Cover Art: a print (etching and aquatint) showing an elf woman in a tree. She is nude and is using a long branch to point downward at a bear who is looking up at her. In the background are other leafy branches and a scenic cove. The print has a pink tint, and at the top left is the word Peitho. At the top right is written "26.3 Spring 2024." Around the whole image is a black frame. The original art is by Max Klinger and is titled Bear and Elf (Bär und Elfe). It was created in 1881 and is in the National Gallery of Art's public domain collection of images.

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Editor's Introduction

Rebecca Dingo and Clancy Ratliff

We work to produce the spring 2024 issue of Peitho amid global trauma and violence. The war in Gaza continues, with arrest warrants for war crimes and crimes against humanity issued by the International-al Criminal Court for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant, Hamas leader Yehiya Sinwar and other Hamas leaders. In Sudan, the conflict between two military factions, ongoing for the past year, has resulted in mass destruction and displacement.   In the Democratic Republic of Congo hundreds of thousands of people have been displaced by armed conflict, inter-communal tensions, land disputes, and natural disasters. On Rebecca's campus, like many other campuses across the world, students protested the war in Gaza and begged their campus leaders to divest from Israel, a move they hoped would quell the violence. Also, like other campuses, students formed an encampment but were met with hundreds of police in riot gear who violently chased down and threw students, faculty, and community members to the ground. One hundred and thirty students, faculty, journalists, and medics were arrested, had their hands zip tied, were hauled onto local public transit buses, and were held overnight in our basket-ball/hockey stadium. Those who were arrested reported that they were refused water, bathrooms, and food. One student reported having their leg broken by the police. Graduating seniors have not been allowed to graduate due to impending conduct hearings. Unfortunately, many college student protesters have faced similar violence for the civic act of protest. For universities to bring state riot police into a peaceful protest is not only dangerous (indeed the protests only became violent when the police acted in violence) but it also reflects an alarming trend toward dismantling democracy and silencing dissent. As feminist rhetoric and

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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).

composition scholars who have worked to empower student voices and the foster an understanding of the relationships among power, identity, geopolitical and geo-economic location, and rhetorical situation, this attack on students who were attending to such relationships is deeply distressing. For us, student protesters represent the possibility for a better and more just world. Their activist tactics remind us that as a field we must continue to grow and change.

The articles in this issue reflect some of the ways that scholars see that the field must adapt and change to our changing culture and world.   For example, Mais Al-Khateeb's essay, "Marking the Boundaries of Care in/and Definitions of Refugee Medical Encounters" demonstrates the utility of a transnational feminist lens to the study of Rhetoric of Health and Medicine and Technical Communication. While importantly the essay demonstrates the racist, imperialist, culturally relativistic, and gendered logics beneath the cultural interventions that healthcare providers are trained to offer refugees, the essay itself is also remarkable for how it cogently lays out its theoretical intervention. Through this intervention, the essay demonstrates new methods and questions that lay bare how cultural interventions are often entangled with the logics of US exceptionalism and thus limit how care workers respond to refugees.

Much like Al-Khateeb's essay pushes the field to develop new feminist methods to understand and respond to our changing world including the migration of people to the US, both Faith Kurtyka and Caroline Dadas each call for new feminist methods to understand and explore rhetoric as it circulates on digital media.

For example, Kurtyka's essay counters the claim made by many feminist scholars that attribute displays of personal confidence on social media as a form of popular feminism and thus somewhat empty and limiting. In "'It Helps Me Feel More Comfortable': Creating an Affective Public to Build Confidence on Instagram," Kurtyka demonstrates how a specific group of Instagram users from an exercise group create an affective public that offers writers confidence, but that confidence, the essay shows, leads to a form of subtle everyday activism. Tracing the Instagram usage of a local chapter of a national group of college students dedicated to supporting each other at university gyms, Kurtyka demonstrates how the group alters the composing platform and uses feminist methods to build each other up and function as a community and not as confident individuals. Kurtyka's ethnographic method is unique and demonstrates a feminist method that works understanding community writing and composing practices over individual users.

Caroline Dadas demonstrates the need to mix both feminist and queer methods to address the ethical concerns she encountered when attempting to write and study the #MeToo movement online. In "When Ethics Get in the Way: The Methodological Messiness of Analyzing #MeToo," Dadas describes the initial attempt to research this movement as failure. Dadas shows that sometimes researchers need to abandon projects and rethink them in order to be open to reframing their goals and approaches. In addition to exploring the ethics of methods for studying sensitive materials, Dadas offers a compelling exploration of the differences, affordances, and overlaps of queer and feminist methods illustrating how the two can work together to create a more ethical approach to understanding the rhetorics of hashtags like #MeToo.

Both Kurtyka and Dadas's essays demonstrate how we need new methods, tools, and ethics for studying social media composing and circulation in our present moment. For example, throughout the season of spring 2024, a viral question made the rounds on all social media platforms, which inspired this issue's cover art: as a woman, if you were alone in the woods, would you rather encounter a strange man or a bear?

