strong support for Xuan by acknowledging and affirming her intersectional identities (see fig. 3). Xuan could see the WC as her family in the U.S., as none of her extended family members reside in the U.S. Seeing and feeling other WC individuals like her family members who are having similar or parallel difficulties, Xuan could further relate with them and provide a "feminist ethic of care" (Wenger 121). Such care refers to "a moral and egalitarian means of leadership, one that spreads out rather than reaches up" as "a means of flattening hierarchies and redefining professional relationships" (Wenger 120-122), disturbing the dominant structure (Blair and Nickosen 3). Accordingly, power under such leadership "is shared and facilitative, built through relationships and governed by support [,] not control" (Wenger 122-123).

One example of the support alluded to above was when everyone, including the WC contingent staff, had to deal with the high inflation rate in the early 2020s. Seeing and experiencing the importance of financial aid support systems to the success of first-generation students (see Rehr et al.), Xuan persuaded other WC administrators to agree on raising the hourly rate while simultaneously helping create a connection with the graduate school, securing two graduate assistantships (GAships) since Spring 2020 and one more GAship since Spring 2024. Those GAships have helped undergraduate tutors, many of whom are first-generation college students, apply for graduate schools without too many financial concerns. Though their department might give them their GAships, the GAships from the writing center, as a great option or backup, have supported six individuals, including Naya.

Xuan's Feministic Co-authoring as Empowerment

Xuan sees herself in the other WC individuals' strength and resilience navigating their intersectional identities. More collaborative scholarship emphasizing emotions, rapport, humanities, and mindfulness in writing and writing tutoring processes were crafted, submitted, and published. This made their voices loud in academic and creative writings, as well as in op-eds. The WC staff shared and reviewed each other's manuscripts as peer review exercises but also peer therapy. When such collaborative opportunities to participate in research and writing were available, the WC staff, many of them minoritized students, worked to "enhance work-related skills that can better prepare them for their future careers and interpersonal relationships" (Castillo and Estudillo 2). Such co-authorship has been communally documented and celebrated in the center's collaborative Curriculum Vitae (see the figure 4 below).

Figure 4: Excerpt of WC Curriculum Vitae

It is worth noting that many of the names outlined in the snapshot above belong to peer tutors who identify as women coming from ethnically and racially diverse backgrounds. One individual co-author, Ms. Casabone (see figure 4) was one of the three students in Xuan's tutor- training class who came to her office for a research study about free access to menstrual products after Xuan's class announcement, along with

other announcements about conferences and calls for proposals and publications. The three students were invited to chat and learn more about what they needed to do, and how long they needed to commit to this project. Even though the invitation was responded to by three individuals in class, Ms. Casabone was the one who followed up after the semester ended and contributed most to the literature review section. Her interest and dedication in this study showcased not only "how personal and professional lives are interconnected" (Green 257), but also how her marginalized identities (e.g. Hispanic, female, working class) drove her along the way in earning their co-authorship in mainstream scholarship (Bitzel 3). As Xuan, Ms. Casabone was aware of the monthly cost of menstrual products and passionate about the free access to menstrual products at the workplace and beyond. It should be noted that this publication was referred to by the HSI's Center for Women and Gender Studies and shortly followed by the decision of the HSI's Student Government Association that free pads are provided on campus. Ms. Casabone is currently a receptionist in a law firm in New York City, and she has been moving toward her dream as an editor in a publishing company, updating Xuan with her milestones.

Another collaborator, Ms. Peña (see figure 4), joined the authorship journey through the same process as an undergraduate student. She moved on to her master's degree at the HSI and is now a second-year doctoral student at the University of Miami, thriving with the research foundation she accumulated as an undergraduate student. Ms. Peña highlighted her gain in a fourth collaborative piece with Xuan, including metacognitive explorations and identity shifts. As a student collaborator, Ms. Peña changed her self-perception from a knowledge consumer to a contributor (Palmer et al. 5). This series of collaborations has not only benefited Ms. Peña, but also empowered Xuan. As a mentor and co-author of Ms. Peña for several years, Xuan was invited to Ms. Peña's master's thesis defense and introduced as her "research mentor" to her thesis committee and audience. As a contingent faculty member and unofficial mentor of a graduate student, Xuan, having heard Ms. Peña's introduction, felt more legitimate and motivated to continue her mentorship and co-authorship with students.

By encouraging these peer tutors to pursue publication opportunities on the same platforms as faculty, Xuan not only fostered these tutors to embrace and position their own publicly peripheral identities in the larger academic and professional space, but she also established greater diversity within the WC in scholarship and praxis (Blair and Nickosen 3). This has helped to combat the dominant academic standard within academia (including who gets to share knowledge, in what languages, and using whose voices), while also making the WC a more feminine, diverse, and inclusive space. These efforts have also yielded the new generation of minority staff who "will ruffle some feathers" and not be "the tokenized minority who will bring unthreatening diversity to higher education" (Ribero and Arellano 348). Xuan has started to see her emotional support and "feminist ethic of care" as leadership (Payne 285; Wenger 121). This realization comes from a dedication to "transgressing boundaries" which exclude and silence undergraduate student writers, particularly those from marginalized communities (Shanahan n.p.). In doing so, Xuan empowers many individuals in her co-authoring and mutual learning experiences.

Dialogues of Inquiry as Inner Layer of Findings

Xuan could see Naya's quest for linguistic and academic justice, when the latter mentioned her question, as follows:

> *Much of their writing is critiqued by their professors because of their "poor English," which Naya has approached with a conflicted attitude.*

Many times, it is a battle for tutors to position themselves and renegotiate their identities while also being pragmatic and unfaltering in their sessions (see Shapiro). In the context of one-on-one peer tutoring, being pragmatic means adhering to the existing standard and authorities, and being progressive refers to representing student writers' agency. Even though student writers' previous knowledge are rich assets, they may not be seen as legitimate in their instructors' curriculum and instruction. Hence, the battle of peer tutors as an "in-between" does not have a "standard" solution. Xuan argues that in peer tutoring sessions, within such a context of individual proximity and horizontality, tutors' eagerness to be progressive would be even stronger for student writers. Accordingly, the frequency and intensity of peer tutors' identity renegotiation is very salient.

In a similar vein, Naya was able to relate to and reflect upon Xuan's statements, particularly when she stated:

> *Xuan could see herself within the other WC individuals' strength and resilience… they made their voices loud in academic and creative writings, as well as op-eds.*

Having once been a tutor-in-training under Xuan's guidance, Naya remembers the plethora of creative and academic publishing opportunities that Xuan's training class provided her. As a young bachelor's student back then, Naya had never stopped to ask whether or not she should send her writing out into the world for publishing; she simply did not think her work was publishable material. It was not until Xuan introduced her to her first ever call-for-submissions - a flier for O, Miami's upcoming Waterproof anthology - that Naya considered submitting her work for publication. She had her doubts, of course, but her WC administrator continuously reassured and supported Naya throughout the entirety of the publication process. In the end, Naya accomplished a dream that she had never considered possible before - she got to see her translingual poem published in print. If it was not for Xuan's implementation of creative writing activities in class, as well as the promotion of publication and conference opportunities, Naya would not have fully tapped into her professional writing potential. Naya's lived story further confirms Larracey et al.'s statement that "Part of UR's work is to demonstrate to students that they can and do make important contributions to our collective disciplinary knowledge despite histories of exclusion" (11) and Palmer et al.'s identity shift from knowledge consumers to knowledge contributors (5).

Through persistence, Naya has been able to build her expertise in both English conventions and creative writing techniques, allowing her to "negotiate between and among intersecting and clashing cultures, languages, literacies, discourses, and disciplines" (Severino, as cited in Bitzel 2). Naya has published several poems which code-mesh English and Spanish languages and cultures. This allows Naya to translate her writing experiences into her tutoring so that she can help students "decide when to follow organizational and stylistic conventions . . . and when to take risks and violate them" (Severino, as cited in Bitzel 2).

Both authors are aware that underprivileged students are not a homogenous group and that intersections of their MDI would have differences in weights and foci compared to the diagram (Bitzel 3). Such awareness contributes to revealing the ever-changing complexities of interacting and overlapping categories in identities within different spaces and contexts (Bitzel 3). Multilingual students, as Naya discussed above, need to develop their writing and language skills, whereas many first-generation college, immigrant, and international students may need more time to register themselves in academic rhetoric. The complexity, in reality, is that many of our student writers, as well as peer tutors, carry several of the aforementioned identities, intersecting to form and renegotiate their own identities when entering the academic space physically and metaphorically. Noticing such genuine complexities, Xuan argues against monolithic or dichotomic tutoring approaches which put themselves at the risk of artificially simplifying the tutoring process. The writing center administration has advocated and cultivated tutors' mindset of a continuum embracing mirror and window (Kurzer 202), for both pre-service and in-service tutors. Peer tutors and student writers exercise their own agency as they decide contextual positionality and identity renegotiation along this continuum. Peer tutors can encourage student writers to use writing to amplify their strengths and richness as a mirror (Kurzer 202), for instance, in their experiences out of the classroom, with their work and family life. They can also make connections with the new class about how to write better as a window (Kurzer 204). Through peer tutoring, writing tutors can connect with student writers and motivate them to be better writers by seeing the content and purpose of their writing as self-expression and knowledge-sharing. Through these sessions, student writers would be engaged as active thinkers and rewriters, and left their undeniable right to decide how they renegotiate their intersectional identities, including their professional identity (Godbee et al. 5).

Conclusion

WC practitioners, many times, are WC tutors and administrators from different linguistic, cultural, and gendered backgrounds, carrying out their own perspectives through their practices. The lived experiences shared by both Xuan and Naya reflect these findings, emphasizing the importance of the WC as a space that promotes cultural awareness, linguistic diversity, and creative collaboration,despite being systematically unprioritized within the larger academic space in the trying era of the early 2020s. One of the inside-out approaches is to value and share WCs' own intersectional stories to enrich WC scholarship and to amplify their identity-renegotiating voices to a broader audience.

By sharing their perspectives as female, multilingual, and culturally diverse WC staff members, the

two authors advocate their renegotiated intersectional identities as resources and assets by illustrating how their individual experiences have positioned themselves in the WC and for the WC, internally and externally. In doing so, they combat the standard pushed by the white, masculine academic space in general, and connect and empower student writers, many of whom have been minoritized and even excluded by the aforementioned space and standard. Future studies would benefit from looking at the lived and fluid experiences of other WC tutors and administrators, as well as student writers with different perspectives from the ones detailed here.

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Cluster Conversation: Talking Back Through Rhetorical Surveillance Studies: Intersectional Feminist and Queer Approaches

Introduction

Morgan C. Banville and Gavin P. Johnson

Abstract: While surveillance practices have long histories that pre-date the digital age, recent transnational events have brought into sharper focus the prevalence of surveillance and its targets, especially multiply marginalized communities who are women, LGBTQIA+, disabled, Black, Indigenous, and people of color. This rhetorical moment requires our attention and collective action. That is, our academic scholarship and public discourse cannot ignore or downplay the oppressive lunge toward ever-increasing surveillance. With this cluster conversation, our goal is to invite and enact a talking back to surveillance infrastructures of power in a way that is a "gesture of defiance that heals, that makes new life and new growth possible" (hooks 9; Browne 62). "Talking back," as we use it here, comes from the critical work of Black feminists. We set the stage for talking back to surveillance practices, technologies, and cultures using a repertoire of feminist and queer rhetorics. Our goal is to argue for the sustained and sustainable study of surveillance in rhetorical studies but, more specifically, insist on forwarding intersectional feminist and queer frameworks in that study. In this introduction to the cluster conversation, the editors briefly review major moves and important concepts in the interdisciplinary field of Surveillance Studies. This cluster conversation features nine manuscripts, exploring the following themes: State and Government Surveillance, Surveillance of Women's Bodies and Surveillance Technologies, Surveillance in Schools, and Tactics. Through this cluster, we hope to establish not only the need for rhetorical surveillance studies grounded in intersectional feminist and queer practices but also uplift the voices of emerging scholars and graduate students already talking back.

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Introduction

"Surveillance," as a critical term, invokes the systemic observational practices purposefully used to discipline and control bodies. While surveillance practices have long histories that pre-date the digital age, recent transnational events have brought into sharper focus the prevalence of surveillance and its targets, especially communities who are women, LGBTQIA+, disabled, Black, Indigenous, and people of color. This rhetorical moment requires our attention and collective action. That is, our academic scholarship and public discourse cannot ignore or downplay the aggressive lunge toward ever-increasing surveillance. These dystopian possibilities are, indeed, materializing quickly and rendered visible by recent controversies surrounding reproductive justice following the simultaneous overturning of *Roe v. Wade* and *Planned Parenthood v. Casey*; anti-trans and anti-LGBTQIA+ legislation, especially related to healthcare; content restrictions in social media, schools, and public libraries; the ongoing war and apartheid in Palestine; the violent dismantling of peaceful college campus encampments protesting the necropolitical horrors of American-sponsored war; and thorough integration of biometrics and artificial intelligence (AI) into our daily lives–––just to reference a few. To grasp the connections between these events and the rhetorical study of surveillance, consider these examples:

1. As we write this introduction in summer 2024, the second anniversary of the *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization* has just passed. In the United States, the devastating reversal of federal abortion rights in 2022 has been followed by a constant barrage of attacks on reproductive rights, which allows and encourages surveillance. The list of states increases by the month (see fig. 1). Anti-abortion centers, which rhetorically position themselves as "pregnancy crisis centers," have made use of data-driven Google ads and search engine optimization (SEO) in order to dissuade treatment. Such centers, search engines, ads, and mobile apps also collect valuable data that experts fear may be used as evidence in legal action, which most often targets women of color in urban areas (Abrams and Bergengruen; Gillo, this cluster). Research has shown that abortion bans of all types have the greatest impact on people in marginalized groups (Hartline and Novotny; Foster; Jarman; McGinn Valley et al.). In particular, Fuentes writes how individuals who face systemic racism, especially Black and Indigenous women, and other forms of oppression may encounter compounding barriers to obtaining an abortion.
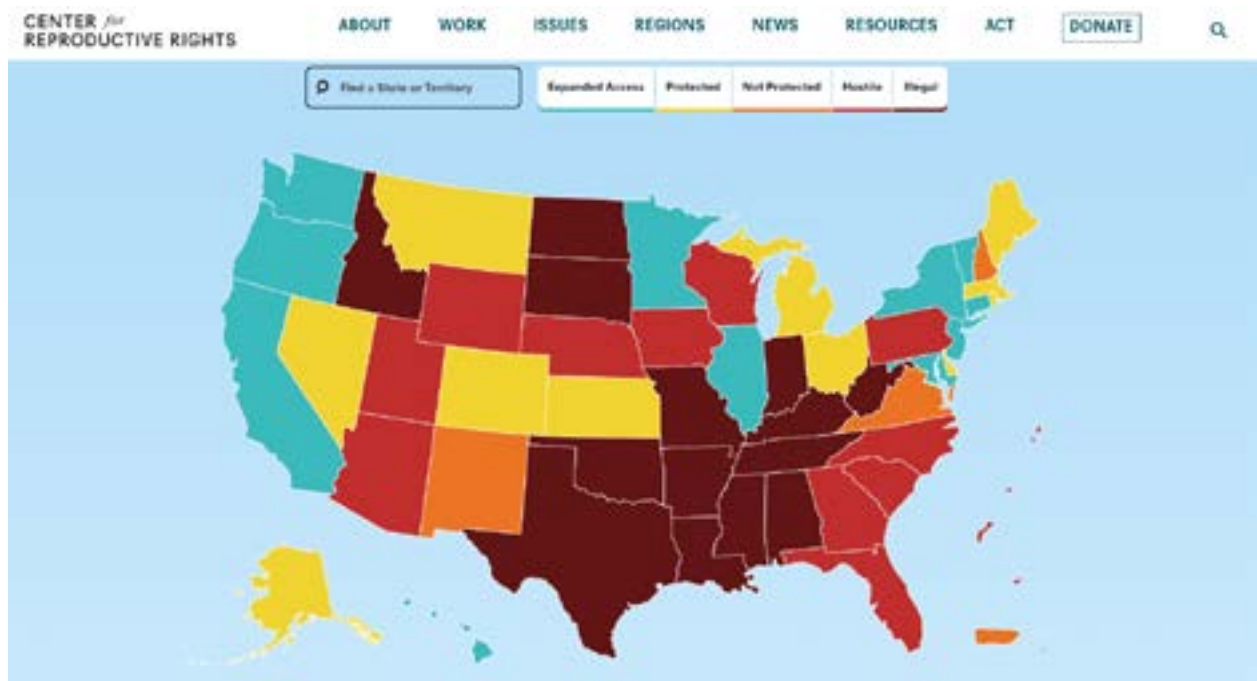
Fig. 1: The Center for Reproductive Rights offers an interactive map tracking abortion-related legislation, court decisions, and policy post-Roe.

2. Similar surveillance practices have been forcefully applied to migrants at the southern border to restrict and control movement. For example, since 2021, Texas' "Operation Lone Star" has received more than $11 billion to maintain what Governor Greg Abbott characterizes as essential in maintaining Texas' right to self-defense. Part of this "self-defense" includes the Modular Mobile Surveillance Systems (M2S2) used by the Texas National Guard, which are "equipped with advanced cameras that can detect the presence of migrant caravans long before they begin crossing the border illegally" (Serano). Sarah Sherman-Stokes has described these kinds of tactics and technologies as the "multimodal nature of surveillance and enforcement" (234), and these technologies are made more palatable by a media obsessed with spectacle. To this end, Camilla Fojas writes, "Media about the border disseminate a culture of borderveillance and mark the integration of immigration surveillance with entertainment modes. Control over mobility, along with the procedures of processing and sorting migrants into citizen and noncitizen, is not merely a news event local to the border regions but part of the drama of everyday life in the United States" (28). The technologies of "borderveillance" paired with deeply rooted xenophobic and racist ideologies make possible Donald Trump's campaign promise to initiate "the largest deportation" in American history a key plank of his 2024 Presidential campaign, and, since winning the election, has pushed for aggressive and immediate action to begin on January 20, 2025.

3. Surveillance is used extensively in Gaza and the West Bank, and that is a feminist and queer issue. Palestinians have been under surveillance since, at least, the period of British colonialism wherein both physical technologies of surveillance (e.g., watch towers, separation walls, prisons) and bureaucratic technologies of surveillance (e.g., census, identity cards) were deployed (Len-

tin). The continuing colonization of Palestine since the founding of Israel has been supported by the growing sophistication of surveillance technologies. In May 2023, just months prior to the October 7th attacks, Amnesty International released their report "Automated Apartheid" documenting a pervasive system of facial and biometric identification that contributes to "a coercive environment aimed at forcing Palestinians to leave areas of strategic interest to Israeli authorities, by making their ordinary lives unbearable" (8). This surveillance regime indiscriminately observes all Palestinians using the familiar rhetoric of "(inter)national security." This rhetoric is used to justify genocide.

4. Keeping the mass surveillance of Palestinians via biometric technology in mind, we must note that mass surveillance is also happening across university campus protests in solidarity with Gaza. As Mir, Klosowski, and Romero write, surveillance occurs during protests in both overt or visible, and covert or invisible ways (see also Guariglia). Many campuses are resorting to similar tactics used on the Gaza strip to identify protestors or "threats" and calling in militarized police forces. Such identification doesn't just include video and audio recordings—protesters may also be subject to tracking methods like facial recognition technology and location tracking from their phone, school ID usage, or other sensors (Mir, Klosowski, and Romero). Similar tactics have been used against student activists before including during the 2020 Black Lives Matter protests.

5. In 2019, *Article 19* released a report documenting how countries like Lebanon, Egypt, and Iran used data collected from dating and social media apps to target and entrap LGBTQIA+ citizens for arrest under "anti-debauchery," "acts against nature," and similar morality laws (Rigot). A study by INSIKT GROUP reported, for example, that across much of Africa and Middle East, the LGBTQIA+ community is "perceived as a threat to society that states are combating through organized crackdowns, surveillance, and censorship." In some instances, governments are partnering with private sector surveillance organizations to target "high risk" groups, which includes the LGBTQIA+ community. Entrapment by law enforcement agencies and criminals is a common theme observed across Africa and the Middle East, with the outing of LGBTQIA+ individuals posing a significant threat due to strict anti-LGBTQIA+ legislation and socially conservative views among the public (INSIKT GROUP).[1] This kind of targeted surveillance of LGBTQIA+ communities, of course, is not exclusive to these regions and is increasingly a tactic used in the West.

6. Surveillance has increased globally with in artificial intelligence implementation in various industrial sectors. From deepfakes (see Feiger), to Olympic surveillance (see Meaker), supply management (see Nitschinger), and more, AI is seemingly ubiquitous. For example, the over-abundance of 'smart' devices has caused consumer concern. A UK consumer group called Which? found that there are more 'everyday' items than we realize that are spying on us (see Booth). In their example, Which? tested three air fryers each of which requested permission

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1   For the full global report, please visit: https://go.recordedfuture.com/hubfs/reports/cta-2020-0714.pdf

to record audio on the user's phone through a connected app, ultimately citing personal data and privacy concerns. We've also seen an increase in hyper-surveillance of messaging and applications, with the intent to locate dissenters. For example, after allegedly making disparaging comments about politician Xi Jinping in WeChat, a Chinese instant messaging application, economist Zhu Hengpeng has not been seen in public (see Davidson). Further, in West Africa, surveillance has increased in the name of public health and safety with the creation of a pathogen surveillance model (see Broad Institute). Though the intent is promising and influential, we see medical surveillance as a privacy invasion that has severe implications for bodies who are deemed "at risk" or "not in compliance." This surveillance system was introduced nearly a year after demonstrable increases in spending on surveillance technologies occurred across a number of African nations. A report by the Institute of Development Studies (IDS) and the African Digital Rights Network (ADRN) found that surveillance tech is being used to "single out citizens for harassment, detention and torture for expressing opposing views, violating international human rights law and the technology companies' policies" (see Harrisberg & Bhalla).

We do not share these examples to fearmonger or project a sense of nihilism about the inescapability of oppressive surveillance. These brief and in no way comprehensive examples certainly provide a terrifying but nonetheless important glimpse at the impacts of surveillance on multiply marginalized bodies on a global scale. Surveillance, in these examples, is activated for different reasons, by different authorities, and across different contexts; however, the end goal remains the same: a reification of power and the control of bodies. And, therefore, the rhetorical study of surveillance is an intersectional feminist and queer project.

With this cluster conversation, our goal is to invite and enact a *talking back* to surveillance infrastructures of power in a way that is a "gesture of defiance that heals, that makes new life and new growth possible" (hooks 9; Browne 62). "Talking back," as we use it here, comes from the critical work of Black feminists. Theorizing from her experience growing up in a southern Black community, bell hooks explains talking back as "speaking as an equal to an authority figure" and a "rite of initiation, testing [one's] courage, strengthening [one's] commitment, and preparing [one] for the days ahead" (123; 128). Talking back, in hooks' thinking, is liberatory insofar as the speech act challenges dominate systems of power openly. Rhetorically speaking, we might pair hooks' talking back with the feminist and queer reimaginings of ethos wherein "the physical body, ethos, and subjectivity necessarily intertwine" (Shellenberger; see also Ryan, Meyers, and Jones). Building on hooks, sociologist Simone Browne argues that "talking back [...] is one way of challenging surveillance and its imposition of norms" (62). Browne's work, which has become foundational in the study of surveillance, demonstrates the long histories of surveillance targeting Blackness, and defines surveillance as both discursive and material. Taking hooks and Browne's work seriously means not only acknowledging the need or potential to talk back but also act.

In this introduction, we set the stage for talking back to surveillance practices, technologies, and cultures using a repertoire of feminist and queer rhetorics. Our goal is to argue for the sustained and sus-

tainable study of surveillance in rhetorical studies but, more specifically, insist on forwarding intersectional feminist and queer frameworks in that study. We briefly review major moves and important concepts in the interdisciplinary field of Surveillance Studies. We then call attention to the efforts in rhetoric, composition, and technical communication that take up surveillance and how those conversations have shaped current discourses in the field. After establishing these important genealogies, we explicitly highlight our goals for this cluster, our editorial commitments, and overview the included essays. Through this cluster, we hope to establish not only the need for rhetorical surveillance studies grounded in intersectional feminist and queer practices but also uplift the voices of emerging scholars and graduate students *already* talking back.

Surveillance Studies

Interdisciplinary researchers argue surveillance depends on emergent *social structures* and *social processes* often rendered invisible for the benefit of political, cultural, technological, and educational institutions (Marx). The study of surveillance, unsurprisingly, draws heavily from sociology because, as David Lyon explains, these surveillance structures and processes are "not merely something exercised on us as workers, citizens or travelers, it is a set of processes which we are all involved, both as watched and as watchers" (13). Going further, Morgan Banville defines surveillance as the collection of both visible and invisible data/information derived from those being observed, suggesting an application of power over the observed audience, who are often not informed of such collection ("Am I Who" 32). One implication of defining surveillance as the "application of power over the observed audience" may be viewed through what Mark Andrejevic calls "mass culture," which, "like the mass market that produces it, has long been criticized for being top down, homogeneous, and non-participatory" (28). The term "top-down" is important to emphasize because of the connotations of power/dominance over both living and non-living actors.

Its firm grounding in social sciences as well as the humanities differentiates surveillance studies from, for example, cybersecurity research, which is often housed in computer science and engineering disciplines. This is not to say that surveillance studies doesn't engage with the technical features of cybersecurity; indeed, notable new examples of surveillance systems worthy of rhetorical analysis are "smart surveillance," which has the potential to create new divisions of perceptual labor between humans and computers, as exemplified through the Internet of Things (IOT) items (Ring doorbell, smoke detectors, thermostats, Alexa, Google Home, refrigerators, etc.) (Gates). However, while technologies are essential nodes within the larger network, our actions as the watched and as watchers are essential to understanding the rhetorical structures that maintain surveillance cultures. What surveillance studies does, in our assessment, is make space to interrogate the *need and desire* for cybersecurity, the *need and desire* for tracking technologies, and, of course, the *need and desire* to control bodies.

While surveillance should be studied as a constellation of social structures and cultural processes, Surveillance Studies has not always attended to the complexities of "the social" or "the cultural" in ways that may be familiar to those of us in rhetorical studies. Often discussed as "ubiquitous," these rhetorics flatten

the disproportionate impact surveillance has on systemically excluded communities (Kafer). Put another way, to say surveillance is everywhere and impacts everyone ignores how multiply marginalized communities suffer the brunt of the impact. Surveillance happens at the intersections. Only recently have researchers purposefully engaged intersectional frameworks to better understand how our identities, positionalities, and relationalities influence and are influenced by surveillance (Monahan), especially when considering issues of race (Browne), gender/gender nonconformity (Beauchamp), and sexuality/queerness (Kafer and Grinberg). For example, in their important edited collection *Feminist Surveillance Studies*, Rachel E. Dubrofsky and Shoshana Amielle Magnet argue that intersectional feminist praxis offers a critical intervention in surveillance studies that can address the foundational technologies of disenfranchisement that maintain normalizing structures of whiteness, able-bodiedness, heterosexuality, and cisgenderism under late capitalism (3). Going further, Kafer and Grinberg argue, "Attending to the queerness of surveillance demands vigilance to the ways in which norms mutate across sites of control and how different intersections of queer and trans identity can be rendered threatening or secure in relation to certain abject Others" (595). Such an intersectional praxis attends specifically to the body (and bodies) as realized through surveillance, and a rhetorical methodology, here, presents a tool kit attuned to how discourses of surveillance circulate and take hold in the public imagination and political arena.

Finally, while the focus of a great deal of research demonstrates how systems of power disenfranchise through making certain raced, sexed, gendered, classed, and disabled communities invisible––removing them from the historical record, denying community expertise, silencing dissent––surveillance does the reverse: disenfranchisement by careful observation. Torin Monahan, a leading scholar in the field, echoes this insight and names it "marginalizing surveillance," which marks individual bodies and entire communities "as complicit victims, society outcasts, invasive species, or swarms" and "pulls bodies between extremes of compulsory legibility and exclusionary invisibility" (202). Along with scholars like Monahan and Browne, we insist that any study of surveillance must account for the intersectional difference that calls our bodies and communities into being. This marking of bodies for the purposes of observation, categorization, and control through the strategies of "compulsory legibility and exclusionary invisibility" is, without a doubt, rhetorical.

Efforts in Rhetoric, Composition, and Technical Communication

From this point of view, we believe rhetoric and its collegial fields of composition and technical communication are primed to make important contributions to interdisciplinary conversations about surveillance, especially if we practice our unique repertoire of feminist and queer tactics for talking back. Even with relatively limited uptake, rhetoricians have already contributed important insights about surveillance. For example, scholarship has emphasized the rhetorical surveillance of wearables and other biometric tracking technologies (Banville "Am I Who"; Tham et al.; Hutchinson and Novotny), surveillance in classrooms and pedagogical interventions (Banville and Sugg; Beck et al.; Johnson), data aggregation and commodification (Woods and Wilson); issues of authorship and copyright (Reyman; Amidon et. al), privacy policies as rhetorically designed texts (Banville "Resisting Surveillance"; Pandya and Pigg; Woods and Johnson), internet

infrastructures (Beck; Hess; McKee), identity and government surveillance (Dolmage; Cedillo; Ramos), and more. A range of these topics were addressed in the field's first edited collection on the topic *Privacy Matters: Conversations about Surveillance Within and Beyond the Classroom*, published only four years ago. And, while not always explicitly tied to surveillance, insights from researchers in technofeminist rhetorics also "embrace and enact the interconnectedness of technological practices and gender, race, class, and sexuality, as well as their co-constitution and shaping of each other" (Shivers-McNair, Gonzales, and Zhyvotovska 46) in ways that shore up the important investigations that can be undertaken by feminist and queer scholars of rhetoric.

While scholarship on surveillance has been published in the field since, at least, the early 1990s with articles like Joseph Janangelo's "Technopower and Technoppression: Some Abuses of Power and Control in Computer-assisted Writing Environments" and Gail Hawisher and Cynthia L. Selfe's "The Rhetoric of Technology and the Electronic Classroom," as the citations in the previous paragraphs attest, the majority of rhetorical scholarship on surveillance, and its related concept of privacy, did not take shape until about a decade ago. In her recent book *Working Through Surveillance and Technical Communication,* Sarah Young offers an excellent overview of relevant scholarship and helpfully identifies eleven themes or areas of emphasis:

1. Surveillance in the workplace

2. Surveillance in schools

3. State/government surveillance

4. Medical surveillance

5. Surveillance of women's bodies

6. Surveillance technologies

7. Teaching surveillance

8. Surveillance research and development

9. Tactics of resistance via Certeau

10. Consequences of surveillance

11. Foucault, panopticism, and/or disciplinary power

These areas of emphasis, of course, are not studied in isolation and topics often overlap and intersect. While seemingly extensive, Young notes that, often, scholarly engagement with surveillance is passing, and she encourages working with and expanding our rhetorical vocabularies around surveillance.

Building on this momentum, the Digital Rhetorical Privacy Collective (DRPC) was founded in 2022

by Charles Woods, Morgan Banville, Gavin P. Johnson, Chen Chen, Cecilia Shelton, and Noah Wason. The DRPC's mission is explicitly feminist and queer: bridging scholarly and public conversations about surveillance and privacy to enact coalitional action dedicated not only to ending oppression under surveillance capitalism, but also to building equitable futures for all ("About the DRPC"). This work has begun in earnest through academic dialogue across multiple university and professional communities, and we, Morgan and Gavin, are proud to be a part of this coalitional effort. Coalition, we know, has become a commonplace in feminist and queer rhetorics. As Aurora Matzke, Louis M. Maraj, Angela Clark-Oates, Anyssa Gonzales, and Sherry Rankins-Robertson argue in a recent special issue of this journal, coalition is both a rhetorically powerful tactic and a intentional moving toward the uncomfortable work happening elsewhere. For scholars, that often means moving beyond the purely theoretical work of the academy (Mcclantoc). The DRPC and the coalition of scholars discussing surveillance rhetorically must continue moving toward uncomfortable work if our goal is building equitable feminist and queer futures.

Cluster Conversations

This cluster comes at a time when the field is finding its collective voice and talking back to a pervasive social, cultural, rhetorical, and intersectional problem. Authors examine important issues in contemporary surveillance using feminist and queer methodologies and a range of methods, including rhetorical criticism, interface analysis, discourse analysis, participant interviews, mixed methods language coding, and more. They show us that there are many ways we can talk back to and through our research.

Considering our emphasis on surveillance as controlling bodies and the rhetorical possibilities of talking back as well as *Peitho*'s purpose and audience, we believe it is pertinent to make use of some of Sarah Young's categories to demonstrate how these researchers are intervening and expanding our current conversations about rhetorical surveillance.

State and Government Surveillance

We begin with two articles focusing on State and Government Surveillance (Young's third theme). In "**Digital Surveillance and Control of Chinese Feminists and a Transnational Response,**" **Chen Chen** uses a case study of violence against Chinese feminists, illustrating how contemporary and historic surveillance technologies (digital and pre-digital) specifically impact transnational, non-western communities and how transnational studies support or complicate feminist insights on the rhetorical contours of surveillance. Chen charts the contemporary strategies of surveilling Chinese feminists through textual, affective, and infrastructural dimensions and studies surveillance strategies use the rhetorics of "Da Zi Bao" (Big Character Posters) from China's Cultural Revolution era used to label feminists as traitors to the nation, which thrive in a nationalist affective economy supported by political and technological infrastructures that use technological instrumental power to control information circulation.

To further complicate the state and governmental surveillance tactics across the globe, **Charles Woods** writes about talking back to the use of biometrics for bodily control in "**'A Gesture of Defiance' From the Body: Interlocking Consent and the Privacy Aesthetic at the U.S. Southern Border**." Through an analysis of biometrics policies and practices used by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security Office of Biometric Identity Management, Woods' analysis amplifies how geo-spatial elements and multiple data usages support privacy erosion and unethical surveillance in the U.S. Southern Border. Woods posits that understanding how biometrics perpetuate oppression from an intersectional feminist perspective is a critical element of attuning to the oblique rhetorics of privacy and surveillance; recognizing the influence of ToS documents; understanding the intersection of "the body" and "the digital" as essential for new surveillance technologies; and, considering of the importance of space regarding data collection.

Surveillance of Women's Bodies and Surveillance Technologies

Next, authors engage with two themes as defined by Young: Surveillance of Women's Bodies (theme 5) and Surveillance Technologies (theme 6). In "**Digital Eyes on Bodies: Analyzing Post-Roe Reproductive Surveillance,**" **Emily Gillo**, focuses on the increased hypersurveillance of digital spaces and subsequent erosion of reproductive rights and privacy for people who menstruate and people who can get pregnant following the overturning of *Roe v. Wade*. Adopting a feminist "surveillance of care" framework, Gillo's contribution analyzes, critiques, and offers a critical feminist response to Flo, a popular period tracking app, its cis-heteronormative interface, and its inadequacy in providing privacy protections for its users.

Elitza Kotzeva also examines how surveillance technologies seek to control women's bodies in "**Face-Shaping Power of the Postfeminist Male Gaze, or Lateral Rhetorical Digital Surveillance in Armenia**." Drawing on feminist surveillance theoretical work, she demonstrates that rhetorical digital surveillance is a product both of a patriarchal synopticon surveillance, where many observe the few, and a gynae-opticon, a type of female peer surveillance. Kotzeva argues that beauty norms solidified via globalized social media objectify the female body, counter traditional cultural practices, and normalize cosmetic surgery for young Armenian women.

Surveillance in Schools

Surveillance in Schools, Young's second theme, explores racialized and colonized workplaces. In "**Cohering Marginality: A Thematic Analysis of Mentorship and Counterveillance Among Black Women Scholars in Rhetoric and Writing Studies**," **Christopher Morris** focuses on racialized workplace surveillance, which has been shown to negatively affect many Black women who work and attend school at U.S. colleges and universities. As Morris writes in this cluster conversation, many Black women who are profiled, isolated, and aggressed upon on the basis of racial identity have reported both emotional and professional distress in academia. At the same time, however, cultures of Black mentorship in higher education provide professional development and networks of care that counteract racialized workplace surveillance.

Next, **"Writing Centers are Watching: Surveillance, Colonialism, and Writing Tracking Data"** by **Kelin Loe, Angela Stalcup, Shannon Shepherd, and Breeanna Hicks** compliments Morris' examination of surveillance in higher education. The authors write about reckoning with their, and the writing center's, complicit relationship with data surveillance and colonial logics. They examine the forms used in a writing center to collect writer data and focus on how their own "best practices" have contributed to colonial logics of gender and the subjugation of student writers. They present preliminary conclusions about data collection practices and look toward future research at the intersections of feminist, decolonial, and surveillance studies in the writing center.

Tactics

Our final articles explicitly engage with three themes as defined by Young: Tactics of resistance [via Certeau] (theme 9), Consequences of surveillance (theme 10), and Foucault, panopticism, and/or disciplinary power (theme 11). **Amy Gaeta**'s contribution, "**A Disability Theory of Anti-Surveillance Tactics**" sketches how disabled people resist surveillance in everyday life in the liberal democracies of the Global North. Gaeta explores the normalizing gaze of the mass surveillance state and how it operates to sort subjects into 'kinds' of people in ways that amplify pre existing hegemonies, such as white supremacy, cisheteropatriarchy, and ableism. Further contributing to the interconnectedness of technological practices and intersectionality, Gaeta outlines tactics used by disabled people to resist surveillance as well as tactics of her own creation inspired by activist practices and recent events in social organizing.

Asa McMullen examines how Black women use multiple consciousness as a tool to perform sousveillance practices against bureaucratic systems, specifically law enforcement or police. In her contribution, "**'There is Power in Looking': The Oppositional Gaze in Black Women's Sousveillance Practices When Encountering Police,**" she examines how Black women use multiple consciousness to develop an oppositional gaze and become critical Black female spectators to police actions through sousveillance. McMullen argues that Black women's sousveillance practices formed from their oppositional gaze and critical Black female spectatorship give Black women autonomy over their experiences, allow them to show the truth of Black life, resist bureaucratic systems, and create counternarratives to racist narratives of Black experiences with the police.

Finally, in "**Studying Surveillance Through Hybrid Concealment Practices: A Queer Analysis of Digital Sex Work Safety Guides**," **Rachael Jordan** explores surveillance by analyzing the hybridity and concealment in digital sex work safety guides from multiple countries. As Jordan writes, sex workers are the "canaries in the digital coalmine" (Sly) as surveillance, including laws and censorship, are tested on sex workers before the general user population. Her contribution showcases surveillance of bodies, bridging technical communication scholarship with queer surveillance scholarship (Kafer and Grinberg) to study how sex workers work within/against systems of surveillance by utilizing the "hybrid concealment" necessary for hypermarginalized users when participating in digital spaces.

Final Reflections on Our Goals, Limitations, and the Need to Keep Talking Back

Feminist and queer work must always be intentional, and as editors, we aimed to be intentional in our work. We were happy to receive 28 proposals from a range of scholars ready to talk back, but, unfortunately, we could not accept every contribution. While reviewing submissions, we not only considered which pieces would demonstrate unique and actionable analysis alongside intersectional feminist and queer theorizing but considered the importance of uplifting the voices of early-career scholars and graduate students. After selecting contributors, we offered brief feedback and encouraged the submission of full essay drafts. Upon receiving those drafts, we initiated an anonymous peer review among the experts included in the cluster. Gavin had previously participated in a similar peer review as a contributor to a special issue[2] and felt that this model guaranteed a few important things: collaboration across the cluster, deeper engagement of authors, and removed the need for external volunteer labor. Each reviewer provided feedback on two essays using a heuristic designed to make actionable the core tenets of anti-racist scholarly reviewing practices as well as *Peitho's* reviewer expectations (Cagle et al.). Once each manuscript received two thorough reviews, we synthesized reviewer feedback for authors to guide revision. Throughout the process, authors were encouraged to work with the editors to clarify feedback, ask questions, and evaluate their argument within the scope of the cluster. After receiving revised manuscripts, we worked in collaboration with Ashanka Kumari on copy editing this cluster. We cannot express enough gratitude to Ashanka for her careful and encouraging reviews of cluster essays and this introduction.

Editorial intentionality, however, does not mean that this cluster comprehensively addresses the complex issues of surveillance and the need for intersectional feminist and queer approaches. First, we, Morgan and Gavin, recognize the influence our individual positionalities have had on this process. Our editorial decisions will, inevitably, reflect our own biases and ignorances. While we do exist at the intersections of some marginalized communities and brought our embodied experiences to this editorial work, we aim to not recenter our privileged positions as white cisgender academics here. The whole goal of this collection is to call attention to and amplify the ways surveillance happens at the intersections, and, we have done our best to direct authors and ourselves towards the uncomfortable work demanded of us.

Second, there are major gaps in these conversations. Notably, we do not have entries analyzing the surveillance of Black queer and trans communities, the enhancement of surveillance and erosion of privacy facilitated by emerging AI, feminist historiographies of pre-digital surveillance, and a host of other questions both asked and unasked in the original CFP[3]. And while you are reading this after the 2024 U.S. presidential election, these articles were composed and fully edited months before. We do, however, want to emphasize that many of the systemic issues identified in this cluster are, based on campaign promises and early announcements from the Trump transition team, likely to be exacerbated beginning in 2025. This, we believe, further demonstrates the need for talking back and taking coalitional and intersectional action.

2   Shout out to the editorial team of the "Toward a Digital Life" special issue of Communication Design Quarterly (vol 12, no. 2), Danielle Mollie Stambler, Saveena Chakrika Veeramoothoo, and Katlynne Davis.

3   Read the original CFP here: tinyurl.com/RhetSurveillanceCluster

Finally, another noticeable gap is a full discussion of ongoing and genocidal surveillance in Palestine, though we have worked to call attention through this introduction. We originally accepted an essay focusing on these issues; however, the author had to withdraw from the collection because of the increasing violence against Palestinians and the subsequent toll that studying the ongoing situation took on their health. Scholarship is an embodied practice, and if we are going to demand intersectional feminist and queer scholarly frameworks and engage in anti-racist editorial practices, we need to be transparent about the potential harms of doing this work and honor the needs of our colleagues.

To expand these conversations, and considering our growing surveillance society, we believe intersectional feminist and queer rhetorical frameworks are essential in identifying and challenging the contours of the theoretical, historical, and embodied entanglements of surveillance and rhetoric. We hope you find this cluster conversation challenging, actionable, and maybe even enjoyable, and join the uncomfortable but important rhetorical work of talking back.

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State and Government Surveillance

Digital Surveillance and Control of Chinese Feminists and a Transnational Response

Chen Chen

Abstract: Using a case study of violence against Chinese feminists, this article illustrates how contemporary and historic surveillance technologies (digital and pre-digital) specifically impact transnational, non-western communities and how transnational studies support or complicate feminist insights on the rhetorical contours of surveillance. Applying the concept of deep circulation (Edwards), I chart the contemporary strategies of surveilling Chinese feminists through textual, affective, and infrastructural dimensions. These surveillance strategies use the rhetorics of "Da Zi Bao" (Big Character Posters) from China's Cultural Revolution era to label feminists as traitors to the nation, which thrive in a nationalist affective economy supported by political and technological infrastructures that use technological instrumental power to control information circulation. The article ends with a brief discussion of Chinese feminists' transnational response, disengaging from the discourse based on nationalism, and a call for action for Western audiences to examine the global impacts of Western technologies.

Introduction

On March 30, 2021, Xiao Meili[1] and some friends went to a hotpot restaurant in Chengdu, the capital city of China's Sichuan Province, to enjoy a nice dinner. But their meal was disrupted when a man at an adjacent table started smoking. He refused to put out his cigarette when Xiao Meili politely asked him to do so, especially given the restaurant's policy of no smoking and the city's ordinance on no smoking in public spaces. The man became enraged after repeatedly refusing to stop smoking and then poured some liquid from a cup on the table toward Xiao Meili and her friends. An altercation escalated. Even after the police arrived, he was still yelling profanities and claiming his freedom to smoke, interfering with the police's intervention into the incident.

This event was recorded by Xiao Meili and then posted on the popular social media platform Sina Weibo (a Twitter-like microblogging site) and became viral with the Weibo hashtag "woman trying to persuade a neighboring table to stop smoking was poured unidentified liquid." She was interviewed by local media and the trending topic on social media prompted many sympathetic responses that supported her actions and condemned the man's rude behavior. For a brief moment, the event reminded people of the harmful

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1   I use the convention for Chinese names: Last Name First Name for all Chinese names in the article.

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effects of public smoking.

This outcry against public smoking didn't last long and the gender-based attacks started by this man became part of a broader campaign against women and feminists, after some Weibo users pointed out that Xiao Meili is a "feminist," a term carrying strong negative connotations on the platform, and then accused her of being a supporter of Hong Kong independence.

All of a sudden, she and her fellow supporters (including me) were called "nation's traitors," influenced by or sellouts to "foreign forces." It seemed that by simply being women or feminists, Xiao Meili and her supporters were deemed as against the national government and anti-patriotic. Despite the fact that the smoker apologized to her two days after the event at the request of the police and compensated her with 1000 yuan, Weibo deleted Xiao Meili's account while many of the trolls who wrongfully accused her are still around (Wee).

Chinese feminists have been the subject of a "surveillance assemblage" (Haggerty and Ericson) both in China and globally, especially since the development of transnational feminist activism around #MeToo (Chen and Wang). While feminist thoughts and activism have always existed in China, #MeToo brought to China a digital feminist awakening that both broadened its reach and complicated how people might understand feminism, particularly in digital spaces where backlashes against feminists and women in general increased significantly (Huang). Popularized ideas of feminism emphasizing women's economic independence challenged hegemonic norms (Wu and Dong) while public efforts for combatting sexual violence propelled by the #MeToo movement were seen as "potential threats to China's political stability" (Han 739). In particular, one such strategy is "identifying feminists as betraying the nation" (Huang 8). Under the historical and political context wherein the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) has been increasingly promoting nationalist values through internal Party communication such as Document 9 (ChinaFile), facilitated by the intensified and complicated information control and censorship system, a surveillance assemblage emerges that expands to transnational spaces directly targeting Chinese feminists and feminist activists.

While Western audiences may be generally familiar with the control of internet discourse in China through the term "The Great Firewall" (a metaphorical term to describe Chinese government's media censorship and information control blocking some Western sites such as Google, Facebook, etc.), they may be less familiar with how the historic strategies of surveillance from the Cultural Revolution period are translated into contemporary manifestations in interacting with digital technologies.

In this article, I illustrate the contemporary surveillance assemblage of Chinese feminists by applying the concept of "deep circulation ecology" developed by Dustin Edwards. I analyze how these means of surveillance interpolate Chinese feminists as traitors, thus delegitimizing feminism and feminists (Charland). According to the dominant ideology of the CCP, there's only one right way of advocating for women's rights—through state-sanctioned means and avenues, without interrogating how these systems are designed

to see women as "docile" patriotic bodies. Feminist surveillance studies scholars Rachel E. Dubrofsky and Shoshana A. Magnet have argued that surveillance practices "remake the body" (9) and thus create different ways of seeing or not seeing women. In the context of this case study in China, feminists are constructed as colluding with western forces, distinguished from mainstream women's rights advocacy. While legislative and policy changes for gender equality are crucial (Chen), this rhetorical interpellation of feminists enacted through surveillance diminishes the agency of feminist activists for self-definition and self-positioning and narrows the general public's understanding of "feminism."

Deep Circulation and Surveillance Assemblage

Drawing from Deleuze and Guattari's theorization of assemblage that fixes a free-flowing phenomena temporarily and spatially driven by desire, Kevin D. Haggerty and Richard V. Ericson demonstrate how "a range of desires now energize and serve to coalesce the surveillant assemblage, including the desires for control, governance, security, profit and entertainment" (609). In this vein, rather than focusing on discrete surveillance technologies, an assemblage approach allows us to pay attention to how a variety of agents (e.g. technologies, systems, government institutions, tech companies) can coalesce through connections facilitated by technological advancement and policy development. In turn, the monitored body becomes reassembled into one where the flesh/information flows of the human body can be standardized.

Edwards defines deep circulation as encompassing three dimensions: textual, affective, and infra-structural. Textual circulation "describes how composed texts across genres and media enter networks of broader circulation once they are distributed in particular moments and venues" (Edwards 80). This dimension considers how text, or any kind of symbolic artifacts, may contribute values to the public arena and communities. Edwards defines affective circulation as "a dimensionality of circulation that can be easily felt but difficult to render into representation" (77). His understanding of affect aligns with what Sara Ahmed calls "movement between signs or objects" (Ahmed 45). The more signs and bodies circulate, the more intensive the affect becomes. Thus, Edwards argues that "as having generative force, provoking, inciting, overwhelming, or suspending," affective spaces "can mobilize habits, trajectories, and practices" (80). Finally, and perhaps most importantly in this case here, is the infrastructural dimension of circulation. Edwards emphasizes that infrastructures of circulation include the "complex technical-material assemblages involved in carrying, ordering, and filtering flows of information" (81). As relevant to this article, Edwards argues that "infrastructures of circulation are key for advanced surveillance today" (81). The infrastructure of a platform like Weibo is shaped by technical, material and ideological forces as it is subject to the erratic information control systems of the Chinese government.

In the next section, I map out the deep circulation dimensions of the attacks on Xiao Meili and her supporters. Specifically, I chart the deep circulation ecology (Edwards) enacted by this surveillance assemblage, grounded in a Foucauldian conceptualization of "discipline" that includes both contemporary techno-logical instruments/strategies (Green et al.; Roberts) and the historic practice of Da Zi Bao "大字报" (also

known as "big character poster," a practice from the Chinese Cultural Revolution of detailing an individual's 'sins' against the Communist Party) as a form of surveillance. This discursive practice thrives in an affective economy driven by nationalist and patriotic desires and supported by a complex and unpredictable infrastructure backed by both governmental power and the tech industry in China.

Digital surveillance and control of Chinese feminists

Discursive Dimension

One of Xiao Meili's attackers is a Key Opinion Leader (KOL) on Weibo @ZiWuXiaShi. With a large following, his posts labeling Xiao and her supporters as "anti-regime" garnered much attention. Here, I examine how, in nine serialized, long posts detailing the history and background of Chinese feminist activists, he employed rhetorical strategies akin to the Da Zi Bao or "big character posts" from the era of Cultural Revolution, such as: using syllogistic reasoning, expressions of emotion, aggression and profanity, and constructing conspiracy theories about feminist activists.

Da Zi Bao, or "big character posters" or "wall posters" is a communication genre popularized in China during the Cultural Revolution as a method of mass mobilization where people could express their opinions in interpersonal political battles (Li). They were usually "three feet wide by eight feet high and were printed in stylized calligraphy" (Lu 73). During the Cultural Revolution, these wall posters were seen everywhere in China and often served the rhetorical purposes of condemning anyone deemed "class enemies" or opponents of Maoist ideology. In some ways, it can be seen as akin to the contemporary digital cancel culture discourse where the author of the text might perceive the action as noble, but the rhetoric employed can be actually less than sound.

According to Lu, the rhetorical features of the wall posters include using syllogistic reasoning, expressions of emotion, aggression, profanity, and using metaphors to present moral/ethical appeals aligned with Chairman Mao's ideologies and to construct conspiracy theories about people who were deemed enemies. Such rhetoric permeated both public and private spaces in China, creating a culture of fear and hatred fertilized by lateral surveillance practices where people would write Da Zi Bao condemning their co-workers, neighbors, even parents. One of the stylistic features of Da Zi Bao is to find and expose new evidence or ulterior motives to prove political crimes already presented as a foregone conclusion, often by digging into someone's family history. For example, one could be deemed a class enemy if their ancestors were landlords.

In contemporary China, while some may see Da Zi Bao in the forms of user-generated internet content (Li), it's important not to forget the rhetorical functions of shaming associated with this genre (Canalli). I see Da Zi Bao in other communication genres such as "anonymous letters" or internet trolling. Anonymous letters are often used by ordinary citizens to share with the government wrongdoings of government officials or civil servants (Lu). These days, such letters can take the form of digital messaging or online vid-

eos where people sometimes give up anonymity to show the authenticity of their information. However, digital trolls don't always reveal their true identities but rather adopt rhetorical strategies similar to those of Da Zi Bao. As such, contemporary digital versions of Da Zi Bao find affiliations with "cancel culture." Rodrigo L. Canalli argues that both share common rhetorical features, such as "absolute moral certainty, promotion of dogmatic and polarized thinking, mythmaking, conspiracy theories, aggressive language and radicalism" (97). As a result, this type of rhetoric purports to make an evidence-based argument while actually supporting foregone conclusions already predetermined by the author's values.

A prominent example of syllogistic reasoning in ZiWuXiaShi's posts is done through framing feminist activists as nation's traitors because they have been affiliated with NGOs and Western organizations. Similar to how Da Zi Bao writers would dig into someone's family history during the Cultural Revolution, ZiWuXiaShi digs through their history of feminist activism. For example, he uses serialized posts to reveal the history of Xiao Meili's "associates," such as Lü Pin, a prominent Chinese feminist activist now in exile in the United States (U.S.). He reveals Lü's history of feminist activism work, such as founding Feminist Voices, creating accounts on Facebook to call for justice for "Feminist Five" (the five Chinese feminists who were arrested in 2015 and later released under international pressure), participating in various feminist activist events such as "Occupy Male Bathrooms." Notably different from the Da Zi Bao style, however, is that when listing such history, ZiWuXiaShi uses not only passionate and aggressive language but also words that indicate logical reasoning and careful investigation, such as "据知情人透露" (according to insiders) or "另据一个未经证实的消息源称" (according to another unverified information source). Such rhetorical gestures signal the investigator's cautious attitude, thus suggesting his allegations were well-founded.

At the same time, he also uses different styles of language to highlight the supposedly nefarious nature of feminist activism, effectively drawing a foregone conclusion that these feminists' ultimate motive is to overthrow the Chinese government, including emotional language, internet jargon, and military and espionage terms, often in an exaggerated manner. Throughout his posts, he regularly refers to feminist activists associated with Xiao Meili, such as "the Feminist Five" and feminist scholar Leta Hong Fincher, as "同伙 tong huo" (accomplice) and "女拳 nü quan" (feminist fist, a pejorative term to refer to feminists). To describe their connections, he would refer to Lü Pin as Xiao's "上线 shang xian" (a term used to describe an upper-level spy in an espionage system) in their "组织 zu zhi" (organization but used in a pejorative way as if describing a crime organization). "Feminist fists" in Chinese (nü quan) sound exactly the same as "feminism" and have been used consistently as a term online to attack feminists by people who believe feminism is about pitting women against men and who dismiss its legitimacy due to its western origin. Using this term here along with other political and criminal terms constructs a discourse of violence against feminists and delegitimates feminist ideas. Finally, I'll note that, just as multiple copies of Da Zi Bao might be posted about the same person, here ZiWuXiaShi also posted his diatribe in a serialized manner, documenting each post with a number to further solidify the legitimacy of his posts, making it appear as if there were a lot of evidence against feminists.

Affective Dimension

Such discursive acts can only thrive in an affective economy that promotes nationalist values and sees Western forces as enemies. According to Jude Blanchette, Xi's attempt to consolidate the narrative about the Party's history and position from Mao Zedong (the founding of China) to Deng Xiaoping (Reform and Open era) in part aligns with the neo-Maoist desire to maintain China's socialist ideological stance. Going even further, Xi reinforces the national and cultural pride of China, claiming that the Chinese should "return to our beginning" and that they don't need Western support or foreign knowledge. What's important to understand here is that decisions made by the CCP, and its propaganda and information control offices are ultimately influenced by two goals: to maintain the legitimacy of the party and to keep the society stabilized, characteristic of the surveillance state of a dictatorship (Pei).

Further, "Document 9," which was issued during the Third Plenum of the Eighteenth Party Congress of the Chinese Communist Party in 2013 as a communiqué among party leaders, reveals the CCP's concern over Western infiltration through media and culture, which they see as attempting to undermine China's socialist ideological and political foundation (ChinaFile). With this broader ideological context, we can assume the CCP information control system would tolerate and perhaps even welcome the anti-feminist rhetorics of KOLs like ZiWuXiaShi as long as it's done under the argument to support the unity of the country and the Chinese government, and as long as it doesn't incite social instability. As long as they frame feminists as a sinister organized group whose aim is to challenge social stability through collusion with Western forces, it's difficult not to sow seeds of doubt in the internet sphere. For a social media platform like Weibo, which makes its censorship decisions largely through guessing what the government wants, it makes sense that it would promote accounts such as ZiWuXiaShi due to their ideological stance. Ironically, it's also interesting to note that ZiWuXiaShi's images in this series of posts often have signs of being altered in order to dodge censorship. It's hard to say whether that was done as a show (given that Weibo would probably not censor these posts) or if it's simply a sign of the erratic and unpredictable censorship system. For example, he reposted the photo of Xiao holding a sign during 2014 as evidence that she supports Hong Kong independence, with a red cross over the photo to dodge censorship, further supporting his argument that the photo itself was problematic.

This rhetoric is an example of what scholars of affective politics Megan Boler and Elizabeth Davis call "the affective weaponization of information" through "the exploitation, manipulation, and surveillance of emotions" (2). On Weibo, love of the home country is above all other emotions. But the love here is insidious. I understand this national love in Sara Ahmed's sense as "bound up with how bodies inhabit the nation in relation to an ideal" (133). This love must also be understood as in relation to grief, where the love stems from a desire for what the nation should be: fully united not only in government structure but also in ideology, where Hong Kong and Taiwan are all part of China, the father nation's children. Charlie Yi Zhang theorizes love in contemporary dominant Chinese social and political discourse by calling the political affective construction of the neoliberal China as "Loveland." Zhang argues that the Loveland is constructed

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with classed and gendered biopolitics such that the neoliberal love for the motherland/fatherland is manifested or promulgated with the construction of gendered identity that puts women in a double bind; they are required to be modern, professional, successful career women while still upholding the traditional role as caretakers and homemakers. At the same time, as Zhang's analysis of the PRC's Sixtieth Anniversary Ceremony shows where female performers represented docile citizens grateful for the sovereign power of the father nation, gender becomes a means to reconnect the government with its people, erasing the social inequities caused by neoliberalism. Therefore, a woman's role has always been to uphold the patriarchal nation-state structure where they are interpellated to not only be loyal citizens, but also objectified as nationalist love is expressed. It is this "dreadful desire," as Zhang calls it, that enhances the appeals of nationalist trolls like ZiWuXiaShi and his digital Da Zi Bao. Working in tandem with technological infrastructures and policies, feminist bodies are effectively surveilled for their rebellion against a nation they should "love."

Infrastructural dimension

It's difficult to study China's censorship strategies systematically, but a number of scholars and organizations have attempted (Green et al.; Pei; Roberts). Earlier discussion of the affective dimension of deep circulation has suggested why ZiWuXiaShi's damning posts would be popular on Weibo and thus not censored. In this section, I use the infrastructural dimension to show why such posts might not be censored, while the Weibo accounts of feminists such as Xiao Meili and her supporter Liang Xiaomen were deleted by the company.

From a technical and material perspective, Chinese social media platforms employ erratic information censorship and control strategies in order to align with the central government's policies and ideological and political preferences (Green et al.). Margaret Roberts has theorized this censorship system as "porous," including three types of strategies: fear, friction, and flooding (1). This porous system is more complex than simply deleting posts and accounts. Rather, direct-deleting content is a tactic to instill fear in users, aimed to create Foucauldian disciplined bodies, where people begin to second-guess what makes something they said or did censorable, possibly leading to self-censoring. On the other hand, methods of friction and flooding aim to direct public attention away from undesirable content by making it difficult to access it (friction) or by flooding the internet with more desirable, i.e., officially-authorized content. Ultimately, this system is aimed to control: controlling who has the power to say, "the truth" and what's considered as truth.

Infrastructurally speaking, the technical, material, and ideological forces underpinning this erratic control are shaped by an assemblage of China's recent history of techno-development and the resulting instrumental power (Lei). Ya-Wen Lei defines "instrumental power" as power "based on technology over people in postindustrial society" (3), which reflects the transitions from a "labor-intensive, explore-oriented manufacturing to 'techno-state capitalism'" (22). While western surveillance scholar Shoshana Zuboff has argued for the rise of instrumentarian power deriving from the commodification of people's behavioral data by companies such as Google and Amazon, driven by the need for profits and innovation, the situation in

China is one where "the proliferation of technical and legal instruments established by the state and large tech companies [regulate] work and life, and enhance legibility, valuation, efficiency, and behavior modification" (Lei 22). What this means is that Chinese people are subject to the instrumental power from both the nation-state and the tech industry, the latter of which is also subject to the control and regulation of the former. More broadly, this instrumental power is facilitated by the broader "multilayered surveillance system" that involves far-reaching organization structures ranging from central government apparatuses such as The Ministry of State Security to the "institutions and organizations directly controlled by the party-state, such as neighborhood committees, state-owned enterprises, government bureaucracies, state-affiliated social organizations (such as official labor unions and religious groups), and universities" (Pei 240).

From this perspective, we can understand a bit more why the information censorship and control strategies might appear so erratic and difficult to study. Because the government intentionally shifts and recalibrates its strategies depending on the situation, tech companies must constantly guess and even over-comply just to stay safe. This constant adjustment is why posts commemorating the COVID-19 whistleblower Dr. Li Wenliang were initially deleted en masse while later he was enshrined as a martyr by the government (Green et al.; Zhang Chenchen). One can imagine that when Weibo sees ZiWuXiaShi's Da Zi Bao, it would probably rather "play safe" than stand on the side of "nü quan" (feminist fists, a pejorative term for feminists).

Conclusion

I end with a brief discussion of how a transnational feminist perspective can be a productive response to this deep circulation ecology of surveillance. In Lü Pin's "white paper" commenting on the nationalistic attacks on Xiao Meili and her supporters, she highlights the localized nature of China's feminist movement, making visible how the transnational, intersectional feminist rhetorical praxis of the Chinese diasporic community challenged the systemic oppressive forces of nation-states, patriarchy, geopolitical global tensions, and power imbalances (Texler Segal and Chow). On research about online aggression, Reyman and Sparby call for "an ethic of responsibility" that requires "more engagement"; designing for protection against digital harassment rather than after-the-fact cleanup"; and "for accountability and tactical response rather than civility within digital contexts" (7). In the context of violence against Chinese feminists, to enact systemic and design change can be difficult, faced with the political challenges. Thus, in response to this nationalist attack on feminism, Chinese transnational feminists employed a rhetoric of disengagement and a tactical way of flooding digital spaces in order to reframe issues and to advance their arguments for feminist activism in China.

In the context of increasing tensions between the U.S. and China, labeling feminists as nation's traitors becomes a syllogistic argument that cannot be engaged. It doesn't matter whether feminists love China or not; it doesn't matter whether trolls like ZiWuXiaShi love China or not. These attacks are simply a force of violence against feminists that takes advantage of this geopolitical tension and the Chinese state's patriar-

chal political ideology and its resulting affective economy. The goals of this violence, as Lü illustrates, are to fight the "gender war" that trolls perceive to have been started by feminists and to frame advocacy for women's rights and equality as men hating. I view what Lü does here as a rhetoric of disengagement. As an activist in exile, her writing like this can only be accessed outside the Great Firewall on sites such as China Digital Times, a space dedicated to document censored voices and experiences in China.

This rhetoric of disengagement doesn't mean that Chinese feminists would either stop or continue posting on Chinese social media such as Weibo, as Lü points out that her voices will always be heard by the Chinese feminist (diasporic) community no matter where she is and whether her Chinese social media accounts are deleted or not. Rather, this disengagement refers to disengaging from the nationalistic perspective toward feminism. Faced with various censorship strategies, they respond with similar tactics to flood the platforms with their messages even if they might be deleted later. In Xiao's case, I joined many Chinese feminists inside and outside China in a Weibo campaign with the hashtags #RefuseSecondhandSmoke; #RejectGenderViolenceInPublicSpace; #IStandWithXiaoMeili. We posted pictures of ourselves wearing masks with a "no smoke" sign drawn on it. In doing so, we tried to reorient the "controversy" back to the issue at hand, attempting to illustrate how secondhand smoking in public was tied with gender violence. These tactics aimed to redress the deep circulation of violence against feminists in all three dimensions. Discursively and affectively, they reframed the discussion away from nationalism-based attacks to issues of gender violence; infrastructurally, they helped spread the messaging even while faced with harsh censorship.

Regardless of how I feel about Xiao Meili personally or politically, I refuse to allow internet trolls to frame the issue in such a way and I refuse to acknowledge the validity of such arguments made by ZiWuXiaShi and the like. Chinese women and feminists are also citizens of China, and their fight for women's rights and discursive space is not waged as a means to "overthrow" the government but to challenge an oppressive affective economy and political and information infrastructure that stymies feminist voices advocating for justice. In my post supporting Xiao, one Weibo user commented that they weren't surprised to see me supporting a "nation's traitor" because my location data reveals I'm in the U.S. I did not respond to the comment, disengaging from an argument I would not win.

Rather, I document this experience through scholarship, as a feminist rhetorical response to this violence and the dimensions of its deep circulation. To my (predominantly) Western audience, I would also urge you to not engage in nationalist discourse such as the rampant anti-China sentiments in the U.S., nor to paint Chinese dissidents/feminists as all enemies of the PRC. Instead, I urge you to examine the geopolitical tensions that contextualize the lives of Chinese diasporic communities, and more importantly, interrogate the technological instrumental power facilitated by global technology companies and their profit-driven policies and algorithms. As I finish this manuscript, an X (formerly Twitter) account[2] documenting in Chinese stories and voices of dissent from China has released a post warning his followers that Chinese government agents have been manually combing through his followers' list and visiting those located in China. I couldn't help

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2   I'm deliberately not mentioning his name to avoid unwanted attention.

but ask, what's the role that X is playing here? How has the governance of the platform failed these users? And how can a platform better protect such users?

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"A Gesture of Defiance" From the Body: Interlocking Consent and The Privacy Aesthetic at the U.S. Southern Border

Charles Woods

Abstract: This essay talks back against using biometrics for bodily control by articulating an intersectional paradigm called "Interlocking Consent" that explains the interlocking nature of various Terms of Service (ToS) policies. Through an analysis of biometrics policies and practices used by the Department of Homeland Security Office of Biometric Identity Management, it amplifies how geo-spatial elements and multiple data usages support privacy erosion and unethical surveillance in the U.S. Southern Border. It posits that understanding how biometrics perpetuate oppression from an intersectional feminist perspective is a critical element of "The Privacy Aesthetic." It defines "The Privacy Aesthetic" as attuning to the oblique ubiquity of rhetorics of privacy and surveillance; recognizing the influence of ToS documents; understanding the intersection of "the body" and "the digital" as essential for new surveillance technologies; and, considering of the importance of space regarding data collection.

This essay was written within the imagined but instituted geographic borders of the state of Texas where I live with my wife and daughter, and where oppressive legislation restricts their bodily autonomy. It is a "gesture of defiance that heals, that makes new life and new growth possible" (hooks 9).

Introduction

The immigrants and asylum seekers who arrive at the United States (U.S.) Southern Border in Texas are not "suspected terrorists, criminals, and immigration violators," as explained by the Office of Biometric Identity Management (OBIM) on the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) website, nor are they committing *migrant crime*, a phrase used by Donald Trump during a 2024 Presidential debate. They are humans seeking the *new life* and *new growth* America has purported to offer, constantly and systematically, since her founding. Unfortunately, privacy erosion abetted by unethical policing via biometrics in this polarizing place shudders those futures and positions *all* immigrants as criminals that must be tracked. "Perhaps we may say," recalling Michel Foucault, "that some of the ideological conflicts that drive today's polemics are enacted between devoted descendants of time and the fierce inhabitants of space" (175).

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Contrast the assumed criminality of migrants at the U.S. Southern Border with the recent arrest of Joseph James D'Angelo, the notorious Golden State Killer. Like many high-profile arrests and situations involving police intervention, the capture of the Golden State Killer garnered significant media attention both domestically and abroad not only because numerous decades-long cold cases were solved but also because police revealed they repurposed direct-to-consumer genetics (DTC-genetics) as a rhetorical surveillance technology to identify the serial offender. DTC-genetics are a biometric technology (biometrics) marketed to consumers who want to learn more about their genetic make-up, medical information, or family history without the direct involvement of a licensed healthcare professional. Authorities in California used the DTC-genetics website GEDmatch.com (GEDmatch) to perform genetic testing in the Golden State Killer case. DTC-genetics, here, doubles as a rhetorical surveillance tool within the larger global digital surveillance infrastructure, one supported by and that supports systemic injustices against multiply marginalized bodies and is abetted by unethical surveillance occurring as part of the white supremacist American law enforcement apparatus. The Golden State Killer is the most prolific offender in California state history, and he was a police officer. He is a US citizen, not an immigrant who is always-already assumed to be a criminal. His genetic profile allowed him to avoid capture for decades within our surveillance society; that is, being a cisgender heterosexual white man was a benefit, exempting him from systematic daily surveillance.

Since 2018, DTC-genetics companies like GEDmatch, 23andMe.com (23andMe), and Parabon Laboratories (Parabon Labs) have assisted police with solving cold cases while also empowering racial profiling and contributing to the long history of privacy erosion of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) in the U.S. In a wide-ranging critique that arrived as privacy erosion caused by the increasing popularity of DTC-genetics was increasing in America, Black feminist Simone Browne demonstrates how biometrics have always been a tool for surveilling Blackness, which she defines as "identity and culture, history and present, signifier and signified, but never fixed," from slavery to today, and are thus a cornerstone of the American law enforcement and criminal justice systems (8). This unethical surveillance strategy has long-lasting, far-reaching social, economic, and political implications which need to be analyzed because genetics as a rhetorical surveillance tool perpetuates discriminatory policing strategies.

State and federal laws both govern and exist in concert with the Terms of Service (ToS) documents governing user interactions and data collection for genetics companies. ToS documents include privacy policies, user agreements, and other policy statements outlining the relationship between a user and a technology, product, or service. Estee Beck explains that privacy policies are written for the express purpose of protecting a company or website from legal damages. In recent years DTC-genetics companies integrated enhanced measures detailing their values regarding data privacy and digital surveillance and their products and services, including updating their ToS documents to offer opt-out protocols and attend to the disparities in legal coverage for users based on their geographic location (geolocation). However, due to the expanded use of biometrics, we must consider how some technologies are designed and repurposed to be beneficial for political, cultural, technological, and educational institutions in the new surveillance (Marx), like in the Golden State Killer case. And perhaps there is no better place to study how biometrics perpetuate

systemic oppression and bodily control than at the border(lands)—an imagined geographical and culturally liminal space.[1]

Biometrics are an asset for the global surveillance infrastructure that privileges cisgender heterosexual white able-bodied men. Technofeminist intervention into biometrics is needed because the data that fuels them comes, quite literally, from the body and (re)conceptualizations of the body remain a primary concern of feminist research. As Ann Shivers-McNair, Laura Gonzalez, and Tetyana Zhyvotoyska explain, we must "embrace and enact the interconnectedness of technological practices and gender, race, class, and sexuality, as well as their co-constitution and shaping of each other" (46). Researchers in rhetoric and composition, therefore, need feminist methodologies that amplify intersectionality and that interrogate the *collisions* of asymmetrical power stemming from inequity to study and dismantle this late capitalist phenomenon (Crenshaw).

In this essay, I work toward that goal by building on scholarship defining and extending *digital rhetorical privacy* to *talk back* against unethical surveillance caused by using biometrics for bodily control. I triangulate *digital rhetorical privacy* with Simone Browne's *racializing surveillance* and Morgan C. Banville's *interlocking surveillance* to demonstrate *interlocking consent* as an intersectional paradigm (Collins; Collins and Bilge). Interlocking consent explains the interlocking nature of various ToS policies and amplifies the geo-spatial elements of data privacy erosion and unethical digital surveillance via analysis of the rhetorical surveillance practices used at the U.S. Southern Border. I posit that understanding how biometrics—wherein the body is digitized and datafied—perpetuate oppression from an intersectional technofeminist perspective is a critical rhetorical attunement emphasizing how technologies fueled by the intersection of "the body" and "the digital" contribute to "The Privacy Aesthetic." Finally, I offer necessary paths forward that include negotiating rhetoric's relationship to privacy and surveillance and amplifying the geolocation of data collection practices.

Digital Rhetorical Privacy, Racialized Surveillance, and Interlocking Surveillance

Defining privacy is very difficult because people understand what privacy is but have different ideas about what constitutes it. Estee Beck and Les Hutchinson Campos write that "one of the problems with defining privacy––especially within legal reform––is the utter disharmony in views about the many distinctions of discretion due to varying subject positions and life experiences" (6–7). Understanding privacy erosion amid unethical surveillance across "varying subject positions and life experiences" propels a theory of digital rhetorical privacy, which is a "state of being when a user is confident their digital data is free from unauthorized observances by nefarious computer technologies and other users" (Woods 5). Here, nefarious means looking at the data collected and how it is used. Digital rhetorical privacy accounts for the cultural aspects of the privacy-surveillance continuum to underscore how unethical surveillance supports oppressive social, political,

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1   Gloria Anzaldúa (1987) conceptualization of La Frontera and the body influences how I understand the relationship between biometric technologies and imagined borders.

and economic infrastructures. In this way, such a theory responds to what Patricia Hill Collins describes as the matrix of oppression (or matrix of domination), an understanding of how different characteristics such as race, gender, and socioeconomic status exist simultaneously and why power is distributed asymmetrically throughout society.

The theory of digital rhetorical privacy, as an analytic, originally proposed six inherently intertwined analytic elements to guide the analysis of ToS documents, including (1) temporality, (2) transparency, (3) language, (4) data usage, (5) digital surveillance, and (6) meaningful access (Woods). An incomplete but pliable theory initially, rhetoric, composition, and technical communication scholars have extended digital rhetorical privacy by arguing for innovative pedagogical applications centering remediations of privacy policies (Woods and Wilson), advocating for critical digital literacies for patients using medical wearables (Woods and Wason), and conceptualizing privacy literacy as essential to digital life by focusing on the design of ToS documents (Woods and Johnson).

Here, I argue, digital rhetorical privacy must emphasize its connections to understandings of racializing surveillance. Simone Browne, studying how Blackness is surveilled across space and time, introduces the concept of racializing surveillance as "a technology of social control where surveillance practices, policies, and performances concern the production of norms pertaining to race and exercise 'a power to define what is in and out of place'" (Browne 16; Fiske, quoted in Browne).[2] Placing racializing surveillance in concert with a theory like digital rhetorical privacy re-situates emphasis toward understanding how elements like language and data usage are positioned in ToS documents to perpetuate racism. What jargon and/or legalese regarding geolocation *blurs* values about data privacy and digital surveillance? How do we contend with the *racialization* of data collection outlined in ToS documents? What does it mean to imagine equitable futures when "white adults are more likely than Hispanic and black adults to think it's acceptable for law enforcement to use information from cell phone towers to track people's locations" (McClain et al.)? Further, merging racialized surveillance with digital rhetorical privacy propels robust interrogations of how design and meaningful access keep certain bodies out of places and spaces (Selfe and Selfe; Banks; Woods and Wilson). Importantly, these conversations must be situated within a wider breadth of concerns about consent and biometrics.

Morgan C. Banville introduces interlocking surveillance as a theoretical framework in her study of healthcare professionals' perceptions of consent in medical settings that use biometrics. Interlocking surveillance "combines elements of the new surveillance and intersectionality to develop a framework that addresses sites of surveillance and their levels of awareness, advocacy, and transparency of normalized surveillant practices" (Banville 90). Interlocking surveillance exponentially and categorically enhances a theory like digital rhetorical privacy because it offers a way to understand how ToS documents perpetuate systemic oppression. While Banville develops interlocking surveillance by analyzing intersectional approaches to understanding

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2   *Racializing surveillance* is one of two concepts Browne posits along with Dark Sousveillance, which is "a way to situate the tactics employed to render oneself out of sight, and strategies used in the flight to freedom from slavery as necessarily ones of undersight (21). My focus is on racializing surveillance for this essay.

surveillance in healthcare, I leverage interlocking surveillance to examine more closely the racialized implications of ToS and offer interlocking consent to extend Banville's framework. Ultimately, understanding the interlocking and overlapping nature of the digital rhetorical privacy framework via interlocking surveillance illuminates the interlocking nature of consent. In the following section, I merge racialized surveillance, interlocking surveillance, and digital rhetorical privacy to introduce the concept of interlocking consent through analysis of rhetorical surveillance practices and policies used by the OBIM at the U.S. Southern Border.

Interlocking Consent at the U.S. Southern Border

Combining racialized surveillance and interlocking surveillance with digital rhetorical privacy illuminates the holistic, justice- and equity-oriented efforts underlying the theory. It also foregrounds the importance of understanding what I describe as interlocking consent, a critical intersectional paradigm and additional analytical element for the *digital rhetorical privacy* framework. Interlocking consent demonstrates how consenting to one ToS interlocks with other ToS. As a theory, it values intersectionality and racialized surveillance and seeks to disrupt and dismantle the "practices, policies, and performances" concerning consent that led to racial oppression (Browne 8). Furthermore, interlocking consent values feminist and queer conceptualizations of consent located in the body (Chávez), in sexual experience (Bauer), and in the right to consent (Donovan, Butterby, and Barnes), and, as an analytic element, interlocking consent coalesces with Sasha Costanza-Chock's principles for design justice and provide a path to work against surveilling gender (non)conformity, a hallmark of transgender politics (Beauchamp), abetted via ToS. Importantly, interlocking consent pushes us toward not only policies but also practices for obtaining consent and transmitting data–– sometimes across imagined borders where laws governing consent differ.

Critically, a single genetic sample is used in different ways in the Immigration Detention Centers at the U.S. Southern Border, which illuminates the multipurpose nature of data usage and the importance of understanding interlocking consent. Genetic samples are sent to the federal Combined DNA Index System (CODIS) *and* used for rapid testing to determine familial connections. The DHS is a critical component of the larger American law enforcement apparatus, and the interlocking ToS documents and policies, laws, and practices governing the use of facial recognition software, global positioning systems (GPS), aerial drones, genetics, and other biometrics used for bodily control at the U.S. Southern Border necessitate intersectional technofeminist intervention. DHS positions biometrics as helpful: "Biometrics collected by DHS and linked to specific biographic information enable a person's identity to be established and then verified" (DHS). DHS highlights the ability to identify "suspected terrorists, criminals, and immigration violators" using biometrics to ensure that [a] document belongs to the person presenting it" (DHS). Interlocking consent offers us a way to understand these policies and practices as oppressive at this critical rhetorical surveillance site (Lyon). When we consider the implications for data privacy and digital surveillance at the U.S. Southern Border, we must ask: How do immigrants coming to the U.S. Southern Border consider the implications of their interlocking consent when they submit their genetic sample in hopes of entering the U.S.? Do you think you would care about your interlocking consent in that spacetime?

Examining interlocking consent related to genetic technologies at the U.S. Southern Border amplifies previous arguments about the constellation of policies users must navigate, often via hyperlink, to understand how data collected might be used (Woods and Wilson). It illuminates the complex, multipurpose use of digital data collection and the importance of understanding how consent to data collection via a product or service––or in the case of immigrants, a requirement for border crossing––can (and does) lead to its use in other contexts. For example, the OBIM "Biometrics" webpage on the DHS website prompts users to learn more about topics like "Exchanging Biometric Data" and "Privacy Information" in their navigation panel. Including these two webpages denotes to users that biometric data collected at the Southern Border will be exchanged among various stakeholders and third parties. Biometric data potentially shared includes Unique Person Identifiers, photographs and fingerprint information, and the different organizations which might have access to this data via the Automated Biometric Identification System (IDENT) includes, but is not limited to, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Next Generation Identification (NGI) System, the Department of Defense (DoD) Automated Biometric Identification System (ABIS) and the international community via the Secure Real-Time Platform (SRTP). This necessitates the development of interlocking consent.

The webpage for "Privacy Information" includes contact information and Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) information alongside a "Privacy Mission Statement" that reads:

> The mission of the OBIM Privacy Office is to uphold the privacy of people while protecting our national borders. We do this by adhering to the letter and spirit of U.S. privacy laws, complying with fair information practices (notice, choice, access, security and redress), by treating people and their personal information with respect and by ensuring a high standard of privacy protection.

It is difficult to define privacy in the United States, even with foundational laws and especially amid evolving data privacy legislation. Further, the politically polarized state of the republic—evidenced by Donald Trump's *migrant crime* comment—defies the notion that Americans maintain a comprehensive spirit regarding privacy laws in the country. How can the DHS purport a high standard of privacy protection if data is shared among various governmental organizations and third parties without consent, let alone the fact that DHS cannot preserve immigrant families by keeping family members together throughout the immigration process? Finally, and importantly, necessitating users to comprehend "Privacy Information" by giving the topic its own navigable webpage and developing a Privacy Mission Statement for the OBIM website amplifies what I describe as *The Privacy Aesthetic*.

The Privacy Aesthetic

A defining feature of our current surveillance capitalist moment includes people's interlocking attitudes, beliefs, and values about, and ideologies, epistemologies, and aesthetics regarding data privacy and digital surveillance as society contends with the infrastructural saturation of digital surveillance technol-

ogies (Zuboff). By infrastructural saturation, I am referring to the analog and digital technologies, policies, and practices that influence our existence by propelling a predisposition for considering data privacy and digital surveillance, and which prompt a reorientation to "the digital" as "a multisensory, embodied condition" absent "even the most innocuous of activities, such as grocery shopping, now rely on computational procedures that connect local purchases to global supply chains" (Boyle et al. 252). These include new surveillance technologies like Closed-Circuit Television (CCTV), surveillance cameras and body cameras (body cams), facial recognition software, GPS, aerial drones, and DTC-genetics, among others (Marx). Infrastructural saturation also includes ToS documents and their features, like pop-up and dialogue boxes that prompt user agreement, and the Cookie policies users must acknowledge on websites that seek traffic from users who are in the EU, which is governed by the GDPR. It is not difficult to understand how infrastructural saturation of surveillance technologies are influencing our lived experiences in real time. For example, we can analyze how *dark sousveillance* occurs during Black Lives Matter protests and how women like Brittany Watts must make critical decisions about maternal-fetal health in states that do not value maternal-fetal health (Browne). And, of course, we can look to the immensely vast and ever-expanding network of Borderveillent infrastructures implemented for bodily control at the U.S. Southern Border (Fojas). Ultimately, these contribute to a wider aesthetic for understanding privacy and surveillance: The Privacy Aesthetic.

By *aesthetic* (or aesthetics) I am referring to design features but also the capacity for design features to guide a movement towards valuing privacy in different (side)ways. Immigrants who arrive at the U.S. Southern Border are acutely aware of the importance of their geo-spatial orientation and likely aware of the hyper-politicization of their body, as well as the critical influence of privacy and surveillance on their lives. When they submit their genetic sample to CODIS and for rapid testing, a condition of their entrance into America, they are submitting a powerful and proven biopolitical biometric. But what about other emerging technologies, like collecting biometric data from drones equipped with facial recognition? What happens when biometric data is collected via drones that then traverse imaginary geographical borders for uncertain purposes with deep sociopolitical consequences? In her work, artist Dinie Besems explores privacy as a luxury and how we divulge devices into our private spaces. Designer Jesse Howard values privacy in the redesign of digital technologies. In coordination, artist Tijmen Schep outlines eight principles coalescing around security and authenticity:

1. privacy first

2. think naughty

3. collect as little data as possible

4. protect your data

5. understand identity

6. open the black box

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7. make the user a designer

8. technology is not neutral.

The Privacy Aesthetic I describe is a positive technical consideration that aligns with these eight principles to contend with privacy erosion occurring at the U.S. Southern border. The Privacy Aesthetic also includes an attunement to the oblique ubiquity of rhetorics of privacy and surveillance (Boyle); recognition of ToS documents as one of the most influential genres in the world (Woods); cognizance of the intersection of "the body" and "the digital" as essential for new surveillance technologies to maintain their influence; and consideration of the importance of geolocation regarding data collection.[3]

The triangulation of aesthetics with privacy and surveillance is not a new or novel approach to understanding culture. Michel Foucault conceives us "at a moment when the world is experiencing…something less like a great life that would develop through time than like a network that connects points and weaves its skein" (175). The Privacy Aesthetic is an orientation "now appearing on the horizon of our concerns, of our theory, of our systems" and it maintains "a history, and one cannot fail to take note of this inevitable interlocking of time and space" (Foucault 175–176). More recently, Casey Boyle argues, "As the field moves the needle of inquiry well beyond ways humans use symbolic language for communication, whole waves of thinking call us to surrender head-on modes of engagement in favor of sideways means of knowing and elliptical ways of being and moving" (68). The Privacy Aesthetic favors "sideways means of knowing" and "emphasizes elliptical ways of being and moving" that contend with infrastructural saturation and offers a renewed approach to overcoming collective apathy about privacy and surveillance, which is often initiated in ToS documents. Saturation as a catalyst for apathy necessitates a turn "to and with aesthetics as other-than-direct orientations offer other ways to transverse recent concerns over ontology and epistemology" (Boyle 69). Thus, The Privacy Aesthetic represents a move from analysis to aesthetics–from a privacy rhetoric to a privacy aesthetic.

Ultimately, The Privacy Aesthetic I describe stratifies an oblique orientation to pressing ontological concerns and seeks to deconstruct dominant and oppressive epistemologies regarding ubiquitous privacy and surveillance. By oblique, I am referring to, as Boyle does, a "function concern[ed] not only the material design of structures but also the affective possibilities capacitated by embodied experiences when practicality and something like playfulness coincide (68). Emphasizing obliqueness elucidates the asymmetrical power of data privacy and digital surveillance and presses us to consider the increasing interfacing of "the body" and "the digital" as inevitable.

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3   Blurring humanity and technology is a post-humanist concern, certainly, but fully articulating the influence of post-human technologies beyond biometrics is beyond the scope of this essay.

Necessary Paths Forward

In this essay, I explained the impetus for analyzing biometrics: the implementation of DTC-genetics into the American law enforcement apparatus, especially at the U.S. Southern Border where immigrant populations are coded not as future citizens but future criminals. Using DTC-genetics as a tool of surveillance in law enforcement produces negative implications for bodies that are already disproportionately and negatively impacted, particularly Black bodies and immigrant bodies. Additionally, I engaged with racialized surveillance and interlocking surveillance to introduce a new paradigm and analytical element into the digital rhetorical privacy framework: interlocking consent. Future studies centering interlocking consent will require intersectional interrogations if we are to overcome the norms of oppression stemming from social sorting (Dubrofsky and Magnet; Browne, Banville). The Privacy Aesthetic, as a concept linked to interlocking consent, is a means of amplifying rhetoric's relationship to the privacy-surveillance continuum and the importance of the geo-spatial element of data collection. Perhaps a primary offering of rhetorical approaches to understanding privacy and surveillance is emphasizing the deconstruction of the faux privacy "and" surveillance binary and the merging of the two onto a comprehensive privacy-surveillance continuum for newfound and renewed issues like the widespread adoption of AI, as we navigate living in a world with Coronavirus, amid the passage of oppressive legislation regarding bodily autonomy, and as America reckons with immigration reform at the U.S. Southern Border.

We, technofeminist scholars in rhetoric and composition, must continue using emerging theoretical frameworks to interrogate complex data privacy and digital surveillance strategies outlined in ToS. A pliable theory like digital rhetorical privacy offers additional opportunities for expansion beyond engagements with Browne's racialized surveillance and Banville's interlocking surveillance theories in the analysis of biometrics used at the U.S. Southern border in this essay. Future directions should consider the geolocation of data collection and automation and advocate for equitable futures defined by a tactical privacy. Further research should engage with how ToS contribute to Anthony Stagliano's disobedient aesthetic and, while the focus of this article was on biometrics, researchers should engage, like Iván Chaar López has, with the uniqueness of aerial drones in relation to intrusion. We must consider: Where was the data collected, and what laws govern data privacy and digital surveillance there? Was data transferred across imagined borders of states and countries where laws governing data privacy and digital surveillance differ? And where does that data go after it is collected? How is it moved through oppressive digital and legal networks? These are essential questions for technofeminists invested in resisting asymmetrical power, combatting privacy erosion, and safeguarding bodily autonomy.

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Surveillance of Women's Bodies and Surveillance Technologies

Digital Eyes on Bodies: Analyzing Post-Roe Reproductive Surveillance

Emily Gillo

Abstract: Focusing on the intersection of reproductive rights discourse, digital surveillance, and embodied feminist rhetorical practice, this essay examines the repercussions of the 2022 overturn of Roe v. Wade and the subsequent erosion of reproductive rights and privacy for people who menstruate and people who can get pregnant. Adopting a feminist "surveillance of care" (Hutchinson and Novotny) framework, this essay analyzes, critiques, and offers a critical feminist response to Flo, a popular period tracking app, its cis-heteronormative interface, and its inadequacy in providing privacy protections for its users. This essay advocates for human-centered interface designs and privacy policies for health monitoring apps and exemplifies how critical digital health literacy and a surveillance of care framework can be used to "talk back" (hooks 128) against the invasive privacy practices of the post-Roe era.

Introduction

In 1973, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in *Roe v. Wade* that the constitutional right to privacy "is broad enough to encompass a woman's decision whether or not to terminate her pregnancy" (*Roe v. Wade* 113). Despite a decades-long battle to codify *Roe v. Wade*'s ruling to not only allow the right to an abortion but to also protect access to this potentially life-saving health care for people who can become pregnant, July 2022 marked the overturn of the landmark 1973 ruling. The U.S. Supreme Court, in reviewing the case of *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization* in Mississippi, held that the U.S. Constitution does not provide the right to abortion, overruling *Roe v. Wade* as well as the 1992 ruling in *Planned Parenthood v. Casey,* and returning the regulatory power to individual states. This decision sent a clear message that bodily autonomy and reproductive rights are controlled by the power of the government and sent shockwaves across the country in the new age of digital surveillance. Those of us who can get pregnant were left with the realizations that our bodily autonomy was stripped away and that the same entities who stripped these rights now, in the digital era, have the capability to surveil our bodies through online behavior and mobile device data.