Women everywhere stated, without much hesitation, that they would rather deal with a bear in the woods than a strange man. The reasons varied; here is a compilation of some:

- The bear wouldn't pretend to be my friend
- The bear would only kill me, not sexually assault me first
- If it was a bear, no one would ask what I was wearing or if I drank too much
- A bear hunts to survive, a man hunts for fun
- A bear wouldn't record it and use it as blackmail
- A bear would attack to protect her cubs
- A bear wouldn't brag to his friends
- We aren't choosing the bear because we think we would survive, we choose the bear because we know there are worse things than just being killed.
- Statistically, the bear is the safer choice
- If a bear attacks me, everyone will believe me
- I wouldn't be forced to have a bear's babies

Men responded with surprise and, in some cases, annoyance at what they perceived as women's paranoia about strange men. Some men admitted that it gave them pause when other commenters asked the same question for daughters: if your daughter were alone in the woods, would you prefer that she encounter a strange man, or a bear? Also, if your daughter were alone in the woods, would you prefer that she encounter a strange woman, a strange man, or a bear? The men immediately recognized the strange woman as the safest option. It's unclear how much this conversation advanced some men's awareness of the everyday dangers that women contend with, but it resonated with many people, and it feels important.

Cluster Conversation

In this issue is a Cluster Conversation titled "Teaching Feminist Rhetorical New Materialisms," which gives the story of an undergraduate honors seminar course called "Talking to Animals, Listening to Nature." The students, Kate Criner, Jessica Julian, Catherine Schanie, and MarLee Yow, each have reflections on their exposure to rhetorical concepts, especially Edward Schiappa's idea of "Big Rhetoric," connecting their thoughts with experiences in nature and expressing a passion to work for change in their communities. Each of the pieces by students has a brief preface by Megan Poole, the professor teaching the course, who also introduces the Cluster Conversation by situating it in rhetorical theory. As faculty members, we may wonder

how students are processing what we do in class, and this Cluster Conversation demonstrates how thoughtfully students reflect on ideas from class and integrate them into their prior knowledge. We are pleased to publish work on feminist pedagogy, especially given the folding of the longtime journal *Feminist Teacher* in 2017, and we have been happy to see the interdisciplinary work in *Feminist Pedagogy*, a journal published by DigitalCommons@CalPoly starting in 2021.

We conclude by noting that this is our first issue being published on the WAC Clearinghouse platform. We want to thank Mike Palmquist, Michael Pemberton, and the whole WAC Clearinghouse team for their help and the work they did to migrate the archives to the new site (old issues will also remain archived at the Coalition's website). With this change has also come a change to our formatting: we are moving to PDF-only instead of both PDF and HTML to eliminate duplication of efforts. We hope that readers enjoy this issue and the new platform.

Marking the Boundaries of Care in/and Definitions of Refugee Medical Encounters Author Names

Mais T. Al-Khateeb

Abstract: This essay brings together transnational feminist rhetorical studies and critical conversations in care with scholarship in the rhetoric of health and medicine (RHM) and technical and professional communication (TPC) to propose a methodological framework for reading and reimagining cultural interventions in transnational health contexts. This framework, what I term unexceptional logics of care, centers analyses of globalized power to interrogate the logics underlying the composition of cultural interventions intended to support refugees and health providers in health contexts. Using this framework to analyze the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) 2014-2017 "Refugee Health Profiles," I demonstrate how and why cultural interventions can become rhetorically entangled with logics of US exceptionalism that can limit the imaginaries of caregivers and foreclose possibilities for responsive care encounters. The analysis highlights three central logics (comparison, (re)victimization, and recognition of evidence) to consider in the construction of cultural interventions to challenge "non-performative" and/or violent forms of care in refugee health contexts.

> "[T]o care about the body is to care about how we make meaning, to care about how we persuade and move ourselves and others."
>
> —Jay T. Dolmage, Disability Rhetoric. (4)

A 2022 World Health Organization (WHO) report and recent empirical studies have documented health disparities in the care provided to refugees worldwide, attributed to diverse financial, logistical, systemic, cultural, and linguistic factors that hinder refugees' access to healthcare in host and asylum countries (Lamb and Smith; Matlin et al.; Ng; World Health Organization). Studies addressing cultural and linguistic barriers have focused not only on refugees' unfamiliarity with medical models in receiving countries but also on the cultural competence of health providers as a crucial factor that can (un)intentionally subject refugees to discriminatory practices in health contexts (Alizadeh and Chavan; Grant et al.; Koutsouradi et al.; Laverack; Newaz and Riediger). In the United States, for example, several studies conducted with refugees and other stakeholders, including health providers, practitioners, interpreters, and social workers, have identified health providers' cultural competence as an area needing critical attention (Alfeir; Balza et al.; Griswold et al.; Morris et al.; Njenga; Rashoka et al.; Reihani et al.; Worabo et al.). Stakeholders specifically continue to report

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challenges in delivering culturally appropriate care for refugees, despite the presence of interventions, such as guidelines, translations, and trainings (Getzin et al.; Teoh et al.). One problem these stakeholders recognize is the lack of clear and effective definitions of cultural competence, especially ones that move beyond emphasizing the importance of cultural sensitivity or equating this competency with providing translations (Dubus and Davis; Lau and Rodgers). The problem, as a group of community health centers explains, is not that health providers are not committed to acquiring the knowledge necessary for delivering culturally responsive care but that available interventions need to account for the complexity of care on the ground, especially with "an ever-changing refugee population" (Dubus and Davis 876). Collectively, these studies illuminate the need for examining and creating interventions that can support providers and refugees in health contexts. While cultural interventions are only one component of care within health contexts, I argue that they are nonetheless important sites of rhetorical inquiry because they mediate refugees' bodies and cultural knowledges based on assumptions, definitions, and intentions of *care* that can facilitate and/or hinder responsive care encounters. In other words, cultural interventions participate in marking and actualizing the boundaries of care for both refugees and health providers in health contexts.

This essay engages with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) 2014-2017 Refugee Health Profiles (RHPs) as examples of cultural interventions circulated in refugee health contexts in the wake of what the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) characterized as the most massive refugee crisis since World War II. The RHPs are seven sets of cultural guidelines that introduce health providers and refugee resettlements agencies to US-bound refugees[1] from countries, including Bhutan, Burma, Iraq, Somalia, and Syria, and regions such as Central America. The CDC composed the RHPs in consultation with scientific and cultural research and through collaborations with local and global organizations, including the US Department of State, WHO, and UNHCR ("Refugee"). The RHPs have been disseminated to all US state-level health programs to assist health providers and resettlement agencies in "determin[ing] *appropriate* interventions and services for individuals of a specific refugee group" ("Refugee," emphasis mine). These guidelines are accessible to the public through the CDC's website and are continuously updated "as new information becomes available"—the latest update was on January 14, 2021 ("Refugee"). The RHPs are important not only because they were produced by a US federal agency but also because they evidence the complexity and problematics of constructing cultural interventions that can *both* amplify the voices, histories, and bodies of refugee populations *and* facilitate responsive care encounters. On the one hand, by providing information about the refugee groups' different conditions of displacement, languages, literacies, and cultural and religious practices, the RHPs reflect the CDC's commitments to implementing a cultural approach to care and challenging representational practices that homogenize refugees or demarcate them as, what Noor G. Aswad calls, "universal refugee subjects" (Aswad 363-65). On the other hand, through reverting to rhetorics of US exceptionalism to define care for refugees, the RHPs show how arguments about care can (un)intentionally (re)produce refugees and their bodies within the parameters of coloniality and colonial discourse in ways that might limit the imaginaries of caregivers and foreclose possibilities for responsive care encounters.

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1   US-bound refugees are individuals who have been approved for resettlement and must undergo a medical examination before and after entry to the United States.

Bringing together transnational feminist rhetorical studies and critical conversations in care with scholarship in the rhetoric of health and medicine (RHM) and technical and professional communication (TPC), this essay advances a methodological framework to study, complicate, and reimagine cultural interventions in refugee health contexts. This framework, which I term *unexceptional logics of care* (ULCs), directs attention to the logics informing the composition of refugee care models with an emphasis on the politics of representation, inclusion, and care for the Other. I argue that those composing cultural health interventions must engage critically with the discursive and material entanglements of care and its rhetorics, especially in light of uncertainties brought by geopolitical exigencies such as a refugee crisis. Specifically, I argue that transnational feminist rhetorical orientations toward care are helpful to the critical engagement I am calling for because such orientations provide tools to highlight the possibilities, complexities, as well as limitations of care models through ULCs.

ULCs refer to arguments about care that gain appeal and credibility as a result of historical and contemporary relations rather than embodied, situated, and relational encounters. In a globalized world, these relations are normally facilitated by (neo)colonial, (neo)imperial, and global racial capitalist logics that, often in the name of care, can privilege and justify the (re)production and (re)circulation of ahistorical and disembodied care models for/about the Other. I use "unexceptional" to emphasize the persistence of particular composition logics, such as logics of US exceptionalism that (re)surface to inform new care rhetorics about marginalized populations. As a framework, ULCs center analyses of globalized power that inevitably inform the construction and design of cultural interventions and may mediate notions of care between health providers and refugees. Specifically, through a rhetorical analysis of the RHPs, this framework foregrounds questions about the logics of comparison, (re)victimization, and recognition of evidence about gendered violence within cultural interventions. As expressions of ULCs, the three logics and their concomitant rhetorics offer tools to unpack how care, its definitions, and practices can be/become rhetorically entangled with epistemically violent logics that can facilitate the production and circulation of "non-performative" (see Ahmed, *On* 17) and/or violent rhetorics of care in health contexts. Importantly, this framework offers ways to reimagine and rebuild cultural interventions intended to enhance health providers' cultural competence and honor and privilege refugees' bodily autonomy, agency, and the complexity of their identities and subjectivities.