As the national landscape shifts towards restricting abortion access, and as many states now hold the threats of "homicide," "murder," and "death penalty" over our heads, it is essential to understand how these changes impact reproductive health, bodily autonomy, and privacy. Leading up to and since this legal shift,

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the discourse surrounding reproductive rights has evolved and fractured, and has intersected with the discourse surrounding digital surveillance. In the era of data tracking and monitoring, it is critical to analyze the digital health tracking applications being sold as a way for us to take control of our lives and attend to issues surrounding informed consent, data privacy, and gendered societal expectations.

Ahead of *Roe v. Wade*'s overturn, the fear of government surveillance was sweeping social media. People online were calling for the removal of period tracking apps (@jkbibliophile), and discussing the use of coded language when seeking access to abortion care (@KelliSoby), and the avoidance of any device that tracks geo-location when traveling for essential healthcare (@RonWyden). Despite the attitudes of some indicating the fear of reproductive surveillance was excessive (Harwell), the International Digital Accountability Council (Palfrey and Ghamrawi), state attorneys general (Lucan and Rimm), and several New Jersey lawmakers ("Sen. Menendez") have written to various app developers and app stores, highlighting concerns about information sharing with third parties, restrictions on data deletion, and geo-location tracking. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services states that, while the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) protects health data from being shared by medical providers, it does not protect health information stored on a mobile application or other personal device ("Health App Use"). In an age of increased surveillance and disregard for reproductive healthcare, it is now more important than ever to understand "how and why data collection, aggregation, and manipulation contributes to systemic oppression" and how this understanding enables us to make educated decisions about the platforms with which we choose to engage (Woods and Wilson 7).

This essay combines a feminist rhetorical analysis of court records surrounding reproductive rights with a critical examination of the privacy policy of Flo, one of the most popular period-tracking mobile apps on the market today, using Les Hutchinson and Maria Novotny's *surveillance as care* framework. This feminist framework serves as a method of analyzing, critiquing, and responding to the state of reproductive surveillance in the U.S., as well as a means of civic and pedagogical intervention. I aim to echo bell hooks' notion of talking back against invasive surveillance practices by reframing patriarchal "power and control" as feminist "compassion and care" (Abu-Laban 53), exploring the ways in which feminist rhetorical theory and queer studies can guide those interventions against the pervasive digital eyes on our bodies.

Intersectional Feminism and Feminist Rhetorical Theory

The language of *Roe v. Wade*, when analyzed through a lens of intersectional feminism, appears to be less concerned with bodily autonomy than the patriarchal belief that the "(male) doctor knows best" (Gibson 312). The Court's majority opinion states, "The abortion decision in all its aspects is inherently, and primarily, a medical decision, and basic responsibility for it must rest with the physician" (*Roe v. Wade* 166). In reviewing the characterization of the physician in this opinion––using only he/him pronouns when referring to physicians, making reference to Soranos as "the greatest of ancient gynecologists," and referring to Hippocrates as "the great Greek Father of Medicine"––it is clear that the idea of the physician is patriarchal,

and that the male doctor alone should be trusted to make health decisions on behalf his patients (Gibson 319).

The rhetorical decisions made in *Roe v. Wade* also neglect to address what we may recognize as inter-sectional feminism, a framework that examines the intersection of gender with other social identities. Physician bias can involve women being "portrayed as a homogenous group," but the intersection of identities puts "some women at higher risk for worse health outcomes than other women" (Figueroa et al. e526). Ignoring intersectional identities can lead to medical mistrust and a host of other health-related complications. As Katie Gibson explains, "The Court's physiological approach to women's reproductive rights invites a singular understanding of woman-as-womb and occludes considerations of difference" (325). When the medical decision of abortion is placed in the hands of a (assumed male) medical practitioner, and when the center of focus is the *masculinity* of the medical practitioner rather than the health and well-being of the *feminine* patient, the patient is reduced to a *single image* and a passive component of their own health. A single image such as this reduces patients to "empathetic representatives of universal womanhood in crisis, a category that feminists of color have long argued is implicitly synonymous with whiteness" (Kaplan 119).

Anthropologist Kath Weston explains how queer people have long been excluded from representations of the family and are often diminished to an identity solely made up of sexual interest. This means they are "destined to move toward a future of solitude and loneliness" and are treated as "members of a nonprocreative species set apart from the rest of humanity" (23). Pushing back against this homogenous image, Zillah Eisenstein notes that "a middle-class, [B]lack, pregnant woman's body is not one and the same thing as a working-class, white, pregnant woman's body," nor the body of a person on welfare, of a diabetic person, of a surrogate, or of an inseminated lesbian; nor, I will add, is it one in the same as the body of a transgender or non-binary pregnant person (Eisenstein 222). This single image of the patient is not only traditionally feminine, but also white, cis-gendered, heterosexual, decidedly middle-class, and entirely "passive or nonexistent" to the authority of the male doctor (Gibson 320).

The Supreme Court's decision in *Roe v. Wade* left reproductive health open to political attack for five decades. As *Roe v. Wade* maintained a significant focus on trusting the expertise of medical professionals, the U.S. stood witness to that political attack with a turn of trust in medicine in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. While many lauded medical professionals and scientists for their efforts in combating the virus, others saw their trust in medicine faltering à la vaccine hesitancy and rejection, virus denial, and anti-masking. It is worthwhile to consider whether the (largely politically conservative) wavering trust in medicine in 2020 might be connected to the (majority politically conservative) Supreme Court overturning a ruling that privileged the medical professional in 2022. Should this be the case, it would appear as though the Supreme Court, in a doubling-down of valuing anything other than the female patient, now values "errant and authoritarian laws" over the "material complexities of biomedical science" (Kaplan 121). If we take this to be true, it points to a very grim reality in which those in power not only maintain their single image of the feminine patient, but now also disregard the once-lauded medical professional and reject *Roe v. Wade*'s ruling that

pregnant people have a right to privacy as a way to exert further control over the womb.

Reproductive Surveillance in the Digital Age

In Justice Clarence Thomas's concurrence on *Dobbs*, he noted that the Supreme Court should also take up the "error" established in other rulings like *Loving v. Virginia*, *Eisenstadt v. Baird*, and, notably, *Griswold v. Connecticut,* which established the right to privacy in reproductive decision-making for married couples (Thomas 3). However, in an era of increasing digital surveillance, it appears that the right to privacy has already been lost by way of corporate entities and the U.S. government.

Following the ruling overturning *Roe* and *Casey*, many are growing increasingly worried about digital surveillance methods that may be used against those seeking such reproductive healthcare. While some argue against this concern, the reality is that laws like HIPAA do not protect individuals' online behavior, and companies like Google, Facebook, and WhatsApp are not bound by any legal obligation to protect health data (Gupta and Singer). Supporting this concern, Oregon Senator Ron Wyden warned that "your geolocation data, apps for contraception, web searches, phone records" are all "open season for generating data to weaponize the personal information of women across the country" (Vesoulis). The implications of Wyden's warning are especially problematic for those of us living in states that are eager to hand down felony charges for obtaining––or even attempting to seek information on––an abortion.

In 2017, Mississippi woman Latice Fisher was initially charged with second-degree murder after she voluntarily submitted her phone as evidence in her court case. State prosecutors scraped all her phone's data and search history, "which included searches for Misoprostol" to prove that she had "intentionally 'killed' her fetus" (Kalish). Latice Fisher explained during questioning that she was concerned about not being able to afford more children and that she "simply couldn't deal with being pregnant again" (Phillips). In 2022, a teenager in Nebraska was alleged to have conducted a medical abortion at home. Private Facebook messages between the teenager and her mother were entered into court as evidence and both women were given multiple felony charges and misdemeanors including "perform/attempt abortion at > 20 weeks" and "removing/concealing a dead human body" (Koebler and Merlan). During sentencing, the teenager explained to the judge that "she was in an abusive relationship and didn't want to parent a child with her partner" (Rinkunas). These cases demonstrate that *Roe* was overturned "not through the nurturance of individual life but through the surveillance, regulation, and criminalization of raced, gendered, and sexualized life" and reiterate the one-size-fits-all single image of the passive female patient-turned-criminal (Kaplan 127). This broad analysis of the patriarchal language used in both *Roe* and *Dobbs* v traces how we could have gotten to a point in which people who can get pregnant are being made felons due to their private messages and Google searches being surveilled and submitted as evidence. I would now like to heed Senator Wyden's warning and narrow my focus to specific, actionable steps that can be taken to mitigate future risk.

Flo and the Feminist "Surveillance of Care" Framework

Flo, one of the most common "female health apps" on the market today, allows users to track menstrual cycles and symptoms, monitor cycle predictions, prepare for conception and pregnancy, and track menopause ("Flo Homepage"). As of 2022, the app had "more than 48 million active users" and was a popular and somewhat controversial talking point on social media following *Dobbs* (Kilpatrick). Some were praising the app for introducing an "Anonymous Mode" that boasts "an even deeper layer of privacy," giving users the option to use the app without using their name or email address ("Flo Privacy Policy"). Others, however, were warning users to delete the app entirely. Given these developments, I find it prudent to scrutinize Flo using Les Hutchinson and Maria Novotny's *surveillance as care* feminist framework. This framework places consideration upon how this app constructs or reinforces expectations relating to women's bodies and health, and how it empowers or disempowers users in managing reproductive health data. This kind of feminist rhetorical framework can be employed to challenge, resist, or remediate these surveillance practices.

The field of surveillance studies so often looks at surveillance through a "power and control" framework rather than a "compassion and care" framework (Abu-Laban 53). In calling for feminist theorizing on surveillance and care, Yasmeen Abu-Laban demonstrates this by comparing the use of CCTV footage at borders and prisons as an expression of power and control versus the use of baby monitors as an expression of compassion and care. Hutchinson and Novotny's surveillance as care furthers this theorizing and outlines a method of remediating the technical documents and interfaces of health monitoring platforms as artifacts of compassion rather than control. Their framework for this reimagining first requires an analysis of technical documents and data collection practices, then a critique of the "ideological systems and discourses" that are reflected in the app's interface. The final step is a "reflective feminist response" that demands a complete redesign of the technical documents and the app's interface that is more ethical and "promotes a critical digital health consciousness" (113). Effectively, I am using this framework to resituate the functions of Flo as *surveillance as care* rather than *surveillance as control*.

Feminist Surveillance as Care: Analysis

In 2021, the U.S. Federal Trade Commission (FTC) launched a complaint alleging that, despite Flo's claims that health data are kept private and will only be used to provide the app's services, "Flo disclosed health data from millions of its users" to third parties. The complaint further alleged that Flo "did not limit how third parties could use this health data" ("Developer of Popular"). Later in 2021, Flo and the FTC settled, and Flo agreed to notify all affected users and update their privacy policy to include a user consent clause (Merken). Bearing in mind the number of active users (48 million), post-*Roe* data privacy concerns, and the FTC's allegations, I find it necessary to compare the 2017 privacy policy that was subject to this complaint to its current (as of June 2024) privacy policy.

There are two noteworthy changes that appear to have been made following the agreement with the

FTC. The first revolves around users having a level of control over how much or what data are collected. In 2017, Flo's privacy policy said, "If you do not want your Personal Information used by the App or the Company as provided in the Privacy Policy, you should not register as a user" ("Flo Privacy Policy Archive 2017"). As of June 2024, the privacy policy says, "You have the right to request that the processing of your personal data be restricted in some circumstances" and "You may ask us to erase your personal data if you withdraw your consent to processing" ("Flo Privacy Policy"). The second change provides users the "right to request information about what personal data we process about you" ("Flo Privacy Policy"). In light of being accused of causing very real and significant harm to its users by the FTC, Flo seems to have made two minor language changes to its privacy policy: informing users that they have the right to restrict their data being processed *in some circumstances*, and that they have a *right to request information* about the processing of their personal data. It appears as though Flo still shares sensitive health information with various third parties, although now this information is disclosed 4,800 words into their 7,000-word privacy policy.

Looking further into Flo's current privacy policy, it details what data are automatically gathered such as device information, storage information, IP (Internet Protocol) address, service provider information, and frequency of use. It also lists the information that can be voluntarily input by the user, such as name, email address, birth year, location information, language, weight, height, body mass index, body temperature, menstrual cycle dates, details of pregnancy, menstrual cycle symptoms, and information relating to the user's sex life. While a key complaint in the 2021 FTC filing revolves around access to data by third-party services, Flo now states that "various partners and providers who help us handle your data on our behalf" have access to user data. It further explains that the purpose of this collection and sharing is to "fulfill our contractual obligations to you in order to provide the Services to you" ("Flo Privacy Policy"). In sum, Flo's privacy policy updates provide *transparency* without changing *practice*.

In reading headlines exclaiming that Flo has changed their privacy policy and has developed an "Anonymous Mode," users have no way of knowing how little was changed without bearing the burden of an in-depth, side-by-side analysis of the former and current privacy policies. Flo's consistent privacy problem is that health data submitted to Flo are "not protected by federal safeguards for patient privacy" such as HIPAA (Gupta and Singer). While Flo has now made clear that they will not sell personal information to data brokers, their privacy policy also states that data may be preserved and shared "in response to subpoenas, court orders, or legal processes" ("Flo Privacy Policy"). Given that we have seen personal health information subpoenas resulting in murder charges in Mississippi and Nebraska (among others), this should be a point of contention for any potential user of Flo.

Feminist Surveillance as Care: Critique

To critique Flo, one must also reflect upon the "ideological systems and discourses that shape the design" (Hutchinson and Novotny 114), which are traced through the patriarchal rhetoric of the *Roe* and *Dobbs* rulings, the male judges and lawyers involved in recent criminal court cases involving abortion, and

the male-identifying Flo founders, Dmitry and Yuri Gurski. Critiquing the aesthetic and linguistic choices made in Flo's interface makes this patriarchal influence abundantly clear. The predominant color used on the site and the app is pink, and any minimal use of secondary colors are pastel shades of green, yellow, and purple. The app has a "Health Insights" section that houses a library of informational articles, videos, and surveys that are organized by information category. Every human character found in this section is gender-normative and female presenting, most characters are white or have lighter complexions, and they are either standalone characters or depicted alongside male-presenting partners.

The most common linguistic theme seen in this section of the app is "libido." Notable headlines include "Faking orgasms? Try this instead," "Is your sex drive normal," "How to boost your sex drive," and "Do you bleed after sex? What to do" ("Health Library"). This language places the burden of a *perceived* low libido or not enjoying sex onto the assumed woman rather than the presumed male partner and assumes a baseline "normal" sex drive. Additionally, the articles listed speak to the heteronormative stance of the app: users should focus on being more sexually available for and pleasing their male partner rather than exploring gender identities or sexual preferences outside of cisgendered heterosexuality. This stance makes clear that a fundamentally women's rights issue is—and has always been—handled by *men in powerful positions* with little care or consideration being given to the viewpoints, interests, desires, or expertise of the *passive woman.*

It is also imperative to look at how Flo promotes itself as female-centric, empowering, transparent, and backed by medical expertise and ask how well it upholds those characteristics in practice. Flo's website proudly proclaims that they are the number one OBGYN recommended application with over 300 million downloads, and states that their purpose is to "build a better future for female health by helping you harness the power of your body signals" ("About Us"). To this, remember that so many of these tracking options, "sold through appeals to 'empowerment,' do not actually help people figure out which questions they should be asking, much less how to ask the next question, test ideas, or make discoveries" (Neff and Nafus 11). More concerningly, as these technologies are sold as a way for us to "harness the power" of our body's signals, I emphasize that the same means of this empowerment—our data—are also how our data become "connectible and monetizable for [these] corporations" (Hong 89).

In support of "building a better future," Flo says that their team is made up of doctors, editors, engineers, designers, and marketers who "care passionately about revolutionizing the female health space" and improving the state of female health education "worldwide" ("About Us"). The language used here is meant to invoke a sense of female empowerment. They claim to be furthering the traditionally "underfunded and undervalued" movement of female health education and providing a space for "women and people with periods around the world" to educate themselves and others ("About Us"). Behind the veil of this empowering female-centric rhetoric, however, is the truth that Flo is *selling a product,* has shared extremely sensitive health data with third-party services, and that Flo's gendered aesthetic and language intend to bring "order and control to menstruators' 'chaotic' and 'unpredictable' bodies" with a focus on "a normative gender standard and 'expectation of reproductive citizenship'" (Friedlander 690). Flo also demonstrates the assumption

that every menstruating person in the world has ready access to the technology required to monitor such intimate details about their lives.

Feminist Surveillance as Care: Response

The final step in the *surveillance as care* framework is a response that enacts embodied rhetorical practice. My "reflective feminist response" (Hutchinson and Novotny 113) re-situates Flo as an app capable of care and compassion rather than just power and control by first remediating Flo's privacy policy then providing a feminist reimagining of Flo's interface.

In the article, "Data Our Bodies Tell: Towards Critical Feminist Action in Fertility and Period Tracking Applications," Maria Novotny and Les Hutchinson call for "critical feminist action" that is human-centered rather than company-centered and demands more transparency so that that users are "able to comprehend and understand to what they are consenting" (355). To better suit a human-centered approach, a significant revision to this sentence from Flo's privacy policy is needed. "We first determine that we have a legitimate interest in conducting and managing our business. We then consider and balance potential impacts to you and your rights" ("Flo Privacy Policy"). I suggest moving this to the top of the privacy policy and revising it to state: "We consider you and your rights to privacy and transparency and our legitimate interest in conducting and managing our business jointly, as we cannot manage our business without you." This not only signifies its importance as it would be placed at the top of the privacy policy, but also emphasizes user safety and security in managing the business.

While Flo's privacy policy could be revised throughout to provide additional clarity, one example of this would be under the Limitations section of Retention of Your Personal Data: "You should be aware that although we will delete...data where possible, we may retain certain personal data...this is required and permitted by applicable law" ("Flo Privacy Policy"). While they provide some general applicable circumstances like "as necessary to comply with legal obligations," Flo could provide specific legal obligations that may require this action to be taken rather than leave such a serious and potentially consequential statement up to user interpretation ("Flo Privacy Policy"). As a lay user, I am unsure as to whether they are referring to subpoenas of records to use in criminal cases against users, or if they are referring to circumstances that are less relevant to the individual user, such as legal action in favor of or opposing the business.

Finally, I also recommend a redesign of Flo's click-wrap agreement, which is presented to users immediately upon opening the app for the first time (see fig. 1). It states that "your health data will never be shared with any company but Flo, and you can delete it at any time. I agree to the processing of my personal health data for providing me Flo app functions. See more in Privacy Policy" ("Flo Click Wrap"). Concerningly, users are never required to interact in any way with the privacy policy before clicking to agree, preying upon the digital apathy that many of us feel regarding click-wrap agreements. Another concern with the quoted excerpt is that it is patently untrue; Flo's privacy policy lists five companies with which they share

"all personal data," "aim and usage purpose," and/or "data relating to cycle dates, goals, symptoms" ("Flo Privacy Policy"). A critical feminist and human-centered redesign of this opening pop-up would require users to open the privacy policy and, at a minimum, scroll to the bottom to click that they agree. The choice to agree or disagree with the policy could be accompanied by another statement of care: "Your health data, while shared with some third-party services for optimal functionality, will never be sold to data brokers and will be securely stored and encrypted on our servers. You can request to delete your data at any time, and only under select circumstances will we refuse this request. For more information, see the 'Third Parties Processing Your Personal Data' and 'Retention of Your Personal Data' sections of our Privacy Policy." These human-centered revisions of Flo's privacy policy allow users to "feel empowered by their choice in using the application because of their conscious understanding of their role in the engagement with the app" (Novotny and Hutchinson 356). This revision also supports Flo's purported goal of empowering their users, and better protects user data in the process.

Fig. 1. Flo Click Wrap Agreement. Image description: a hot pink shield in front of a system of gears in silver, gold, and lighter pink, with a block of text below. Under that are the words "Accept all" and a pink horizontal oval button saying "Next." The agreement pops up immediately upon opening the app for the first time and states that users can delete their health data at any time, and that the health data will never be shared with any company but Flo. The full Privacy Policy and Terms of Use are both hyperlinks.

An ethical and inclusive aesthetic update to Flo's current design requires a large-scale overhaul of the characters depicted across the app. Flo's use of Alegria-like characters entirely defeats the style's purpose of being "abstracted––oversized limbs and non-representational skin colors help them instantly achieve a universal feel" ("Facebook Alegria").Their characters maintain traditionally cisgendered, feminine-presenting characteristics such as long hair, wearing dresses and bras, and being presented alongside masculine-presenting partners. Not all characters depicted on the site are Alegria characters, however, as some are photographs of people. One simple redesign solution that could promote inclusivity would be to replace all graphic design

characters with photographs of people that represent a variety of gender, sexuality, racial, and ability presentations. As Alex Monea explains, it is crucial for users to "see representations of queer identities in the context of relationships, embraces, kisses, and sex so they can imagine these scenarios as possibilities in their future, a process that heterosexual people are privileged to take advantage of in most popular media" (147).

Regarding both aesthetic and language use, Caroline A. Figueroa, et al. provide a method of adopting human-centered design: using "a gender-sensitive language app Sheboard, which autofill text-message conversations with empowering words...instead of gender stereotypical words to avoid gender biases in language" (e530). They also recommend including people of varying backgrounds, identities, and communities in the design process to further exclude bias in the app's design.

Melissa Stone and Zachary Beare provide additional suggestions that can apply to a redesign of Flo's use of language, noting that it is a distinct linguistic choice to use words such as "female health," "women," and "feminine," and that choice is "exclusionary to queer folks who have fraught relationships with the identity category of 'woman'" (23). They instead call for a queering of reproductive justice that involves using language accounting for "different ways of conceiving children or becoming a parent, ideas about who can and cannot have children, and... sexual pleasure without reproductive intent" (23). Combining the feminist reimagining of Flo's privacy policy with these aesthetic and language redesign suggestions would allow Flo to support their goal of empowerment, promote and celebrate diversity, and provide *surveillance as care* health and wellness services to a wider audience.

Future Directions: Critical Digital Health Literacy and Feminist Rhetorical Practice

In discussing the *surveillance as care* feminist surveillance framework, Hutchinson and Novotny note several learning goals for a professional writing course that supports feminist intervention of health monitoring technologies. These goals include "acquire a critical digital literacy of surveillance and privacy, learn to engage in feminist rhetorical intervention of privacy health concerns; [and] understand that feminist intervention requires an ethical stance that situates user advocacy and agency as central outcomes" (114). People who can get pregnant who are concerned about not only their bodily autonomy but also their right to reproductive privacy must situate themselves in this mindset of critical digital literacy and feminist rhetorical intervention in order to "talk back" (hooks 128). With this comes an issue of access: how can these literacies be made accessible to those who need it most? Tackling this question will require service learning in higher education classrooms as modeled by Hutchinson and Novotny, public-facing activism and information dissemination by activists and other civic voices in both online and in-person communities, and a reframing of health monitoring from an act of control to a human-centered act of compassion by the technical writers and developers.

bell hooks writes that the act of talking back is "no mere gesture of empty words," but rather "the expression of moving from object to subject" (hooks 128). To avoid such empty words, future work in this

arena must stress the importance and exemplify the successful use of intersecting critical digital literacy with feminist rhetorical practice in order to redesign the state of reproductive rights, health, and empowerment from *surveillance of control* to *surveillance of care.* This future work must also be conducted through an intersectional lens; both the technology and our critical understanding of the technology must account for the ways in which "observation and data collection may be gendered, sexed, sexualized, raced, and classed as well as having implications for people with disabilities" (Magnet and Orr 421). Continual critical analyses of court records, the technical documents of health monitoring apps, and patriarchal misconceptions of our wants and needs must take place to truly talk back against the controlling digital eyes on our bodies.

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Face-Shaping Power of the Postfeminist Gaze, or Digital Rhetorical Lateral Surveillance in Armenia

Elitza Kotzeva

Abstract: This article draws on feminist surveillance theoretical work to discuss digital lateral surveillance that objectifies the female body on social media and normalizes conformity with popular beauty standards. It studies how female social media users allow the postfeminist gaze to control, condition, and modify their bodies and identities. The piece argues that digital lateral surveillance has rhetorical character because it is a product both of the synopticon where many observe the few, an interpellation of the institution of patriarchy in the digital age, and the gynaeopticon, a type of neoliberal female peer surveillance. The analysis focuses on the functioning of the postfeminist gaze in social media posts and user comments regarding the unconventional appearance of an Armenian model. The study further theorizes rhetorical practices of techno-feminist resistance which can help female social media users revise their relationship with technology to regain agency over the construction of their bodies, identities, and realities.

Introduction

In 2020, one of the world's leading fashion designers and Gucci's creative director, Alessandro Michele, brought Armine Harutyunyan to the catwalks of the luxury Italian fashion house. Italian social media exploded with criticism of the "unusual looks" of the 23-year-old Armenian model and her introduction to the world fashion scene. According to the critics, Armine's angular facial features, long nose, and thick eyebrows—a hallmark of traditional Armenian appearance—did not meet the accepted beauty standards for Gucci models, considered to be the sexiest women in the world (Hughes). The debate naturally took place on Instagram, an image-driven global social network with culturally diverse international users. Despite the diversity of its audience, social media has contributed to the cultivation of rather narrow beauty standards, zealously safeguarded by its users.

Instagram and Facebook are among the most popular social media platforms in Armenia, home country of the publicly shamed Gucci model Armine Harutyunyan (Martirosyan; Movsisyan). It does not come as a surprise then that Armenian young women share and uphold beauty standards that are set and safeguarded by social media users worldwide. But there is a paradox. Armenian culture strives to preserve traditional gendered conventions of public behavior in both dress and beauty (Ziemer). Like other countries

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in the South Caucasus, families in Armenia, specifically parents and older siblings, closely monitor young people to ensure that they behave according to the decrees of traditional values (Aliyeva). Enforced by the methods of patriarchal body surveillance, the Armenian woman's public performance must conform to the societal expectation of her as "sacred mother" responsible for the maintenance of the family and the preservation of its values and norms (Ohanyan 231). Traditional Armenian values permeate the view on dress and beauty standards too—women need to attend to their appearance to make themselves desirable brides and consequently secure their roles as married women and mothers in order to fulfill their duty to the society and the nation.

When I moved to Armenia five years ago, I was surprised by the number of women with taped-up noses strolling down the street. It did not take long to discover that the bandaged faces were a consequence of surgical procedures intended to straighten the traditional Armenian aquiline nose. Although there is no official data, medical evidence suggests that rhinoplasty is the number one cosmetic surgery in the country (Molenaar). Since Armenian culture has preserved its traditional conventions regarding courtship and marriage, the rules for young women stipulate that they should have a serious suitor by sixteen years of age. And if by that point there is not a prospective husband in the picture—many of my Armenians students testify—the family suggests that the young woman consider rhinoplasty: a clear deviation of the call for adherence to local tradition regarding beauty standards.

Further, the patriarchal culture requires that a woman's behavior, dress, and look conform to traditional norms. But to preserve the conventions regarding marriage and family, the culture bends the rules on traditional appearance to adopt Western beauty standards and correct an ancestral Armenian feature—the aquiline nose—together with other traditional facial features. In the past few years, I often observed how the faces of some of my Armenian female students would transform over a short period of time to become new, different, and sometimes hardly matching their original picture from the class roster. Young women in the street, in professional places, and at universities publicly take selfies and post these images to social media networks not simply to report to the world about their day, work, and activities but to seek approval of their appearance. The initial question of patriarchal interpellation gets further complicated by the role of digital spaces in mediating the normative expectations regarding beauty. Both the values of local patriarchy and global makeover culture affect the surveillance of female bodies to exercise control over them, condition them, and ultimately modify their appearance.

Scholarship on surveillance has addressed personal identity in the digital age with focus on the individual self as the ultimate target of surveillance practices (Magnet; Rosen and Santesso; Christmas). But the individual self and the resulting personal identity are regulated differently in local and global contexts even within digital environments. Moreover, surveillance through technology can problematically prescribe our bodies and identities (Frost and Haas). Digital surveillance practices influence young women's self-esteem and behavior, often persuading them to undergo cosmetic surgery procedures (Zhao). In this article, I am specifically interested in exploring the ways vertical female body surveillance, performed by the local

patriarchy, intersects with digital lateral surveillance that is underlined with neoliberal values. The resulting hybrid form of surveillance empowers female peer-policing together with self-regulatory practices.

To explore such surveillance tactics, I study the case of the Armenian Gucci model Armine Harutyunyan further theorizing how digital lateral surveillance operates and how it becomes rhetorical. I begin by drawing on feminist surveillance theoretical work (Bordo; Dubrofsky and Magnet; Gill) and discuss digital lateral surveillance (Andrejevic; Gill) that objectifies women's bodies and normalizes cosmetic surgery through social media practices. I argue that digital rhetorical lateral surveillance is a product both of the synopticon (Mathiesen) where many observe the few, an interpellation of the institution of patriarchy in the digital age (Trottier et al.), and the gynaeopticon, a type of female peer surveillance. The fusion of the two types of surveillance grants young women on social media the rhetorical power to ask their female peers to either comply with or resist the normative societal expectation for beauty (Brooks).

From Foucault to Bordo to Gill: Development of the Postfeminist Gaze

Surveillance—the combination of information collection and its use with power (Andrejevic)—allows for the state or society to produce docile bodies essential to its operation. In *Discipline and Punish,* Michel Foucault explains that state control is not achieved only through external forms of policing but also through internalization of surveillance. He famously uses the spatial organization of Jeremy Bentham's prison to explicate the production of docile bodies—the architecture of the panopticon induces a state of conscious and permanent visibility which makes power automatic and independent of the person who exercises it (i.e., there may not be even a guard in the prison's tower) (Foucault). This disciplinary apparatus homogenizes the effects of power and distributes it evenly to all individuals under surveillance; it both partitions and diffuses the power to the spaces individuals occupy (Foucault). Visibility in the panopticon is the central mechanism that produces docile bodies: those who know that they are in the field of visibility perform the power relation as both the observer and the observed; they police themselves without the need for a surveillant.

Surveillance operates in ways that directly affect the bodies and mental state of those being surveilled. Foucault thinks of surveillance not in ideological but rather in practical terms: through the organization and regulation of bodies and their movement. Susan Bordo recognizes the primacy of practice over belief in Foucault's theory and further elaborates on bodies as a locus of social control, specifically paying attention to the surveillance ramifications for women with explicit demands on the female body. Socially imposed disciplines of diet, makeup, and dress organize the time and space of women, making them inscribe in themselves the power relation in which they end up playing both roles—of the surveillant and of the surveilled. By measuring their bodies against the elusive ideal of femininity, they become the principle of their own subjection. The mechanisms on which power operates are not repressive; on the contrary they are constitutive (Bordo). They do not come from above and are not imposed by one group but rather are grown from below and are distributed through a network of practices, institutions, and technologies that constitute the power and exercise control over the female body. All these networks incorporate in one way or another

visibility as a primary mechanism of control over the female body and offer practices of looking at what is made visible voluntarily by women.

Contemporary digital media and culture enhance and multiplie the practices of looking to produce a novel and powerful regulatory gaze on women. Rosalind Gill tracks down the origin of this gaze dubbing it postfeminist, or representative of sensibilities that are developed from the neoliberal values of autonomy, self-actualization, and risk-taking. To show the connection between surveillance and postfeminist culture, Gill explores the links between neoliberalism and postfeminism and argues that both are structured by a grammar of individualism which has completely displaced notions of the social and the political where individuals are not any more subjects to pressures and constraints from the outside. Instead, the postfeminist sensibilities are intimately related to neoliberalism and are driven by "entrepreneurial selfhood"—a commitment toward self-discipline and improvement (Gill 150). The postfeminist gaze focuses on the body as a main site for the exhibition of achieved self-discipline and self-improvement thus breaking away from the traditional practices of looking at the female body. The postfeminist media culture has shifted from women's passive objectification to a new form in which women seemingly have choices and agency but most importantly are able to construct themselves as active and desiring sexual subjects (Barker et al.).

Gynaeopticon, or Female Lateral Surveillance in Digital Spaces

The postfeminist gaze achieves its targeted regulatory function over women's bodies and appearance through the modes of visibility available to the contemporary users of digital media. It homogenizes and diffuses the effects of power to the observed through their awareness of the possibility of being observed. In social media culture, this possibility is both desired and, in most cases, guaranteed: many women voluntarily and actively circulate images of their bodies as a testimony to their conformity with the demands of the postfeminist gaze, seeking approval of the surveillants when their image is seen and "liked." Foucault's metaphor of the panopticon works to explain the internalization of disciplinary power for the surveilled but in the digital culture it fails to account for the visibility of the surveillant. In the panopticon, the internalization of power happens because the observed cannot see the guard in the tower, and often there is not even a surveillant. In social media spaces, the visibility is reciprocal.

Thomas Mathiesen revised Foucault's metaphor of the panopticon to account for the changed nature of visibility in the new media culture. Mathiesen argues that in media-dominated societies there is a reversal of Foucault's model of surveillance where rather than the few watching the many (like in the panopticon), the many are watching the few (e.g., the "masses" following celebrities). Mathiesen dubs this type of mass surveillance "synopticon." More recently, Alison Winch has introduced her own revision of the surveillance model of Bentham's prison: "gynaeopticon," a gendered, neoliberal variation of the panopticon where "the many women watch the many women" (229). In this type of surveillance, control is shared and internalized, and policing happens through digital groups of women connected through female friendship. These "intimate publics" monitor and regulate women's bodies, sexualities, and intimate life (Berlant 5). Winch argues

that, through digital networks of female friends, women in online spaces establish codes of acceptable femininity that also meet market values with an emphasis on self-management for competitive purposes. Peers in digital spaces disseminate the normative discourses defining a successful feminine skill set. The subject in these spaces police her behavior in search of approval by the gaze of her friends, thus making the lateral surveillance rhetorical.

Andrejevic defines lateral surveillance as peer-to-peer monitoring of spouses, friends, and relatives. He underscores the importance of technologies in the functioning of this type of do-it-yourself surveillance driven by the incentives of risk management in a neoliberal society. The mutual monitoring becomes an extension of state interests and is a mechanism that offloads to the populace the governmental responsibilities to uphold practices reinforcing security and productivity. The deployment of new information and communication technologies plays a major role in the workings of lateral surveillance. Communication and rhetoric scholars have drawn on Andrejevic' concept to write about peer monitoring of bodies and behaviors of others through digital technologies, networked environments, and more specifically on social media (Trottier; Ivana; Frost and Haas). Trottier, for example, studies interpersonal surveillance on Facebook and its effects on the presentation of the virtual self in social media. Like Andrejevic who sees lateral surveillance as a means for the state to don responsibility on citizens, Trottier observes that Facebook users become both the agent and the subject of surveillance thus employing practices of visibility which monitor and control the behavior of the other social media users and at the same time are controlled by their gaze.

These practices of visibility are primarily rhetorical because they require adherence to a set of neoliberal skills and values of both surveilled and surveillant. However, the postfeminist gaze does not exercise control by looking only at one aspect of the female body and identity. Ericson and Haggerty observe that surveillance is not a centralized practice but rather relies on a collection of information designed to govern the activities of populations—a "surveillant assemblage" (4). In line with the focus of the postfeminist gaze on the body as its primary site of control, such assemblages refer to data that genders, sexualizes, races, and classes the surveilled subject's body and behavior. Dubrofsky and Magnet develop a critical feminist lens to offer an approach to studying surveillance with an emphasis on intersectionality. A feminist praxis, they argue, does not limit the exploration to gender issues but sees it as part of a bigger system of interlocking oppressions based on sexuality, race, class, and ableness. In the same edited collection dedicated to feminist surveillance, Dubrofsky and Wood show how gender and race intersect in the production of a virtual self on social media. They explore the way female celebrities of color, who are framed as agents, sexualize their bodies by controlling objectification and willingly self-objectifying.

The Postfeminist Gaze and Its Rhetorical Shape-Shifting Power in Armenia

As part of the Soviet Union, Armenia and its female population has been influenced heavily by the Communist party and its normative view of women. Soviet magazines like Rabotnitsa (Working Woman) and Krestyanka (Peasant Woman)––published in Moscow and distributed throughout the country––estab-

lished the socialist agenda on beauty, cosmetics, and fashion. Starting in the 1920s, these magazines disseminated state propaganda regarding the working woman as naturally beautiful and financially independent. These publications juxtaposed the Soviet woman to the one in capitalist societies arguing that the latter needed to use cosmetics to attract a financially stable man for her economic survival (Attwood). The Western woman also needed to hide her poor health ensuing from the capitalist dismal life which she undoubtedly lived (Attwood). The Soviet state as a quintessential masculine figure in every Soviet family (Ashwin) exercised the regulatory "male gaze" projecting its expectations on the female figure which consequently was styled accordingly (Mulvey). The Armenian equivalent of these beauty magazines, Hayastani Ashkhatavoruhi (Հայաստանի աշխատավորուհի)— Working Women of Armenia— featured images of women consistent with the Soviet ideal of beauty.

After the dissolution of the USSR in 1991, the representation of femininity in Russia was revamped to capitalize on sexual liberation and to focus on a slim, groomed, and sexy body appearance (Davidenko). The end of the Soviet Union also gave a chance to new independent states to reevaluate the gender politics imposed by the USSR. In the Armenian example, it brought about a move toward "re-traditionalization" (Shahnazarian and Ziemer 30). In the 1990s, the traditional expectations of women's behavior and appearance in public spaces were revived and with that the respective surveillance practices were reinforced. Like in other countries of the South Caucasus, Armenian traditional values are still foundational to family and community life and decree a certain level of propriety in dress and behavior in public (Aliyeva; Ziemer; Ohanyan).

At the same time, with the end of the Cold War and more specifically after the 2018 Velvet Revolution when the first democratic government came to power, Armenia has deliberately been moving away from the Russian sphere of influence and looking to the West for economic and political alliances (Broers). Because of the country's new liberal politics, Western social media platforms like Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook have entered the Armenian media landscape to become popular spaces for public discourse (Martirosyan). Facebook and Instagram in particular have become vehicles of Western values, beauty standards included. Beauty practices have been inevitably influenced by neoliberal ideology which promotes individual responsibility and entrepreneurial selfhood (Gyulbudaghyan).

Armine Harutyunyan and Digital Lateral Surveillance

The case of the Armenian Gucci model Armine Harutyunyan sheds light on the intersection of traditional and neoliberal values in the lateral surveillance practices in online spaces. It also showcases the emergence of a new hybrid model of surveillance that is fundamentally rhetorical in nature. In September of 2019, when *Arajin News* posted a success story about Armine's rise to fame, social media comments ranged from highly approving to severely condemning. Social media users who were genuinely happy for her success and proud of the Armenian girl representing their country were fewer in number compared to those who not only publicly disliked the girl's appearance but also ridiculed her natural features (Fig. 1).

On the Facebook page of *Arajin News*, some female users posted in reaction GIFs showing their shock and disapproval of Armine's body as representative of Armenian beauty standards. Others used abusive language to pejoratively liken Armine's looks to those of animals (pig, monkey, donkey, etc.). Some social media comments went as far as to give Armine advice on how to improve her appearance. Similarly, on the Instagram page of the Italian Fashion magazine *Grazia*, Italian-speaking users called Armine "ugly," "monkey," and "monster," advised her how to style her hair, and wondered if the purpose is to provoke the viewers to think about standardized beauty standards. Social media users measured Armine's body against the neoliberal ideal of femininity and beauty. In their comments, they pronounced their judgment based on postfeminist practices of looking where women need to self-regulate their behavior and appearance in accordance with the notion of entrepreneurial selfhood—everyone can modify their body to meet the beauty standards and become a desired sexual objects. The postfeminist gaze of the surveillants has become rhetorical with its neoliberal demands on women's bodies and behavior.

Fig. 1. Armenian model Armine Harutyunyan.

Mathiesen's synopticon as a model of surveillance is at work in the case of a fashion model–many observing the few. The celebrity culture evokes reactions that redefine the surveillance practices of the panopticon in terms of numbers: the surveillants are far more than those being surveilled. Additionally, within the networked digital culture of social media, the surveillants are also in the field of visibility and therefore accountable for their looking practices. Social media users get to see each other's profiles and respond to the comments of others. Users who like the "unusual looks" of Armine and appreciate the challenge to the approved beauty standards write back to those who condemn her facial features. The visibility of social media users attributes accountability to the surveillants in their call for conformity. Those who require others to comply with the popular beauty standards are also required to conform with the neoliberal beauty standards and the associated rules of visibility as they construct their virtual selves accordingly. Moreover, with their

public gesture of interpellation they add symbolic value to their authority as surveillants since their argument is seen by the whole community.

This performance of symbolic authority in the social network space is rhetorical in its nature exactly because of the observant's self-proclaimed role as surveillants. Since social media users see the profiles of others, they are aware of their audience and can craft logical fallacies in their argumentation to specifically target other users. For example, a couple of Italian social media users, aware of the cultural background of the fashion magazine's audience, referred to a famous line from the well-known 1975 satirical film *Fantozzi* in which the main character's daughter, Mariangela Fantozzi is often likened to a baboon by her father's colleagues who find her ugly. These users commented on Armine's features with a quote from the film comparing Mariangela's to Armine's looks. A form of association fallacy, this argument utilizes a well-known cultural trope—albeit politically incorrect today to even be in circulation—and appeals to shared cultural histories as it asks other social media users to identify with the offered position on Armine's appearance. The objectification of the surveilled gains rhetorical character because it is performed in the public space of the social media, affirming the dominant masculine subject position of the surveillant.

If rhetorically successful, the postfeminist gaze objectification on social media can be internalized by the observed subject to gain self-regulating and self-surveilling power with devastating consequences for the subject's self-esteem and sense of personal worth. The debate around Armine Harutyunyan's choice by Gucci has directed the popular audience's attention to body-shaming and the mental health harm resulting from such lateral surveillance practices—many articles and social media posts discussed the case with a focus on it. Armine herself has stood up and spoken against the normalization of the postfeminist gaze. In an interview for the Italian daily newspaper *La Repubblica,* Harutyunyan states, "I am more than just a face. I ask girls not to conform" (Tibaldi). With her ongoing modeling career and media presence, Armine continues to challenge the authority of the lateral surveillants and their harmful rhetoric.

The authority of the surveillants in the synopticon, however, is self-proclaimed; it has symbolic value if the other users endorse it. When the postfeminist gaze is at work in a digital space with users emplaced in a local patriarchal context, the surveillants often fail to interpolate their digital peers. The most common comments criticizing Armine's looks evaluate her beauty per the standards of neoliberal values. However, many Armenian users are not convinced of these arguments. They celebrate the success of the model as an Armenian national and are proud of her. Armine, too, utilizes similar cultural rhetoric. In one of her Instagram posts after her international success, she says, "We need to preserve, we need to promote our culture and values." Armine's facial features, strictly speaking, belong to the set of Armenian traditional beauty standards: thick eyebrows, long dark hair, elongated face, and an Armenian trademark—an aquiline nose.

Whenever the rhetorical surveillance of the synopticon model does not persuade subjects to conform, its female version of it—the gynaeopticon— has the potential to be more effective. Female lateral surveillance relies on friendship bonds between girlfriends, and the communication happens in digital intimate

publics that regulate women's bodies, sexualities, and private life. Within such intimate environments, peer judgment can have a more pernicious effect and prove to be more persuasive. In Armine Harutyunyan's case, most of the negative comments by women on Facebook and Instagram posts announcing her success either body-shame her, inform her that her fame will be short-lived, advise her to get a rhinoplasty, or simply insult her using animal imagery to describe her looks (e.g. donkey, monkey, etc.). There are users who congratulate her, praise her unusual appearance, and often commend the fashion luxury house for featuring unique models like Armine. Some even read Gucci's novel approach to marketing as a challenge to the narrow range of beauty standards popularized through social media and the globalization of standardized makeover culture. Technologies of visual culture—social media platforms included—contribute to defining and categorizing bodies and histories and simultaneously prescribing identities and realities in relation to these definitions (Frost and Haas).

At the same time, social media as a platform for global information flow allows for the revision of power dynamics relative to identities and bodies. The model's Instagram page @DearArmine has an international audience with users from Italy, Azerbaijan, and Armenia dominating the comments. The self-proclaimed lateral surveillants rely on diverse cultural data designed to govern the activity of the surveilled. The collection of such wide international data intended to control bodies, a surveillant assemblage (Ericson and Haggerty), refers not only to Armine's appearance and gender but it also intersects with other aspects of her identity—it racializes her. In addition to hate posts about her appearance, Armine gets comments by haters from Azerbaijan—the neighboring country with which Armenia has waged several wars in recent years. These users condemn not only the girl and her appearance but view her as a representation of Armenia, and Armenians to further demonize her based on her national provenance. This type of lateral surveillance advances rhetoric that transposes the non-conformity with globalized beauty standards to national stereotypes.

The case of the Armenian model shows that rhetorical resistance can happen even in a digital world cross-pollinated by patriarchal and neoliberal values where women are surveilled both vertically and laterally. In response to the criticisms of her appearance, Armine Harutyunyan tells *La Repubblica*, "People are scared by everything that is different, there are many different ways of being beautiful" (Hughes). On her social media site, Harutyunyan continues to post images of herself that accentuate her features. Her statement and online behavior are in line with the postfeminist values where female celebrities willingly self-sexualize and self-objectify by making their bodies visible and with that gain a form of agency (Dubrofsky and Wood). Harutyunyan is determined to ignore the negative comments about her appearance. Abiding by neoliberal values of entrepreneurial selfhood and at the same time representing the traditional Armenian appearance, she declares, "It is better to be different than conform to others, even if this is not understood by everyone. My advice is to concentrate on yourself, on who you are and what you really love" (Hughes).

At the same time, Harutyunyan is a female model from a racialized group, and her self-sexualization and self-objectification has different implications in the digital environment. Dubrofsky and Wood analyze the situated and contextual racialization of Armenian American model Kim Kardashian to show that bodies

of women of color are always an object of male desire since they are conceived to possess inherent and animalistic sexuality. Such bodies of color are subject to different kinds of postfeminist imperative since they do not need to self-sexualize. Yet, racialized female models continue to do so by posting sexualized images of themselves, and with that, Dubrofsky and Wood argue, they perpetuate white supremacist rhetoric. Harutyunyan, however, does not fall into the category of inherently sexually appealing female models. But she has captured the public attention with the debate over her unconventional beauty, and therefore is better positioned to produce powerful rhetoric in resistance to female lateral surveillance. She speaks and behaves using neoliberal language and values, willingly making her unusual appearance visible to the postfeminist gaze and at the same time resisting its face-shifting power.

Armine Harutyunyan's story teaches us an important lesson about our agency and about the power of the rhetorical choices we make in seemingly mundane interactions in online spaces. Resisting female lateral surveillance in the digital environment means challenging the rhetoric of those who partake in postfeminist gaze practices and allowing space for difference and non-conformity. To counter rhetorical lateral surveillance means to regain control of how through discourse and technology we construct our bodies and identities. When female users on social media interact with others, they need to be aware of the complex relationship between gender, sex, sexuality, and technologies with the associated effects on the physical and mental health of young women. As individual users and as part of larger digital communities, we have the choice to revise our relationship with technology to challenge stereotypes and advance values that celebrate our individual differences, prioritizing unconventional ways of being and resisting conformity.

Conclusion

As Armine Harutyunyan's story unfolds in public online spaces, it effectively demonstrates the way the postfeminist gaze performs rhetorical lateral surveillance on the female body. Moreover, it represents a battle between neoliberal values and traditional normative expectations in the global context of social media. The female subject will continue experiencing lateral surveillance practices if she allows the postfeminist gaze to control and modify her body and identity, accepting the disciplinary power of the self-proclaimed surveillants. The visibility of the surveillant and the surveilled on social media further complicates the predicament of women, especially in situations where local cultural practices of looking and controlling intersect with global trends in makeover culture and its lateral surveillance.

Yet, the female subject can make rhetorical choices that allow her through discourse and technology to regain control over the construction of her body, identity, and realities. Armine Harutyunyan's case illustrates that techno-feminist resistance is possible even in the intricate context of patriarchal society, which employs neoliberal ideology to uphold its traditional values. To further explore feminist digital resistance tactics, we can look at Schoettler's study of feminist activists and learn how to create affective counterpublics, enact community care, and embrace productive discomfort. We can also explore strategies to exercise control over how we present ourselves in social media spaces, as we acknowledge the pitfalls of discursive

dissonance arising from our inability to control our image and its digital circulation (McGill). Most importantly, as female participants in online communities, we need to understand that we have the power to challenge stereotypes and celebrate our differences, promoting unconventional ways of looking and being. Only in this way can we regain agency over our bodies and identities, allowing us to construct realities that reject conformity and the regulatory power of the postfeminist gaze.

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Surveillance in Schools

Cohering Marginality: A Thematic Analysis of Mentorship and Counterveillance Among Black Women Scholars in Rhetoric and Writing Studies

Christopher J. Morris

Abstract: Racialized workplace surveillance negatively affects many Black women who work and attend school at U.S. colleges and universities. Many Black women profiled, isolated, and aggressed upon on the basis on racial identity have reported both emotional and professional distress in academia. At the same time, however, cultures of Black mentorship in higher education provide professional development and networks of care that counteract racialized workplace surveillance. This article presents a thematic analysis of interviews with 10 Black women scholars in rhetoric and writing studies to further explore the discourses and practices that actively sustain positive Black cultural, scholarly, and professional output at universities and colleges. The results of the analysis: (1) demonstrate Black mentorship as a form of counterveillance called "cohering marginality" and (2) offer themes and categories that can further support additional inquiry into cultures of resistance to surveillance.

Introduction: Black Mentorship and Racialized Workplace Surveillance in Higher Education

Surveillance doesn't only produce victimhood and voyeurism. Surveillance also inspires cultures of resistance, care, and expression. From that perspective, this article presents an analysis of how Black women scholars in rhetoric and writing studies practice cultures of mentorship that invert racialized workplace surveillance. This inversion, which I term "cohering marginality," constitutes a form of counterveillance. Steve Mann defines counterveillance as "camera-blinding technologies" (7). I reinterpret counterveillance, however, through the intersectional lenses of Black gender and Black feminist-womanist rhetoric by conducting a thematic analysis of interviews with ten Black woman scholars. The results of my analysis show counterveillance as sets of rhetorical and cultural practices that develop in the peripheries of institutionalized gaze even as the surveilled are being watched.

Being watched is pervasive, for some more than others. Surveillance in the workplace is consistently used against Black women, especially in predominantly white work environments that monitor, evaluate, and negatively influence Black women through often subtle yet hostile applications of "professionalism." In these hostile environments, Black women's appearances, interactions, emotions, and ways of speaking are often

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policed—through isolation, microaggressions, documentation, and reporting, among other mechanisms—in conjunction with white middle-class norms that legitimate workplace discrimination (Williams). Such workplace policing is a form of "racializing surveillance," which Simone Browne defines as "when enactments of surveillance reify boundaries along racial lines, thereby reifying race, and where the outcome of this is often discriminatory and violent treatment" (8). Browne suggests also that racializing surveillance is a "technology of social control where surveillance practices, policies, and performances concern the production of norms pertaining to race and exercise a 'power to define what is in or out of place'" (17). This phenomenon is particularly present in higher education, where "Black women face unfair demotion, threats of job loss, or [have] changed jobs more often… as a result of workplace bullying" (Hollis 83). Those dynamics facilitate burnout and resignation among Black professionals due in significant part to perceived pressures to "work twice as hard" as their white colleagues (DeCuir-Gunby et al.). These factors have been found to reduce the likelihood that Black women educators and administrators actively confront racial discrimination.

Conversely, Black mentorship thrives as a corrective to workplace discrimination and as counterveillance to institutional surveillance. In contrast to racialized workplace surveillance, mentorship among Black scholars and educational professionals fosters community (DeCuir-Gunby et al.). Several scholars highlight these communities and illustrate, correspondingly, how Black mentorship creates and nurtures networks of care among fellow Black scholars and professionals (Brown and Mendenhall; Kelly and Fries-Britt). In technical communication, rhetoric, and writing studies, similar recent work highlights the importance of Black narratives, discourses, and rhetorics in supporting Black mentorship and vice versa (Gonzales et al.; Ore et al.). This article contributes to existing scholarship on the affordances of Black mentorship in academia by examining Black mentorship practices and discourses with surveillance in mind. Simultaneously, I join other scholars (e.g., Cramer; Gonzales and Deckard) who explore Black cultures in rhetorical surveillance studies. In the following sections: I discuss the Black feminist-womanist theories that influence my analysis; next, I provide additional details about the interviews I conducted; then, I present and discuss the findings from my analysis; and, finally, I conclude with brief suggestions for future research.

Theoretical Framework: Counterveillance, Black Gender, and Black Feminist-Womanist Rhetoric

Counterveillance comprises practices that render surveillance defective. As previously mentioned, Mann defines counterveillance as "camera-blinding technologies" (7). Jennifer Gradecki and Derek Curry define counterveillance similarly as "measures taken to block both surveillance and sousveillance" including "software for anonymization and encryption, and…going 'off the grid'" (6). Counterveillant output ultimately inverts surveillance. Michael Welch takes up this question of inversion, writing that counterveillance "consists of two major inversions [of surveillance]: (1) turn the prison inside out; and (2) watch the watchers" (304). The first inversion occurs when institutional or unfair conditions are made known to the public or to broader audiences, the second when "key officials governing the penal apparatus themselves are

monitored by a collective of prisoners, ex-cons, and activists" (304). For Welch, these two inversions initiate movements toward reform and toward a kind of counter-ethics against unjust surveillance.

While Welch's theory derives from analyzing a particular political movement in France (the Groupe d'Information sur les Prisons), I'm interested in how Black cultures in U.S. higher education develop amid their own moves toward counter-ethics against surveillance. I adopt the concept of *counterveillance* (as opposed to *countersurveillance*) since the discourses and cultural practices of Black women discussed in this project do not explicitly observe, record, or expose oppressors. Instead, interview participants shared stories in which they and other Black scholars were the principal agents and actants in their own worldviews. Thus, I argue that counterveillance comprises also the cultural, technical, and epistemological output generated as the surveilled go unseen and/or make surveillance obsolete or counterintuitive. Further, I introduce a third inversion to counterveillance—*cohering marginality*—which comprises epistemic production initiated and sustained in the coordinated cultures of the surveilled.

Importantly, counterveillance relies on the social coordination of what Michel Foucault termed "counter-conduct" (Welch 305). Foucault assesses that "the tactical immanence of both resistance and counter-conduct to their respective fields of action should not lead one to conclude that they are simply a passive underside, a merely negative or reactive phenomenon, a kind of disappointing after-effect" (Davidson 27). In other words, counter-conduct is not simply disobedience, flight-or-fight, or documentation. Rather, counter-conduct—the world-building inversion of surveillance—is the conceptual, ethical, and attitudinal forces that bring about alternative paradigms in which marginality coheres into a distinct culture. According to Arnold I. Davidson, for Foucault, "gay culture in the widest sense of the term" therefore constituted a counter-conduct because such "relations create a short-circuit, and introduce love where there should be law, rule, habit" (33). Cultures of Black woman mentorship function along similar lines, as mentorship helps Black scholars enact networks of care against anti-Black surveillance in the academy.

Counterveillance, though, is an established tradition in Black and African-American cultural history, wherein spaces like kitchens and barbershops enable Black communicators to engage informative networks of care away from hostile gaze. Olga Idriss Davis explains that, because plantation kitchens were racialized, separate spaces that were at once both surveilled and closed off, "The kitchen provided a space in which black women passed on survival skills to their daughters and helped them develop ways to confront oppressive conditions" (Davis, "Kitchen" 369). This cultural richness prompts comparisons between Black womanist kitchen legacies on the one hand and Black woman mentorship, scholarship, and resistance in the academy on the other. In that regard, due to anti-Blackness that devalues Black cultures and languages in higher education, "As the tenure clock ticks away, oftentimes African American women professors who rise to the challenge of active research, innovative teaching methods, and grantsmanship still are castigated" (Davis, "Kitchen" 377). As a result, Black feminist-womanist cultures in academia take on the structure of the "kitchen"—productive and generative spaces that are simultaneously separate and surveilled. Nevertheless, the kitchen was a locus of Black agency where "the creation of food was a rhetorical act of nurturance and

care, creative genius, and survival" (Davis, "Kitchen" 368). Black feminist-womanist discourse and rhetoric among Black scholars reflect similar functions of care, innovation, and survival. More recently, for example, scholars like Carmen Kynard, Vorris L. Nunley, and Douglas M. Walls have articulated various versions of "hush harbors" in Black educational and professional practice, with hush harbors functioning as Black "safe spaces" that cultivate resistant practices to surveillance.

When it comes to racialized surveillance of Black women, intersectionality offers a thought-provoking lens with which to consider the theoretical capacities of Black feminist-womanist discourse to illuminate cultures of counterveillance. Indeed, hush harbors are spatial and rhetorical instantiations of Black counterveillance. Yet, neither hush harbors nor counterveillances are configured or expressed uniformly. Kitchens, for example, have traditionally been typed as predominantly female, whereas barbershops have typically been discussed as male-dominated spaces. The issue of Black gender in surveillance studies warrants further consideration. By exploring how Blackness (un)does gender, we can explore also how Black counterveillance undoes surveillance. Accordingly, what I seek to present in this article is ultimately a Black feminist-womanist theory of surveillance by introducing cohering marginality as a form of counterveillance.

To be sure, Black women's experiences in higher education constitute an ethical imperative with respect to institutional surveillance. Intersectionality has become widely institutionalized in the U.S. academy, such that Black women in university spaces are often profiled and operationalized on behalf of diversity initiatives and curricular "progress" (Nash). From this perspective, racialized workplace surveillance and intersectionality in higher education are thematically and practically linked. On this front, Jennifer C. Nash asserts that "black women are both desired and disavowed in the academy" (19). At the same time, however, Black woman scholars continually develop sets of ethics, discourses, and cultural practices that buttress Black well-being against fetishistic surveillance.

Black gender functions as an organizing principle for anti-Black surveillance as well as for Black counterveillance. Patrice D. Douglass argues, "The core of Black feminist concerns is how to account for the gravity of gender violences that lack a proper name" (116). As a Black (male) writing professor, I want to acknowledge my own perspective here: my interest in Black feminism-womanism with respect to this project is to familiarize the gravity of gender counterveillances. Black gender reveals how Blackness and anti-Blackness operate at more impactful levels than those of sexed difference. Douglass formulates Black gender as "the pinnacle of gendered and sexual (non)being," and offers that, "to bifurcate Black gender, Black women up against Black men, achieves nothing more than reifying gender stratifications that historically and experientially have never been made available to Black people" (107, 109). Thus, in analyzing the discourses of Black woman scholars in rhetoric and writing studies, like Douglass, I view "Blackness as theorem that is not excessive to the concern of gender but essential to its operative modalities," with Black feminism-womanism "as both a corrective to the assumptive logic of nonblack gender concerns and a theory of violence that expands and challenges the manner in which gendered violence is assumed to appear in the world"

(110). Grounded in an understanding that violence and surveillance are concomitant, my theoretical framework rereads Douglass slightly and suggests that Black feminism-womanism undoes the assumptive logic of nonblack gender concerns vis-à-vis surveillance. Black feminism-womanism intervenes in (counter)surveillance in ways that expand and challenge the ways gendered (counter)surveillance is assumed to function.

Black women's rhetoric formulates at the boundaries of seen and unseen, public and private, as Black feminist-womanist responses to surveillance represent a peculiar case of subjectification under surveillance, because of how gender and race occlude Black legibility. Davis offers that Black women's "experience of struggle and survival by way of telling our story in our own discourse continues to illuminate the dynamics between the public and private spheres of social reality" ("Theorizing" 36). Meanwhile, universalism obscures rather than reveals how surveillance operates. John Gilliom agrees: "Until we are able to generate sufficient research to make plausible sense of how differently situated people—welfare mothers, prisoners, students, middle-class professionals—speak of and respond to their various surveillance settings, I would argue that we are fundamentally unable to define the powers of surveillance or, indeed, to devise a meaningful account of what surveillance is" (126). But, while universalism occludes the limits of (or lack of limits to) surveillance, Black gender gives shape to the enveloping boundaries (i.e., cohering marginality) of counterveillance.

In a Black feminist-womanist framework, counterveillance is not merely the act of hiding or of sharing secrets. Instead, Black womanist counterveillance entails a methodization of time and space that push time and space to the outer edges of social relation where resistance can become an ethical and culturally sustaining shape. Rhetorically, this shape manifests as what Evelynn Hammonds calls "politics of articulation" that "build on the interrogation of what makes it possible for black women to speak and act" (Hammonds 141). This project aspires to the politics of articulation and interrogates how Black woman scholars in rhetoric and writing studies use mentorship to make their own possibilities for speaking and acting. The next section discusses my methods for data collection and interpretation for ten interviews about Black mentorship.

Methodology: Thematic Analysis of Semi-Structured Interviews

The interviews analyzed for this article were initially collected as part of a separate project conducted by myself and Dr. Laura L. Allen, my current colleague at York University in 2023. The project was titled "Rhetorical Kinship and Narrative Ethnographies of Black Mentorship in Composition Studies." We published our initial analysis as "Black Professional Ethos: Exploring Black Mentorship Through Narrative Ethnography in Technical Communication" (2024). Dr. Allen and I conducted ten semi-structured interviews that featured a protocol of five standard open-ended questions with varied ethnographic follow-up questions. The five-question protocol was as follows:

- Tell us a little bit about yourself. What is your current position and field of study?

- How did you get into your field, and how did Black faculty members or other Black mentors inspire you to join your field?

- How have you been mentored by other Black scholarship or work in the field? Maybe you've never met these particular people, but you feel mentored by them, having engaged with their scholarship.

- In what ways have Black faculty members or Black educational professionals contributed to your sense of belonging within your discipline?

- How do you see your work in the field as furthering a sense of community or family among Black professionals?

We recruited participants with snowball sampling via email and social media. Participants were recruited under the following criteria: self-identify as Black; have published academic, peer-reviewed research; and possess a PhD in composition studies or related fields. All respondents live and work in the United States or Canada, identified as Black women, and were active scholars in Technical and Professional Communication as well as in Rhetoric, Composition, and Literacy. Of the ten participants: seven were assistant professors; two were associate or full professors; and one was a full-time contract professor.

I coded and conducted thematic analysis on each interview. My descriptive codes were: <sight>, <sound>, <presence>, <recognition>, and <belonging>. With those codes in mind, the goal of my analysis is to consider how Black woman scholars in rhetoric and writing studies might conceptualize mentorship and professional development as forms of counterveillance, particularly my suggestion of a third inversion—cohering marginality. Summarized in Table 1 and explored in further detail in the next section, my analysis seeks to understand how such conceptualizations might reflect or enrich Black feminist-womanist frameworks in rhetorical surveillance studies.

Analysis: Themes and Categories of Cohering Marginality

Racial Profiling and Institutionalized Isolation: Racialized Workplace Surveillance of Black Women in Rhetoric and Writing Studies

For research participants in this project, racialized workplace surveillance manifested primarily in two related forms: racial profiling and institutionalized isolation. Here, I use *racial profiling* to refer to institutional assumptions and treatment based on racial identity. Racial profiling has the surveillance effect of subjects internalizing being watched while also having their behaviors, identities, and worldviews disciplined in line with carceral ideologies of violence and control. Meanwhile, institutionalized isolation of stigmatized subjects makes surveilling those subjects less difficult (e.g., solitary confinement). Moreover, surveillance of such subjects can create other isolating effects (e.g., electronic monitoring bracelets), cleaving the surveilled from social communities.

Overall, participants in this project shared stories of racial profiling that ranged from name discrimination in applying for jobs to civic neglect of Black neighborhoods in which participants were raised. In higher education, racial profiling often takes the forms of denigration, stereotyping, and linguistic discrim-

ination. One senior scholar says that she and her students feel that "they must master standard American English." "Otherwise," she explains, "they can't even get their feet in the door anywhere to make an impact on people's views about Blacks, about Black language, or anything else." Another participant echoes a similar experience with racial profiling: "For writing in general, the messaging that you get if you are Black from the earliest points is that you can't write like you talk. And because something about how you talk is not proper, not smart…that if you do, it belongs in some creative context." A third scholar mentions that she had been stereotyped based upon the way she speaks, noting "how people are surprised [at] how I sound or trying to figure out, 'why do you sound like that?'"

Meanwhile, for participants, racism and racial profiling are institutional experiences, not just cultural or interpersonal phenomena. One scholar says her predominantly Black workplace struggled at times to attract new faculty because potential hires seem to be "looking for people to be better prepared and white." Another participant expresses that anti-Blackness and profiling can proliferate even amid institutional gestures toward diversity. She describes an occasion in graduate school when an advisor dismissed her concerns as being similar to another Black graduate student who was also dismissed: "We were then just enveloped into this one Black woman. We were gelled as one Black person in the department." For this scholar, the interaction communicated a reductionist message: "Oh, well, you're a Black woman and so you're all kind of the same." One scholar offers her own critique of institutional diversity: "There are particular types of non-white bodies that are embraced." The same scholar also mentions that, as an emerging Black academic with interests in hip-hop, she felt stereotyped and typecast within her department: "Some of the faculty there said I wouldn't make it because I do Black things," she recalls. "I didn't want to be pigeonholed with just hip-hop studies because I find that once you do hip-hop studies, people just think that that's it." Importantly, the racial profiling and workplace surveillance experienced by the participants in this project hinged on hypervisibility brought about by institutionalized isolation.

Many respondents suggest that being the only or one of few Black scholars in particular spaces facilitates racialized workplace surveillance. One scholar notes, "My education has always been in predominantly white spaces, so…I didn't know anything else… just felt like, well, that's just how it is…I will always be the minority in a lot of these professional spaces." For her, such feelings of isolation in her graduate education contributed to an antagonistic relationship with her department. "Even though I was progressing and reading other scholarship," she says, "I still don't feel like I belonged because I was still attending a predominantly white institution." Notably, institutionalized isolation marks some participants for specific, racialized departmental tasks. One scholar expresses that "as a Black woman in the faculty, the only Black woman in the rhetoric and composition faculty specifically, I would be asked to do lots of things."

A senior scholar, however, grounds the work she does mentoring other Black faculty as a corrective to institutionalized isolation. She explains, "There's not enough of us. There needs to be more of us in this field." Several other scholars echo similar sentiments. To further elaborate on Black correctives to surveillance, the next subsection (Table 1) provides greater detail into the themes that emerged, as Black woman scholars dis-

cuss how mentorship sustains their cultural and professional development, which I argue constitutes a form of counterveillance.

Table 1. Cohering Marginality: Categories, Themes, and Sample Coded Text

Theoretical Construct: **Cohering Marginality**			
Epistemic production initiated and sustained in the coordinated behaviors and cultures of the surveilled			
Category 1: **Inverting Profiling**		Category 2: **Inverting Isolation**	
Embracing rather than avoiding surveilled identities and behaviors		*Creating new communities and cultures to counteract surveillance*	
Theme	*Sample Coded Text*	*Theme*	*Sample Coded Text*
Visualizing Self in Others. *"Seeing" and "Finding" other Black scholars and faculty convinced emerging Black scholars as to the possibilities of Black academic communities.*	*I go to this conference. I'm seeing all these Black scholars, all these Black faculty. I'm like, "They all have PhDs?!…I had never been around that many Black PhDs, that many Black grad students in the field*	**Methodizing Talk.** *Scholars utilized informal discussion as a way to exchange information and ideas and to provide practical and emotional support.*	*…just those conversations with the two or three Black graduate students. It was really, really important to me. And that not only gave me a sense of belonging, but I hope it gave them a sense of belonging as well*
Activating Aesthetics. *Scholars intended to use Black artistic and visual expressions to raise consciousness.*	*…some of the questions and ideas…about African-American rhetoric and aesthetics, all of those things. I was curious about design and questions in public art*	**Actualizing Solidarity**. *By interacting with other Black scholars in-person, scholars were able to experience Black scholarly communities.*	*…this is not a separate world anymore. It's not just what I read in the classroom. These are real people behind things who are moving and changing the field around me, and I can be a part of that conversation*

Talking Back. *By studying the legitimacy and efficacy of Black languages, scholars sought to counteract linguistic discrimination against Black ways of speaking.*	*…this is not bad English or ghetto speech or any such thing. This language, which scholars call variously African-American Vernacular English, Black English, Black English vernacular and so forth, is systematic*	**Mentoring Multi-directionally.** *Scholars remedied isolation by mentoring and building communities across disciplines and hierarchies.*	*…mentoring goes both ways. It's not just somebody mentoring me, it's me mentoring somebody else. It goes both ways in terms of that sense of belonging and makes the field feel less isolated*

Though the following analysis is typified and categorized (in line with protocols of thematic analysis), for me, perhaps the most edifying aspect of this project was how richly and distinctly each participant's stories emerged. I've extracted commonalities for the sake of theoretical articulation; at the same time, however, a similar project could just as impactfully explicate differences in participant narratives for the sake of theoretical disarticulation—what Evelynn Hammonds might call a "different geometry"—which is its own ethical imperative. Especially where intersectionality is concerned, Nash for example, warns that sometimes "intersectionality produces an account of power that fails to 'historicize and theorize' and instead simply reproduces a thin conception of power invested in precisely the concepts it aspires to deconstruct" (16). While engaging in this research, I've appreciated both the subtle and the profound variations in how each participant inverts racialized surveillance based on their own viewpoints, emotions, and histories regarding mentorship and professional development. The act of noticing and recognizing as much functioned as a conceptual mirror whereby I could also process my own relationship to racialized surveillance and methods used to counteract it. (Writing this article is one such method.) This self-reflexive position also helped me conduct these interviews and read participant narratives with added sensitivity. As I considered the call for papers for this Cluster Conversation and, later, as I coded and analyzed the transcripts, I continually wondered, "What might it mean to be reflected, to be watched, to avoid being seen, to be invisible, or to be disappeared when searching for yourself?"

In that respect, and with differences and divergences among participants in mind, this project for me (in much the same way mentorship functioned for our participants) is a manifestation of mutual vulnerability and witnessing—those "expansive conceptions of relationality, encouraging us to view ourselves as deeply embedded in the world, and thus as deeply connected to others, effectively exploding the hold romantic and familial have had on conceptions of intimacy, vulnerability, and relatedness" (Nash 117). Indeed, this project initially began with my and Dr. Allen's mutual interest in Black kinships, which have been pivotal to our personal and professional identities. Accordingly, in the analysis that follows, I've intended to present participant voices in ways that reflect interconnectedness, openness, and relationality—qualities that I hope may continue to counter the deleterious effects of institutional surveillance.

Black Women's Mentorship and Counterveillance in Rhetoric and Writing Studies: Themes of Cohering Marginality

Category 1: Inverting Profiling
Theme 1: Visualizing Self in Others

According to participants, "seeing" and "finding" other Black scholars and faculty convinced emerging Black scholars as to the possibilities of Black academic communities. For example, one scholar said, "Seeing a familiar face or seeing a face that looks like me and also the Black technical and professional communication research group…has tremendously made me feel like I belong within this sub-area of technical communication and professional writing, because that also is a predominantly white field historically—still is." Conversely, as exemplified by the sample coded text for this theme in Table 1, social interaction with other Black scholars signified transformative turning points in participant narratives. As this participant shares, the recognition that came to mind was, "They all have PhDs?!" Seeing other Black women in professional contexts encouraged many participants to pursue their own professional goals. One senior scholar described how seeing former politician Barbara Jordan deliver a speech on television inspired her own scholarly interests in Black woman rhetorics. Some scholars also mentioned the benefits of being "seen" by other scholars, particularly being seen by senior scholars who provided valuable feedback on papers, introduced emerging scholars to others in the field, and pointed emerging scholars in the direction of helpful resources.

Additionally, numerous participants identified supportive Black communities and relevant Black scholarship on the basis of their being classified as Black. Indeed, for participants, "looking" for Black scholars functioned as a survival method amid institutionalized isolation. One participant expressed defiance about being isolated in a predominantly white institution. "That shit didn't stop me," she said, "I was about to go find where the Black people was at." For that same participant, seeking out other Black scholars manifested in prioritizing scholarship by Black woman writers in technical communication, because she wanted to engage Black issues in the field. About noted Black woman scholar Miriam F. Williams, the participant recalls, "I used to read all of her work, and I could see myself in this."

Theme 2: Activating Aesthetics

Several participants expressed interest in and commitment to Black art, most notably to music. Some participants study Black art as part of their scholarship. Others noted an intimate, aesthetic relationship to Black music and Black art. For some participants, music is a shared interest that facilitates social bonding. For example, a senior scholar described an informal musical act she produced with other Black woman scholars in their department as part of a group gathering. "We were the 'Motown Mamas,'" this senior scholar reflected. "We had the feather boas and the full-length gloves. And I remember us being out in the English department outer office practicing our choreography." Another participant noted that her scholarly interests are rooted in her passion for music: "I love talking about music and sort of being able to have a conversation through music and unpack those things." Similarly, one scholar expressed a scholarly

and communitarian appreciation for hip-hop, offering that she sees the potential of hip-hop as "a cultural tool in the Black community that is teaching youth responsibility, mentorship, and leadership."

Theme 3: Talking Back

By studying the legitimacy and efficacy of Black languages, scholars interviewed for this project sought to counteract linguistic discrimination against Black ways of speaking. One senior scholar concluded that, with her scholarship, she hopes students will understand that "my language is a real language, so be proud of your language. Don't be embarrassed about your language." Indeed, participants broadly valued "authenticity," "boldness," and "personality" in their academic writing as both resistance and refutation to anti-Black, Eurocentric modes of communication. As one participant explained, "I'm interested in how expertise sounds through the voice of a Black person." These methods of "talking with" reflected scholarly interest in "talking back," with numerous scholars studying how Black communicators use language and rhetoric for social justice. One senior scholar discussed her research: "I was interested in how Black folk use reading and writing to create community [and] how people use writing in their communities." Another participant described her research interest in Ida B. Wells and "how she used language to fight lynching." One scholar concluded that "speaking up or speaking to an issue can also create change."

Category 2: Inverting Isolation
Theme 1: Methodizing Talk

Scholarly conversation is often framed as responding to claims in a series of academic articles. For participants in our project, however, conversation is understood primarily as an informal method of care in which Black scholars exchange critical information about important scholarship, institutional resources and processes, and developments in the field. Moreover, with racialized workplace surveillance in mind, scholars used more intimate, informal discussion to provide emotional support as well as practical guidance for navigating hostile institutional dynamics. One scholar prioritized the need "to actually have conversations with [other Black scholars], like 'how they treatin' you?' kind of discussions. Or meeting the students of other scholars, not necessarily of Black scholars, but meeting their Black students who I got to sit down and have conversations with." Another participant said, "To be vulnerable is really important to have these really tough conversations…with other Black women." That same scholar noted the value of gossip as "being able to strategize outside of the institution…through coffee shops, through going on walks with just another colleague." She described such communication practices as "really helpful." Additionally, one participant stressed the importance of peer mentorship as a dynamic in which emerging scholars could debate, share resources, hold each other accountable, and engage "good Southern conversation"—all of which were key for founding a "community of Black scholars doing the work across institutions and staying connected."

Theme 2: Actualizing Solidarity

As noted in Table 1, this theme references a phenomenon in which, by interacting with other Black scholars in-person, scholars experience Black scholarly communities. The hallmark of this experience is the move from knowing Black scholars based solely on their written work to knowing Black scholars as individ-

uals and later as members of an actual social community. Many participants moved from seeking fellow Black scholars to interacting with Black scholarly communities, which allowed for solidarity and community cohesion. In so doing, moreover, they effectively counteracted institutionalized isolation. One emerging scholar said that, upon meeting an established Black scholar, "I knew from the beginning that I was going to have a community…seeing her in person. Seeing her in the flesh was also an important moment." Participants also noted that mentors emphasized practices of care rather than competition among Black scholars. Such practices of care included creating writing groups, holding social events, and sharing opportunities and resources. As one participant noted, a prominent Black scholar helped students to prioritize that "it was important to stay together, to help each other, to support each other, and to award each other's accomplishments."

Theme 3: Mentoring Multi-directionally

Scholars remedy isolation by mentoring and building communities across disciplines and hierarchies. According to our participants, due to professional isolation and systemically low representation in the general field of rhetoric and writing studies, mentorship and community support rely on a networked ethos that transcends physical location, disciplinary membership, and career status. A senior scholar noted that "particularly at research institutions [and at] predominantly white institutions, one of the ways for me not to feel so isolated was to get to know people in other disciplines." Another participant expressed that "the Black woman mentors in my life are not in the field or not recognized by the field…Black people don't have that privacy or that privilege to stay in a particular place and get those accolades. That's just not our life. Everything is intermingled." For these reasons, that same participant assessed that for Black scholars "our mentorship extends beyond institutionalities [and] being able to go outside of where they can see me has helped develop my strategies and my tactics to get around things." Indeed, for many of participants, Black counterveillance means working beyond conventional institutionality as a way of building mentorship, supporting ethical outcomes, and avoiding institutional gaze. As one participant said, "Our work as researchers shouldn't just stay within the field. It should help the greater good, the greater community."

Conclusion

I believe cohering marginality as well as the categories and themes I've articulated thus far have wide-ranging implications for further consideration in rhetorical surveillance studies. The analysis I present in this article was limited to ten Black woman scholars in rhetoric and writing studies. Accordingly, to further explore issues related to counterveillance and cohering marginality, more work can be done to consider how additional Black communities as well as other surveilled communities in different domains also build cultures of counterveillance. In the case of this project, especially with Black intersectionality in mind, the themes described thus far signal Blackness's "moment of suspension" as respondents detailed how their lived experiences—sometimes willfully, sometimes not—collapsed boundaries between public and private, seen and unseen.

For participants, with their practices and cultures of mentorship, what was silenced was heard. What was isolated was networked. What was denigrated was elevated. What was marginalized cohered. This dynamic further demonstrates how conceptualizing resistance to surveillance "through the history of black enslavement and its attendant practices of captivity opens up the possibilities for fugitive acts of escape, resistance, and the productive disruptions that happen when blackness enters the frame" (Browne 164). More than that, however, cohering marginality gestures toward the valences that flourish outside the frame, displaced by the circumscriptive limits imposed by gaze. In our interviews, relationships within communities of Black scholars and mentors were not simply defined as colleagues or friends. These relationships, taking forms of rhetorical and fictive kinship, were routinely defined as "brothers" and "sisters," with many participants noting a "family connection" with other Black scholars. Cohering marginality was a "family" affair as institutionalized strangers were (un)made into familiar kin, an inversion in the subjectification of surveillance. As one senior scholar in an interview explained, "I think in terms of my scholarship, I hope that when people read it, they feel a sense of, "Oh. That kind of speaks to me. It speaks to my community. It speaks to my people."

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Writing Centers Are Watching: Surveillance, Colonialism, and Data Tracking

Kelin Loe, Angela Stalcup, Shannon Shepherd, and Breeanna Hicks

Abstract: Writing center studies is currently reckoning with the complicit relationship between writing centers and the state. Here, we continue that work, inquiring specifically into digital surveillance as a colonial technology. Using the framework of feminist, queer, and decolonial surveillance studies, we critique examples of data collection in our Writing Center and offer takeaways to help writing centers reduce their dependence on data-based surveillance.

Writing center studies is currently reckoning with its complicit relationship with the state. Here, we, folks from the Texas A&M University-Commerce Writing Center continue that work, inquiring specifically into digital surveillance. This project grew out of a Fall 2023 semester-long, all-staff consultant Inquiry Group focusing on Artificial Intelligence (AI) and privacy. Conversations in these weekly meetings prompted us to reflect on the different data we collect: the stories it can tell, our justifications for collecting it, and ultimately the ways this collection positions our writing center to work for sovereignty. Knowing we needed to perform a deeper self-assessment of our writing center, and understanding collaborative work as a tenet of feminist research methodology—particularly when that work requires space and time for strategic collaboration (Kirsch and Royster)—we formed a research group in Spring 2024 consisting of the faculty writing

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center director, undergraduate consultants, and the graduate assistant director.[1] Together, we examined the forms we use to collect writer data and present here our preliminary conclusions.

Part 1: Surveillance as a Modality of Colonization

Reckoning with our writing center's complicity with the state requires grappling with the colonization inherent in our values and practices. For decolonial feminist scholar María Lugones, colonialism manages populations by "articulat[ing]" "all control over sex, subjectivity, authority, and labor … around it[self]" (2007, 191). Colonizers manipulate and reiterate colonized peoples' experiences of their self-identity (including racial- and gender-identities), their work, and their agency. Colonization is predicated on surveillance. Any populations that are not easily made docile, whose difference might interrupt the homogenizing processes of assimilation, are problems for sovereignty (Dubrofsky and Magnet 2). Due to this threat, the state seeks to extinguish their difference, if not their existence (Dubrofsky and Magnet 22). The ever-present sense of being monitored causes subjects—othered and not—to "police" their own behavior (Dubrofsky and Magnet 2). Thus, surveillance is essential to imperialist control. "Surveillance" often carries with it a sense of novelty, of emerging technology like facial recognition, data harvesting, fitness tracking, etc. Although new technology certainly increases the modalities of surveillance, Simone Browne reminds us surveillance long predates the internet (8–9). For example, slave ships were constructed to allow white traders to observe stolen people (33), and New York's eighteenth-century lantern-laws "mandated enslaved people carry lit candles as they moved about the city after dark" (11)—a surefire method of making those visible who most likely didn't want to be visible.

If colonization is dependent on surveillance, then surveillance is dependent on visuality, both physically and metaphorically. Ahmad Sa'di explains that the colonization process first begins with categorization of populations, making large groups into smaller groups (152). In the wake of the Indian and Jamaican rebellions against British colonizers (1857, 1865), the British categorized population groups, especially those "inimical to colonial rule, visible and easily identifiable to the colonial gaze" (153). They photographed native peoples and circulated the images as examples of different populations, thus allowing fellow surveillants to essentialize the native groups from single images (153). The colonial gaze is the surveillant gaze. Living in that line-of-sight places populations in categories of "seen" and "not seen." Christina V. Cedillo complicates the seen/not-seen binary clearly:

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1   We combine feminist collaborative practices with an equitable approach to labor. We share this to explain that our goal was equity in labor over equity in the representation of our voices in this article. Everyone participated in the research and development of ideas. Kelin (faculty director) and Angela (undergraduate consultant) did a majority of the further research, drafting, and revising. Kelin, Angela, and Shannon (graduate consultant) performed the self-assessment described below. Breeanna (graduate assistant director) assisted with revision and editing. When we share reflections directly, we do so with first-person pronouns as an indication of who is speaking. All labor performed by the consultants was paid work time for the Writing Center (and one long night of revising while attending the South Central Writing Center' Association Conference together). Because I, Kelin, have spent the most time with this piece, and because it takes up administrative decisions made by me, my perspective is most prevalent. Our research, self-assessment, and responses to what we learned were collaborative, and Angela and Shannon's voices below represent those conversations.

> Invisibility can simultaneously protect vulnerable people and render them susceptible to violence; visibility can invite public support while increasing surveillance and policing. The experiences of marginalized people show that relationships to in/visibility cannot be generalized. (203)

Visibility causes both safety and danger, and invisibility causes both danger and safety. A population's vulnerability is determined by their value to the state. Under colonization, literacy performance creates in/visibility. In schooling systems, the colonial searchlight is trained on the uptake of the colonizer's language (Saʿdi 155). This practice is still true in U.S. education. While teaching in a Detroit high school, April Baker-Bell received "pressure" from administration to teach students to use Standard American English, or as they put it, the "'language of school'" (4). She said that other teachers did not understand "that standard English is a byproduct of white supremacy" (6). Baker-Bell names this colonizer language "White Mainstream English" (WME), emphasizing the white normativity of the language instead of the invisible ubiquity implied by "Standard American" (3–4). Of course, WME is the primary modality of writing center work.

Recent writing center (WC) scholarship critiques and builds upon a turn-of-the-21st-century exploration of the WC's imperialist role in the management of populations. Nancy Grimm urged writing center studies to understand our oppressive language practice, and the compulsion of teaching and using the colonizer's English, as a method of maintaining sovereign status quo, and therefore as a form of control over non-WME-using populations. Thus, if WME education is a form of control, WCs are sites of its regulation. Eric Camarillo compares writing centers to "border processing centers," as "they decide who can and who cannot enter the university; that is, who does and does not belong." Anis Bawarshi and Stephanie Pelkowski also articulate this regulatory role of the writing center as colonization. They note that instead of seeking to alter a writer's product, WCs aim to change the writer's process—their social, cultural, and behavioral relationship to writing—a deeply interior target, a more productive target for assimilation.

WC scholars with decolonial perspectives remind us how colonization acts through contemporary writing centers. Romeo García explains that WCs don't exist in a post-colonial world; they exist in the currently-still-colonial world, and their regulatory work functions as contemporary colonial action (40). The existence of writing centers is predicated on the colonial goal of the standardization of English. The WC then polices by offering writers support in learning the official discourse of the state. In our experience, nearly all writers, when asked if they want support in writing WME or in another version of English, will choose WME. Of course they would. Why come to the writing center to receive support in creating their own voice? The consultants may have expertise in different languages and in multiple varieties of English, but what they obviously share is experience with WME. When constant surveillance drives the desire to behave in the best interests of the state, when writers are pursuing degrees at state-funded institutions, when they are holding down jobs, caring for family members, or simply overwhelmed by course work, who would choose, when prompted in a writing center session, to write against the state?

With Wonderful Faison and Anna Treviño, García asks "If the WC will always rewrite itself as colo-

nial, where does that leave us, then, with regard to a hope for a different WC?" (90). They want WC studies to understand that actually *resisting* colonialism requires that we don't "recenter" ourselves with "colonial logics of management and control" (90). To do so, García urges WCs to *listen to and hold histories* as a way of taking up a decolonizing response to WC colonial complicity ("Unmaking" 40–41). We are listening to Browne and Sa'di as they remind us how surveillance is a *historical* form of colonization. We are oriented by their work to ask how surveillance is borne out in the writing center. This recent decolonizing work in writing center studies has addressed colonization in sessions, in intra-staff relations, and in supervisor-consultant relations, so we turn to an arena barely addressed: digital surveillance. García, Faison, and Treviño ask WC studies to recognize the "inescapabilities of our complicities" (92). Following Browne's warnings and García's call, we take up writing center digital platforms as study-able tips of colonial-complicit icebergs, and as recent manifestations of historical forms of colonial control.

Part 2: But Writing Centers Run on Data!

If you work in a writing center, you know we run on data. Collecting data is generally known as a best practice in WCs; it is justified by a desire to know the writers whom we serve (Parsons et al.). Indeed, this is a practice that is engaged in at all levels of the WC, from broad strokes numbers that show our value to funding bodies, to emerging trends in participation that teach us what services writers use most, to evaluations showing us what writers value about the WC, to a consultant learning about what a writer wants to do in an upcoming session. As a consultant, I, Angela, regularly use the Registration and Appointment Form data to determine what I need to do to best help the writers who come to me. The spaces writers use to tell us about themselves and their goals are seemingly helpful in creating a productive session. Serving our writers to the best of our ability is the mission of the WC, and I believed that knowing about them beforehand could make it much easier to do so.

Registration and appointment data play important roles in WC assessment beyond session preparation. Rebecca Jackson and Jackie Grutsch McKinney show us that far more WCs are collecting data for record-keeping than for research. They reference the "perennial story of writing center directors caught between the desire to conduct knowledge-making research and the imperative to 'keep good records'" (3). Good records can lead to good funding and positive visibility on campus (Thompson 36). Neat books also fulfill the professional obligations we share with campus service units. As Jackson and McKinney suggest, a WC survives year-in-year-out on the back of its data reporting—not on the value of its research.[2]

Tracking is in service of whiteness, Alexandria Lockett reminds us. She says, "In attempting to make WCs a 'respectable' place, which is code for a certain ideology of whiteness that is concealed through the word 'professionalism,' researchers"—and we would add administrators— "risk neglecting that very place" ("Why I Call it the Academic Ghetto"). In scrambling to represent ourselves in numbers up the leadership ladder, we miss the actual writers in the center.

2   Thank you to Preslee Beumer, a former graduate Assistant Director for the East Texas A&M Writing Center at the time of writing, for her research that led to this paragraph.

With this ingrained desire to "professionalize," to prove our worth to institutions through our numbers—to surveil—WCs use basic and sophisticated technology of all sorts. These range from hardware like card scanners used to count attendance, to software like Microsoft Excel used to manage and analyze data, to campus-wide education management platforms like the Education Advisory Board's Navigate360, used to manage and track appointments and communicate with campus partners. The East Texas A&M WC previously used Navigate360 as the appointment management system, and one of my, Kelin's, first moves as director was to phase it out. I didn't want any WC data to be visible to any faculty member or administrator with power over students. That included consultants, who somehow had access to writers' GPAs and course histories. I cut ties with the Education Advisory Board immediately and started our subscription to WCOnline.

WCOnline is the premier online "management solution" that offers "cloud scheduling, record keeping, and reporting." Within the platform, the data-savvy administrator can quickly discover their overall utilization rate, the popularity of sessions on Mondays at 1 p.m., the completion rate of an individual consultant's session reports and evaluations, the number of first-year students using the WC in September, and so on. That data, what we think of as a first layer of surveillance, comes from the cloud scheduling, which tracks appointment times, lengths, cancellations, no-shows, etc.