Using ULCs, I rhetorically analyze the RHPs for the explicit and implicit argument(s) they make to represent refugees' cultural knowledges, mediate refugees' bodies to US health providers, and support health providers and refugees with dynamic definitions of care in medical encounters. My analysis reveals that rhetorics of care in refugee health contexts, in addition to moving beyond an emphasis on care as inclusion, must also attend to representations of care as *occlusion*. By occlusion I mean calling attention to what is hidden, assumed, or implied about cultural care in the RHPs, which must be considered in the construction of cultural interventions. This analysis builds on robust conversations within RHM and TPC that argue for critical analyses of medical and technical rhetorics to build relational, embodied, and situated models of care for marginalized populations in local and global contexts.

Care in (Transnational) Health Contexts: Possibilities, Complexities, and Occlusions

Scholarship in RHM and TPC has expectedly centered care and care ethics through advancing intersectional methods and methodologies that confront health injustices and bring about more accessible, inclusive, and equitable care discourses and practices within research and health contexts. An explicit emphasis on care is evident in works highlighting the rhetorical, material, and social possibilities of feminist and decolonial care-informed methodologies for fostering relational, reciprocal, and embodied encounters (Gagnon and Novotny; Novotny and Gagnon; Novotny and Opel; Scott and Melonçon; Teston).[2] This attention has also extended to articulating the complexities of care in intercultural and/or transnational health contexts (Bloom-Pojar; Bloom-Pojar and Devasto; Gonzales; Gonzales and Bloom-Pojar; Hopton and Walton; St.Amant; St.Amant and Angeli). RHM and TPC scholars have specifically argued that the construction and design of care in transnational health contexts must account for historical, contextual, social, political, economic, and linguistic differences, or what Kirk St.Amant calls "variables of care" (St.Amant 64). Considering these variables, Kirk St.Amant and Elizabeth Angeli argue, necessitates asking questions about the *when, who, what, why, where*, and *to/by whom* of care because such variables influence ways stakeholders understand the time/ing of care, objects of care, caregivers, access to care, and places of care in different cultural contexts (St.Amant and Angeli 1-4). To engage these complexities, RHM and TPC scholars have demonstrated how communicating care to communities requires developing and embodying simultaneously flexible and rigid rhetorical strategies (Hopton and Walton); considering communities' visual literacies (Bloom-Pojar and Devasto) and linguistic and cultural diversities (Gonzales and Bloom-Pojar); and emphasizing practices of localization, usability, and human-centered design (Acharya; Agboka; Melonçon; Walton; Walton and Jones). These complexities occasionally entail stepping "outside traditional concepts of medical care" to design and deliver care that is informed by relational and embodied interactions and that, thereby, truly serves communities in transnational health and research contexts (Hopton and Walton 5). Hence, these conversations have illustrated that evaluating and intervening in cultural approaches to care necessitates developing complex tools that challenge Euro-American notions of care while simultaneously centering communities' ways of being, knowing, and doing.

This line of inquiry about care also intersects, though implicitly, with conversations within RHM and TPC that have attended to ways medical and technical rhetorics can (in)advertently (re)produce violence and/or obstruct marginalized communities' access to relational, embodied, and situated care in local and global contexts. Through rhetorical analyses grounded in feminist, critical race, queer, disability, transnational, and decolonial theories, RHM and TPC scholars have illustrated how medical and technical rhetorics, embodying the appearance of objectivity, efficiency, and neutrality, have historically participated in dehumanizing, silencing, erasing, and objectifying marginalized populations (Agboka; Ding; Frost; Frost and Eble; Harper; Jones; Jones and Williams; Moeggenberg et al.; Molloy; Solomon). These forms

2   This robust body of RHM and TPC scholarship on care has added to an ongoing conversation within rhetoric and composition about the significance of an ethics of care for processes of knowledge production and the practice and the praxis of living with others in the world. For example, Jacqueline Royster and Gesa Kirsch make "an ethics of hope and care" one of the essential components of the inquiry model they propose for scholarship and research practices in feminist rhetorics.

of injustice and oppression necessitate analyses that, as Zarah C. Moeggenberg et al. state, reveal how such rhetorics "[mediate and] regulate bodies" and "mask the possibilities of social justice—even generate defeat, fear, and disengagement" (406). Therefore, this line of inquiry calls for analyses that expose and challenge the ideologies that facilitate the production and circulation of medical and technical rhetorics; trace how these rhetorics materialize on bodies of vulnerable populations; and reimagine and intervene in the construction and design of localized, usable, and human-centered communications in various contexts. Whether from a medical or technical rhetorical perspective, such interventions urge rhetoricians and other stakeholders to participate in creating communicative practices that promote "human dignity and human rights" (Walton 403) and "center […] the perspectives, experiences, and embodied realities of multiply marginalized communities" (Frost et al. 224). In the context of the refugee crisis, centering analyses of cultural approaches to care is not only a logical response but also an ethical imperative.