There is a second layer of surveillance to data collection through WCOnline: the layer controlled by the WC administrator. This is the layer we chose to investigate, as it captures a WC's colonial mentality in interaction with surveillance technology. The administrator controls four major forms:

- Registration Form
- Appointment Form
- Client Report Form
- Session Evaluation

In each of these forms, the WC administrator controls (1) what the form prompts say; (2) various ways that information can reach consultants; (3) whether the question is required or optional, and (4) the form the prompt takes ((see fig. 1), small fill-in box, large text box, dropdown (single selection); checkboxes (single or multiple selections); and Likert scale. In theory, whatever data a WC wants to acquire about their writers, they can—should their writers trust them enough to share that information. Not only are the data tracking possibilities boundless, but WCOnline makes customizing, organizing, and exporting that data simple.
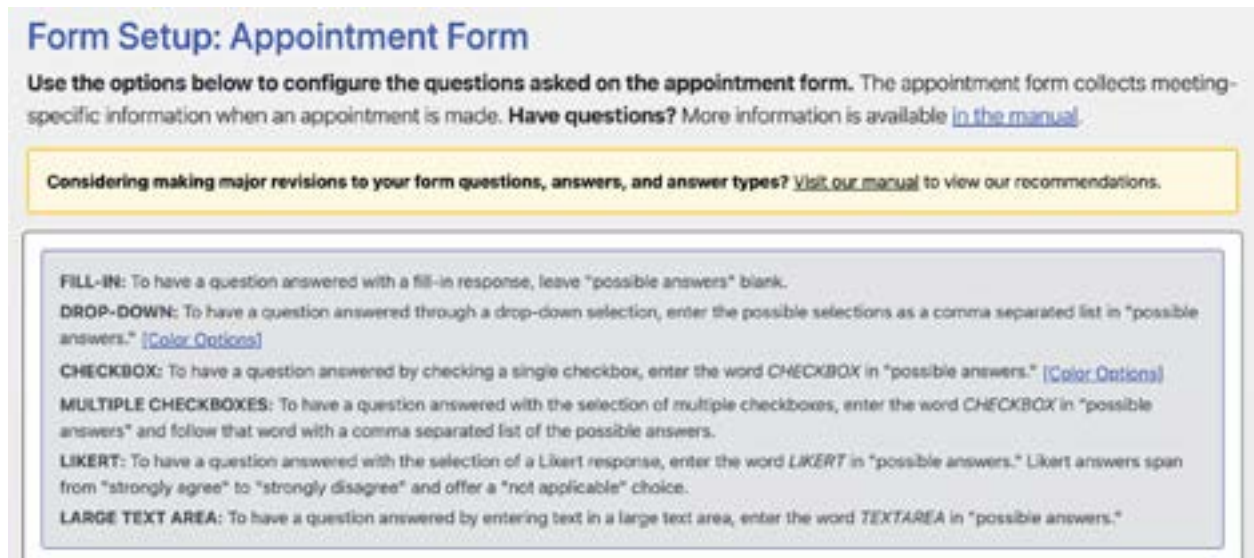
Fig. 1. Administrative view of the Appointment For from WCONLINE, v24.7.2, *Twenty Six Design LLC,* 2024, commerce. mywconline.com. Accessed 13 Aug. 2024.

Part 3: Gender Surveillance in our Registration Form, from the Faculty Director's Perspective

After acquiring WCOnline, my next task as director was to write the Registration Form. At the time, I, Kelin, viewed these forms as opportunities to familiarize difference, to re/introduce the writing process meta vocabulary that is part of WC lingo, and to figure out "who" exactly was coming to our WC (with the anticipation that I would need to pursue other funding partners in the future).

One prompt I included to familiarize writers with differences was an optional small fill-in box asking "What are your preferred pronouns?" (fig. 2). Following the WC data logic *du jour*, I believed we could better support our writers by knowing and using their preferred pronouns instead of our assumed pronouns. At my previous institution, our Registration Form was sometimes the first time a writer encountered the possibility of preferred pronouns. That WC was situated in an area with relatively vast cultural awareness of gender identity. Moving to a place not known for its progressive constructions of gender, I figured that the pronouns prompt (optional, of course) could serve the same pedagogical role. As the Fall 2023 Inquiry Group on AI and Privacy required we re-access our daily practices, I recognized the pronoun question for what it *could* become to *the state*: a list of individuals' gender identities.
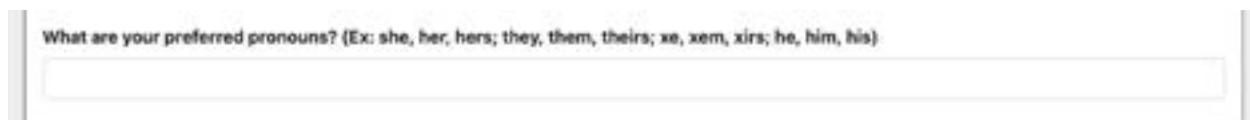

Fig. 2. Writer's View of the pronouns prompt on the Registration Form from WCONLINE, v24.7.2, *Twenty Six Design LLC,* 2024, commerce.mywconline.com. Accessed 13 Aug. 2024.

Towards resistance, García urges us to "be conscious of how histories of racial violence continue to be ignored and suppressed in the present" (40). He calls this "transformative listening," a way of attuning oneself to the community they serve (33). In the case of the pronoun prompt, I was listening to the community from my previous institution. Further, I was also listening to what that community told me when I was a WC assistant director, five years prior to starting at East Texas A&M. García says, we need to listen to the histories of our *local* contexts, but my "best intentions" here drove me to instead *talk at* my new local community through the Registration Form. I wasn't listening to the racialized and gendered history of colonization (Lugones 2007 and 2010), to the history of colonization in writing centers, and to the history of surveillance as a colonizing action.

A few months after the Registration Form went live, a colleague of mine was starting a trans support group for students, staff, and faculty on campus. He said that he would not officially register the group, because in the Texas political climate, he did not want to create any lists of names of transgender people that could fall into the wrong hands. He was right. Nine months after creating the form, Ken Paxton, Texas' Attorney General, sent a request to the Texas Department of Public Safety. He asked them to "compile a list of individuals who had changed their gender on their Texas driver's licenses and other department records during the past two years" (Hennessy-Fiske). Although I was thinking in terms of exposure, or, the positive potential of visibility, he was thinking in terms of surveillance, or, the relative safety of invisibility. By prompting writers for their preferred pronouns, I created a list. Anyone willing to share pronouns in their Registration Form now has them listed alongside their name in our records. All Ken Paxton needs to do is compare that list to the names and genders (and/or sexes) writers filed when they entered the university. As Christina V. Cedillo suggests, sometimes visibility (names on a list) creates danger.

The dangers of in/visibility are clear in Writing Centers. In a study of queer WC directors, Travis Webster studied visible labor as "nameable, countable, measurable, and translatable to a job description" while invisible labor "accounts for work not often associated, understood, or recognized as generating capital for an institution but from which such labor elicits and capitalizes on identity, emotion, and embodiment from the institution's workers" (100). As Christina V. Cedillo indicates, invisibility can be positive. For the directors in Webster's study, invisibility offers the opportunity to support students and build community out from under the thumb of administration. Conversely, visibility can place queer directors in danger. Participants addressed how their visibility led to toxic workplaces with direct and indirect bullying (107–109). Webster delicately connects this vulnerability with how visibility in medical texts and media leads to the death of queer people (107–109) because the historical oppression of a group cannot be separated from how sovereignty manages (disposes of) populations in local contexts. As Lugones says, colonization seeks to control sex and gender as it does labor and subjectivity. WME may be an obvious form of control at work in WCs, and Webster shows us, it isn't the only one.

When I first built the Registration Form, I considered the "who" the form allowed me to track in terms of "standing" and "degree program." Standing helps us, for instance, learn how many first-year and

graduate students have registered in WCOnline. I asked about "degree program" because I wanted to be able to track which departments use our services the most. Departments that use us could be potential collaborators in—and funders of–our programs. With this information, we can target outreach towards departments that don't use our services. Now I understand that, of course, "preferred pronouns" creates a "who" population as well. Anyone not wanting to feel tracked based on pronouns may feel othered, watched, distrustful of the Writing Center, and/or scared of us, and justifiably so.

Part 5: Varied Surveillance in our Appointment Form

García, Faison, and Treviño ask us to recognize the "inescapabilities of our complicities," to always ask of ourselves "'for what reason and toward what ends?'" (92). So, as a smaller research group in Spring 2024, we did. We started with the Appointment From, which appears when a writer clicks on an open session to book. We asked ourselves a series of reflection prompts for each question/prompt on the form. Here are some examples:

- How does this question help a consultant better understand and/or support a writer in a session?
- Is there a pedagogical purpose to this question? If so, what?
- What trackable categories are generated by this question?
- What narratives can be crafted with this data?
- Which other campus stakeholders might want to know patterns or individual information derived from this question?

Kelin, Angela, and Shannon responded to each question in individual questionnaires to avoid influencing one another's perspectives. Next, we compared our individual responses. In terms of "for what reason," or, the justification of putting a question/prompt on the Appointment Form, three categories emerged:

- Consultant preparation for sessions
- writer education (in our WC's lingo and philosophies)
- writer population tracking

Fig. 3. Administrator's View of Question #5 from WCONLINE, v24.7.2, *Twenty Six Design LLC,* 2024, commerce.mywconline.com. Accessed 13 Aug. 2024.

Fig. 4. Writer's View of Question #5 from WCONLINE, v24.7.2, *Twenty Six Design LLC,* 2024, commerce.mywconline.com. Accessed 13 Aug. 2024.

Reading our reflections around Question #5, a prompt for the Instructor's Name, we noticed all three categories of justification (see fig. 3 and fig. 4). The most straightforward justification for Question #5 came from my, Kelin's, reflection. I appreciated Question #5 for its role in writer education. As a professor frustrated by students not learning, misspelling, or mispronouncing my name, I wanted to invite (in actuality, require) students to practice writing their instructor's name. In so doing, I position myself as a teacher and writers as students, again, working against the peer relationship and agentive-writer positionality we aim to create.

This positioning is true for all the questions/prompts that I created with the reasoning being "writer education." At the threshold point of the Appointment Form, the moment when a writer is thinking through the session they might book, the WC itself is, as we'd say it, "trying to teach them something." The pedagogical reason for Question #6, "Where is this project in the writing process?" is to either introduce or reinforce the meta vocabulary for the writing process. It has a multiple checkbox list including "Brainstorming," "Planning," "Researching," "Reading," "Drafting," "Revising," "Editing," and "Not Sure." Although repetition of meta vocabulary in changing contexts is good for learning the words, this moment is an opportunity to introduce ourselves to the writer. Instead of prompting the writer to tell us in their own words where in the process their project is, instead of setting ourselves up to listen to the writer and learn their vocabulary and experience, I've written a question that immediately requires writers to frame their experience in the terms of not only the WC, but in the stages of an academic writing process. Would a writer believe us when we say we love to work with nonacademic projects? Why would a writer believe us when we say WME is a choice? Similarly, Question #5 prompts the writer to share the "Instructor's Name," and it's required. Question #3 asks: "What is the writing project for? If it's for a course, give us the number and title (for example, ENG 333: Advanced Writing Nonfiction)." When Question #3 tries to resist an explicit relationship with academic en-

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deavors, Question #5 reinforces our alignment with course work by literally requiring an instructor's name. If a student wants to work on a blog post, they have to know they can write "N/A." Question #5 doesn't even suggest how to subvert itself.

In terms of surveillance, Question #5 makes *instructors* visible. Although we don't anticipate department heads or other administrators requesting session data being broken down by the instructor, the fact is, we have it. Take tenure, for example. An instructor's record of how many of their students visited the WC, depending on the committee, could be a positive or a dangerous visibility. Positively, the committee might see WC visits as a sign that the tenure candidate supports student engagement and retention. If the committee believes the WC to be a remedial space, and especially if the tenure candidate has an accent or is marked in other ways, that committee might see student usage as a sign of weak student performance or a lack of pedagogical strength in the instructor. Even if this is a speculative example, the fact remains that the WC made a list, and the WC can't control how that list will be interpreted and acted upon.

The converging issues with Question #5 beg the question: if the project is for a class, do we need to know the instructor's name to best support the writer? I, Angela, have found that the practice of asking the instructor's name is only useful if I know the professor. I could go into the session confident that I would be able to help the writer meet the professor's standards. However, this practice is only useful in sessions where WME is the goal. If we are striving to cultivate a WC in which students know that WME isn't the only way to write, then why ask a question that reinforces that the WC is for WME? After all, this is information that can easily be discussed in the session.

Agreeing with Angela that Question #5 doesn't necessarily improve our chances of supporting writers, I, Shannon, want to extend my critique to how this question aligns our work with the colonization practices of the academy. This question assumes that a writer is bringing in an academic project. It leaves out the possibility that a writer wants to work on a personal project. I visit the WC with creative writing pieces unrelated to academia. By setting up the Appointment Form with the fixed mindset that a project is academic-related, is it possible we are discouraging writers from seeking out ways to improve themselves as writers detached from the institution?

Questions or prompts written to educate the writer work against our efforts to meet the writer as a peer. They reiterate the WC as colonizer, as do the surveillance focused questions/prompts. As many of our Appointment Form questions exist for multiple reasons, the question becomes, does having a function of preparing consultants for a session take priority over the problematic nature of surveillance and writer education? Our answer is no, and we aren't alone.

Part 5: Slashing Surveillance as a Decolonizing Action

Faison, Treviño, and García depict WC colonialist logics as "white benevolence" wherein white people and those aligning with whiteness—largely white women in WCs—disseminate Western language and epistemologies that aim to "save" colonized people (82). The authors consider actions taken by WCs to separate ourselves from our colonial foundations as acts of white benevolence because these actions don't accept the impossibility of such a goal (87).[3] The existence of WCs is predicated on the colonial goal of the standardization of English. To imagine a fully decolonized WC, or a WC somehow otherwise detached from colonization, is not a possibility in higher education.

Resistance is possible, and we've created a list of five principles we are bringing to our surveillance practices moving forward. Angela Haas' basic tenets for decolonial methodologies include "'redress[ing] colonial influences'" and "'support[ing] coexistence[s]'" (22, cited in Itchuaqiyaq and Matheson). Before categorizing our concluding principles as forms of decolonization, we listen to Cana Uluak Itchuaqiyaq and Breeanne Matheson urge researchers[4] to extend "the definition of decolonial" to "deman[d] … more robust implications for the sovereignty of Indigenous peoples" (22). Our aim with the following principles is to resist and revise colonial logics, but these principles do not carry implications for the sovereignty of Indigenous peoples. García defines the work of a decolonizing agent as "ethically and socially committed to social justice for all. It is having those critical conversations that question even the well-intended progressive and leftist practices" (49). Following his lead, if these principles are not fully a "decolonial" practice, perhaps they are discrete "decolonizing" actions. Said differently, these principles don't decolonize digitality in our WC, but they work towards decolonizing it under our current conditions. The principles include: collect less, self-assess more, be honest, listen more, and talk more.

Collect Less

We are revising our forms and asking much less about our writers. For the Appointment Form, we don't plan on having more than name, project description, and a description of the writer's current context relating to that project. Parsons et al. resist the WC will-to-record-keep. As their WC was integrated with the practices of research librarians, they learned there is quite a difference between the "best practices" regarding data in WCs and libraries. Library best practices emphasize the importance of patron privacy. The American Library Association requires the guarding of users' data, arguing "that without adequate safeguards for information, patrons' records could be weaponized, compromising our intellectual freedom and even our democ-

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3   Further, Pritha Prasad and Louis Maraj consider "benevolent gaslighting" when white aggressions are transformed into learning moments (often positioned as misunderstandings) that benefit the racial education (and further empowering) of white people (324). In the terms of Faison, Treviño, and García's "white benevolence," an example of "benevolent gaslighting" would occur when white directors learn of their past colonizing practices, and instead of owning those actions for what they are, they position them as necessary learning moments that further position those white directors as credible and credentialed.

4   Though Itchuaqiyaq and Matheson are speaking to researchers in the field of Technical and Professional Communication, we feel their encouragement can apply to Rhetoric and Composition broadly.

racy" (11). Employers might want to find out if their employees are searching for new jobs, for example; it would be a violation of the patrons' privacy to share this information with the employers, so libraries gather as little information about their patrons as possible (11). Similarly, WCs are part of universities, which are state institutions. What if the university (and therefore the state) decides that it wants writers' information that has been stored within our systems? If libraries practice limiting the data they collect and store about their patrons, WCs can too.

Self-Access More

Though it is self-evident for any social justice practice, it deserves saying, particularly when practitioners leverage white privilege. When we started considering surveillance in the Fall, I, Kelin, thought we'd perhaps remove some questions from our forms. After a pointed assessment of those forms, they are profoundly changing in nature to center the writer and collect as little information as possible. As director, one of my current assessment projects is to read my end-of-year reporting requirements carefully. Which numbers are *required* to be there, and what controls do I have over them? Which numbers are the most important to our funding sources?

Be Honest (with Writers About What We Track and Why)

In "Writing Center Reporting Strategies That Subvert Institutional Absurdities," Erica Cirillo-McCarthy et al. describe how tied contemporary writing center funding is to "administrative speak," (which includes vocabulary like "'utilization,'" "'student credit hours,'" "'resiliency,'" "'retention rates,'" and "'impact'"). They reflect that this "transactional" language works against WC values. To resist and urge directors to emphasize expertise, be explicit about labor, and center lived experiences. To these subversions, we add strategically limiting data collection (Collect Less), learning what are the most important things to track (part of Self-Access More), and being honest in forms about what is being tracked and why. Knowing our intentions, writers can make choices about what to share.

Listen More

García considers "transformative listening" a form of "actional and decolonial work" (33). Although this includes, of course, listening to writers, it requires listening to complexities, frictions, and connectives of local histories and contexts (40), geographies (33), and materialities (41).

And Talk More

We don't need to create lists to learn writers' preferred pronouns (or their instructors) to better

support them. Instead, we need to listen—transformatively—to what writers choose to share with us on their own terms and in their own time. Indeed, our job literally necessitates listening to writers. Without collecting data, we then envision a staff that communicates with each other, informing the group when there is important context or information to know about the writers (and instructors) in our networks.

Conclusion

In the general terms of colonial surveillance, without performing the colonizers' language, WME, writers are made visible. As Dubrofsky and Magnet theorize, that visibility can lead to the danger of sovereignty targeting non-WME-using populations for assimilation and control. Further, those who resist control risk becoming a population who, as Rachel Lewis would say, becomes "disposable" to the state. Lewis revisits Radcliffe's "rhetorical listening" to give it a queer abolitionist orientation and a grounding in transformative justice. Transformative justice is a "response to violence" that "seeks safety and accountability" instead of punishment (Carruthers xi). Lewis draws on Charlene Carruthers, who urges those working in and towards transformational justice to "reckon with how the carceral state," the sovereignty that imprisons, "has colonized our own ways of dealing with conflict" (Carruthers 82). While "conflict" here could mean violence (the sort that leads to questions of (de)carceration), Carruthers discusses conflict in terms of the workplace, friends, and social media. We take her statement alongside our reckoning with the colonizing practices that constitute WCs. And, though it may be a connection in name only, we connect the transformative commitments in Lewis' version of "listening" to García's "transformative listening." Each requires openness, identification, attention, and transformation. Lewis' queer abolitionist listening adds relationship building, which feels like a strong addition to transformative listening as a form of decolonial work in writing centers.

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Tactics

A Disability Theory of Anti-Surveillance Tactics

Amy Gaeta

Abstract: This article sketches how disabled people resist surveillance in the liberal democracies of the Global North. Since there is a dearth of scholarship on disability and surveillance, this article first overviews the surveillance state's primary mechanisms of capture inflicted on disabled people. Building on insights from queer, trans, and feminist surveillance studies, I gesture toward the need for disability surveillance studies. Second, I outline tactics used by disabled people to resist surveillance as well as tactics of my creation inspired by activist practices and recent events in social organizing. Highlighting the radicality of these tactics validates disabled people as critical knowers and makers in the efforts of anti-surveillance. Lastly, I use crip theory to contend that examining how disabled people experience and fight surveillance is insufficient to account for the ways that the disability-ability binary—as a structural set of relations—shapes the discursive and material production and execution of surveillance.

"A flock of surveys is a surveillance."— Sandra Beasley, "Customer Service Is."

Introduction

I have generalized anxiety disorder. When I go to urgent care with severe, painful, and random nerve damage symptoms, the nurse tells me to stop thinking about it so much. When a grapefruit-sized benign cyst appears on my spine during an MRI that I demanded due to the nerve sensations, the neurologist tells me I need to try meditation, oh, and that it's inoperable. When I ask for other options, a nurse tells me to download a yoga app sponsored by my health insurance company. I cannot do this again. I go to a new doctor. I do not consent to my medical records being transferred. I never tell the new doctor about the anxiety, the depression, or the PTSD. I start to wonder if there's a way that I can also use my language to hide my womanhood or my sexuality. This is a story of surveillance and anti-surveillance.

My personal experiences of medical surveillance, expertise in critical disability studies and feminist and queer surveillance studies, and position in varied disability communities enable me to appreciate that surveillance critically maintains the everyday machinations of the apparatus of disability, both as a medical,

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social, and political category but also as a way of living in the world. This leads me to ask: How are disabled people resisting the surveillance state? How and why has this resistance been heavily enacted through language? What can we learn from these practices about the value of crip thought for queer, trans, and feminist approaches to surveillance?

It is common among disabled people and other people with non-normative bodyminds for our voices to be overpowered by narratives and images imposed upon us in the medical system and beyond. As a result, many, me included, have been forced to lie to doctors, demand items be struck from our medical records, seek alternative sources of medical knowledge, or avoid medical care for the material harms it poses to our physical and mental well-being, not to mention our humanity. When we take these actions, we are taking some agency over the ways we are socially, medically, and even politically sorted. To argue for the importance of disabled people's resistance to surveillance and their strategic uses of language, I base my understanding of surveillance on David Lyon's theory of surveillance as not merely controlling-via-watching, but as producing and sorting subjects and their data in ways that reinforce social hierarchies and proximities to who counts as 'normal.' This idea has been valuable in identifying how surveillance works in concerts with white supremacy and anti-Blackness, cisheteropatriachy and biological essentialism and ableism (Brown 8-9; Umoja Noble 28, 34; Mirzoeff 1-14; Conrad 384-386; Beauchamp 17; Kafer & Grinberg 594; Banner & Adleman; Saltes 56).

This article will largely focus on how disabled people resist surveillance in everyday life in the anglophone liberal democracies of the Global North. I will first provide an overview of the surveillance state's primary mechanisms of capture in the Global North. Second, drawing from personal experience in and of disabled communities, I will highlight anti-surveillance tactics already employed by disabled people as well as tactics of my own creation. Inspired by J. Logan Smilges' theories of crip negativity and access thievery, these tactics largely center around strategic uses of language and 'bad' behavior, such as lying to doctors to avoid compromising information on your medical record, refusing a professional diagnosis to escape its potential consequences for citizenship, and entering incorrect data into health tracking apps to compromise the data capture of Big Tech.

In crip queer feminist spirit, I will not strive toward totality or vague universals. When I speak from the "I" and "my" in this essay, I refuse a vulgar standpoint criticism nor do I attest to myself being able to speak for the shifting, infinitely heterogeneous groups of people that compose disability communities. In fact, any approach to surveillance must confront partiality, in light of both the 'black box' of many digital surveillance systems (e.g., algorithms) and the inherently fluid, shifting nature of non-normativity as a concept. I focus on the Global North for three primary reasons: 1) to leave space for scholars and activists in and of the Global South, as well as of different political and technological landscapes in the Global North, to identify anti-surveillance practiced by disabled people in their respective geographies, 2) to break up the idea of 'disabled people' as some monolithic group with uniform modes of resistance and proximities to surveillance and its material and ontological risks, and 3) the chosen localized perspective here is anything

but exceptional, yet, having a more focused cultural, political, and geographic focus will promote approaches to both surveillance and disability that refuse universals and account for the ways that surveillance—as a process of social creation and sorting per Lyon—differently function to partially produce the category of disability and people's relationship to disability, among other categories such as gender, class, and race.

Highlighting the radicality of these tactics will help validate disabled people as critical knowers and makers in the efforts of anti-surveillance and highlight the ways that disabled people encounter the surveillant gaze. This will begin to address the dearth of literature on surveillance in disability studies and disability perspectives in surveillance studies. In doing so, it will emphasize the valuable role of rhetoric in anti-surveillance tactics.

Disability Surveillance Studies

Queer, trans, and feminist approaches to surveillance have been foundational in both showing the constitutive roles of sexuality and gender in surveillance practices and logics as well as imagining means of resisting surveillance and unearthing the minoritarian knowledges absent from surveillance studies (Kafer & Gringberg 592-959; Gill 148-152; Dubrofsky & Magnet 1-20; Abu-Laban 50-54; Beauchamp 1-17). In each approach, the body and bodies and its proximity to processes of normalization—with special emphasis on Foucault's work on the measuring, categorizing, and policing of bodies to a prescribed set of ideals that aid the smooth functioning state and economic power. Before sorting and categorizing subjects, surveillance produces subjects, however. This section gestures towards the need for a disability surveillance studies that builds upon and speaks to queer, trans, and feminist surveillance studies because these prior fields of knowledge and their respective frameworks differently examine how surveillance contributes to core issues in disability studies: the production of the idea of abnormality vs normality and how those ideas materialize, particularly around ideas of the body and how bodies can exercise mobility differently in different spaces.

Disability surveillance studies should attend to how surveillance can be a process of negotiating and creating bodies and subjectivities. In his groundbreaking study of how trans people experience surveillance, Tony Beauchamp details how surveillance is a process of fluidity in which "fixed, ahistorical, or easily read markers of deviance" are also "active interpretations that … can shift according to context" (77). In a disability context, we might consider the algorithmically curated targeted health advertisements that appear on people's social media feeds and assume their impairments by selling them a certain product or service. The point of these systems is never accuracy or properly capturing the needs and identities of subjects. Rather, surveillance is a means of creating data doubles that stand in and are used to act upon and influence the people they represent. The data double, sometimes known as the shadow self, is an informational profile built to represent each surveilled subject. Rita Raley quotes Roger Clark in describing how the data double is produced through

processes of disassembling and reassembling. People are broken down into a series of discrete informational flows which are stabilized and captured according to pre-established classificatory criteria. They are then transported to centralized locations to be reassembled and combined in ways that serve institutional agendas (127).

Take, for instance, the doctor—seeing only an idea of me based on my medical records through the sexist, ableist, and racist epistemologies of Western medicine— who could only see my anxiety and not my nerve disorder, for instance.

To understand and trace the material impacts of the categories produced by medical surveillance, such as diagnostic categories, feminist surveillance studies are necessary. Feminist approaches have highlighted the quotidian nature of surveillance, treating it more as part of the infrastructure of everyday life and the domestic than an exceptional, sensationalized practice of wiretapping and WikiLeaks or simply top-down relations (Gill 148). It has also drawn our attention to how ideological structures such as patriarchy are necessarily entwined with surveillance. As Laurie Penny has said, "the fight for the principles of free speech, the fight against surveillance and the fight for a society where whistleblowers are protected, is a feminist fight." Examining how ableism, for instance, is reinforced by privacy and surveillance norms can help illuminate how surveillance is a complex infrastructure of control that normalizes itself and naturalizes the social categories it produces by working in tandem with hegemony.

Building on this everydayness, we may turn towards Michel Foucault's theory of the panopticon and its emphasis on the surveilled subject internalizing the surveillant gaze and projecting it upon themselves and others. That is, surveillance embeds itself with psyches and social attitudes, such as ableism, sexism, and other forms of implicit or explicit bias as well as mechanisms of self-regulation and maintenance. This might be why disability and privacy are incompatible, perhaps even antithetical, in the eyes of ableism. The history of disability is punctuated by fraught stories of unwilled exposure. Disability history scholarship from Michael Rembis, Susan Schweik, Rachel Adams, and Rosemarie Garland-Thompson, among others, has documented these histories from forced medical experimentation on disabled people or in the name of eradicating disability, laws banning disabled people from occupying certain public spaces, the advent of the 'freak show,' and even the everyday stares inflicted on disabled people. In all, disabled people are treated as sites for the public to consume rather than part of the public.

When it comes to either actively or passively resisting surveillance, it is tempting to presume that non-normative subjects that do not fall into binary categorizations can show the fissures of surveillance systems and the normative logics by which they operate. Although it would be premature of us to romanticize either as naturally revolutionary and to stake such a claim would ignore the plethora of scholarship, such as that from Lisa Duggan and Jasbir Puar, that describes how LGBTQIA+ identities and queerness are smoothed into capitalist and state projects of control. Examples of technologies that are adopted despite operating on flawed, limited logics of gender, for instance, include biomimetic body scanners relying on

binary and biologically essentialist ideas of gender or automatic gender recognition technology (see Beauchamp; Keyes). While these scanners indeed fail to accurately capture people who fall outside of binary gender scripts, the scanners are not broken by the presence of non-normativity. This failed recognition often leads to more surveillance in the form of body searches (Waldron & Medina). Ellen Samuels has further noted the affinities between trans and crip bodies for how they are framed as "anomalies" in the eyes of the U.S. security state wherein both are cast as outside the biological norms of "safe" citizens, thereby serving as justification for additional surveillance (153). In agreement with these analyses, later in this article, I also will propose that, in certain contexts, leveraging and perhaps even exaggerating the porousness and uncontrollability of the bodymind holds important potential to disrupt surveillance systems and logics.

While I focus on disability and disabled people here, a larger aspiration of this article is to crip surveillance studies. "Crip" is both a politics and an analytic grounded in values and experiences from disability studies and disability justice. Primarily, this lens aims to de-center ability as the arbiter for determining value and values orientations, aesthetics, embodiments, bodies, and other modes of being and doing that have been cast outside the norm and ideals, such as slowness, partiality, submission, negativity, irrationality, and so on. The deployments of crip from Allison Kafer, Robert McRuer, J. Logan Smilges, and Eunjung Kim animate my work here. Crip can do something "disability cannot," which here I primarily understand to be getting us beyond a strict identitarian focus in/on surveillance (Smilges 9). Further, crip enables us to operate from a place of a more universal-local understanding of disability where we do not assume who or what counts as disabled and instead attend to the very systems and knowledges that constitute the shifting contours of 'disability.' Further, if surveillance is a practice of producing and sorting subjects, why resort to yet another strict identitarian-based way of evaluating surveillance and imagining anti-surveillance?

Why Language?

Many of the anti-surveillance tactics outlined here are rooted in strategic uses of language and deciding which rhetorics to foreground. When I speak of 'language,' I include all and any systems of communication that a person may practice. Language is the stuff of world-building and world-destroying. As Jay Dolmage has outlined, disability and language have a tenuous relationship due to the ways that linguistic and language norms of 'proper speech,' oralism, and anti-mutism have prevented the full access of disabled people in various spaces and systems. The disabled subject has also been theorized to shore up the limits of language and representation as well as serve as a site to understand and value the expansiveness of ways of languaging (Quayson 1-5; Henner & Robinson 7-37). At the same time, language is an expanse of potential access frictions between non-disabled and disabled people as well as between disabled people. Since surveillance studies, at least partially, studies the relationship between "power and information collection" (Andrejevic xxi), I will show throughout this article that disabled people often reframe rhetorical situations of surveillance in strategic ways to protect themselves and their privacy and/or to disrupt the surveillant gaze. As such, this article attests to the view that the language we use can indeed have a material impact on the world. I work in the same spirit as numerous disability studies scholars who have shown that rhetorical re-

sistance, especially when done collectively, can be an effective catalyst for societal change and transgressive, anti-ableist action (Wheeler; Mann; Smilges).

Surveillance in the Global North

This section will map out three major vectors of surveillance and detail how they interact with, and even produce, disabled people and ideas of disability. I use the term 'Global North' with awareness of its limitations and how the term can potentially flatten differences within countries included in the symbolic region, such as the United States, Japan, the United Kingdom, Australia, and others. Indeed, it is a short-coming of this article that I do not have the space to survey cultural and political differences in understandings of privacy across the Global North, for instance. Here, I find the term useful as disabled people in the Global North experience different kinds of threats to privacy and types of surveillance due to the lesser prevalence of armed conflict, imperial interventions, and economic disparity than in the Global South. With focus on liberal democracies of the Global North, I also use to the term to zone in on how disabled people experience and fight surveillance within political systems that boast freedom and inclusion.

State surveillance

From citizenship requirements to voting rights, disabled people are routinely tested for their proximity to normativity and such testing ultimately determines their levels of rights and access in state systems. Numerous scholars and activists have been vocal about the ways that disability is either assimilated into the hegemonic ideas of a good citizen or made to suffer if they cannot or refuse to assimilate. In either case, disabled people's fit for assimilation is tested by surveillance. At the time of my writing, seven EU countries (Bulgaria, Denmark, Estonia, Hungary, Lithuania, Portugal, and Slovenia) indirectly deny voting rights to people with intellectual disabilities by requiring a guardian to accompany them to vote but also only allowing one person in the voting booth at a time, for instance (Vasques)[1]. Disabled people's access to both privacy and rights is especially fraught in welfare systems. In November 2023, the UK government proposed a plan to allow the Department of Work and Pensions to access the personal banking information of state benefit claimants, many of whom include people on disability benefits, migrants, and refugees. ("DPDI Bill: New 'Welfare Surveillance'").

On the ground, disabled people are prone to heightened police surveillance. In the U.S., nearly half of the people killed by the police are disabled (Perry & Carter-Long). Disabled people of color, particularly Black disabled people, are at heightened risk of such violence. Counter to the (racialized) stereotypes of disabled people as innocent, passive, and in need of protection, "abled people have been fantasizing about the dangers of evil crips for centuries" (Smilges 42). These fantasies are critical to structural ways that disabled people are cast as untrustworthy, "shaping everything from welfare programs to truancy laws to the definition of citizenship" (42). State surveillance of disabled people highlights the uneven distributions of stigma

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1   This article was planned and written between February to August 2024.

and fear projected onto disabled people along the lines of class, race, gender, sexuality, and citizenship status.

Medical surveillance

The medical system is built upon the logics of surveillance as sorting and risk assessment. As Olivia Banner and David Adleman note in their cripping of surveillance, by drawing on the work of Simone Brown, the visual field in which surveillance operates is both racializing and normalizing, typifying and classifying bodies into hierarchical categories, much like traditional systems of classification in western medicine. For instance, the clinical gaze, argues Alex Haagaard, is a key site where the category disability is produced, and where it is decided which differences 'count' as abnormal.

Disabled people are often forced to comply with medical surveillance as they rely on the medical system for necessary medical knowledge and treatment. Or, in the case of involuntary detainment—from psychiatric institutions to prisons—disabled people are not even given the fantasy of choice in how they comply with medical surveillance. With the turn to telehealth, health and hospital management systems, and biotechnologies, new opportunities for surveillance arise. Some trusts of the UK's National Health Service (NHS) have begun using a covert, omnipresent video surveillance system called Oxevision, for one. The system runs 24 hours a day, always recording patients, even during sleep. It tracks patients' heart rates, attempts to leave their beds, and any visitors into their rooms. It is unclear whether patients consented to such invasive, totalizing surveillance (Pring 2021). The rationale for using this system may be for patients' benefit, however, to strip patients of their privacy rather than take a less invasive security measure is indicative of larger assumptions about who deserves privacy.

Beyond the confines of hospitals, disabled people's health needs prompt them to confront other forms of surveillance. In many situations, disclosing private health information enables access that otherwise would not be available, such as receiving a certain accessibility support. Karen Reilly notes that disabled people are incentivized by material needs to engage in systems that may also exploit them for data and otherwise threaten their privacy. Social media platforms, for instance, are vital spaces of friendship and communication for disabled people who cannot engage in in-person social environments and these platforms have proven to be critical for knowledge-sharing about safety during and beyond the COVID-19 pandemic. Yet, to engage in these systems at all is to, at least partially, submit to the platform's extractive data tactics.

Surveillance capitalism

Shoshana Zuboff uses the term "surveillance capitalism" to describe a prediction-centered business model that aims to modify consumers' behaviors. This is done by harvesting personal data, and then using it as raw material for marketing and product research on how to dictate consumer behaviors. To surveillance capitalism, people are both consumers and commodities. Disability and healthism are particularly key to surveillance capitalism due to the rise of "diagnostic advertisements" where users experience health prod-

uct marketing on their algorithmically curated social media feeds, such as an advertisement for an anxiety management app on one's TikTok "for you" page (Gaeta). It does not if the targeted users are disabled. The ads signal the creation of a disabled data double that is then projected onto real users and that data double becomes the basis for the type of behavioral interventions inflicted on users.

State surveillance and medical surveillance, as crudely outlined here, are about "monitoring bodies against normative ontological standards, classifying 'abnormality' and problematizing 'abnormal bodies' as risky" (Saltes 55). Surveillance capitalism is where that 'abnormality' is assimilated as a site of economic opportunity and where curative rhetorics can be projected onto users' consumption habits.

Disability Resistance to Surveillance

This section outlines a few acts of anti-surveillance practiced by disabled people. These acts are drawn from disability studies scholarship and my first-hand experience in disability communities. These divergent scenes were chosen as they complement each other in demonstrating the agency of disabled people as well as the ways that any anti-surveillance tactic must be vectored through an intersectional lens to identify its effectiveness and risks.

Self-Diagnosis and Claiming Disability

Putting aside debates about the legitimacy of self-diagnosis, it is evident that self-diagnosis is extremely strategic for people who need to bypass the legal, social, and medical consequences that may arise with formal diagnosis. Indeed, a formal diagnosis can enable access to various treatments, services, supports, and more, but it can also greatly foreclose a person's social and geographic mobility and rights. Australia and New Zealand, for instance, have historically tended to reject migration applications due to applicants' high medical needs, especially around mental differences (Meekosha 674-75). Along these lines, Devon Price—an autistic sociologist and autism blogger — has advised autistic people to rethink getting a professional diagnosis if they plan to migrate to another country, as the formal diagnosis may put the success of their application at risk. Due to these constraints, self-diagnosis can serve as an effective way to bypass situations where disclosing a formal diagnosis may impede one's access to desired institutions and services.

Alongside self-diagnosis is the question of claiming disability or using disabled as a way to describe oneself. To desire to be recognized in the category of disability may even be understood as a privilege in certain contexts. Many people with an impairment, may, for reasons of safety and decreased risk of even more social stigma, disidentify with or deny the label as applicable to themselves. For instance, Sami Schalk has identified how many Black people with impairments have historically refused disability identity and labels for numerous reasons. This could be read as a way to avoid the multiply stratifying surveillant gaze that comes with being both Black and disabled, alongside other oppressed identities. The material stakes of such

refusal are high when we consider the relationship between Blackness, disability, and police violence, with over half of police violence victims being disabled (Abrams).

Of course, how one understands and names themselves cannot fully protect them from how they are identified, such is the case for physically disabled people or disabled people who do not have the cognitive capacity to carry out such decision-making processes. Carefully and strategically deciding which categories to align oneself and in which contexts is an anti-surveillance practice as it involves negotiating how we become visible and are made visible. This is perhaps why the popular autism blog StimPunks writes that "Self-diagnosis is not just "valid" — it is liberatory. When we define our community ourselves and wrest our right to self-definition back from the systems that painted us as abnormal and sick, we are powerful and free" ("Autism"). Recognizing the choices to claim and self-diagnosis as anti-surveillance, and that these choices may not be consciously understood as anti-surveillance, shows that anti-surveillance is an embedded and implicit part of the discourses and practices of disability communities. To achieve the feeling of being "powerful and free" means trying to evade or disrupt the surveillant gaze.

Lying and Theft

When I lie to HR and mark 'not disabled' on employment forms, I am protecting myself from invasive questions and ableist assumptions. When I purposely neglect to tell doctors about my previous diagnoses out of fear of stigma, I am protecting a certain image of myself that might actually get fair treatment. When I am burnt out and lie to get out of work meetings, I am protecting my access needs, or what Smilges calls "access thievery:" the act of stealing access. Lying and theft are important tools of anti-surveillance, and each has its risks. Social attitudes about disability are haunted by the figure of the faker, also known as the disability benefit scammer. Disabled people are sometimes forced, or at least highly motivated to lie in the current medical and social system that demands disability be visible and consistent in order to be valid (Moses).

If surveillance is intractable to the medical system, why not take what is ours from a system that is supposed to care for us? In this case, we are stealing access and care from systems that thrive on scarcity and austerity politics—systems that tell disabled people they are too much. This may not combat surveillance or protect privacy per se, but it does mark a careful rhetorical negotiation that disabled people undertake to maintain a sense of autonomy in an exploitative surveillant system and at least protect themselves from being 'sorted' into incorrect or even harmful categories.

Masking and Hiding

Around the world, in the era of CCTV, facial recognition technology, and drone surveillance, it has been common practice for protesters to hide their faces while at public demonstrations and practicing social unrest. It is a common suggestion in safe protesting guides as well ("Protest Safety Tips;" "What to Do at a Protest"). While masking during the COVID-19 pandemic was, and still is in some locations, a suggested or

required government order, masking threatened the smooth functioning of the surveillance state as racial justice, and police abolition protests broke out in numerous countries after Minneapolis police officer Derek Chauvin killed George Floyd in May 2020. This marked a turning point in what it meant to hide your face as a protest as protestors turned out in masses wearing personal protective equipment in the form of cloth masks to limit the spread of COVID-19. Whereas wearing facial coverings during protests did not begin with disabled people's calls for community masking, the dual function of community care and hiding one's identity has transformed masking into disability anti-surveillance. The merit of masking lies not in its effectiveness but in the ethos behind it. European Digital Rights, for instance, has found that standard PPE face masks are not fully successful at helping individuals evade facial recognition systems ("Can a COVID-19 Face Mask"). This does not diminish the calls of disabled people and allies to wear masks during protests as a dual form of protection.

During the writing of this article, as protests for ceasefire and justice for Palestinian life spark up around the world, the UK Home Office announced a ban on facial coverings at protests, with the risk of a fine or jail time ("New Protest Laws"). It is one of many European countries to impose such a ban. At a time when nearly the entire world has experienced the effects of an airborne viral pandemic, this ban also prevents community care in the form of masking and thus marks the need for new ways to keep one another safe at protests while also protecting ourselves from state surveillance.

Further, in the everyday, masking serves another purpose: to hide one's facial expressions and block the ableist stare. Rosemarie Garland-Thompson understands staring as "the effort to make sense of the inexplicable, to craft a narrative of recognition from incoherence." Staring is a process of social sorting as well, one that is particularly imposed on people who diverge from social norms. For people with facial differences or neurodivergent people who struggle to meet social decorum expectations, masking can offer a sense of freedom from the ableist stare and thus the surveillant processes of being reduced into coherent narratives.

Anti-Digital Surveillance

Here, I encourage us to understand surveillance as a process of determining not only who is seen and how, but what is seeable and when. This final section offers a few prospective crip tactics for confronting surveillance in the age of digital everything. These tactics are crip in that they defy and refuse the ableist logics at the heart of surveillance logics and systems, therefore showing the desirability of disability.

The Mad Rant

Taking Smilges' cue to sit with bad crip feelings, I propose we crips use our digital spaces to complain, yell, scream, and overshare in ways that defy the logics of normative reason and ableist, sexist, and racist expectations of 'appropriate' expression. Since "predictive models fed by surveillance data necessarily reproduce past patterns. They cannot take into effective consideration randomness, 'noise,' mutation, paro-

dy, or disruption unless those effects coalesce into another pattern," then why not be loud and unreasonable? (Conrad 385). Anti-surveillance must include attempts to disrupt the hegemonic regimes of visuality. Here enters the power of what I call the social media "rant" in the form of unrestricted disabledness and Madness. The social media rant defies social media norms, which often mirror the 'real-world' of largely white, cishet, able influencers and other public figures who amassed thousands, even millions of followers, resulting in their words and images claiming significant digital space. I am inspired by La Marr Jurelle Bruce's work on Blackness and madness, in particular his call to center "mad subjectivity" by taking seriously the ramblings, rants, and cries of people marked as mad, a deeply racialized designation (50). Vital to Bruce's "Mad methodology" is to not fetishize the madperson as "resistance personified" and "defy and deform the grammars of hegemonic Reason" (51). For Bruce, Blackness is central to the formation of mad subjectivity. The centrality of Blackness and anti-Blackness in histories of defining reason and unreason, or rationality and irrationality, doubly functions as a reminder about the uneven ways that people, particularly Mad and otherwise 'unreasonable' people, can safely ramble, rant, and cry in physical and digital spaces. It also reminds us of the racialized and ableist ways that people's rantings will be perceived as more or less legible and valid, which makes them all the more important to amplify.

Part of any Mad-justice-inspired anti-surveillance is to attest to the potential validity of voices that have been suppressed by state surveillance mechanisms—including policing, institutionalization, and incarceration— as well as by surveillance's social sorting processes wherein voices are categorized into levels of risk, opportunity, and authority per state and capitalist projects of systemic discrimination and hegemonic control. So, what happens when we refuse to succeed to the norms of social media sociality and communication and instead occupy as much visual digital space as possible with our unconstrained disabledness and Madness? And if we do so in ways to make this a collective act of solidarity, where our rants, ramblings, and cries come to occupy a critical mass of noncompliance with ableist and racist norms?

Here, I suggest we occupy digital spaces and feeds with rants, rambles, and longings that cannot be neatly categorized as they evade the normative meaning-making processes that underlie automated and autonomous systems. Further, visually, on the screen, rants take up space and disrupt normative patterns of social media interaction and expression. They capture attention. If we see one, we should retweet, share, like, and engage by all means to amplify the visibility of disabledness that refuses compliance and assimilation.

Dataset Fuckery

The U.S. Supreme Court's overturning of Roe v. Wade in 2022 raised more public critical consciousness of the policing of reproduction and bodies, especially as many states made legislative efforts to criminalize abortions altogether. In the months following, a slew of horror stories plagued U.S. media, many of which revolved around digital surveillance of people's reproductive processes and decisions. Period tracking apps came under fire due to the sensitivity of the data they collect and how this data could now be used to monitor people's reproductive status.

A common refrain on Twitter was the call to disrupt period tracker apps' datasets by inputting excessive amounts of false data, particularly for cisgender men to do this work. One viral tweet from @ SantiagoMayer, a founder of a U.S.-based voting rights NGO, said "I'm a cis man I'm a cis man who just downloaded a period tracking app because if there's anything I love it's causing chaos" and continued "To clarify, this will likely do nothing to aid individuals who are subpoenaed themselves. The goal of this is to mess up data so that any law enforcement agency that purchases a database would have to waste significant resources in cleaning it up before using it." To disrupt the regimes of health data collection as a collective action holds great potential as a crip tactic for, at the very least, slowing down the surveillance state. Since surveillance systems don't aim for accuracy, per se, the least we can do is to make our data double as excessively non-normative as possible and therefore difficult to sort.

Depending on Each Other

Ableism values a fantasy of a unified, able-bodied independent self, whereas disability justice and crip theory recognize our utter vulnerability and interconnectedness with one another, human and non-human. Taking this idea to technology, we must question how much we rely on certain surveillance technologies and how we can come together to disrupt that reliance by caring for one another. The Cyborg Jillian Weise, a disabled poet and activist, writes heavily about her experiences of medical and social surveillance, arguing for noncompliance she writes

> It hasn't been easy to escape the doctors. They have so many maps of us. They're on our phones, of course. So many apps we've downloaded as parts of our bodies. But we take it all off now, all that tech unless we need some gizmo to breathe, and if we can sit, we sit; if we can sign, we sign; if we need to be carried, we carry each other.

Weise's call for collective noncompliance is a reminder that any suggestions to simply 'stop' relying on certain services, products, or institutions must confront the ableist demonization of reliance and offer alternative ways of providing for one another. In practice, this may look like manually tracking your period with a friend instead of using an app or building networks with other disabled people to knowledge share around evading the negative effects of medical surveillance.

To criply resist submission to surveillance must mean more than hiding or destroying. It also means creating systems of care that operate outside and despite the other systems we are forced to rely upon including insurance companies and hospitals. Albeit this may seem like the most obvious tactic of all— to care for each other and care for those who do not have the capacity to care back. And yet, amid calls for boycotts and the sprawling, ubiquitous nature of digital surveillance, collective and mutual care to loosen our need to submit to state and corporate-run surveillance is perhaps one of the most radical acts.

Towards Cripping Surveillance

In this article, I've proposed the need for both disability surveillance studies and crip surveillance; the former being a subfield and the latter being a framework for recognizing how disability and ableism are at the heart of many surveillance rhetorics. While they are necessarily intertwined, the primary difference lies in application. Crip surveillance can and should extend beyond the ways that disabled people experience and push back against surveillance. If we take disability to not simply be a biological condition (the medical model) or a manifestation of social design norms (the social model), but also a structural relationship to power, then we identify how ableism reproduces itself through surveillance rhetorics and begin to imagine beyond their confines and opacity. This choice is partially influenced by Kafer and Gringberg's exploration of the "productive tensions between [the] terms" queer and surveillance (594). The other influence is my research into new "intelligent" and "autonomous" surveillance technologies and how the usage of these technologies is justified by claiming they are superior to human ability, being less biased and more predictable.

So, what is crip surveillance and what can it help us to sense differently? Crip surveillance is a way of thinking with human inability, vulnerability, and unpredictability, rather than resorting to reinforcing damaging ideals of technology as all-seeing and all-knowing or appealing to hyper-able-bodied human mastery. To put another way, to crip (anti) surveillance structures and practices—a project that extends beyond this article—is to ask what it means when ability and ableness are not the defaults for analyzing and imagining surveillance and resistance. Crip surveillance re-evaluates the potential of that which ableism has rejected and marked as without value. Crip surveillance understands that bodymind non-normativity can and must have an integral, material, rhetorical, and epistemological place in resisting surveillance. And finally, crip surveillance affirms that justice and surveillance—as a system of social control and sorting—are anti-thetical no matter which subjects are co-opted in facilitating surveillance. Albeit these are only prospective ideas towards what should be an effort of collectivity. That is, to build crip surveillance and articulate what it would value and offer, the needs, voices, and practices of disabled people must first be foregrounded in conversations about surveillance and anti-surveillance.

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"There is Power in Looking":
The Oppositional Gaze in Black Women's Sousveillance Practices When Encountering Police

Asa McMullen

Abstract: This article examines how Black women use multiple consciousness as a tool to perform sousveillance practices against bureaucratic systems, specifically law enforcement or police. More specifically, the article examines how Black women use multiple consciousness to develop an oppositional gaze and become critical Black female spectators to police actions through sousveillance. The article used a mixed-methods approach to analyze six traffic stops and the sousveillance practices that Black women use to critique police. The author argues that Black women's sousveillance practices form from their oppositional gaze, and critical Black female spectatorship gives Black women autonomy over their experiences, allows them to show the truth of Black life, resists bureaucratic systems, and creates counternarratives to racist narratives of Black experiences with the police.

Introduction

In 2020, during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, the world witnessed the modern-day lynching of a Black man, George Floyd. The witnessing of Black folks' reality—the brutality of police—was made possible through Darnella Fraizer's recording of Floyd's murder. While this young Black girl was harassed and ridiculed by some, one can't deny how her "watching from below" impacted not only police departments but individuals and caused them to consider the question, "Do you like what you see?"

The reality is Black women have realized the "power in looking" and the need for what Steve Mann calls sousveillance, an "observation or recording by an entity not in a position of power or authority over the subject of the veilance" (6). Black women have been able to recognize and use sousveillance through their multiple consciousness, which is Black women's awareness of their multiple identities and how they truly exist versus how the world perceives them. Essential to sousveillance is its reflectionism which uses "technology to mirror and confront bureaucratic organizations" (Mann et al. 333). Mann et al. note that sousveillance can give those with little to no power a sense of self-empowerment and aid them in mastering the gaze (448). Additionally, Simone Browne extends the original definition of sousveillance, coining the term dark sousveillance to describe "the ways that tools of social control in plantation surveillance and beyond were appro-

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priated, repurposed, co-opted, and also challenged to facilitate escape" (*Dark Matters* 21; "Simone Browne" 4:47–4:58). The simple questioning of bureaucratic organizations through sousveillance's reflectionism and Browne's definition of sousveillance allows one to resist surveillance, abuses of power, and dominant structures within organizations.

Examining Black women's sousveillance through these definitions permits an understanding of how Black women interact with technology aside from the intended purposes to neutralize surveillance and establish practices within our surveilled society that forge paths, uncover and preserve truths, and resist and remove current barriers. When sousveillance is combined with mobile networked technologies that are linked to social media networks, sousveillance can be a dynamic force to disrupt and change antiblack narratives of policing Black bodies. Judith Butler notes that videos of police brutality that do not hold police accountable through convictions do so by shaping narratives around the videos that clearly depict police brutality against Black people and construing them within a "racist interpretive framework" to alter how one sees the actions taking place (16). Butler offers up the claim that readings within the racist interpretive framework need counterreadings to expose the truth of brutality. Throughout this article, I refer to Black women watching from below through *Facebook* videos (live or uploads) as a form of sousveillance.

In this article, I argue that Black women's sousveillance of their encounters with law enforcement is an attempt at offering these counter readings of police brutality. I use a Black feminist perspective to continue Simone Browne's focus on tools as a form of resistance, centering Black women's specific lived experiences with racialized and gendered surveillance and how Black women's multiple consciousness is used to look (or gaze) back at those in positions of power through digital technology. I analyze how Black women use social media features (live videos and video uploads) as a tool to "talk back" to and resist harmful law enforcement surveillance practices. I argue that it is through what bell hooks calls the oppositional gaze—the "rebellious desire" of Black people to look despite the repression of Black peoples' right to look—that Black women become critical spectators of police surveillance practices (116). Being able to "surveil the surveillers," Black women can sousveil those in power, use current digital technologies to neutralize surveillance, and resist surveillance practices that harm Black women and others within Black communities (Mann et al. 332).

Theoretical Framework

To examine the autonomy and power Black women forge by enacting sousveillance in encounters with police, I take up the following question: how is Black women's multiple consciousness displayed in their use of social media as a veillance technology? Within this question, I seek to answer three supporting questions:

1. How are Black women expected to engage in or mediate in activities through digital technology when interacting with bureaucratic systems, specifically law enforcement?

2. To what extent do Black women participate in the expected activities of bureaucratic systems when sousveiling them?

3. How do Black women evaluate bureaucratic systems, evoking reflectionism, when sousveiling law enforcement?

To address these questions, I use the theoretical frames of Black women's multiple consciousness, oppositional gaze, and sousveillance to form the understandings of Black women's sousveillance practices as distributed on *Facebook* and similar social media platforms. Black women's multiple consciousness is an extension of W. E. B. DuBois' theory of double consciousness and acknowledges how Black women's overlapping identities of gender and race are essential to understanding the lived experiences of those who are multiply marginalized (Spillers). Black women's multiple consciousness opposes dominant conceptions of discrimination that "condition us to think about subordination as a disadvantage occurring along a single categorical axis" (Crenshaw 140). Additionally, Black women's multiple consciousness allows us to create new paths for navigating a White patriarchal society and resist the negative stereotypes and discrimination of Black women in particular. For this study, Black women's multiple consciousness provides a distinct perspective into Black women's experiences with law enforcement and how we use digital technology to showcase our experiences and resist surveillance practices.

Black women's multiple consciousness also aids in the formation of what bell hooks calls the oppositional gaze. hooks defines the oppositional gaze as the "rebellious desire" of Black people to look despite the repression of Black peoples' right to look (116). Developing this oppositional gaze permits Black women to participate in critical Black female spectatorship (hooks 122–123). hooks further notes that Black female spectators are aware of how race and racism influence "the visual construction of gender" (122). Thus, Black women's oppositional gaze stems from an awareness of multiple consciousness and depicts Black women's multiple consciousness. hooks emphasizes that being multiply conscious of discrimination and devaluation as Black women contribute to the development of the oppositional gaze and explains that this form of looking provides a sense of satisfaction in its resistance (123–127). In this study, Black women's oppositional gaze permits both visual and verbal representations of Black women's multiple consciousness and shows how critical Black female spectatorship critiques surveillance practices through sousveillance.

Sousveillance is often briefly defined as watching from below or inverse surveillance (Mann 6). Black Americans have used sousveillance to navigate a white hegemonic society and resist the surveillance of Black bodies (*Dark Matters*; Mann). As a form of reflectionism, sousveillance allows those not in power positions to use "technology to mirror and confront bureaucratic organizations," which includes using the tools of social controllers against organizations (Mann et al. 333). In examining Black women's multiple consciousness through their digital technology use and literacies, sousveillance offers insight into how Black women use their knowledge intentionally to critique and resist structures of asymmetrical power and show the truth of their experiences. In this study, sousveillance through the oppositional gaze permits Black female specta-

tors to interrogate by showing the actions of those in positions of power. In sharing these actions on social media platforms, like *Facebook*, Black women maintain autonomy over the narratives of their experiences, resist by looking (or gazing) back at those in power, and use digital technology to ultimately ask those in power "Do you like what you see?" (Mann et al. 334).

Methods, Data Collection, and Data Analysis

I conducted this study using a mixed-methods approach of verbal data analysis, called coding streams of language, by Cheryl Geisler and Jason Swarts supplemented by Margarete Sandelowski et al. and W. Paul Vogt et al. Geisler and Swarts' mixed-methods approach permits the use of Black feminist theory to construct the coding categories and provides multiple means of comparing, contrasting, and examining the intersections of the coding categories described later in this section. To evaluate how Black women's multiple consciousness is invoked through the interactions of digital technology as exuded in sousveillance practices, I relied on their lived experiences as they captured their encounters with police using *Facebook* Live or videos uploaded and shared on *Facebook*. To find the videos that showed these encounters with law enforcement, criterion-based sampling was used to gather the videos. First, I searched *Google* and *Facebook* using phrases, such as "Black woman and police live," "Black woman arrested live," and "Black woman record police live." I also took up these same queries and replaced "Black" with "African American." For the protection of the identities of youth under the age of 18, all videos involving youth under the age of 18 were excluded from the sample size. The content was also filtered to only include videos from 2015 to 2022, which is suitable for this study because *Facebook* Live was not available until August 2015 and numerous Black users still use the platform. After performing *Google* and *Facebook* searches with these criteria, the samples presented in the study were selected based on convenience, particularly focusing on videos in which the full recording was available.

From this aforementioned search, six videos were selected and the audio of each traffic stop was fully transcribed for coding and analysis. To establish codes that would accurately define multiple consciousness, oppositional gaze, and critical Black female spectatorship, I first segmented the transcripts by topic chains to define the topics (or experiences) the officers and Black women are attempting to create in their dialogue. The data was then segmented by conversational turns to help determine power within the conversation. To do this, I segmented the data after each time the speakers took a turn speaking. For this study and as a nested code, the conversational turns determine who is constructing the building task (or experience), how the other is experiencing the building tasks, and whether or not their experiences align. In the nested coding, "the second dimension was applied selectively only to data that had been placed in a specific category as a result of the first coding scheme" (Geisler and Swarts 148). Lastly, the drivers' responses from the conversational turns were segmented to determine how Black women in this study evaluated the building tasks they were prompted to participate in.

After segmenting the data, I applied hooks' theory of critical Black female spectatorship along with

trends within the data to determine three coding categories, which aided in my investigation of the presence and intersection of multiple consciousness, oppositional gaze, and critical Black female spectatorship as depicted in Black women's thoughts and through their sousveillance acts. To evaluate the impact of Black women's multiple consciousness on technological interactions during moments of sousveillance, I considered that multiple consciousness, like double consciousness, is rooted in lived experiences, particularly those experiences in which one becomes aware of self through the actions and/or view of others as it pertains to race, gender, and class. I deduced that sousveillance enacted by Black women through social media is pertinent to illustrating the intersection of Black women's digital technology use, multiple consciousness, and literacies, which are reflected in oppositional gaze and critical Black female spectatorship. Since this study only assessed verbal discourse of the videos, coding definitions that would assess experiences, particularly the type of experience, were constructed. Geisler and Swarts' coding streams of language method was used to help assess how each coding category intersected and/or was interdependent. The coding definitions are organized into the three categories of building tasks, participation, and contribution, which I explain in the following paragraphs.

Using the idea of building tasks within language as proposed by James Paul Gee and as a basis for assessing experience and self, I first coded to appropriately categorize and identify experiences or realities. Gee proposed that "language-in-use is a tool, used alongside other tools, to design or build things" (11). According to Gee, this also includes using language alongside other tools to create seven areas of "reality" (11). I use Gee's concept of language as a tool to construct or build reality to analyze how Black women's multiple consciousness (or racial-gendered reality) is linguistically mediated through digital sousveillance literacy practices like oppositional gaze and critical Black female spectatorship. The three building tasks chosen for this study and inspired by Gee's building tasks and Black women's identities that prompt an oppositional gaze were Action, Knowledge, and Identity. These building tasks intend to establish the experiences that the police officer and the driver are attempting to create and show their realities with a specific focus on how the drivers, Black women, are creating and managing their realities through language. Viewing the discourse as a means of creating experiences or realities allows us to see the congruences and differences between the police officers' and Black women's experiences. I use N/A (not applicable) in all sets of coding definitions because some segments did not need to be coded due to the lack of information and/or inaudible phrases.

After deciding on and coding for building tasks (Action, Knowledge, and Identity), I used nested coding on the two remaining segmentations for each transcript to identify the sousveillance literacy practices (oppositional gaze and critical Black female spectatorship) that are prompted by Black women's multiple consciousness. These nested coding categories were based on magnitude, which "consists of and adds a supplemental alphanumeric or symbolic code or subcode to an existing coded datum or category to indicate its intensity, frequency, direction, presence, or evaluative content" (Saldaña 73). I specifically created nested coding categories to determine the intensity and evaluative content of the building tasks. Intensity of the building tasks was coded using the category of Participation (Full, Partial, None, N/A). Coding the building tasks for participation identifies how Black women engage in experiences or realities set by bureaucratic

systems like policing. This correlates with hooks' analysis of how Black women mediate their looking relations—"the extent to which black women feel devalued, objectified, dehumanized in this society determines the scope and texture of their looking relations" (127). Evaluative content of Black women's participation in the building task was coded using the category of Contributions (Critical, Neutral, Uncritical, and N/A). Coding Black women's evaluations of building tasks as contributions based on levels of critique (Critical, Neutral, Uncritical) permits an assessment of Black women's development of a critical Black female spectatorship. In relation to hooks, the coding definitions of contributions aid in the identification of a "broad range of looking relations, contest, resist, revision, interrogate, and invent on multiple levels" that critical Black female spectators engage in (128). Full coding definitions for building tasks, participation, and contributions are displayed in table 1, table 2, and table 3.

Codes for Building Tasks, Participation, and Contributions

Table 1: A table providing definitions for the building tasks codes used within this study.

Building Tasks Codes	Definitions
Action	Code as action any topic chain in which the driver (D) and/or police officer (P) are completing or attempting to complete an activity. Actions can include obtaining physical property from the driver and/or removing the driver from the vehicle.
Identity	Code as identity any topic chain in which the driver (D) and/or police officer (P) provides a description of oneself related to job occupation, race, ethnicity, and/or relationship to others.
Knowledge	Code as knowledge any topic chain in which (a) information about the speaker's well-being is requested (i.e. "How are you?", "Are you okay?"), (b) a common understanding of information is being made or attempted through a series of clarification statements or questions, or (c) the driver (D) makes a claim of Knowledge of rights and/or the legal system and/or questions the legality of the police officer's actions.
N/A	Code as N/A any topic chain in which (a) salutations between the police officer(s) and the driver are expressed, (b) the police officer (P) is requesting or sharing information with a dispatcher or another officer, or (c) full topic chains that are inaudible.

Table 2: A table providing definitions for the participation codes used within this study.

Participation Codes	Definitions
Full	Code as full participation any conversational turn in which (a) the driver (D) or police officer (P) provides a direct reply in response to the previous question, request, and/or statement without opposing the question, request, and/or statement or (b) initiates a new task after the completion of the previous task. Direct replies are statements in agreement with and direct response to the action requested by the driver or police officer.
Partial	Code as partial participation any conversational turn in which the driver (D) or police officer (P) responds to the previously mentioned task in order to provide and/or receive clarification. Partial participation does not oppose requests and/or statements.
None	Code as none participation any conversational turn in which the driver (D) or police officer (P) refuses to participate in the activity as requested and directly opposes requests and/or comments (i.e. "No." or "I'm not."). A complete change of subject or no response may also be a form of Non-participation.
N/A	Code as N/A any conversational turn in which (a) salutations between the police officer(s) and the driver are expressed, (b) the police officer (P) is requesting or sharing information with a dispatcher or another officer, or (c) conversational turns that are inaudible.

Table 3: A table providing definitions for the contributions codes used within this study.

Contributions Codes	Definitions
Critical	Code as critical any phrase in which the driver (D) questions or makes commands in regard to the action or commands of the police officer (P). A Critical phrase can be identified as (a) questions or commands that respond to the police officer's actions as directed towards the driver, (b) questions or commands that respond to the police officer's actions as directed towards an object in the driver's possession, and/or (c) statements that oppose the actions or commands of the police officer.
Neutral	Code as neutral any phrase in which the driver (D) provides no response to the police officer's request.
Uncritical	Code as uncritical any phrase in which the driver positively responds using short phrases such as okay, yes, thank you, etc. Positive responses do not oppose actions or commands and are direct responses to the police officer.

N/A	Code as N/A any phrase in which (a) salutations between the police officer(s) and the driver are expressed, (b) the police officer (P) is requesting or sharing information with a dispatcher or another officer, or (c) phrases that are inaudible.

Results

Of the six traffic stops analyzed, the data revealed similarities among the building tasks, participation, and contributions among all traffic stops except for Traffic Stop 4. The data further revealed that Black women use sousveillance to critique building tasks (Action, Identity, and Knowledge) during encounters with law enforcement. From the data, the extent to which Black women participate in building tasks during traffic stops is mostly partial or not at all. When examining Black women's critical spectatorship through sousveillance and as drivers during traffic stops, the degree to which Black women participate and contribute in the building tasks that unfold throughout the encounter is similar when a singular driver is present. A strong indicator within the data of Black women's multiple consciousness and oppositional gaze reflected in their sousveillance practices is Black women's contribution (critical, neutral, or uncritical) to attempts at completing building tasks, or creating experiences, during the traffic stops. For all traffic stops, the majority of Black women's contributions are critical, in which they have questioned or made commands regarding the police's actions or commands. All of the six traffic stops analyzed in this study yielded large frequencies of critical contributions.

Analyzing the relationship among the dimensions of this study (building tasks, participation, and contribution) shows how Black women's multiple consciousness invokes Black women's digital literacy practices when social media is used to sousveil bureaucratic systems and organizations. Specifically, the study reveals how the oppositional gaze, sousveillance, and reflectionism become digital literacy practices when Black women's multiple consciousness is mediated through digital technology. Throughout this study, law enforcement acts as a representation of bureaucratic systems or organizations. Additionally, the results show how Black women call out questionable actions they are expected to participate in when encountering the police, the extent to which Black women participate in questionable activities, and how Black women evaluate the questionable activities through the oppositional gaze and sousveillance reflectionism to become critical Black female spectators.

Black women pinpoint questionable actions, knowledge, and claims of identity when encountering the police. Based on this study, the most prominent questionable tasks that Black women are expected to participate in involve performing certain actions. Black women calling out these actions contributes to sousveillance reflectionism. Recording and linguistically announcing the actions of police allow Black women to "mirror and confront" the powers of law enforcement. From the women's experiences in this study, the oppositional gaze is determined based on the intersection of codes for Black women's level of participation in (full, partial, or none) and contributions (critical, neutral, uncritical) to the building tasks.

Black women call out police actions in four ways: through sousveillance, direct audience interaction, articulating officer actions, and question officer actions. The first means of Black women calling out police actions is through sousveillance itself. Black women's choice to sousveil the police despite the potential dangers is the initial indicator of Black women's multiple consciousness and oppositional gaze. In this study, Black women begin to sousveil at various points in their police encounters. The various points at which they sousveil indicate when they believed the police's actions were worth critique. For some Black women, history dictates when they begin recording. For other Black women, the questionable behaviors of police cause them to begin recording. This is a point of contention for those who question the completeness or incompleteness of sousveillance.

A second form of calling out police actions is directly talking to social media viewers or potential viewers. Sousveillance when paired with social media features, like *Facebook* Live, creates a virtual space for and presence of viewers. In recording and inviting others to watch virtually, Black women are also requesting that others be present and participate in witnessing.

The third form of calling out police actions involves stating the officer's actions. Black women clearly state the questionable actions of the officer(s), leaving little to no ambiguity in Black women's perception of how they are being treated during traffic stops. Adverbs, like "very" and "even," and determiners, like "no," place emphasis on actions and help describe the action(s) as extreme. These clear statements of the officer's action(s) also create a verbal record of the officer's action(s) within Black women's sousveillance.

Clearly questioning the officers' actions is the fourth form Black women use to call out police actions. Black women also use questions to announce actions, by stating the action in questions of which they want clarification. Stating actions within questions along with sousveillance allows Black women to enact reflectionism, suggesting that officers reflect on their actions and realize the practices are unreasonable for the situation and towards certain demographics. When each form of calling out actions intersect, Black women become spectators of themselves and others.

In the traffic stops examined for this study, the level of participation determined how Black women engaged in the building tasks. Black women's engagement in the action requested by police was predominantly partial or none. Rarely were these interactions full participation. Black women's social participation reflects the oppositional gaze and their opposition to asymmetrical power and bureaucratic systems. The extent to which Black women participated in activities initiated by asymmetrical power could be seen in their means of providing or receiving clarification on actions and opposing requests or comments based on police actions.

Black women involved in the traffic stops of this study evaluated the actions of the police and critiqued the actions by questioning and making commands in response to the police's actions. A key aspect of sousveillance is reflectionism, which is also a key aspect in pinpointing multiple consciousness and op-

positional gaze in Black women. Reflectionism occurs through the type of tasks that Black women critique through questions or statements. Basically, Black women's sousveillance practices allow them to place police actions at the forefront and enact reflectionism, ultimately asking "Do you like what you see?" Beyond simply recording from below, Black women's questions and comments about police officers' actions as they sousveil this bureaucratic system, highlight their oppositional gaze and critical Black female spectatorship.

Black women's contributions as critical female spectators to attempted tasks during traffic stops allow them to critique actions in two ways. First, Black women are critical of officers' actions directed towards the driver, the driver's possessions, or an object. Second, Black women evaluate police actions by opposing the actions or commands of the police officer. Black women, in this study, used a combination of statements, commands, and questions to critically evaluate the officers' actions. Black women also critique officers' justifications for wanting or making observations about the driver's possession(s). This critique often stems from the officer's inability to effectively justify why the women are being detained or investigated. In these situations, critical Black female spectatorship permits Black women to talk back to officers' violation of their bodily autonomy or awareness of different treatment than other non-Black citizens. Black women who critique in these ways are professing their innocence and the officers' negligence.

Black women's multiple consciousness and oppositional gaze are mediated through digital technology, specifically sousveillance discourse. The results above aid in determining how Black women call out the activities Black women are expected to participate in, how they participate in the attempted activities, and how they evaluate the activities through an oppositional gaze. Lastly, these results reflect how Black women's multiple consciousness aids in the development of critical Black female spectatorship and gives Black women autonomy in encounters with bureaucratic systems that abuse power.

Conclusion

This study examines how Black women mediate multiple consciousness through social media, enacting oppositional gaze, sousveillance, and reflectionism as digital literacy practices during traffic stops. Collectively, invoking these digital literacy practices aids in the development of a critical Black female spectatorship, in which Black women "do more than resist" and instead "participate in a broad range of looking relations, contest, resist, revision, interrogate, and invent on multiple levels" (hooks 128). In mediating multiple consciousness through social media, Black women use the aforementioned digital literacy practices to archive their experiences, resist White hegemonic systems, and survive and thrive despite repression of their gaze and lived experiences. Black women harness autonomy over their experiences and the experiences of their communities, creating counternarratives to racist interpretations of Black experiences. By sousveilling and becoming critical Black female spectators, Black women showcase the power in looking.

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Studying Surveillance Through Hybrid Concealment Practices: A Queer Analysis of Digital Sex Work Safety Guides

Rachael Jordan

Abstract: This article explores surveillance by analyzing the hybridity and concealment in digital sex work safety guides from multiple countries. Sex workers are the "canaries in the digital coalmine" (Sly) as surveillance, including laws and censorship, are "tried out" on sex workers before more "mainstream" users. Through analysis, this paper bridges sex worker voices with "queer surveillance" scholarship (Kafer and Grinberg) to study how sex workers work within/against systems of surveillance by utilizing the "hybrid concealment" necessary for hyper-marginalized users when participating in digital spaces. These tactics, then, "talk back" through surveillance by centering sex workers' critical positions in their writing about combatting surveilling practices. We must continue analyzing, assessing, and addressing concealment/visibility: who gets to be visible and why and when; how do we weave concealment for imperative safety, privacy, and protection, especially when trying to enact harm reduction against criminalization and connected surveillance practices?

"Surveillance is not total. Things spill out, escape, mutate."

~ Kafer & Grinberg, "Queer Surveillance"

"Remember: Whores told you."

~ Bardot Smith, "Algorithmic Warfare" Workshop

Activist Orientations

I cannot write about surveillance without writing about sex work decriminalization. This means that any work I do exploring and engaging with surveillance, especially "queer surveillance," and its impact on hypermarginalized groups such as sex workers, must align with sex work activist aims. The ideas expressed in this piece are rooted in the need for decriminalization as the way to address the primary sources of harm for sex workers. As my analysis will show, it's not that sex work itself is inherently risky (any more so than other forms of work), but criminalization that *makes* sex work risky. The surveillance efforts involved in both maintaining criminalization and enacting punishment, oppression, and violence in the name of criminaliza-

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tion deserves attention.

I am a technical and professional communication (TPC) scholar who has an interest in texts not usually codified as "professional" for how they work against/within systems of oppression. My blatant call to sex work decriminalization activism is one move to discuss this issue openly and aid in reducing stigma about discussing sex work. My research stems from the desire to center sex worker voices to help complicate our scholarship. For this piece, I turn that lens towards queer surveillance.

Digital Sex Work Safety Guides & Queer Surveillance

Other work I do in TPC revolves around digital sex work safety guides, with a particular focus on how sex workers navigate documents of compliance such as terms of service. As I read more safety guides, I noticed a pattern of "hybrid concealment" tactics shared across documents, particularly to work around, with, or through surveillance systems embedded in online platforms. Also, sex workers make clear in their writing that it's always already safer for certain individuals (namely, white, conventionally attractive, cisgender women) to be visible as sex workers. As a queer, cisgender woman, with friends who have been in and out of the industry, I began to ask myself:

> How/are "hybrid concealment" tactics shared in documents, such as digital sex work safety guides, and used to combat surveillance? What can these guides teach us about queer surveillance and criminalized groups?

In its simplest form, surveillance can be about being observed by others and even oneself. However, my analysis works from Morgan Banville's definition of surveillance as "the collection of both visible and invisible data/information derived from those being observed, suggesting an application of power over the observed audience, who are often not informed of such collection" (32). This definition and Banville's methodological framework of "interlocking surveillance" ––combining surveillance and intersectionality––is particularly important to queer surveillance, especially when we discuss criminalized groups who are often hyper-surveilled. Gary Kafer and Daniel Grinberg argue that queer surveillance offers three "propositions" for future research: queer surveillance requires a more "expansive view of control, power, and violence" (596), that a queer surveillance lens can help illuminate contours in the way surveillance is "encountered, imagined, and endured" (597), and that queer surveillance requires us to examine the ways "minoritarian subjects contest sorting and monitoring systems" (598). Analyzing sex worker created safety guides for their use of hybrid concealment is one way to extend the conversation about the tactics sex workers use to "contest sorting and monitoring systems" (Kafer and Grinberg 598) that work together to criminalize, deplatform, and oppress them.

I approach my analysis from the stance that "sex work is work." Though people engaged in sex work use various terms for their work, sex workers, organizations, and activists have been lobbying for years to un-

derstand sex work as labor and, therefore, to have the same labor rights as other jobs. Though not all people who engage in exchanging sexual services for resources identify with or refer to themselves as sex workers (D'Adamo), I follow Itchuaqiyaq, Edenfield, and Grant-Davie in claiming that sex workers *are already* professionals and, therefore, produce professional writing such as sex work safety guides. For example, in one interview, Kara, a current sex worker, highlighted how sex workers need to "conceptualize issues in a labour context...When we're talking about violence against sex workers, it's an occupational health and safety issue" (van der Meulen 154). Approaching sex work as work helps us with a more nuanced understanding of the surveillance impacts and surveillance affordances of criminalized work.

Hybrid Concealment

Hybrid concealment, then, is something to consider when dealing with communities whose work is criminalized. Here, I view hybrid concealment as a specific safety tactic for a hypermarginalized group, sex workers, to use to maintain safe working conditions through specific decisions about how much information to reveal and when, utilizing both visibility and concealment in several ways on the same platforms. If hybridity is an "always already" condition for any subject position (Bhabha) then we must interrogate and attest to who gets to be hybrid, when, and where. We need to account for whose hybridity is stigmatized and, in turn, surveilled. My analysis shows that sex workers use concealment ethically to protect themselves from surveillance practices, both visible and invisible, extending "queer surveillance" to include criminalized groups.

Rather than focus this article on sex workers experiencing these oppressive tactics, which sex workers themselves have discussed in length (Smith; Blunt and Wolf; Blunt and Stardust), this article focuses on the publicly available safety guides sex workers have created to work around, with, and/or against these surveillance practices. Focusing on documents is in keeping with the aims that Grant calls on for solidarity with sex workers. She advises, "rather than narrow in on sex workers' behaviors, turn your questions outward. What are these people doing that might harm sex workers? Why not help them, rather than sex workers, change their behavior?" (130). Rather than ask for labor or change from sex workers, we can look at the processes, the documents, and the workflows that may harm, oppress, and enable violence against these groups. Also, by analyzing the documents already created *by and for* sex workers that are in circulation, we can understand and learn about the work already being conducted to combat surveilling technologies and practices. Using "hybrid concealment" as a framework to explore "queer surveillance," I argue that hybrid concealment is a useful tactic to employ while negotiating surveillance technologies, especially for criminalized groups.

Sex Workers & Surveillance

Sex workers are the "canaries in the tech coalmines" as surveillance, including laws and censorship, are "tried out" on sex workers and their digital spaces before moving to more mainstream users (Sly). Olivia Snow, professional dominatrix and research fellow at UCLA's Center for Critical Internet Inquiry, writes

about how sex workers are the "test subjects" for novel surveillance technologies because they are "excellent scapegoats; we're not only criminalized but also highly stigmatized, so the general public is less likely to hear us, let alone believe us." Though the ability to conduct sex work in online spaces has offered safety and security not afforded by street-based sex work. However, as highlighted in multiple safety guides, the need for digital privacy is paramount to that safety working (Henry and Farvid; Nelson; Middleweek). However, privacy is not the only surveillance concern. Being a "test population" for a variety of surveillance tactics online from data sharing, to shadowbanning, to platform governance means that sex workers are experts on the impact of, negotiations with, and resistance of surveillance technologies.

Activists have made clear that using online platforms to conduct sex work offers safety in some ways, but also means contending with the affordances and constraints of more visibility. As Melissa Gira Grant, former sex worker and now journalist and advocate, explains: "where the internet has opened up opportunities for [sex workers] to take control of their work by increasing their direct access to customers, it has also given law enforcement, politicians, and assorted anti-sex work types a highly visible and vulnerable place to attack" (65). Surveilling sex workers enables these attacks to be carried out, especially when legislation, such as the 2018 FOSTA-SESTA bills, legalize even more surveillance in the name of combating sex trafficking (Blunt and Wolf). The distributed surveillance mechanisms––from visible laws to invisible data sharing––all have outsized impacts on criminalized groups who have fewer protections due to criminalization.

There are a wide range of surveilling technologies and tactics used on/against sex workers that sex workers have been writing about for some time. They've reported on companies using cross-platform data sharing to ban their accounts (Grace), Airbnb using tracking data to deny sex workers' stays (Parham; Dickson; Holmes), and crowdfunding platforms flagging funds to attend conferences such as the Feminist Porn Awards as "adult content" (Chiel). Reports have been filed about how Amazon's use of facial recognition software to find child sexual ads also gets "vast amounts of information about the marginalized consenting sex worker community from publicly posted ads and sex trade forums, often without their knowledge" (Brewster). The examples mentioned here are also in addition to more traditional forms of police surveillance. As a scholar and sex work decriminalization advocate, I cannot separate sex work criminalization from the way that sex workers are surveilled.

The fact that sex work is criminalized in most places is inseparable from the ability to surveil sex workers. Many surveilling techniques are used under the guise of "safety" and, more recently, specifically with "child safety." Sex workers have sounded the alarm on recent legislation, from FOSTA-SESTA, to EARN It, and now the Kids Online Safety Act (KOSA) arguing that these are thinly veiled laws that will increase surveillance and negatively impact all users, with an outsized impact on LGBTQIA+ youth. Fight for the Future, a digital rights group, shared an open letter stating "all the benefits of accurate health information, social networking, community, and access to help in a questioning or crisis situation will be eliminated for all LGBTQ youth" if KOSA passes. KOSA will require age verification documentation, which is

collecting sensitive data and information from *all* users.

As the arguments against KOSA show, these laws impact communities beyond those stated as its targets, which include laws criminalizing sex work. There is a history of prostitution laws being wielded against women and queer people. As Grant explains, "Laws against prostitution are used to target a class of people as whores whether or not they are selling sex, and in areas of their lives far outside what they do for a living" (128). For example, we've already seen how tactics used on sex workers have also been used to track and share data on women seeking abortions and, generally, on women, queer people, transgender people, disabled people, and communities at the intersections of these identities (Snow). "Marking" people as sex workers, regardless of whether they are or not, is complicated by aggregated data online. Since "all algorithmic interpretations produce their own corrupted truths" (Cheney-Lippold 12), the reliance on algorithms to "mark" those people, communities, and even professions as deviant, has dire consequences.

Since these surveillance tactics are used across marginalized identities and in varying contexts, it's important to adopt a queer framework of surveillance that specifically accounts for "non-normativity." I'm not arguing that "queer" itself is always necessarily disruptive, as shown in arguments around "homonormativity" (Duggan) for example, but that queer can be applied to sexual and social practices which includes "taboo" occupations, such as sex work (Barnard).

Sex Work and (Queer) Surveillance Assemblages

The argument that sex workers are over-surveilled and that consequences from over surveillance are unevenly distributed has been well-established. From the immediate workplace impact of security cameras inside of legal "adult establishments" like topless bars (Dewey) to surveillance being an aspect of "sex work governance" (Johnson and Porth) with impacts beyond legal prosecution, sex workers, researchers, and activist groups and organizations consistently show the practices and impact of surveillance on sex workers' work, personal lives, and health.

Despite the use of surveillance to police sex workers' actions and bodies and to conduct academic research on sex workers, surveillance studies as a field has interrogated the way surveillance is being used against sex workers. For example, Khan argued that feminist surveillance studies should be concerned with how, and to what extent, surveillance is being conducted "in the name of feminism" (191). Particularly, she cited the importance of how "feminist [sex work] prohibitionist discourse participates in the 'surveillance of sexuality,'" (191) of an already stigmatized group, perpetuating the ways in which academic researchers and scholars can also surveil.

Sex work and worker surveillance also goes beyond the legal prosecution of street-based sex work and bleeds into online actions. Part of online surveillance comes in the form of content moderation, tagging, flagging, reporting, algorithmic bias, and data sharing across sites. Blunt and Stardust argue that "whore-

phobia, like other biases, is by design within the algorithm. Sex workers are specifically targets of men weaponizing content moderation reporting tools, which results in the deplatforming and invisibilization of sex workers" (359). The impact of this type of surveillance is detrimental. For example, Myers West found content moderation consequences were "particularly detrimental to users who are already in a marginal position in society" (4375). In line with Myers West's findings, Blunt and Stardust explain "deplatforming is a form of structural violence that predominantly impacts populations already vulnerable to policing" (359) such as sex workers. Content moderation, and the surveillance inherent in those practices are just one example of ways sex workers are surveilled online.

My analysis of sex work online safety guides complicate Kafer and Grinberg's work on queer surveillance by centering sex worker voices. If we must remain "attentive to the differential modes by which queerness is elaborated and experienced as a function of changing racial, gendered, and sexual norms" (Kafer and Grinberg 594), then the work, knowledge, and experiences of criminalized groups are paramount. For example, sex workers are not a monolith and have a diverse range of races, ethnicities, genders, and sexualities with varying disabilities, habits, beliefs, and goals. Their wide range of experience and viewpoints, from a variety of backgrounds and contexts, means that the experiences, work, and writing they do are a rich and useful opportunity to study the ways we can navigate surveillance systems. I argue, then, that it's important to focus on sex workers at this moment because they have been negotiating the impacts of surveillance technologies long before the "average civilian" and the current legal landscape, with increasing legislation aimed at creating even more surveillance, is dire.

One potential of "encountering the queerness of surveillance" can be to complicate it through sex worker voices and experiences, particularly in how sex workers navigate surveillant practices that adapt to queerness. It is within this call that I situate the importance of studying criminalized groups' "everyday mutinous practices" (Kafer & Grinberg 598) to both honor the work sex workers have been doing and to build coalitions for combatting unjust practices. I also want to extend Kafer and Grinberg's work to include hypermarginalized groups at the intersections of race, gender, ability, age, class, and more, such as sex workers. Sex workers are hypermarginalized because of "their intersecting identities derived from their criminalized work, race, gender, ability, and other identities" (Itchuaqiyaq et. al. 2). With the term "hypermarginalized" I want to call attention to the ways marginalizations can intersect in various and diverse ways across different institutions, contexts, publics, and over time. My analysis here is just a starting point for engaging the ways that queer surveillance is enacted, contested, negotiated, and constantly adapting to criminalized groups.

The following analysis extends "queer surveillance" scholarship (Kafer and Grinberg) to study how sex workers work within/against the surveillance assemblages (Haggerty and Ericson; Trottier) used against them by utilizing the "hybrid concealment" necessary for hypermarginalized users when participating in digital spaces. These tactics, then, "talk back" through surveillance by centering sex workers' critical positions in their writing about combatting surveilling practices.

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Artifact Selection

I chose three publicly available safety guides from multiple countries. Since this work directly involves a criminalized population who are on "platforms hostile to them, using payment platforms that make their income precarious, and needing additional protection measures" (Bhalerao et al. 548-549), I did not use a web scraper to go beyond paywalls or into any sex worker only spaces. Instead, I did a manual search in an incognito window for "online sex work safety guides." From there, I chose safety guides specifically shared through sex worker activist organizations: the Global Network of Sex Work Projects (NSWP), Hacking/Hustling (based in the United States), and United Kingdom-based Beyond the Gaze (BTG).

It was important to include safety guides from outside of the United States not only because sex work is a global profession and various countries have different levels of criminalization, but also because it's important to include global and cross-cultural perspectives in surveillance work. Though these three artifacts are not an exhaustive list, they are a starting point to analyze how "hybrid concealment" is at work to negotiate surveillance practices and how "hybrid concealment" can help show how surveillant goals to impose norms often fail or are incomplete.

Artifact 1: Global Network of Sex Work Projects

The first guide, NSWP's "Digital Security: The Smart Sex Worker's Guide," is a 30-page document that reports on findings from global research with NSWP partner organizations and makes recommendations to various stakeholders. Even though this guide is not a traditional "How-To" with specific and targeted suggestions, it still enacts examples of hybrid concealment through its discussions about surveillance in the guide.

Unlike the other two guides I'll discuss, the NSWP guide explicitly addresses surveillance. For example, it highlights how technology "such as mobile applications and biometric surveillance practices, can also be used to find, count, identify, track, trace, and punish sex workers" (4). This explicit discussion of biometric surveillance practices and their connections to punishment show how surveillance systems use multi-pronged approaches, even outside of law enforcement, to locate criminalized populations, rendering the need for these groups to negotiate being simultaneously visible for work, but untraceable by institutional gazes.   Not only does the NSWP guide name surveillance, but it also addresses a major concern of hybrid concealment: who gets to conceal, how, and when? In the guide's discussion about data protection, they observe how some platforms and technologies require data sharing or personal information to even access the service and that "the risk is higher for sex workers who live in precarious settings... since they cannot afford to choose privacy over securing work" (13). This guide makes clear that sometimes concealment as protection is *not a choice* as sex workers in certain situations must choose between taking a privacy risk or losing income. The inability to choose privacy over income points to ways that navigating these systems is not simply about visibility/invisibility, but instead about making strategic choices about when and *how visi-*

ble one can become.

A possibility to combat these types of choices is by involving the most impacted users in evaluating these technologies. This guide is blatant about how "the meaningful involvement of sex workers and other key populations... has not yet been extensively achieved" (20), but how this practice is integral in addressing the impacts of surveillance, especially privacy and safety concerns while using online platforms.

Sex worker-led projects have already been creating recommendations. The guide shares France's Jasmine Project as an example of *how* to include sex workers in planning and design. For this project "new users must be vetted by a sex worker-led group or current users to be included" (22). The vetting system, then, is a form of ethical exclusion (Walwema et al.) to enact a hybrid concealment to keep the group safe. Excluding non-sex workers is a necessary act of protection and a way to remove a piece of the surveillance assemblage used to find, trace, expose, and punish sex workers: people from outside of the community who may, intentionally or not, reveal safety schemes and other important information.

Overall, this guide's focus is on educating sex workers, organizations, and policy makers about the challenges sex workers face in keeping themselves safe online. Negotiating, contesting, and reducing the harm of surveillance is one major aspect of this online safety. By weaving information between institutional and non-institutional audiences we can see how sex workers both "refuse neat categorization" (Kafer and Grinberg 598) while also coalescing enough to create policy recommendations.