Conducting analyses of cultural interventions necessitates a critical engagement that highlights what care, its definitions, and practices make possible as well as limit in refugee health contexts. Accordingly, building on these conversations, I argue that rhetorical analyses of cultural interventions must also examine how arguments about care can (re)produce "non-performative" (see Ahmed, *On* 17) and/or violent forms of care for and about refugees. The attention here is to rhetorics framed and recognized as gestures of care that may fail their promises of supporting health providers and refugees or, worse yet, further "epistemic and [material] violence" against marginalized communities (see Spivak 282-3). Reflecting on their care framework, John T. Gagnon and Maria Novotny caution against research practices that, "even when highly participatory" can "re-traumatize the very research participants and communities our work seeks to empower" (487). To continue this inquiry in the context of the refugee crises, I argue the need for analyses of care rhetorics that reveal the role of globalized power in facilitating the production and circulation of health and medical discourses and practices, *including* ones that are relational, embodied, and situated. The next section demonstrates how critical conversations in care and transnational feminist rhetorics come together to augment rhetorical analyses of cultural health interventions with an emphasis on care as occlusion.

Transnational Feminist Rhetorical Orientations Toward Care

Turning to critiques of care directs attention to the patriarchal, colonial, ableist, and/or heteronormative frameworks that can inform the production and design of care models in research and health contexts. This engagement recognizes the importance of an ethic of care for social, political, and institutional transformation. However, informed by the work of feminist philosophers (Bartky; Gilligan; Held; Mol; Noddings; Tronto) and feminist, Black feminist, disability, and queer scholars (Ahmed, *Promise*; Kirsch and Ritchie; Piepzna-Samarasinha; Schell), this engagement also problematizes orientations toward care that overlook its embeddedness within power structures that have, often in the name of care, historically furthered conditions of violence and oppression against BIPOC and LGBTQ+ communities. Within such orientations, care can become the property or work of particular bodies (Schell); predetermine and therefore fix the shapes and forms of caregivers, care receivers, and caring outcomes (Ahmed, *Promise*); be used to "undermine, threaten,

or manipulate" caring relations in research contexts (Kirsch and Ritchie 22); and/or become a mechanism to oppress the bodies of the disabled and sick Black, brown, Indigenous, trans, and queer people (Piepzna-Samarasinha). Because care is often transmitted as one of the "innocent pleasures of everyday life" (Bartky 119), these critiques invite us to develop and embody analytics that constantly evaluate the frameworks informing caring relations, practices, and definitions in all contexts.

Engaging care frameworks in light of geopolitical exigencies such as the global refugee crisis also necessitates critical analyses of globalized power that expose how rhetorical productions such as the RHPs or other cultural interventions can become rhetorically entangled with colonial, imperial, and global racial capitalist logics. As transnational feminist scholars have demonstrated, analyses of globalized power can reveal ways the US nation-state and its apparatuses have (re)appropriated discourses of human rights and feminism (or discourses of care in the case of this project) to promote US exceptionalism and further the US's imperial and colonial reach (Dingo, *Networking*; Grewal; Hesford; McKinnon; Mohanty; Narayan; Riedner; Spivak; Wingard; Yam). Transnational feminist analyses challenge parochial conceptualizations of rhetorical studies, as put by Wendy Hesford and Eileen Schell, "around U.S.-centric narratives of nation, nationalism, and citizenship, including its focus on feminist and women's rhetorics only within the borders of the United States or Western Europe" (463). Importantly, by conducting "cogent analyses of globalized power" (Dingo et al. 518), transnational feminism engages rhetoricians in critical inquiries about "the relationship between on-the-ground action and global/local processes," especially processes facilitated by global neoliberal capitalism (Dingo and Riedner 416). In health contexts, transnational feminist analyses complement the work of RHM and TPC scholars by not only insisting on building non- Euro-American-centric care methodologies but also by evaluating how globalized power and its concomitant logics inevitably inform logics and conceptions of care in social, political, cultural, and medical contexts. These analyses allow us to identify sites for intervention that move from a mere emphasis on the inclusion of languages, literacies, and cultures to an examination of *how* inclusion is mediated through cultural interventions. Put differently, analyses of care in the wake of the refugee crises invite RHM and TPC to participate in "exposing all forms and mixes of globalized power through the identification and analysis of texts, spaces, and bodies upon which geopolitics are written" (Dingo et al. 525).

Brought together, conversations in care and transnational feminist studies inform my theorization of *unexceptional logics of care (ULCs)*, offering RHM and TPC scholarship analytical tools to engage more critically with the geopolitics of knowledge production and circulation, especially as geopolitics relates to the construction and design of care in refugee health contexts. ULCs demonstrate how arguments about the health of refugees can derive their rhetorical force from violent logics of composition rather than from embodied, relational, and situated encounters with refugees. Through this framework, I argue that what is determined or marked as *appropriate* care for refugees and other vulnerable populations cannot be read or consumed in a vacuum, but rather in the larger historical and political US context, more specifically in relation to the (ab)use of (health)care to medicalize and racialize the bodies of African Americans, Mexican immigrants, Asian immigrants, refugees, and Indigenous peoples (see Cisneros; Chavez; Flores; Harper;

Jennings; Molina, "Medicalizing"; Solomon).[3] ULCs intervene in health discourses and practices to examine how particular deployments of care might produce or (re)produce the violences they are designed to mitigate. In so doing, ULCs do not adopt an either/or approach to care that would limit questions/options to whether we should or should not care. Rather, it resonates with approaches to care that, as put by María Puig de la Bellacasa, think "*with* care in its transformative, noninnocent, disruptive ways" (71, emphasis mine). Simultaneously, however, this framework amplifies critical accounts of care to respond to geopolitical exigencies, particularly to the ubiquity of what is being produced, circulated, marked, and marketed as cultural care for refugees in health and other contexts. In this sense, ULCs echo theorizations of care maintaining that the immigration crisis demands critical engagements with care to identify what Miriam Ticktin calls "transnational regimes of care" (4). Ticktin argues that such analyses are important to understand how care about "[migrants' and refugees'] bodily integrity is mediated by social, political, cultural, [colonial, imperial] and economic contexts and histories" (4). While this framework does not give up on care because of its entanglements "with hegemonic regimes" (de la Bellacasa 9), it argues that thinking with care in the context of the refugee crisis necessitates unpacking how care is taken up, mediated, and enacted to justify the (re)production of hegemonic practices that can disadvantage immigrants and refugees. Because affect is not sufficient for a critical engagement with globalized power and its material effects (see Dingo, "Turning"; Kulbaga), we need transnational feminist rhetorical orientations toward care to investigate how care can become an emotion, action, and thought to not only escape responsibility but also to further discursive and material violence against marginalized communities across various contexts, if unintentionally.

In the following sections, I turn attention to the 2014-2017 CDC's Refugee Health Profiles (RHPs) as critical examples of cultural interventions that have circulated in refugee health contexts in the US and that aim to enhance the cultural competence of stakeholders working with refugee populations and reduce health disparities. Published as part of the larger discourses on screening (the health of) refugees entering the US in light of the 2011 refugee crisis, the RHPs are important because they show ways global mobility brings texts, technologies, and bodies together in new yet familiar ways that call for further exploration.[4] Therefore, my choice of the profiles was driven by an interest in these refugee screening discourses and questions about the politics of transnational rhetorical encounters (see Al-Khateeb).[5] This choice was also driven by two other factors: 1) observations about the continual (re)surfacing of the seven RHPs on websites of state health programs as guides for US providers and resettlement agencies to encounter the aforementioned refugee groups, and 2) an examination of "health rhetorics" that problematize the composition of existing cultural interventions in refugee health contexts. These rhetorics included recently published empirical studies in the US

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3   For example, care has been historically invoked to commit violent acts, such as the 1932 Tuskegee Experiment that exploited the bodies of African Americans (see Solomon); the early 20th century eugenics projects in the US that entailed the sterilizations of thousands of people with mental illness; the medicalization of Mexican immigrants which, also in the name of care, justified actions like stripping Mexicans naked "for physical examination and then bath[ing] [them] in a mixture of soap, kerosene, and water" (Molina 28, "Medicalizing"). This violent history of care in health contexts repeats today in contemporary forms of care, such as the gynecological surgical procedures conducted at detention centers without the consent of Latina and Black women.

4   While this essay focuses on one profile, a larger in-progress project engages with the seven profiles.

5   Transnational rhetorical encounters refer to ways discursive and material entities travel and come together across different geopolitical contexts (Al-Khateeb 18).

highlighting an urgent need for more dynamic and responsive interventions that move beyond stressing the importance of cultural sensitivity and translations. These rhetorics also included texts that circulated globally and that reveal the impact of global racial capitalism on the health of refugee populations in host countries. Thus, my analysis of the profiles is "intercontextual" (see Hesford 9-11), linking together seemingly singular, distant, and disparate texts and contexts to reveal the role of globalized power and its concomitant logics in (re)producing and occluding particular forms of care composition. In this sense, this analysis is a critique with the end goal of ameliorating and intervening in health and medical rhetorics (Segal 16). This critique engages with the RHPs as one example of cultural interventions to argue for an intercontextual approach to evaluating and writing health guidelines in refugee contexts. However, this critique does not assume a direct causal relationship between the RHPs and well-documented cultural and linguistic inequities in refugee health contexts that I referenced in the introduction.