Artifact 2: Hacking/Hustling

The next guide is a U.S. based guide from Hacking/Hustling, a group of sex workers, advocates, and survivors fighting technological violence. "Online Worker Safety Hazards and Cautions: A Practical Harm Reduction Guide on Why and How Sex Workers Can Protect Ourselves at Work," is a shorter, shareable three-page poster. Where NSWP had a thorough, in-depth, and more theoretical approach, Hacking/Hustling has simple, straightforward tactics.

This guide is much more traditional with images and short descriptions explaining, for example, what a VPN is and information about domains. Particularly interesting is a section on "What if Law Enforcement Takes Your Device?" which has the most explicit examples of hybrid concealment. One piece of advice is to make sure that notifications aren't visible on the lock screen, which enables messages to be concealed and only accessible by unlocking the phone. With these locking/unlocking concerns, the guide also suggests having a number or gesture-based lock rather than a fingerprint, which would collect biometric information. Police can't force an individual to put in their number, but "can force your hand onto a device to unlock it." Here, we see specific tactics aimed at hybrid concealment––the guide doesn't suggest not using phones for work or completely handing over a phone when dealing with law enforcement. Instead, it suggests tactics for concealing information during detection to avoid being surveilled further.

This guide also makes suggestions for payment processing. Since payment processors use email addresses to link accounts and share data, the guide recommends "keeping your personal and work contact information separated in your payment services." Again, hybrid concealment involves being visible in certain ways. By keeping email addresses and accounts separated between professional and personal, sex workers are attempting to reduce the harm caused by payment processors' surveillance techniques.

The guide doesn't only suggest keeping accounts separate. It also recommends using separate SIM cards or devices, utilizing a VPN, and using encrypted services. The guide makes clear that even joining "invite-only" forums "or startups promising perfect security (which doesn't exist)" requires taking these security measures. These tactics point to how, in many situations, users can't fully avoid or escape surveillance practices and, instead, aim for harm reduction.

In keeping with queer surveillance, these tactics also show how contesting surveillance practices isn't always straightforward and that tactics need to shift and change depending on the platform, the policies, and the overall situation. As Kafer and Grinberg proposed, we can see the "messy and clandestine" ways that surveillance is negotiated by looking towards these sex worker guides (598). If queerness is "an animating difference" (598) created through regulation, then sex workers' (whether they identify as LGBTQIA+ or not) experiences, knowledges, documents, and insight offers to complicate queer surveillance by insisting on simultaneous imperceptibility and acknowledgement which relies on fluid visibility/invisibility.

Artifact 3: Beyond the Gaze

Lastly, the UK-based Beyond the Gaze (BTG) project was a three-year project (2015 – 2018) examining the working practices of online sex workers in the UK, safety, and regulation. From the study, they created a 45-page manual called "Safety and Privacy for Online Sex Workers." The guide begins with an introduction and the "Top Tips" for safety before going into more depth around specifics from screening clients, to using social media, to avoiding payment scams, and more. For the purposes of this article, I'll focus on their "privacy" section and how the guide is circulated.

Hybrid concealment is at work in multiple areas of this guide. First, there are specific directions to share the guide link with other sex workers, especially those new to sex work. They suggest posting the link specifically to sex worker only forums or sending directly to other sex workers. The tactic of sharing this type of resource over forums is one way to keep these resources circulating within the group, showing how hybrid concealment is used not only as a safety practice, but also to safely share and circulate information within the community.

This guide also highlights the crucial point that "we have also purposefully omitted some practices that some sex workers use, and we have avoided giving too much detail on some safety procedures to protect your practice." The need and care to purposefully avoid giving too much detail and not exposing certain

practices is paramount. Revealing certain safety protocols can be dangerous and harmful because those tactics then can be accounted for in future changes to surveillance practices. Choosing which safety protocols to share and which to only share orally and in other less permanent ways is a stark example of hybrid concealment's importance. This form of hybrid concealment is also another way we can "call into question the design and expanse of surveillance systems" (Kafer and Grinberg 598). Having multiple options to circulate information while trying to protect that information is another way of probing at the limits of surveillance and continually adapting to the ways that surveillance systems shift and change to accommodate user tactics.

Since sex workers have so many surveillance concerns, a common theme among these three guides is the need to have a separate work name, email, social media sites, and contact information. For example, the BTG guide suggests having a "work persona with separate phones, social media accounts, and emails" (3) and to make sure to know if any payment options "might compromise your privacy (see privacy section)" (3). The privacy section details other precautions to take. For example, it highlights how information can be gleaned from anything in a video background such as, "leaving out addressed letters, bills, items with your, your partner's or family's name on or details of other places of work/study and family photos" (21). These suggestions are an example of hybrid concealment because they consider unintentional disclosure that can occur in these computer-mediated environments.

Once again, sex workers embody the way "queer surveillance" moves beyond LGBTQIA+ identities and, in these instances, specifically targets a "non-normative" and criminalized occupation further complicated by multiple intersections of race, ethnicity, class, ability, age, gender, and more. However, the diverse negotiations sex workers need to continuously make means they are an invaluable source for learning more about queer resistance to these surveillance tactics.

Hybrid Concealment & Implications for Surveillance

All three guides not only address specific tactics to enact hybrid concealment but use it in their practice of creating and sharing the guides. They also highlight that taking on a "queer surveillance" lens can help us understand the ways various hypermarginalized groups contest surveillance and expand the ways that we understand the impacts that surveillance has on criminalized groups. If "the identity categories ascribed to minority subjects are always at odds with their lived experiences" (Kafer and Grinberg 598), then we need to not only acknowledge when surveillance systems label groups as "deviant," but listen to those directly impacted by those systems.

Since sex workers are the "canaries in the tech coal mines" (Sly) then these safety guides and features aren't relevant or useful for only sex workers. These protections can work for civilians, too. VPN's, paying attention to privacy and data settings and collection, and more of this advice is useful for multiple users. For example, Snow shares how the same tactics she uses to keep herself safe online as a professional domina-

trix can be used to safely navigate the internet for information on abortions. We need to honor the immense work that sex workers and sex worker organizations are doing around safety and privacy, often warning us long beforehand about issues that may be coming, particularly regarding online surveillance.

Most importantly, however, is how these guides point to (as has been argued over and over) the need for decriminalization. Sex work itself is not an inherently risky activity. Instead, the stigmatization and oppression of sex workers due to criminalization *makes* sex workers experience negative outcomes. With criminalization's inescapable ties to surveillance assemblages, we cannot discuss one without the other. We must continue analyzing, assessing, and addressing concealment/visibility: who gets to be visible and why and when; how do we weave concealment for imperative safety, privacy, and protection, especially when trying to enact harm reduction against criminalization and connected surveillance practices?

Overall, these safety guides show we have experts on negotiating, contesting, and navigating surveillance: sex workers. Olivia Snow reminds us that "those seeking to surveil us have been refining the tools to do so for a very long time. This is exactly why sex workers are preyed upon first: because those in power know nobody will listen to us." As researchers, scholars, activists, and members of our communities, we need to not only listen to sex workers, but include their voices, compensate them for their work, and make sure they can affect law, policy, and the design of these technologies that overwhelmingly affect them. As surveillance systems get more adept at accommodating queerness, across intersections of "queer," it becomes even more imperative for us to create coalitions and include criminalized groups most impacted by these practices. One way to "talk back" through surveillance is through queer liberation that includes sex work decriminalization.

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Recoveries and Reconsiderations

Recoveries and Reconsiderations: The Archive We Inherited

Rachael McIntosh

Abstract: The Slavery Documents Collection at the Eberly Family Special Collections Library serves as a case study to explore the impact of collection organization and the interplay between digital components of archives, such as finding aids, and the physical items within the repository. I will recount my experience encountering the collection to consider how the organizational logics of the archive and reparative description efforts undertaken by an archivist inform how the documents are interpreted and understood. I offer this analysis to consider how sustained critical attention to archival rhetorics might contribute to the development and refinement of archival practices and research strategies to contend with violence and silences in the archive.

In "Venus in Two Acts," Saidiya Hartman narrates her attempt to reckon with the violence enacted by the archive of slavery. She weighs her desire to tell the stories of women who are only represented through their interactions with mechanisms of power that sought to erase their subjectivities with her desire not to reenact that violence in the telling. Hartman asks, "[y]et how does one recuperate lives entangled with and impossible to differentiate from the terrible utterances that condemned them to death, the account books that identified them as units of value, the invoices that claimed them as property, and the banal chronicles that stripped them of human features?" (3). In this question, Hartman highlights the extent to which documents in the archive dehumanize by stripping people of their "human features," claiming them as property, and recording them only in relation to violence and death. The very systems that dutifully recorded and condemned enslaved people as objects of trade ensured that these records would survive and that the lives, perspectives, and histories of enslaved Africans and their descendants would be written out of the grand historical narrative. This is the archive we have inherited; what do we do with it?

Scholars of African American history and culture like Hartman have skillfully articulated the challenges researchers face when looking for Black life in the archives, especially the archive of the transatlantic

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slave trade[1].

Jacqueline Jones Royster paved the way for Black feminist rhetoricians who take seriously the rhetorical prowess of Black women. Royster and others[2] have crafted methods informed by the experiences of Black women to draw attention to Black women rhetoricians who have not always had access to spaces to which scholars of rhetoric have traditionally turned, and who do not always employ strategies that are legible when relying only upon traditional methods and frameworks.

Feminist historiographers have undertaken work to recover the rhetorics of historically marginalized people, including, but not limited to women, and have shifted existing and developed new archival research methods (Royster; Enoch; Glenn). Archival rhetorics scholarship has helped draw attention to the archive itself as a rhetorical actor (Cushman, Morris, Rawson). The structures, organizational logics, and textual elements of archives participate in the process of knowledge creation; they create meaning around and through the materials they house. Additionally, over the past decade or so, archivists have been working to address some of the ways that systemic power imbalances have influenced what kinds of records are most often preserved and how marginalized and underrepresented people are depicted within their repositories, largely through digitization and reparative description efforts (A4BLiP; Berry; Hughes-Watkins).

Less attention has been devoted to the impact of collection organization and how it often reinscribes power imbalances and notions of who is worthy of subjecthood that are rooted in a racialized and gendered colonial order. A critical understanding of the rhetorical power of organizational logics is especially important when considering the history of the transatlantic slave trade. Current interventions typically aim to assert the humanity of enslaved people by rewriting descriptions and editing metadata. Some of these strategies include updating terminology, naming enslaved people whenever possible, and providing thoughtful historical context for collections in finding aids. Digital exhibits provide opportunities for archivists to reorganize and reframe materials to center the experiences of enslaved people and make records related to those experiences easier to find. The physical holdings are often left as they were, which raises complex questions about the effect of interventions that occur in digital spaces and the interplay between physical holdings and digital components of the same repository. I will share my experience encountering the Slavery Documents Collection at the Eberly Family Special Collections Library at Pennsylvania State University to consider the rhetorical impact of collection organization and the interplay between digital resources, in this case a finding aid, and the physical materials.

I had the opportunity to explore Penn State's Special Collections as part of a five-day seminar on archival methodologies, which included time in the archive to try out the methodologies we studied in the classroom. Without a specific project in mind, I sought out materials that would allow me to explore my general interest in the construction of hierarchies of racial difference through the discourse surrounding

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1   See also the work of Jennifer Morgan, Marisa Fuentes, Tiya Miles, Stephanie Smallwood
2   For example, Tamika Carey, Brittany Cooper, Patricia Davis, Ersula Ore, and Gwendolyn Pough

slavery and an emerging interest in archival rhetorics. After running a couple searches in the catalog, I came across the "Slavery Documents Collection." According to the finding aid, this collection contains 24 bills of sale, two certificates of indenture, and a few additional documents of a similar nature related to the transfer of property in the form of both land and people ("Slavery Documents"). Though this collection aligned with my interests, I hesitated to submit a request. I had read about these documents that recorded enslaved people as units of property, documenting their market value but no real sense of who they were; however, I had yet to encounter them directly. I knew confronting the reality of this history would be emotionally taxing, but I went ahead with the request.

I entered the reading room with a feeling of curiosity tinged with dread. I braced myself for what I anticipated would be cold, depersonalized, legalistic language acting upon the bodies of enslaved people and reaffirming their status as objects to be traded. I sat down at my table in the middle of the brightly lit room in which other seminar participants were dispersed reviewing their own materials, took a deep breath, and flipped open the manila-colored file box. I carefully slid the first folder out and placed it on the table. I opened the folder, and, to my surprise, the first document was titled "How to De-Control Your Union of Communists." Startled and confused, I checked the request slip. Sure enough, it read, "Title: Slavery documents collection," so why was I looking at a document about communism? I sifted through a few more items within the folder, but none seemed to relate to slavery. The archivist explained that the collection was part of a shared box, which was indicated in the catalog by the box number, "Collection — Box: Share 16." Being fairly new to archival research and to the Penn State catalog, I did not notice this detail, nor did it occur to me that there might be such a thing as a shared box.

The archivist explained that the shared box was a result of storage logistics. If they have a small collection that is housed in one folder, they cannot simply put that folder on a shelf. It would get lost. For the sake of space, they cannot put one folder in its own box. So, smaller collections are housed in shared boxes. This made perfect sense to me, but I was struck by how such straightforward, logistical decision-making could potentially affect the way in which I was interacting with these documents. It troubled me that documents that can appear deceptively banal at first glance, especially if someone does not know exactly what they are looking at, could end up in a box with such a random, disjointed array of other materials. With a better understanding of and some new questions about the organizational system, I returned to my table and located the folder containing the collection I sought.

The line of inquiry that led me to the collection of bills of sale for enslaved people has to do with how the construct of private property played a significant role in dehumanizing enslaved Africans and reducing them to property. Property law did not end at securing an enslavers' "right" to claim ownership over an enslaved person, it stripped enslaved people of their personhood and linked wealth and property to whiteness. The bills of sale housed in the Slavery Documents Collection enact this work of separating the lives of enslaved people from their bodies by reducing them to items to be traded and listing only the features that are relevant to the sale (e.g., sex, age, ability). I could not help but wonder how the archive in which these docu-

ments were housed might still be participating in this process of objectification.

The bills of sale in the collection mostly come from the same county in Tennessee. In many ways they seem quite ordinary, hardly any different from a letter or any other kind of document. A few include a witness statement from the county court attesting to the legitimacy of the agreement. Signatures from the relevant parties appear at the end of each statement and sometimes spill onto the back. In one document that outlines an agreement to divide all of the enslaved people within a particular estate among two parties, a few words are even crossed out, which comes across as a mark of informality, at least at first glance. In one line about halfway down the page where it is outlined which enslaved people will be transferred to whom, the phrase "and child" was inserted with a caret symbol and then crossed out ("Bill for seven"). What happened to the child? One might be left to assume that the child was either sold elsewhere, rather than divided between the two parties, or, perhaps, that it did not survive. It seemed to me that the matter of dividing a significant portion of an estate is important enough that it might warrant a clear, unmarred statement of the particulars. Once the matter of the child was clarified and other errors made, would it not be worth rewriting the agreement? It is possible that this was a draft or one of multiple copies that existed. Either way, the overall form of the document is rather informal and to the point. They contain no special headers or seals, just a statement of the exchange and the necessary signatures.

Each bill of sale begins with a statement of the date and the basic facts of the agreement. The agreed upon amount of the purchase and the fact that the money was at that moment "in hand" precede the brief description of the person/s being sold, indicating that the financial aspect of the transaction is the most important component. The details of the "goods" being purchased are secondary. Many contain language that ensures that the seller and their heirs can make no future claim to ownership against the purchaser or their heirs. For example, the closing statement of one reads, "I further warrant and defend my title of said girl to the said adary his heirs and [illegible] against the lawful claims of all other persons whatsoever this 11th day of November 1852" (Fletcher). The heirs are not named, which could account for the possibility of additional children. A primary occupation at this time was to secure wealth within the family and to pass it down. The mechanisms through which this was achieved are deeply intertwined with racialization. For this reason, one of the other places where property law and racial differentiation intersect most explicitly is in the laws that were written not just to protect inheritance, but to ensure that wealth remained linked to whiteness.

The legal doctrine *Partus Sequitur Ventrem* ensured that wealth would not be passed to the mixed-race children of white enslavers by assigning them the "status" of their mother. This doctrine ensured that any children born to enslaved people were also enslaved by default. Through this system, wealth in the form of material goods, social capital, and family legacy was firmly linked to whiteness.[3] The crossed-out addition of "and child" in the document described above stood out to me as a symbol of the fact that kinship links among enslaved people were deliberately destroyed. The child is written into the margin of the historical

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3   For more about the legal linkage between whiteness and property, see Harris, Cheryl L. "Whiteness as Property." *Harvard Law Review*, vol. 106, no. 8, 1993, pp.1708-1791.

record, a secondary consideration. The parent is sold away, and the child is scratched out, its fate unknown. By contrast, the document attests that "all the heirs at a law in testimony whereof use have hereunto set our hands this 6th day of 1840" ("Bill for seven"). Even if it survived, the crossed-out child is likely no one's legal heir. Only the legal heirs, the white, property-owning heirs, can witness and testify to the facts of the sale.

The clauses that protect the ownership rights of heirs ensure that the ownership of the person sold remains in the hands of the purchaser and his descendants and reaffirm the relationship between the enslaved person and the descendants of the enslaver. The language explicitly dictates that the seller and their heirs cannot contest the rights of the purchaser's heirs to the "property," and it also more subtly underscores that the enslaved person cannot contest their ownership either. The term of each person's enslavement is explicitly stated in each bill of sale, often through the phrase "to have and to hold a slave for life." Generally, this assertion follows the description of the person's attributes, such as their sex, age, and a statement that the person is of "sound body and mind." The repetition of this standardized language within the documents illustrates the frequency and ordinariness of these transactions. The repetition of the transactional language in documents that, aside from a few basic characteristics, hardly differentiate a human being from a cow or a plot of land, has a compounding, soul crushing effect. It emphasizes the quotidian nature of both the physical and ontological violence of the institution of slavery that these records continue to enact.

The finding aid for the Slavery Documents Collection provides useful context that demonstrates a significant effort on the part of the archivists to mitigate the violence inherent in these documents. A processing note explains that archivist Lexy deGraffenreid "re-described" the collection and then later "further revised it," and one strategy she employed was to add the names of the enslaved people and the enslavers referenced in item level descriptions whenever possible ("Slavery Documents"). Presumably, the choice to name individuals in both groups functions to restore some degree of personhood to enslaved people and to ensure that enslavers are named in the historical record as such. The stated purpose of deGraffenreid's revisions is "to elevate the names and experiences of the enslaved persons present within this collection" ("Slavery Documents"). Entering the names of enslaved people into the metadata is meant to work toward this goal given that enslaved people are often unnamed in records, and sometimes are only represented by tallies.

Allocating the time and resources to re-process these items and informing researchers of those efforts is a significant step. The note itself prompts researchers to consider the limitations as well as the contents of the documents, and to center the enslaved persons as subjects even when the documents do not. The finding aid is less successful in elevating the experiences of enslaved people, given that the aid does not provide any specific information to explain what those experiences may have been or where to find that information beyond what appears in the documents. The documents contain very little information other than small details that may lead a researcher to locate more materials related to a particular enslaver, plantation, or town. It is very possible that more information about the enslaved people referenced does not exist.

Finding aids are important resources, especially when deciding what items to request in advance of a

research visit. Online access to finding aids often provides insight into collections that allows researchers to develop a sense of what materials might be relevant to their inquiry, which is an important step in the initial stages of research. They can also help to frame a collection and orient a researcher to the materials. de-Graffenreid's revision of the finding aid draws researchers' attention to the enslaved subjects of the records and the description of her efforts prompts researchers to consider how they are approaching the documents. However, finding aids are not always front of mind during the process of reviewing materials.

As part of the online catalog, finding aids often factor into a researcher's initial searches, but the online format creates some degree of distance between the finding aid or catalog record and the physical materials, as researchers may not consult them after they locate the materials they want to review. Though it is possible that a researcher may view a finding aid while in the reading room, factors such as box contents and folder organization will likely have a more immediate, if subtle impact on the framing of materials as they are being reviewed. In "The Rhetorical Power of Archival Description," K.J. Rawson claims that "archival boxes can enlist both bureaucratic and epistemological functions" (339). In the case of the Slavery Documents Collection, the arrangement of the box serves a bureaucratic function in that materials are housed in a shared box as a result of the limitations on space in the archive. Small collections need to be stored in a safe and efficient manner, which can result in unrelated materials being held together in the same box. Some researchers may have noticed the indication in the catalog that it is a shared box, and so may not have been so surprised to encounter pamphlets discussing communism upon opening it. However, the dissimilarity among the items sharing the box is still jarring even if it is not surprising. Housing the bills of sale in a box that is filled with completely unrelated items decontextualizes them. It leaves the transactional, seemingly straightforward language of the records to speak for themselves.

The title of the collection, The Slavery Documents Collection, which appears on the outside of the folder, suggests that these are the only documents related to slavery that are in the archive's holdings. A review of their catalog determined that collections related to slavery in their holdings mostly focus on individuals who were abolitionists or other, mostly white people who wrote about slavery. Other items, such as "Unidentified Paper (pertains to slavery)" and "Slavery Notes" are single files that are minimally processed, so no description is available online. I can only assume that they were acquired at different times and so are not stored together due to the logistical constraints that make reorganizing boxes and re-cataloging items when new, related items are acquired unmanageable. The existence of this folder in this shared box is a result of the lack of related materials at the time of acquisition within this archive's holdings.

Encountering the materials in this way diminishes their significance as records that speak directly to the role of slavery in the development of capitalism and the United States' economy. Two collections stored within the shared box are the Charles Owen Rice correspondence and Arthur St. Clair family papers. The proximity of these collections draws attention to the fact that the slavery documents record part of the family and estate histories of the enslavers, primarily in one area of Tennessee. The gaps left in the historical record by the dearth of information related to the enslaved subjects of the documents are primarily filled by

the personal papers of men of Scottish and Irish descent in the folders that surround the collection. Situating the documents among personal collections emphasizes their function as records of the white enslavers' family and personal histories and positions the enslavers as the primary subjects of the records. The inclusion of a property agreement related to a marriage underscores the emphasis on personal history and contributes to the dehumanization of the enslaved people referenced by creating the opportunity for comparison between the sale of people as property and the transfer of the rights to a house and a few cows through marriage. The enslaver's legacy is effectively secured through their history of property ownership and the subjecthood of the enslaved people is significantly diminished.

Yet how might one organize and present this collection differently within this archive? In "Archival encounters: rethinking access and care in digital colonial archives," Daniela Agostinho describes "the productive tension between the desire to recover those documented subjects from archives structured by violence and dispossession, and the impossibility of recovery when one is dealing with archives whose organization is envisioned and managed so as to obliterate the colonized" that has been central to discussions of colonial archives and transatlantic slavery (154). The Slavery Documents Collection is a prime example of that tension.

The description of deGraffenreid's efforts to re-describe the collection indicates that she engaged in recovery work; however, including the names of the enslaved people in the item descriptions may not counterbalance the dehumanizing effects of the documents, the lack of supplementary materials about the enslaved people referenced, or the effects of the repetition of banal, transactional language, all of which are beyond the archivist's control. Naming can be powerful, but reproducing names that appear in the documents as a means to restore subjecthood is fraught considering that the names by which enslaved people were recorded may have been given to them by their enslaver, a tactic that deliberately distanced captured Africans and their descendants from their cultures, languages, and communities. In these documents, their names only serve the purpose of identifying them as items to be sold, so names in themselves do not always restore full personhood, though they are the best option we have to refer to enslaved people with some dignity. I do not say this to criticize deGraffenreid or to suggest that her efforts are not worthwhile, but rather to draw attention to the tension that Agostinho names and to identify some of the specific challenges that it creates. In order to develop strategies to counter the ways in which the archive often dehumanizes racialized subjects, careful attention must be paid to the contexts from which the materials emerged and that continue to inform their meaning.

I sit here looking at my notes in which I transcribed the records from the Slavery Documents Collection. I see photos of browned pieces of paper with watermarks, deep creases, and small tears carefully protected in plastic sleeves. In them, a woman and her child are sold for $520. A "negro girl by the name of Jemirna age seventeen years" (Fletcher), the same age as my sister. The crossed-out child. I wonder who these people were and how we will ever learn to live with the fact that these documents, a piece of paper through which a parent is sold, and their child is blotted out, may be the only records left to us of their lives. What else could possibly go in that box that could provide the appropriate context and attempt to restore some

sense of life to the subjects of these documents? I cannot claim to have any answers to that question, but sustained, critical attention to the ways in which the archive participates in generating historical knowledge and shaping understandings of the materials it houses will lead to the continued development and refinement of archival practices and research strategies that contend with violence and silences in the archive and enable the writing of more dynamic histories.

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Cooking with Scissors and Paste: Recoveries and Reconsiderations of Motta Sims's Composition Book at Spelman College

Andrew Fiss

Abstract: This "Recoveries and Reconsiderations" describes and contextualizes the composition book of Motta L. Sims, held in the Spelman College Archives. The composition book consists of Sims's notes taken during a Spelman cooking class in 1916, including numerous excerpts from a textbook, perhaps re-typed, and pasted in. Given the form of the document, Sims's composition book invites reflection about scrapbooking as writing, particularly how it supported the framing of cooking as scientific study. Sims went on to have a career as a home economics professor at various Southeastern HBCUs, but her work appears only in collections named for other people, with her composition book in the Lucy Hale Tapley Presidential Collection. Acknowledging how the archival records of Black women, even when signed, face deep problems of fragmentation and erasure, this article offers a preliminary analysis of Sims's composition book for cooking as scientific study.

Within the Spelman College Archives, there is a document labeled "composition book" and signed "Motta L. Sims/ First Year Cooking/ Spelman Sem./ Oct. 14, 1916" (Sims "Composition Book"). In 1916, Motta Sims (1900-1968) traveled from rural Georgia to Spelman to take an introductory class in cooking before pursuing a home economics degree at Fisk University and a certificate as "supervisor of household arts" at Columbia Teachers College ("Miss Motta Sims" 12). Ultimately, Professor Sims had a wide-ranging career teaching home economics at various Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs): Tuskegee in Alabama, Shaw State in North Carolina, South Carolina State, Virginia State, and Fort Valley State in Georgia ("Miss Motta Sims" 12). Despite Professor Sims's importance, her writings appear only in collections named for other people, with her composition book in the Lucy Hale Tapley Presidential Collection in the Spelman College Archives, which has not been digitized.[1] A chronicler of the scientific trends of her communities, Sims's composition book shows evidence of scrapbooking, using numerous excerpts from a cooking textbook, perhaps re-typed, which supported the framing of cooking as scientific study.

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[1] I would like to thank Ms. Holly Smith, archivist of the Spelman College Archives, for introducing me to the institution's collections and published histories, as well as granting me permission to quote from Motta Sims's composition book. Thank you, as well, to Ms. Nicole Carr, Spelman Archives administrative assistant, for meeting with me. Ms. Cheryl Ferguson of the Tuskegee University Archives helped me through the process of gaining permission to quote from the George Washington Carver Papers. Jason Gart of History Associates additionally provided me access to the Library of Congress microfilm.

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The label "composition book" refers to the book's marketing, pre-printed with lines indicating where a student could write, and it moreover draws attention to Sims' writing and typed snippets. Sims emphasizes the cut-and-pasted excerpts, writing minimal notes especially at first. For instance, the first page has a cursive "Lesson I" in black pen above the excerpted section listing the "Table of Abbreviations" and "Table of Measurements" (Sims "Composition Book"). Subsequently, Sims's own writing takes more space starting with Lesson II on Cleaning and ending with the final lesson, Lesson XXX on Cake. Still, cut-and-pasted snippets continue to appear. Even for Lesson XXX, the bottom of the previous page has an excerpted recipe for "Mother's Cake" (Sims "Composition Book"). For Sims, the acts of writing and recycling others' print go together.

Scrapbooking was a common writing technique of the time. Ellen Gruber Garvey has analyzed a large range of scrapbooks from 1860-1920s America, arguing how "writing with scissors" (scrapbooking) allowed self-fashioning for people in power and also allowed "people in positions of relative powerlessness…to make a place for themselves and their communities by finding, sifting, analyzing, and recirculating writing that mattered to them" (4). According to Garvey's sources, Black people of the time often used scrapbooking to construct "alternative histories" at odds with racist narratives of American slavery and Reconstruction, while activist women did so for "self-creation" (23). She notices how students, too, learned scrapbooking as a means of collecting, curating, and recycling print (Garvey 11). For such pedagogical technique, however, Garvey's *Writing with Scissors* points to the work of a White teacher in White schools. Sims's composition book draws attention to the presence of this writing technique at an institution for Black women, particularly in its scientifically oriented class on cooking.

Such scrapbooking, I argue, furthered the framing of cooking as scientific study. Gail Lippincott has argued for the feminist rhetorical practices that reframed American cooking of the 1890s-1910s: combining entertainment with the familiar, using techniques of knowledge communication, and recognizing diverse audiences. Through these techniques, scientists shifted perceptions of cooking from everyday chore to scientific spectacle, site of experimentation, and novel academic study. Though Lippincott's articles mainly analyze the writings of the White professor Ellen Swallow Richards, new work has started to recover histories of Black women in home economics (Nickols and Peek; Alishahi; Jackson). Motta Sims's composition book invites us to consider uses of scrapbooking in similarly framing cooking as scientific.

Motta Sims's records also show problems with accessing historical documents from Black women students. Even when available, such documents might be nested within collections of others that stayed with an institution for longer: faculty, administrators, or even clubs (Royster; Logan). In the Fall 2021 issue of *Peitho*, Susan Ghiaciuc, Cathryn Molloy, and Vanessa Rouillon used the case of writer Elizabeth Stuart Phelps's nine letters with physician Silas Weir Mitchell to argue for the importance of archival materials seemingly hidden within collections of misogynist men. With Sims's papers, the historical contributions of a Black woman can be overlooked within the administrative files of a White college president. Also, as I learned later, Sims has notes in the George Washington Carver Papers, the wide-ranging scientific papers

of a Black man. Together, Sims's archival presence therefore mirrors the intersectional challenges for Black women in STEM fields, as Professor Evelynn Hammonds more recently discussed as being overlooked for White women and Black men (Sands 31-39). In general, as in the case study of the late 1800s and early 1900s Virginia's Central State Mental Hospital (Jones & Williams), archival records of Black women face deep problems of fragmentation and erasure.

Given these challenges, I should take a moment to locate my own position and access. I was able to visit the Spelman College Archives in 2023, shortly before FemRhets 2023. As a male technical communication professor, I felt it necessary to explain my interest in a historically Black women's college, and the conference provided an opportunity. As a Puerto Rican/Jewish academic, I have written about historical developments in science education, inspired by feminist scholarship in technical communication (Jack; Seigel). I met with the Spelman archivists about these interests, and they suggested the Lucy Hale Tapley Presidential Collection, which led me to Motta Sims's composition book. Because of limitations of my positionality, I here offer a preliminary description and contextual analysis of Motta Sims's composition book.

In the spirit of "recoveries and reconsiderations," I aim to describe and contextualize Motta Sims's book as an archival document potentially of interest to *Peitho* readers. I begin by arguing how Sims's scrapbooking furthered the general frame of cooking as scientific study, in the first section, and then proceed to the larger context of Spelman's history and print cultures that supported Sims's reuse of printed matter. Finally, I end with some thoughts about Motta Sims's career and notes in the papers of George Washington Carver. Sims's collected work, particularly her composition book for cooking, invites reflection and reconsideration about the role of scrapbooking in supporting the framing of cooking as scientific study, particularly at a historically Black women's college.

Motta Sims's Composition Book for Cooking

In Sims's time, home economics was developing through a productive tension between its component parts: a focus on the "home" meaning the domestic; and on "economics" standing for general scientific principles. Gail Lippincott has analyzed the ways that this tension developed into three expected approaches to writing in the field. First, particularly in the work of scientist Ellen Swallow Richards, the field "communicated knowledge of new scientific information and technology for the workplace of the home" (Lippincott, "Experimenting at Home" 366). Second, with Richards's involvement in the 1893 Chicago World's Fair, home economics used an "entertaining but familiar atmosphere" to introduce unexpected, new cooking technologies and their knowledges (Lippincott, "'Something in Motion'" 141). Third, in publications from Richards's New England Kitchen, the field negotiated competing approaches for disparate, diverse audiences (Lippincott, "Rhetorical Chemistry" 10). Referring to these three components of home economics – knowledge communication for the overall work of the home; a frame of familiarity; and complex approaches to scientific authorship – I here provide a preliminary description of Motta Sims's composition book. Through its use of excerpts from a textbook, perhaps re-typed, Sims's composition book participated in the framing of cooking

as broadly scientific.

Sims's composition book began with the familiar to introduce scientific knowledge relevant to the home. After a title page, the first page consists of a pasted Table of Measurements with a penned note calling it "Lesson I." It lists abbreviations, followed by equivalences such as:

TABLE OF MEASUREMENTS

4 ssp. equal 1 tsp.	2 tbsp. butter equal 1 oz.
3 tsp. equal 1 tbsp.	4 tbsp. flour equal 1 oz.
4 tbsp. equal ¼ c.	2 tbsp. liquid equal 1 oz.
4 c. equal 1 qt.	2 tbsp. sugar equal 1 oz.
4 c. fl. equal 1 lb.	2 c. butter equal 1 lb.
2 c. granulated sugar equal 1 lb.	

—(Sims "Composition Book")

With features both common and distinctive, the table corresponds incompletely to digitized text-books from the time period, and perhaps it was re-typed in an original form that synthetized multiple books' material.[2] Sims's approach to the snippet is not clear, as there are no notes surrounding it, beyond the label of "Lesson I." Still, beginning with tables, numbers, measurements, and equivalences emphasizes the aspects of cooking that were quantitative, ordered, and broadly scientific. By 1916, it was an approach to knowledge communication codified in textbooks and classes labeled "home economics" or "domestic science."

Such a scientific approach to the home extended beyond cooking, as shown in the next section. The next page of Sims's composition book lists "Lesson II," beginning with a typed snippet about the importance of clean water:

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2   A quick search provided partial matches with Josephine Morris's *Household Science and Arts for Elementary Schools* (1913) and Mary E. Williams and Katharine Rolston Fisher's *Elements of the Theory and Practice of Cookery: A Text-book of Domestic Science for Use in Schools* (1916). The Spelman College Archives does not have a record of the textbook used in the cooking class that Motta Sims attended. Thanks to Dr. Faith Morrison, emerita professor of chemical engineering, for sharing her notebooks and making the point that the excerpts could have been re-typed onto new pieces of paper by Ms. Sims or others in her communities.

WATER

Water dissolves more substances than any other liquid. It is because of this property that it is sometimes hard. Hard water may be somewhat softened by boiling. Impure water may be made safe for us by boiling.

Since by ordinary means water cannot be made hotter after it begins to boil, fuel is wasted by keeping up more fire than is required to keep the water at the boiling point.

SOME AIDS TO CLEANLINESS

Cleansing materials act either by friction or chemically. Of the first class, among the most useful are bath brick for scouring steel knives; whiting for cleaning silver, glass, and aluminum; and sapone or old Dutch cleanser for cooking utensils. Of the second class, sal-soda and ammonia are most useful in the kitchen. Kerosene is useful for cleaning polished wood, rusty iron or zinc. (Sims "Composition Book")

The uses of water and other cleaning tools "useful in the kitchen" are justified, dealt with through general, scientific principles about water and even statements about the act of "cleansing" itself. Moving from a description of water as a familiar "liquid," the excerpt begins to introduce the chemical terminology of "silver," "aluminum," "sapone," "sal-soda," "ammonia," "iron," and "zinc." Such sections served as an introduction to chemistry, about the overall work of the home and also scientific knowledge useful to it.

Unlike in Lesson I, Sims did include her own lengthy notes on Lesson II, adding explanations and instructions that emphasized the frame of the familiar. Below the printed excerpt for Lesson II, Sims penned in dark ink:

LESSON II Cleaning

The dirt in houses consists mostly of dust. Mixed with the dust are particles so fine they can only be seen with a microscope. These tiny things are of three kinds, – yeasts, molds, and bacteria.

Some kinds of bacteria cause diseases. Some kinds are useful.

Like all plants, bacteria require food, warmth, and moisture in order to grow. Harmful bacteria grow best in damp, dark places.

Any thing that kills bacteria or hinders their growth is called disinfectant. Sunshine, soap and hot water are good disinfectants.

Dish Washing

1. Scrape all food from the dishes and wipe greasy dishes with soft paper.

2. Wash all dishes in hot, soapy water and rinse in clear <u>hot</u> water.

3. Use a brush to wash wire stainers [sic] and a wooden skewer to clean seams in cooking dishes.

4. Soak cooking dishes in cold water that have been used for sweet or greasy things soak in hot water. (Sims "Composition Book")

A mix of scientific explanation, justification, and procedural instructions, Sims's writing supplements the pasted excerpt, explaining what should be cleaned away and how to wash dishes. Now longer and more detailed than the excerpt, Sims's Lesson II shows how she begins to write herself into the course in cooking and more broadly domestic science.

Sims's composition book most shows her approach to authorship in that it's signed. Even though much of the document consists of cut-and-pasted excerpts of others' words, it does begin, "Motta L. Sims/ First Year Cooking/ Spelman Sem./ Oct. 14, 1916." Such a historical document therefore stands in contrast to the many archival materials from Black women that are unsigned, erased, or entirely missing (Jones and Williams; Royster and Kirsch). Though it is difficult to find this document – it is, after all, in the files of a White college president – its authorship does not point to President Tapley but instead to Ms. Sims. Later bringing home economics to HBCUs in the Southeast, Professor Sims brought this approach to scientific authorship: partially fashioned with recirculated text, her notes on cooking are clearly hers.

Contexts of Scrapbooking as Writing

Especially relevant for Motta Sims's composition book is the context of scrapbooking as writing. Americans' scrapbooking became so prevalent during the Civil War and into the twentieth century in large part because of the decreasing cost of producing newspapers, books, and other printed matter (Garvey 6). Mirroring Shewonda Leger and Chantalle Verna's analysis of recent zines, scrapbooks have been ways of reusing cultural ephemera for personalized, small-scale productions with diverse ends, including social resistance. Sims's scrapbooking within an educational institution, while not as explicitly disruptive, draws attention to the meaningful reuse of print, fashioning a composition notebook for cooking. In doing so, it invites contextualization through Spelman's history and cultures of print.

Spelman College, from the beginning, was an environment in which print was prevalent. Sophia B. Packard and Harriet Elizabeth Giles founded the institution on a Baptist mission to the South (Lefever 60). White teachers from New England, Packard and Giles then worked for Baptist Churches in the Boston area. There, they and other women founded the Woman's American Baptist Home Mission Society (WABHMS),

a group devoted to the education and conversion of Black and Native women ("Packard, Sophia B." 270-271). Under WABHMS, Packard began to tour large cities of the South: Richmond, Nashville, and New Orleans, where Giles joined her after Packard became ill. Befriending a Black preacher named Reverend Frank Quarles, Packard and Giles settled in Atlanta, where they began to teach groups of Black women to read the Bible in the basement of the Friendship Baptist Church (Spelman College Archives "A Guide to the Sophia B. Packard Papers"). Though Packard and Giles's letters imply that their teaching role was incompletely recognized by the WABHMS (Letter to Rev. H.L. Morehouse Sept 1881), they did begin with a sizable collection of printed missionary materials: Bibles, other books, and stationary from both the WABHMS and from the New England churches that previously employed them. The wealthy, New England-based Rockefeller family donated to Packard and Giles's efforts, which led to the school's naming to honor the parents of Laura Spelman Rockefeller in 1884 (Spelman College Archives "A Guide to the Sophia B. Packard Papers"). By 1888, Spelman Seminary was officially incorporated, and by that time, it had its own buildings outside the city, options for boarding on site, teachers, and classes of various levels and in different courses of study. It was an environment already rich in print.

Moreover, Spelman soon produced its own print materials, in courses of study that connected cooking and printing. Packard passed away in 1891, leaving the administration of the seminary to Giles alone. Under Giles, the institution continued to grow in teachers and students. Along with offering elementary and high school courses of study, Spelman advertised college courses, as well as ones preparatory for missionary work, nursing, teaching, and playing musical instruments/singing, and it had specialized facilities for cooking, laundry work, sewing, and printing (Spelman Seminary "Spelman Seminary Picture Book 1891"). By 1901, such offerings had consolidated into an "Industrial" course of studies (Spelman Seminary "Spelman Seminary Picture Book 1901"). The printing class/facility continued to expand the institution's access to print. Spelman's Printing Office allowed curricular experiences for students, produced materials that advertised the school's offerings, and importantly printed instructions on ways to donate to the efforts (Spelman Seminary "Spelman Graduates"). By the time Lucy Hale Tapley became president in 1910, Spelman had a large collection of printed ephemera, not only from religious and founding materials but also from their own presses operating over decades.

In a place rich with print, Motta Sims cut and pasted a cooking textbook, perhaps re-typed in a way that synthetized multiple sources, into yet another book, pre-printed with horizontal lines. Pre-lined composition books were likely rare at the time; recent artists have started to speculate that composition books were adopted from Western Europe and popularized in America only starting in the 1890s (Kearns). It was an unusually print-rich environment additionally because typed sources (whether textbooks or re-typed pieces of paper) were not necessarily understood to be so expendable elsewhere (Kidwell et al. 3-20). Sims's composition book used the print-rich environment to recycle texts as a way of composing, using scrapbooking to recraft available print materials into her own work in scientifically oriented cooking.

Conclusion

Sims's composition book therefore draws attention to scrapbooking as a way of framing cooking as scientific study. Moreover, it does so in a document signed by a student who went on to have a wide-ranging career as a professor at Southeastern HBCUs. After the course in cooking at Spelman, Sims went on to study in courses explicitly named for home economics, first at Fisk, where it was a course of studies separate from others (Horne 90), and later at Columbia Teachers College, which had started hiring Black women to their faculty (Williams). Then, Professor Sims went on to teach at Tuskegee in Alabama, Shaw State in North Carolina, South Carolina State, Virginia State, and Fort Valley State in Georgia ("Miss Motta Sims" 12). Though I have not found records of her further scrapbooking, Professor Sims's continued work in teaching the science of cooking is well documented across institutions.

Meanwhile, home economics at HBCUs developed into a problem, for some. A federal education committee of 1939 noted "home economics" as especially limiting for Black women. They critically quoted an assistant superintendent, "In our State it would seem that Negroes should be trained in agriculture, and farm mechanics, and the girls in home economics, with specific reference to home service" (quoted in Wilkerson 106). Noting the closed-mindedness of this statement, the committee pointed out how HBCUs offered "restricted programs." Black colleges and universities, they wrote, had nearly two-fifths of their students "concentrated chiefly in the fields of agriculture, mechanic arts, and home economics" (Wilkerson 73). Though Professor Sims supported such fields, home economics was not only a route to "home service" for her. She taught the management of groups outside the home, as when she served as hostess for a service club during World War II ("Miss Motta Sims" 12). Nor was home economics truly a restricted career path for her, as it allowed access to the professoriate. As Margaret Rossiter has argued about Ellen Swallow Richards, home economics provided Sims an "entering wedge," a place from which she could open doors to higher education for herself and later for others (Rossiter 1).

Motta Sims's work, I learned, appeared not only in the Lucy Hale Tapley Presidential Collection but also in the George Washington Carver Papers of Tuskegee University Archives, distributed by the Library of Congress. Dr. George Washington Carver is the subject of multiple new biographies, showing connections from his classes to environmental conservation (Hersey), or to food justice in cooperative farming (White). While at Tuskegee, Professor Sims observed Dr. Carver's teaching and noted some of his aphorisms, now transcribed in government microfilm: "Significant Statements Taken From Illustrated Lecture By Dr. George W. Carver./ By Motta L. Sims." Undated, likely from the 1930s, the document ends with a piece of advice about being a trend-setter. "Be an individualist and not a copyist," Carver expounded. "A man can be truly proud of his productions if he is the originator and promoter of the idea." (Sims "Significant Statements… By Dr. George W. Carver") In this statement, Dr. Carver observes how "a man" should strive to originate and promote ideas, not copy them. In contrast to such a gendered emphasis on originality, Prof. Sims's notes show the value in being a "copyist." Her composition book at Spelman recycles a printed textbook as a basis for new understandings of cooking, as her Tuskegee notes preserve Dr. Carver's sayings.

Yet there is a difficulty in drawing attention to the notetaker. When Prof. Sims's notes about Dr. Carver's sayings are cited, it is more prominent that he said these things than that she wrote them down (Gart 100). Similarly, studying academic scrapbooking is more than an investigation of how well students followed the directions of a teacher in snipping, pasting, writing, and recirculating. As literature about more recent zines has shown (Leger and Verna), such productive reuse of text is a composing process, one that can show complicated approaches to teachers and institutional structures.