This essay focuses on the 2016 "Syrian Refugee Health Profile," which represents one of the CDC's responses to the increase in the number of Syrian refugees seeking asylum in the US following the 2011 'Syrian Civil War.' This profile was last updated on March 17, 2021. It draws from 64 sources of existing cultural and health research about Syrians, presenting 21 pages of information specifically intended for "resettlement agencies, clinicians, and providers" ("Syrian" 18). Based on a rhetorical intercontextual analysis, I have identified three important logics (comparison, (re)victimization, and recognition of evidence) to consider in the construction of cultural interventions, which can have implications for refugees and health providers in medical encounters. Centering the role of globalized power, my analysis questions what counts as effective marking for the boundaries of care for refugees in definitions of medical encounters and how a particular form of boundary marking can orient health providers toward a static mis/understanding of Syrian women, men, and children.

"Tips" and "Tropes"

For example, Syrian patients or their families might be more likely than the general U.S. patient population to:

- Prefer a provider of the same gender[9, 11]
- Request long hospital gowns for modesty (especially female patients)[9, 11]
- Request meals in accordance with Islamic dietary restrictions (Halal) during hospital stays or request family to bring specific meals or foods[9, 11]
- Fast or refuse certain medical practices (e.g., to take oral medication) during certain periods of religious observance such as the month of Ramadan[9]
- Be less likely to consider conditions chronic in nature (they may cease taking medications if symptoms resolve and less likely to return for follow-up appointments if not experiencing symptoms)[9]
- Not be open to questions or discussions regarding certain sensitive issues—particularly those pertaining to sex, sexual problems, or sexually transmitted infections[9]
- Refuse consent for organ donation or autopsy[11]

Figure 1: Screenshot of the "Tips for Clinicians" section (pages 4-5 of the profile).

The excerpted tips here are from a section of the "Syrian Refugee Health Profile" titled "Tips for Clinicians"— "Tips" henceforth. This section opens with a statement summarizing Syrian patients' relationship to the Western medical model: "Although most Syrians are familiar with Western medical practices, like most populations, they tend to have certain *care* preferences, attitudes, and expectations driven by cultural norms, particularly religious beliefs, and expectations" ("Syrian" 4, emphasis mine). The CDC then provides the intended audience with seven tips that compare "Syrian patients or their families" with what the CDC labels as "the general U.S. patient population" ("Syrian" 4). Each of the bullet points in the list is informed by cultural research, particularly from the Cultural Orientation Resources Center (COR) and a scholarly article on cultural competence in health care. The "Tips" specifically recommend providing Syrian patients with caregivers of the same gender, long hospital gowns for female patients, and food that follows Islamic dietary restrictions. The "Tips" also identify some practices that Syrians might decline to participate in or adhere to, such as eating or taking medications while fasting or observing Ramadan, returning to follow-up appointments when symptoms of diseases disappear, discussing sex-related issues and sexually transmitted diseases, and consenting to organ donation or autopsy. Finally, this section concludes with a recommendation to provide refugee patients with translators, preferably of the same ethnicities and genders.

Evidenced by the research cited, the "Tips" explicitly argue for definitions and practices of care that center Syrians' voices, bodies, literacies, and beliefs in medical encounters. Like any text that engages with cross-cultural communication, however, the "Tips" also highlight the complexity and problematics of representing comparative research, which inevitably informs transnational health interventions. Using ULCs, my reading of this section focuses on *how* and *why* certain comparisons gain rhetorical force in knowledge production about refugee care and how deployments of comparison can become entangled with logics of care that might (un)intentionally (re)produce and/or occlude colonial violence. To be clear, I am not arguing about the accuracy or inaccuracy of the information presented in the "Tips." These provisions may be in accordance with some Syrian refugees' care preferences and are, as previously stated, evidence-based and deployed to emphasize the specificity of the Syrian subject—or that Syrians are not "universal refugee subjects" (Aswad 363-65).[6] Rather, my argument is about representing comparative research to produce interventions that can support refugees and health providers in health contexts. This argument echoes the concerns of several stakeholders in recent studies about the need for improving cultural interventions including trainings, guidelines, and translations to facilitate responsive communication in refugee health contexts (Dubus and Davis; Lau and Rodgers). I argue specifically that this work requires probing questions about comparative logics and working *with* the ethical, epistemic, and political challenges these logics present to rhetorical studies at large (see Lyon; Mao and Wang; Wang) and to representations of comparative care specifically. While comparative logics are not problematic in and of themselves, comparison, as Arabella Lyon argues, is a tricky trope: "Comparison is not recognizing the other, but constructing the Other," and this entails "constructing ontologies and epistemologies" (246). Navigating the trickiness of comparison in the context of (cultural) care necessitates identifying and challenging how particular care constructions predetermine the goals,

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6   For example, the scholarly article cited in this section is the result of qualitative interviews with 30 Syrian Muslims living in the Midwest about their cultural and religious beliefs about care and health care.

feelings, actions, and outcomes of care in ways that might limit modes of recognition at moments of en-counter (see Ahmed, *Promise*).[7] This conception of comparative care makes visible the relations *re*imagined and *re*created by deployments of comparison as well as the relations that make them possible.