Moreover, Sims's work reminds us of potential disciplinary prejudices that sometimes keep cooking classes out of stories of STEM opportunities. Working to correct this view are graduate students and early-career scholars, recovering stories of inspiring professors such as Mary E. Creswell in Georgia (Nickols and Peek), educational visionaries such as Nannie Helen Burroughs in Virginia (Jackson), and food activists such as Blanche Armwood in Florida (Alishahi). Similarly, Sims's legacy as a professor was not forgotten, as Fort Valley State awarded the Motta Sims Home Economics Award, though that digital record was taken down during the writing of this article. Given such disciplinary erasure, how might we work to recover and reflect on historical stories of domestic science, home economics, and broadly cooking?

Additionally, Motta Sims's composition book and her notes generally invite reflection about historical scrapbooking as writing and about its preservation. How might we locate practices of reusing print in historical records, and how might we come to understand them as composing? Moreover, Sims's composition book and notes present a problem of access, leading to more questions about Black women's institutional experiences (Royster; Jones and Williams). How might we expand our materials and practices to be more attuned to stories about institutions for Black women, but how might we additionally acknowledge the omissions or erasures that often accompany Black women's historical experiences? Though Ms. Sims's notes do not appear as a collection under her name, she does sign them, which can lead to further stories about her work, writing practices, and scientific study of her time.

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A Queer Iphis: Recovering and Reconsidering Translations of Ovid's "Iphis and Ianthe"

Alexandra Sladky

Abstract: Women have translated Latin and Greek texts for thousands of years but have only recently begun to translate the epic poems of Homer, Vergil, and Ovid into English. Women's translations bring fresh interpretations to ancient texts and demand that twenty-first century readers approach these texts critically. This paper examines the translation of the myth "Iphis and Ianthe" from Stephanie McCarter's recent translation of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, a text written during Augustan Rome and that focuses on stories of transformation. This paper argues that McCarter's translation of "Iphis and Ianthe" is a rhetorical one where she considers her contemporary audience. Her approach to grammar and word choice model her feminist strategy for translating the classics as well as a reconsideration of contemporary values around gender and sexuality, recovering experiences of marginalized characters in the Metamorphoses. This translation offers a way to reconsider the popular fictional retellings of ancient Greek and Roman myth, especially Ali Smith's *Girl Meets Boy*, as feminist acts of (re)inscription.

Recent fictional retellings of ancient myth establish an increasingly popular genre of feminist recoveries of women's experiences, where the often silent/silenced female character gets a chance to tell the story from her own perspective.[1] These recoveries necessitate the reconsideration of their source texts and the translations of those source texts. Alongside fictional retellings, women have begun to translate the epic poems of Homer, Vergil,[2] and Ovid, texts that, until recently, only men have translated.[3] The epic poems shape the literary canon and because of this influential position scholars should reconsider the import of these stories in the twenty-first century. Until this recent round of translations by women, the epic poems have mostly remained off limits for women to translate.[4] Women provide fresh perspectives to ancient texts, illustrate how to approach canonical texts critically, and articulate feminist and ethical strategies for translating the

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1   The list of these novels is now very long and includes Madeline Miller's *Circe*, Pat Barker's *The Silence of the Girls* and *The Women of Troy,* Natalie Haynes' *A Thousand Ships* and *Stone Blind*, Nina MacLaughlin's *Wake, Siren: Ovid Resung*, Ali Smith's *Girl Meets Boy*, and Jennifer Saint's *Ariadne* and *Atalanta*. The length of this list suggests that these are stories we need to read now and the perspectives that we need to hear them from.

2   This spelling of Vergil's name reflects his Latin name, Publius Vergilius Maro, and aligns with Ruden's and Bartsch's recent translations of his *Aeneid.*

3   Mary Innes is the first of these women to translate Ovid's *Metamorphoses* into English in 1955. However, there is a great gap in this work from 1955 until 2004. Sarah Ruden translated Vergil's *Aeneid* (2004; new edition 2021); Caroline Alexander translated Homer's *Iliad* (2015); Emily Wilson translated Homer's *Odyssey* (2018) and *Iliad* (2023); Shadi Bartsch translated Vergil's *Aeneid* (2021); Stephanie McCarter translated Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (2022). Additionally, Jane Alison published a translation of selected stories from Ovid's *Metamorphoses, Change Me* (2014).

4   There are layers to this. Women have translated these texts in their entirety into other languages, the earliest is Anne Dacier's *Iliad* (1711) and his *Odyssey* (1716) into French (Wyles, 66). On the one hand, translation does not count towards professional advancement, and so many women do not do the work because it does not count toward promotion (Porter; Kennerly). On the other, Wilson writes that it is because of the "critical distance" of centuries between contemporary women and the male authors that they can take a different approach to canonical texts. (Wilson, "Found in Translation").

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classics.[5] Mostly men have translated Ovid's *Metamorphoses* until 1955 when Mary Innes became the first women to translate Ovid's text into English in its entirety. Now, McCarter is the second woman to do this, and her translation differs from Innes' translation and all previous translations by men. McCarter articulates her feminist translation strategies and situates her translation in a culture and time distant from the source text's. The feminist approaches to translation are the primary reason why myths like "Iphis and Ianthe" are ripe for recovery and reconsideration within the context of the history of rhetoric and translation. This paper reconsiders McCarter's translation of the story "Iphis and Ianthe" from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* as a rhetorical act and examines how her interpretation is a recovery of a story of female romantic love. I juxtapose translations of "Iphis and Ianthe" by Stephanie McCarter, Mary Innes, Rolfe Humphries, and Allen Mandelbaum to showcase McCarter's feminist strategies for translating Ovid and her rhetorical approaches to word choice and grammar. McCarter's interpretation of the story emphasizes the inherent queerness in the story as a positive quality for the characters, challenging traditional cultural values. These moves reflect a shift in cultural values around gender and sexuality and help reach twenty-first century audiences who recognize these issues as culturally relevant.

In the myth of "Iphis and Ianthe," Ligdus vows that if his wife, Telethusa, gives birth to a girl, they must expose her because they cannot afford the dowry. When Iphis is born Telethusa claims that she is a boy.[6] Ligdus does not find out, and so they raise Iphis as a boy. When Iphis comes of age, Ligdus betroths her to a young woman named Ianthe, whom Iphis has grown up with and loves. However, Iphis knows that women are not supposed to marry women. Even though she loves Ianthe, Iphis has no model for romantic love between women and understands that women only have sex with men. Telethusa prays to the gods, and her prayers are instantaneously granted when Iphis turns into a young man and can marry Ianthe. Once Iphis undergoes transformation, the relationship changes into romantic love. Scholars have long interpreted the myth as one of female homosexuality, where "the real metamorphosis… is not Iphis' transformation into a boy, but the transformation of the bond between Iphis and Ianthe" (Boehringer, 235). Contemporary readers may identify how this story highlights LGBTQ+ issues especially transgender identities and queer women's invisibility. While human rights are a contemporary social issue, this connection is not uncommon when it comes to Ovid's *Metamorphoses*.[7] The remainder of this article examines McCarter's translation

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5   Wilson and McCarter articulate these most clearly. Two of McCarter's four feminist approaches to translating the classics include "avoid misogynistic/sexist/gendered language not explicit in the original; take special care when translating the body, not introducing gendered or racialized language not in the original" (141). Wilson's "Seven Types of Feminist Translation Strategy" include "be (somewhat) visible, watch the time, give voice, keep your distance, contain multitudes, tell it how it is, and don't be evil" (283-286).

6   Iphis is a third declension noun. In Latin, nouns in the third declension are typically identified as neuter (where first declension nouns are feminine, and second declension nouns are masculine). In the myth, Ligdus names the child after his own father and Telethusa agrees to this because "it was unisex and not dishonest" (McCarter, 560). Having a neuter, third declension name is another way that Iphis inhabits the space between gender identities and an example of how gender is originally a grammatical concept.

7   The field of reception studies examines closely how contemporary audiences receive ancient texts. Myths are malleable. Morales notes that "myths are read selectively, re-created, adapted, cut and pasted, and they always have been" (128). Ali Smith's *Girl Meets Boy* (2007) and Nina MacLaughlin's *Wake Siren: Ovid Resung* (2019) are popular fictional retellings that reimagine Ovid's *Metamorphoses* in the contemporary world. Ovid himself retells Greek and Roman myths in his *Metamorphoses,* including "Iphis and Ianthe" based on the story of Leukippos, which originally appeared in a text of Greek legends called *Metamorphoses*, written by Antoninus Liberalis, who got the story from Nicander (Boehringer, 213).

of "Iphis and Ianthe" as a rhetorical act. In her translation, McCarter recovers experiences of marginalized characters in ways that reflect shifting cultural values and prompts readers to reconsider the myth through a critical and contemporary lens.

Reconsidering Translation as a Rhetorical Act

McCarter identifies her goals and approaches for translating Ovid in her "Translator's Note."[8] Her goals include: "to create a clear, poetic rendering of the *Metamorphoses* in a modern idiom" (xxxi), "to clearly and reasonably translate Ovid's scenes of sexual violence and rape" (xxxiv), and "to translate words describing gendered bodies as accurately as possible" (xxxiv). These goals situate her approach to translation alongside her interpretation of the text and a concern for her audience who receives this text in a different time and culture from the Roman Empire.[9] In their updated translations of the classics, women reconsider old, familiar stories, provide new interpretations through their accurate translations, and identify new strategies for translating the classics.

Contemporary women translators do not approach the act of translation neutrally, but rather rhetorically.[10] They translate the texts for specific audiences and in specific times, places, languages, and cultures.[11] The task of the translator is to make the translated text relevant and accessible to the current audience. In this way, translation is related to the rhetorical concept of *Kairos*, where the translator takes into consideration the historical context in which she translates the text and fits "the persuasion to the right and appropriate circumstances of subject, audience, and moment" (Copeland, 19). The translator must find a way to convey the meaning of the text in English that readers understand *now*, rather than trying to reconstruct the English as Ovid, or some other ancient writer, would have written (Kennerly, 6). A translator structures her translation based on the reality of a certain language and culture and readers find that translation accurate or not based on their experience of that reality.[12] Ovid shared a certain reality with this ancient audiences and constructed

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8   Metatexts (Introductions and Translators' Notes) are places where women translators "develop a sense of self" and show they are "increasingly aware that their identities as gendered rewriters enter into their work" (von Flotow, 35). In their metatexts, "translators are introducing and commenting on their work, and offering explanations for it" (von Flotow, 35). The translator's preface or translator's note as we know it came about in the modern era in the form of "a prose essay in which to announce new translation manifestos, but also as a new form of writing, inextricably linked to the work it precedes," (Balmer, 24). In this section, McCarter articulates the moves she makes in her translation, readers can then identify those moves as they read the text.

9   The translator exists between two cultures, "the original one in which the writer produced the text and the receiving one for which the translator must make the text accessible" and this rhetorical situation is most apparent "in cases where tastes or values of the original culture are at odds with those of the receiving one" (Carlos, 335). The contemporary United States is a culture that is at odds with the Roman Empire, however, texts like Ovid's *Metamorphoses* still contains messages that resonate with contemporary audiences.

10 Like the orator, the translator "is in a rhetorical situation" where translation "is… a personal initiative, akin to that of the orator situated between a subject and a public" (France, 261).

11 Wilson writes that "all modern translations of ancient texts exist in a time, a place, and a language that are entirely alien from those of the original" ("Translator's Note," 87). Kennerly defines translation as "a taking across of terms from one time and place to another…" and "…from one language to another" (4). This is the rhetorical situation that women translators find themselves in and the challenge of interpreting an ancient text for a contemporary audience.

12 It is not that readers want "an objective description of reality, but the manner in which opinions concerning it are presented" (Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca, 262).

a reality in his stories that his audience shared with him. The translators of his Metamorphoses do the same as they translate and interpret his text in the reality of the twenty-first century. The writer conceives of a reality, and the audience believes or rejects it.[13] McCarter translates the story of Iphis and Ianthe as one that illustrates romantic love between women, and rather than a negative connotation, she provides an interpretation where queerness is positive and possible and readers may recognize and identify with this reality of the twenty-first century.

Similarly, translators create opportunities for readers to identify with stories not originally a part of their language or culture. The translator must make the text accessible in the target language and as a part of the reality of the twenty-first century. Accessibility in the target language creates opportunities, through translation, for audiences to identify with a text. To consider identification as a rhetorical aspect of translation, the ideas and tonality of the text where McCarter translates queerness in a positive register and the idea of queer love as a possibility situates the story in the twenty-first century where audience members may identify with similar experiences.[14] The translator must make the Latin into the kind of English that readers can identify with. Translating a story in a way that does not alienate an entire community or identity allows those communities and identities to engage in conversations with these texts and to read stories that reflect versions of their experiences.

Feminist translation theory holds that both translations and language are figured in "feminine terms," characterized using feminine qualities of faithfulness and beauty (Chamberlain, 458).[15] Gendered metaphors of faithfulness govern translation and place those same expectations of women on the act of translation. Traditionally, translation was accessible to women primarily because of this gendered metaphor, where "composition was a masculine art, the articulated original; translation was feminine – derivative, defective, muted, 'other'" (Glenn, 146). Women were limited to the translation of men's writing, and this kind of gatekeeping silenced women. Gendering translation as historically women's work devalues it as scholarly work (Porter; Kennerly, 6). Language is one part of women's gendered identity in a particular culture and impacts how they interpret ideas.[16] Women translate experience from private to public realms, where they "translate their private language, their specifically female forms of discourse, developed as a result of gendered exclusion, into some form of the dominant patriarchal code" (von Flotow, 12). Women use their craft to translate experiences from the private realm to audiences in the public.

Glenn writes that "rhetoric always inscribes the relation of language and power at a particular mo-

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13   "The speaker can conceive a certain reality in accordance with different types of relations. Moreover, nothing guarantees that these connections are always understood in the same way by the speaker and his hearers" (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca, 263).

14   Burke's concept of identification posits that "you persuade a man only insofar as you can talk his language by speech, gesture, tonality, order, image, attitude, idea, *identifying* your ways with his" (55). Translators of the classics create opportunities for identification with ancient stories when they make them accessible in languages other than Latin or Greek and update vocabulary.

15   The same feminine terms are applied to language in general, with the term "mother tongue" (Chamberlain, 458).

16   Spivak argues "the task of the feminist translator is to consider language as a clue to the workings of gendered agency" (37).

ment (including who may speak, who may listen or who will agree to listen, and what can be said)" (1-2). The connection between language and power captures the rhetorical nature of translation, where translators are responsible for interpreting messages across languages to make texts accessible to audiences. Women translators embody the relationship between language and power. They use their power as translators to build bridges between languages and cultures that help readers see texts in ways that are relevant to the present moment and break out of the norm concerning these canonical texts.

Rhetorical Word Choice

McCarter's word choices illustrate her approach to accurately translating gendered bodies. McCarter subverts previous interpretations of the story in favor of a more contemporary one to show a specific interpretation of Iphis. One controversial passage shows the cultural impact of deviating from, or sticking to, traditional dictionary definitions of Latin vocabulary. Ovid describes Iphis' love for Ianthe as "…*prodigiosa novaeque*/ Cura…" (727-8). Humphries translates the phrase as "…such a strange and unnatural passion…" (231). Innes, similarly, writes, "…a strange and unnatural kind of love" (222).[17] Mandelbaum flourishes a bit more with: "…love so strange that none has ever known its monstrous pangs" (319). All three of these translators focus on strangeness and monstrosity to describe the kind of love Iphis feels for Ianthe. The Latin, however, does not suggest such a negative connotation as these translators' versions would suggest. McCarter writes: "…by this queer longing for a novel kind of lovemaking that no one understands" (274). Definitions for *prodigiosus* in *Lewis and Short* include "unnatural, wonderful, marvelous, prodigious" and those for *novus* include "new, not old, young, fresh, recent."[18] While definitions for *prodigiosus* include unnaturalness or strangeness it is possible to connect the word to not only ancient Roman cultural norms, where romantic relationships between women were not often visible, and any trace of their sexuality was deemed improper and unnatural, but also American cultural norms of the mid-twentieth century.[19] The word "queer" is not a standard dictionary definition for *prodigiosus*. McCarter's choice to translate *prodigiosa* as "queer" shows an updated approach to the kind of love between Iphis and Ianthe and reflects an updated definition of the term "queer." In her "Translator's Note" for the version of this story published in *The Sewanee Review* in 2021, McCarter writes that "the contemporary register of 'queer' communicates … what Iphis sees as the marvelous strangeness of her desire without saddling her with judgements about that desire that she does not express" (566). McCarter's translation reflects an interpretation of strangeness and newness that isn't negative, and can be marvelous, as well as the contemporary understanding of the term "queer" as reclaimed by the LGBTQ+ community. The word choices in her translation reflect a contemporary cultural understanding and acceptance of love and relationships that are not heterosexual.

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17 Even though Innes has written a prose translation, she is the only other woman to translate the *Metamorphoses* in its entirety, and the similarities between her and Humphries' translations, published in the same year, show how culturally embedded language and beliefs around queerness and romantic love between women are.

18 *Lewis and Short* is an authoritative Latin dictionary.

19 In general, women in ancient culture were invisible, so it's not surprising that this story would reflect the way that the female sex was not valued: from the near infanticide at the beginning of the story to the strangeness of the lesbian relationship here. On the other hand, homosexuality was hardly a foreign concept between men in antiquity. The question for men was not who they were doing it with, but rather who penetrates whom.

The invisibility and impossibility of love between two women in antiquity becomes a concern for contemporary translators as they interpret the story of Iphis and Ianthe. Iphis, like other queer women, becomes monstrous in mid-twentieth century English translations because of her unnatural desire for women, reflecting homophobic culture of the mid-twentieth century. McCarter's translation, on the other hand, reconsiders Iphis and Ianthe and recovers some of their humanity through her rhetorical use of word choice. McCarter's "…by this queer longing for a novel kind of lovemaking that no one understands" hints that the story is in fact about both longing and lovemaking (274). Iphis loves Ianthe but is unable to marry or have sex with her because they are both women, that is, Iphis lacks a phallus and is unable to consummate the marriage.[20] In ancient Rome the penetrative act consummates the marriage. Iphis and Ianthe want to be together, although they don't know how because they have no models, no other stories about the kind of love that they share. Identifying Iphis and Ianthe's relationship as queer suggests that Iphis does not appear to have a problem with her genitalia or her gender, rather she lacks examples and wonders how she could love another female when not even animals do this.[21] Iphis' desire is monstrous because it is considered unnatural – a girl desiring another girl. When Iphis becomes a boy, however, he can be with Ianthe. The transformation erases the monstrosity and rather portrays queer women's invisibility, by "heterosexualizing" the love between Iphis and Ianthe ("Iphis & Ianthe Translated by Stephanie McCarter," 566). Their relationship is no longer monstrous because it appears heterosexual.

The Grammatical and Cultural Concept of Gender

In Latin, gender is a grammatical concept more than the cultural one that we know today.[22] As in English, Latin has specific words to designate biological sex and gender. Latin and Greek languages assign gender (masculine, feminine, and neuter) to all nouns.[23]As in English, Latin has specific words to designate biological sex and gender. Latin and Greek languages assign gender (masculine, feminine, and neuter) to all nouns. These words illustrate how gender comes to be understood to exist on a binary, words on opposite ends of a spectrum make our understanding of gender conform to one thing or another with discomfort surrounding those that exist in the middle. We often confuse words that indicate gender (boy/girl) with those that indicate biological sex (male/female). For this story about queer women, the concept of grammatical gender reveals non-normal gender behaviors and how these behaviors function within cultures.

The transformation from female to male is necessary for Iphis and Ianthe to be together. However, the transformation in the Latin is a transformation of grammar: Iphis becomes a boy and "is the active,

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20 Beek writes that "Roman authors vehemently reject both the idea of a woman taking the penetrative role in sex, as well as the idea of sex occurring without a dominant partner who penetrates," while its generally agreed upon that what matters in the question of male homosexuality is who is doing the penetrating (66).

21 Or, as McCarter writes: "Iphis's dilemma is not that she finds her love morally reprehensible… she finds it instead physically impossible, which speaks to the strictly penetrative view of sex that comes down to us from Roman sources" ("Iphis & Ianthe Translated by Stephanie McCarter," 565-566).

22 Glenn writes that "even though *gender* is merely a concept borrowed from grammar, it, nevertheless, continues to have far-reaching effects on cultural notions of the relation between the sexed body and its behavior" (*Rhetoric Retold*, 173).

23 In English, nouns such as boy/girl, man/woman, king/queen contain "intuitive" gender (Corbeill, 79).

penetrative *puer* in the grammar of Roman sex and is gendered masculine – but she may not have a penis" (Ranger, 239). In English, the shifts in pronouns and gender terms indicate transformation of gender, but not necessarily biological sex. In the description of Iphis' transformation, every feature is explained in comparison to how Iphis appeared as a girl. The transformation preserves feminine endings: *Quam solita est, maiore gradu* (Ovid, IX.787 in Anderson). McCarter renders this line: "And Iphis follows with a longer stride than usual" (275-6). Humphries writes: "But taking, somehow, longer steps than usual…" (233). Mandelbaum translates the line: "Iphis walked behind her, but her stride was longer than it was before" (321). The participle *solita* is feminine and provides a grammatical reason for the use of female pronouns in the description of Iphis' stride. However, McCarter's English translation does not give Iphis a pronoun yet. Crucially, the metamorphosis does not describe the transformation of the part of Iphis' body that would allow Iphis and Ianthe to consummate the marriage, suggesting that Iphis does not have a penis even after the transformation from *femina* to *puer*. This also brings up the question of whether the transformation from female to male is what Iphis wants, or if she longs to see models of queer women.[24] Without a transformation, Iphis is not able to marry Ianthe.

Following the comparison, McCarter preserves the second person pronouns found in the Latin: "… she has more vigor than is normal for a female. You who were just a girl are now a boy!" (563).[25] The shift to second person pronouns allows the author to address the characters in the story and avoid the question of which gender pronouns to use in English, while still marking the grammatical change from *femina* to *puer* (girl to boy) and not limiting them to specific sets of pronouns (563). The Latin juxtaposes *puer* and *femina*, where *puer* exclusively refers to a boy, while *femina* has a wider range of connotations for women, but usually indicates an adult woman. McCarter's use of gender terms "boy" and "girl" also suggest that the transformation is not one of biological sex. The "female" in the previous clause refers generally to females, not specifically to Iphis. Humphries, rather than using the second person in his translation writes: "The vigor less becoming to a woman. She was no woman now, but a young bridegroom!" (233). Humphries' term "bridegroom," defined as "a man just married," may suggest that a penis is present in his translation, as the marriage night is associated with consummation. Mandelbaum's translation reads: "You are more vigorous than you had been, o Iphis, when you still were feminine—for you who were a girl so recently are now a boy!" (321). Innes writes: "She showed more energy than a woman has – for she who had lately been a woman had become a man?" (224). The Latin simply states that Iphis, as a man, has more energy and vigor than a woman. A concern for women and their physical activities also reflects a dated cultural concern in the translations. The translators, however, address a shift in vigor or energy as part of the transformation and comment on the acceptability of energy or vigor for a woman. For Humphries, the vigor is not becoming to a woman, not something that is generally accepted for a woman, while others indicate merely that Iphis as a man has more.

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24 Beek asks would "some instruction in lesbian sexual practices [be] more concenial to her?" (56-7). It is important not to discount the value of the visibility of others living similar lives.

25 "*Plusque vigoris adest, habuit quam femina. Nam quae/ Femina nuper eras, puer es*"" (Ovid, IX.790-1 in Anderson).

Conclusions and Implications: Retelling as a Feminist Rhetorical Practice

The act of retelling is deeply ingrained in feminist rhetorical practices. Fictional retellings and translations of ancient texts recover and reconsider women's experiences. They provide a way to reconsider the stories, taken out of their contexts and applied to the contemporary in explicit ways.[26] Women have shown that there are new ways of interpreting ancient epics that focus on accuracy of word choice and creating accessible texts, while also displaying an inclusive and culturally relevant interpretation for contemporary audiences. Feminist translation strategies and fictional retellings share some key similarities. Each engages in (re)inscription of the source texts, each recovers and reconsiders the characters from the source text in a new light. These strategies are similar to feminist rhetorical practices, where feminist scholars engage in methods that rescue, recover, and reinscribe rhetorical history to include women, and place contemporary women in conversation with historical ones (Glenn, 2; Royster & Kirsch, 14). Writers' identities as women shape their interpretations of the source texts and the stories they tell (Enoch, Jack, & Glenn, *Retellings*, 9). Women's translations of the classics and women's retellings of ancient myth have an entwined relationship. Hardwick includes adaptations and versions in her interpretation of translations (Hardwick, 342). Ali Smith's novel *Girl Meets Boy* is a contemporary fictional retelling of Iphis and Ianthe's story. The novel takes place in contemporary Scotland where the characters face a culture that still grapples with accepting homosexuality and serves as an example of how one author reinscribes the story of Iphis and Ianthe for contemporary audiences that recovers queer identities. Smith's novel celebrates queerness and non-conformity as she reimagines the story of Iphis and Ianthe in contemporary Scotland. She demonstrates how readers should reconsider the story in the contemporary moment, putting Iphis and Ianthe, as Robin and Anthea, in the twenty-first century. Robin reflects the gender-bending qualities of Ovid's Iphis. Anthea's attraction to and love for Robin reflects the kind of model relationship that did not exist in antiquity, where romantic love between female characters is possible. Visibility and exposure to different interpretations of these stories shows readers (often young people) that there are many ways to approach and work with these texts, and many ways to interpret and understand these stories.

Smith recovers and reconsiders the story by giving voice to the characters and their desires. In Ovid's myth, Iphis does not believe how she could marry another woman. Smith gives Iphis-as-Robin this chance, even as she still does not really give specific terminology to Robin, she celebrates the in-betweenness of Robin's identity and makes those in-between qualities exactly what Anthea desires. Smith gives Ianthe-as-Anthea, who does not speak in Ovid's myth, the chance to voice her desire.[27] Smith describes Robin from Anthea's perspective, where readers also see the desire and excitement in discovering Robin's identity. Smith writes: "It had been exciting, first the not knowing what Robin was, then the finding out. The grey area, I'd discovered, had been misnamed: really the grey area was a whole other spectrum of

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26   It is necessary to find a way to translate these texts and what they mean now, rather than trying to preserve only what they meant to ancient authors in antiquity (Kennerly, 6).

27   In Ovid's myth, Iphis gets a speech, much like a man, even though it is about confusion and uncertainty. Ianthe does not get to speak. It is characteristic of feminist retellings to tell the story from the woman's perspective, the woman who is often silent or silenced. Hauser argues that women's silence has a generative quality, where writers recognize the silence and want to tell the story (195).

colours new to the eye. She had the swagger of a girl. She blushed like a boy. She had a girl's toughness. She had a boy's gentleness" (Smith, 83-84). As the list of qualities goes on, Smith bends the expectations for each description with that of the opposite gender (usually we expect a boy to swagger and a girl to blush). In English, a language that lacks grammatical gender, the description of the character creates opposition and contradiction in how readers think about gender expression. The qualities that Anthea observes in Robin do not equate to a biological sex change, and so readers must reconsider their observations and what they know about gender.

Smith also reconsiders Ovid himself, giving readers new ways to think about the ancient poet. Where Ovid existed in the patriarchal and hegemonic world of Augustan Rome, Smith recovers him as "fluid," recalling Robin's own identity (97). She acknowledges the contradiction of his existence: "he can't help being the Roman he is, he can't help fixating on what it is that girls don't have under their togas, and it's him who can't imagine what girls would ever do without one" (97). In this way, readers also imagine how stories change and take on new meaning as they read them in different and distant time periods, and how authors never shift from their existing times, but readers reconsider the author's identity and the reality into which they receive the texts. The twenty-first century is a difficult time to consider the classics, but Smith's recovery of both the myth of Iphis and Ianthe and Ovid himself give hope that there are other ways to reconsider these ancient authors that help us to figure out what we value now, rather than trying so hard to figure out what Ovid and Augustan Rome valued thousands of years ago.[28]

This essay provides one example of how translators use rhetorical strategies and feminist approaches to address contemporary social issues in their interpretations of ancient texts. Through translation women reclaim ancient stories, recover the voices of ancient and mythological characters and reconsider their meanings for contemporary audiences. McCarter's *Metamorphoses* shows how translation embodies a possibility for change by using new words to tell an old story. This possibility for change is as important for "impressionable young people" in high school and college as it is for wider, popular audiences (Wilson, 296). Translations and retellings shift the way that we perceive the classics, once inflexible and unquestioned, now translations and retellings show readers that change is possible. McCarter's updates to Iphis and Ianthe help us to read Iphis and Ianthe's queerness in a positive register. Both translations and fictional retellings give readers examples of ways to reconsider texts from ancient patriarchal societies and different languages in the current time, a way to think critically about them and challenge interpretations. They provide models for how readers and writers might do their own work of recovering ancient texts.

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28   Kennerly calls for rhetoricians to update the translation of rhetorical terminology, words such as "pistis, ethos, and arete," not to "get closer to what Arisotle meant then" but to "help us get closer to what we mean *now*" (6).

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Book Reviews

Review of *Gathering Blossoms Under Fire: The Journals of Alice Walker 1965-2000*

Zoe McDonald

I was a teenager when I found a cardboard box of books from my mom's college classes. Three books were by Alice Walker: the short story collection *In Love and Trouble,* and the novels *The Temple of my Familiar,* and *The Color Purple.* This was the first time I encountered the work of one of the twentieth century's greatest authors. From that moment, I joined multiple generations of readers enthralled when I read Walker's work or saw it performed. Valerie Boyd's edited volume of Walker's journals is for those readers curious about Walker's life and interested in how diaries expand knowledge of how Black women have authored literature and social movements.

Throughout the curated first volume of diary entries, readers learn of Walker's fierce desire to participate in racial justice movements as well as write, fall in love multiple times, experience exhaustion from media tours, and reflect on challenges brought on through achieving financial independence and security. The individual entries also function as a collection of diverse written material: aphorisms ("The bad news is that most of us will have to struggle. The good news is that the struggle makes us beautiful" [261]), drafts for stories (Boyd notes Walker began *The Color Purple* in an entry in its published form in 1980, see pg. 170-1), dream journal entries, notes of thanks to The Great Spirit, documentation of finances, and descriptions of international travels. In the 1960s, a young Walker back from a Spelman College study abroad trip in Europe participates in Civil Rights marches, recognizes her fierce desire to write, and falls in love. In the 1970s, Walker marries, gives birth to her daughter Rebecca, and becomes a professional author. Walker in the 1980s and 90s frequently describes her professional obligations and turns to describing her different houses, declaring "All the houses in the world can't make you happy if they're empty" (393). In the "Postscript," Walker explains her decision to keep the first of two planned volumes of her journals at a manageable length. Walker also provides readers a glimpse into some excluded entries that describe her romances, reflections on religion, and different houses. It remains tempting to speculate about which details of Walker's life remain unknown until the end of the embargo on the original journals at Emory University in 2040. And still, it may

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not be until decades from now that scholars of Walker's work gain more detailed insight into Walker's life.

While Walker's frequently banned work has been well studied within literary criticism, and her life has been the center of biographies, her status as a cultural icon has eclipsed knowledge of her life. In the "Introduction," editor Valerie Boyd, Charlayne Hunter-Gault professor of Journalism at the University of Georgia, writes that this compilation of journals "is a workbook for artists, activists, and intellectuals" (xv). Walker's five decades of journals may be most valuable through the icon's personal descriptions of the interwoven relationship among her work and life as a daughter, teacher, mother, lover, activist, and author. As an example, readers may be familiar with Walker's eye injury from her essay "Beauty: When the Other Dancer is the Self," within *In Search of Our Mother's Gardens*. In a July 8, 1977, entry Walker explains that the six years a scar covered her pupil "made me a human being [and] that made me a writer" (75). Walker adds: "What I internalized from all this, but repressed, was, among other peculiarities, an attraction to light/ dark couples (symbols, I now suppose, of my parents)" (76). Walker's journals' span public achievements— her marriage in defiance of Mississippi's marriage segregation laws, winning the Pulitzer Prize for *The Color Purple,* publishing work on Zora Neale Hurston and Langston Hughes, and tenure at *Ms. Magazine*—and more intimate awakenings—musings on religion, descriptions of romances with men and women, her relationships with her parents and siblings, and descriptions of her writing process.

Although the journals may be best understood by scholars familiar with Walker's work, *Blossoms* is a gift for *Peitho* readers interested in not only gaining context to Walker's work, but further including Walker's influential voice within the study of 20th century social movements, literature, and intersectional rhetoric. Intersectional rhetoricians gain an abundance of previously unpublished insights on the key post-second wave project to understand how Black women's experiences are related, yet different, to those of Black men or white women and circulate histories of social movements and rhetoric that include Black women's vital contributions. As Walker writes of her time at *Ms. Magazine,* "I want desperately to be rid of the yearning for the material beyond adequate food, lodging and shelter and clothing," and in a January 1984 response to a cover story in the *New York Times,* Walker pens, "I don't chose womanism because it is 'better' than feminism since womanism means black feminist, but because it is mine" (65; 220). Scholars interested in feminist movements outside of the US learn about Walker's advocacy to draw awareness to female genital mutilation, the subject of Walker's book *Joy* and the documentary *Warrior Masks.* Those who extend work considering how language as symbolic action relates to language as social action gain first-hand accounts of an author who embraced both purposes, describing herself as "A pair of eyes. Only occasionally a fist" (65). For scholars expanding the work of Geneva Smitherman, Vershawn Ashanti Young, carmen kynard, April Baker-Bell, and scholars of linguistic justice, Walker's descriptions of her linguistic choices within her novel *The Color Purple* may be of special interest to consider how one author reacted to the circulation of her Black English prose.

Walker recognized her journals may not always remain private, and through becoming publicly available, readers may recognize how Walker's purposes relate to those of other journal writers in "our

attempt to face our <u>authentic</u> selves, not fantasies. And indeed to <u>*exist*</u> in our own lives" (144, emphasis in the original). Feminist rhetoricians have recognized journals, or diaries, allow for suspending pressures to make ideas legible for readers, to instead claim a voice so often denied in other spheres. The remove from the pressure to be understood is perhaps one of journals' greatest affordances, as seen in *Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl* or Audre Lorde's *The Cancer Journals*, to name but a few. In her journals, Walker has been highly aware of the rhetorical affordances of journaling. Walker describes herself after finishing *The Color Purple* in a Black feminist tradition as "[t]he womanist writer is the story herself as well as the person telling it" (181). Her journals also illustrate a conscious awareness of future readers and the challenges to shape interpretations of one's life, such as when Walker writes in a 1972 entry, "At times I am dismayed that there are things I am afraid to write about in this journal for I know they might be misunderstood" (44). Walker's efforts to not have her journals misunderstood are greatly aided by Boyd's editorial choices.

Boyd's editorial choices are not intended to condense the entries into a memoir or present the entries as decontextualized original archival documents. With Walker's permission, Boyd provides readers a great service through taking on the labor-intensive process of finding corresponding entries from Walker's habit to write in journals easily at hand to place the journal entries in chronological order. Boyd organizes the journals by decade, from Walker's first journal in June 1965 as a Sarah Lawrence college student and ending with a reflection in 2000 on connecting with nature and the delights of living. Boyd maintains Walker's abbreviations and original spellings and provides detailed footnotes to orient readers to the meaning of abbreviations, and biographical information that includes frequent appearances by Walker's friends and partners among many celebrities and activists.

In *Blossoms,* Boyd rises to the occasion of curating the journals of a well-regarded, and still living, central figure of twentieth century literature and culture. The edited entries illustrate Walker's life involved in multiple activist and cultural movements, and less publicly visible long-term relationships, processes of establishing a career as a writer, and quest to understand the divine. A planned second edited volume is sure to provide additional details of interest to students, teachers, and scholars. Walker's diaries provide new material to provide context to Walker's work and the vital contributions of Black women in the US to politics, culture, and rhetoric. *Gathering Blossoms* is a text worthwhile to analyze to understand Walker's life that has been so memorably lived and composed to influence the history of rhetoric.

Review of Latina *Leadership: Language and Literacy Education across Communities.*

Michael Caballero

Latina Leadership draws on Latina narratives to challenge the dominant discourses in rhetoric and composition and to promote feminist mentorship, activism, and literacies in Latina communities. The collection uses the voices and experiences of women of color as tools to break racial, gendered, and pedagogical barriers that have left their communities underrepresented and underserved in the education system while encouraging coalitions that support, empower, and amplify one another. The book comprises eleven chapters divided into three parts ("Part 1: Identity and Self- (Re) Identification," "Part 2: Research, Recovery, and Learning from Our Histories," "Part 3: Pedagogies and Mentorship," and an afterword). Each chapter consists of narratives from the authors and challenges the dominant higher education practices by sharing counterstories and offering mentorship practices to support their communities. Most of all, this work serves as a call to help Latina scholars reclaim their histories and power and create bridges of solidarity and community with one another.

Part 1: Identity and Self- (Re) Identification:

In "Advocating Comradismo" Ana Milena Ribero and Sonia C. Arellano introduce a feminist mentorship approach called "comradismo," utilizing the knowledge of Latina academics and their experiences in mentoring as a framework for arguing that academic scholars must "attend to the specific needs of black, Indigenous, people of color to recruit and retain diverse voices in the discipline," such as strength, empathy, and access to a network of support for personal and external crises that may arise (Ribero and Arellano 15). Comradismo is structured by addressing needs that have been neglected or ignored completely. This approach provides space for Latina academics to share their unique experiences and challenge both hegemonic structures and traditional scholarship, which remain largely dominated by white cis-gendered male voices.

Michael Caballero is a master's student in Technical Communication at Texas Tech University. My research interests are focused on literacy LGBTQ+ studies. I will never forget when I first took a course in literacy studies as an undergraduate student. The class opened my eyes to the diverse literacy practices of Latinx communities, as well as other communities of color, and how language, identity, and power intersect. My goal is to help further the conversations surrounding representation, identity, and social justice in the fields of composition and literacy and LGBTQ+ studies, with an emphasis on communities that have been marginalized. Outside of school, I enjoy hiking, traveling, and going on road trips with my family.

In "Beyond Skin Deep," Blanca Gabriela Caldas Chumbes examines Latina identity and the need for self-reflection in academia to determine what roles transnational Latina scholars play in the academic hierarchical structure of rhetoric and composition, including their own racial, cultural, and linguistic identities and how they navigate through the colonial and neocolonial ideological practices that exist in predominantly white institutions. Chumbes introduces the issue of 'whiteness' and how it presents better opportunities for some Latina scholars who have fairer skin compared to Latinas of darker skin, highlighting how institutional colorism prevents many Latina and BIPOC from achieving equal ranks and opportunities in academia as opposed to their white Latina counterparts.

Laura Gonzales' chapter, "Beyond and within My Skin," also focuses on Latin identity and highlights the institutional racism and oppression she experienced as a bilingual student and how this transitioned into her experiences in graduate school. Gonzales points out the importance of her role as a Latina scholar because it allows her to build coalitions with other women of color in and beyond academic arenas (Gonzales 63). She highlights how mentorship models that give Latinas the freedom to share their testimonios of their experiences help to form "recursive spatial movements" that allow Latina women to understand their identities and their roles as Latinas in academia, as well as to build friendships and mentorship coalitions with one another (Gonzales 64).

Lorena Guitierrez's chapter, "Research and Raíces," examines language, literacy, identity, and education of linguistically diverse communities by tracing her family roots in migrant farm work and her experiences growing up as a bilingual student. She introduces a literacy practice called language brokering, which she practiced growing up by translating English for her Spanish-speaking family members, and recounts negative interactions that they encountered while speaking Spanish in public places—such as being ordered to "speak English" by an officer while applying for federal assistance (Gutierrez 78). Her experience is an example of racist nativism, which discourages linguistically diverse people from speaking their own language and pressures them into adopting the dominant language. Through her research of her literacy background, she recognizes that Latina students are also subjected to this type of racism in schools and institutions.

Part 2: Research, Recovery, and Learning from our Histories

Stefania Baldiva and Kendall Leon's chapter, "Building Stories and Changing Spaces," encourages their mentoring approach that draws on creating counterstories in university archives to facilitate changes in academic institutions. This form of mentoring focuses on the following key areas: realizing that stories can inspire change, creating changes in institutions begins by changing the stories in the institutions, and building empowerment and coalitions that help students connect with their communities (Baldivia and Leon 99). Such mentoring approaches also lend the way to producing anti-racist practices in the field of composition and rhetoric by challenging the white, cis-heteropatriarchal ideologies (meaning master narratives that define the experiences of marginalized communities through power and collection) that currently dominate archives by building records of their own experiences.

Christine Garcia's chapter, "The Chingona Interviews," utilizes storytelling by interviewing two Latina academics, focusing on women of color trying to navigate the higher education system academically and professionally in composition and rhetoric fields. She argues that counterstorytelling is necessary to give Latinas the autonomy to share how they navigate through and adapt to the environment, institutions, and communities they occupy. Through her interviewing process, Garcia reinforces that counterstories are an effective way of building Latina empowerment and community, and listening to testimonios and sharing them among Latina leaders is a meaningful way to create institutional changes. Thus, the sharing of counterstorytelling is also imperative in giving Latina academics a safe space in which they cannot simply exist to survive but use the messages within their stories and culture to combat stereotypes and bring attention to how they have been oppressed by the dominant culture.

Michelle Hall Kells' chapter "Latina Leadership and Lessons Learned from Women of Local 890," discusses public scholarship and activist literacy with the Salt of the Earth Recovery Project, a collaborative effort of four graduate students who facilitated writing workshops for Latina/o activists in the Local 890 union halls to write their narratives of fighting systemic racism, sexism, unequal working conditions, and white-nationalist power structures in New Mexico's Central Mining District in the 1950s. Each narrative shared common themes of maintaining union and solidarity for the Latina/o community and created rich archives of historical feminist activism. Latina educators and scholars can use the lessons in these stories to empower their students and communities to fight for gender and racial equality in today's society, which is still rife with sexism, systemic oppression, and white nationalist policies that target communities of color.

Part 3: Pedagogies and Mentorship

Aja Y. Martinez's chapter "Counterstory Por mi Gente" introduces CRT Counterstory methodologies for scholarship and pedagogy in composition and rhetoric, recognizing that experiential knowledge of students of color is necessary for understanding how racism is perpetuated in classrooms. Martinez's counterstory narrates interactions between Alejandra, an instructor, and a student, Rick, who reveals how students made assumptions about him because of racial stereotypes. Rick's experience with "color-blind" racism challenges his instructor's previous assumptions about him and highlights the barriers he faces navigating through a system that was not designed for him. Reflecting on her own lack of awareness about race and class until she entered graduate school, the instructor implements a "Race Literacy Narrative" assignment, which encourages students to examine their personal histories and how issues of race, class, and power have shaped their racial literacy.

Raquel Corona and Nancy Alvarez offer collaborative approaches for self-identified black and Latinx doctoral students to share their experiences attending a PhD English program and teaching at schools in New York City. The chapter focuses on personal narratives of navigating through micro and macro-aggressively racist institutional structures, as well as mentorship for Latina students. The chapter specifically focuses on how systemic oppression shapes Latina experiences in graduate school, for example, through the assump-

tion that all Latinas are a monolith of the same cultural ideas and experiences. The two stories of the doctoral students unpack the hardships Latina/BIPOC students face in higher education as they navigate through a system that sees them as out of the ordinary, which has implications on their mental health as well (Corona and Alvarez 206).

Cristina D. Ramirez's chapter "Mestiza Pedagogy" discusses a pedagogical strategy that transcends beyond mentorship between teachers and students of color and promotes engagement between researchers, educators, and communities of color— while also fostering feminist rhetorical approaches that challenge the cultural and gendered institutional status quo (Ramirez 223 and 246). Ramirez's testimonio of her early years as a teacher reflects on how her work as an educator led her to research feminist rhetorical recovery work (Ramirez 224). She discusses how teaching diverse classes of Mexican American students prompted her to begin her own research on Chicana literature to provide representation for her students.

Monica Gonzalez Ybarra's chapter, "Testimoniando," introduces a Latina feminist methodology that encourages Latina academics to reclaim their histories and experiences and position them at the forefront of literacy education, while also challenging traditional research approaches in rhetoric and composition (Ybarra 250). Ybarra highlights how this practice has been a central focus in her life, as well as the communities she grew up in. Testimonios amplify voices that have marginalized Latina communities, and they also serve to decolonize educational research by positioning Latina voices as valuable. Additionally, positioning testimonio as a methodological tool in education gives political agency to Chicanx and Latinx communities by exposing issues that are usually silenced. The chapter also emphasizes how testimonios can serve as a "restorative practice and promote justice and healing to create an embodiment of knowledge" (Ybarra 252).

In the afterword, four junior Latina scholars share stories about navigating academia. They emphasize the central themes of this book to build coalitions of solidarity, mentorship, and community among Latina scholars through counterstories that transcend beyond academia.

Conclusion

Latina Leadership is an important collection that amplifies the voices of Latina communities. The stories presented in this work are helpful for instructors in the fields of literacy studies and composition and rhetoric to promote more in-depth knowledge of diverse communities in their teaching. Moreover, the collection's themes of Latina mentorship can be used by feminist scholars to produce research that supports the experiences of Latina students and scholars in and beyond academia.