Reading cultural interventions from this perspective shifts attention from comparisons as gestures of inclusion to how deployments of comparison might mark boundaries and practices of care in medical encounters. Returning to the "Tips," this perspective can be useful for examining and reimagining the seven explicit comparisons drawn between the Syrian patient subject and the general US patient subject. Compar-isons within this section are deployed as static categories that frame care as *invariant* processes for all US-bound Syrians. While this section of the profile includes a qualifying sentence acknowledging that care for Syrian refugees may vary on the ground ("Syrian" 4), these categories might fall short in providing guidance for health providers to inquire about the complexity of Syrians' identities and subjectivities, such as distinct languages and ethnic and religious differences within the Syrian context. The limitations of such framings of care extend beyond their homogenizing effects of refugees and into their implications for patient-pro-vider encounters. As reported by several US health providers and refugees in recent empirical studies, such framings of cultural interventions have often resulted in ineffective practices, including the use of culturally inappropriate translation services, even when translators share the same ethnicities and genders as refugees (Morris et al.; Reihani et al.; Teoh et al.; Worabo et al.); misrecognition of refugees' experiences of trauma and genocide, especially when cultural interventions highlight histories of geopolitical conflicts and refugee displacement without providing trauma-informed guidance to inquire about these experiences (Alfeir; Du-bus and Davis; Getzin et al.; Griswold et al.; Reihani et al.; Teoh et al.); and, relatedly, the use of generaliza-tions and stereotypes that can lead to cultivating negative attitudes toward refugees, undermining refugees' trust in health providers, and discouraging them from sharing critical information due to fears of stigma and discrimination (Njenga; Rashoka et al.).[8] These examples illustrate how deployments of comparison and comparative research, even when intended to *include* refugees and stakeholders, can materialize as rhet-orics of fixation that can limit stakeholders' effective engagement in care encounters.[9]

While the solution does not lie in creating interventions that (re)produce refugees' complex differ-ences as new static and essentializing categories, health providers highlight the necessity for strategies that promote *dynamic* communication with refugees in health contexts (Alfeir; Griswold et al.; Lau and Rodgers; Njenga; Reihani et al.; Teoh et al.). These strategies would enable providers to elicit input from refugees, such as asking open-ended questions that position refugees as experts during these interactions and that avoid relying on preconceived and limited/ing notions of cultural care (Griswold et al.). Accordingly, *re*framing the seven comparative constructions in the "Tips" would offer strategies to inquire about Syrian

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7   Sara Ahmed calls this type of care "a hap care" because it does not foreclose "possibilities to become possible" (Ahmed 218, *Promise*).

8   For example, due to generalized and stereotypical representations prevalent in cultural interventions, Somali refugee women reported that "some of the health care providers believed that all Somali women and girls had undergone FGC [Fe-male-Genital Cutting]" (Njenga 10).

9   In the words of Arabella Lyon, comparison in such cases can become a mechanism to perpetuate rather than challenge "the colonialism of comparative work" (245).

refugees' self-defined and self-identified needs as well as their understanding of their bodily autonomy. Such strategies relate not only to inquiring about Syrians' care preferences about organ donation, autopsies, and their preferred genders of health providers but also to defining the medical encounter in ways that address emergent problems in light of the 2011 'Syrian Civil War'[10] while avoiding the (re)production of tropes and topoi about Muslim women, particularly regarding openness to discussions about sex and sexually transmitted diseases.

While it is fairly common for medical and technical rhetorics to embody *efficiency*, it is crucial to examine how particular deployments of comparison can lead to "non-performative" (see Ahmed, *On* 17) and/or violent frames of care in refugee health contexts. Simultaneously, given how efficiency has been historically used to silence, oppress, and limit the agency of marginalized populations in various contexts (Frost; Ornatowski), it is also imperative to continually interrogate the logics that make efficient definitions of comparative care im/possible. In the context of cultural interventions and, more specifically, the CDC's "Tips," ULCs examine how efficiency can be/become rhetorically entangled with colonial logics that (un)intentionally normalize and perpetuate inequitable rhetorics and practices of care about/for refugees. Even when cultural interventions are evidence-based, this attention to comparative care logics means framing efficient comparisons in ways that engage stakeholders in dialectical, dialogical, and open-ended processes of (re)construction[11] and that also account for the geopolitics of knowledge production and circulation.[12] This transnational feminist rhetorical orientation toward care shifts attention from comparison and its constructions as categories to understanding how globalized power has brought such categories into being (see Dingo et al.; Wang). Similar to social-justice frameworks in RHM and TPC emphasizing human-centered and usable communication in local and global contexts (Acharya; Agboka; Melonçon; Walton; Walton and Jones), ULCs center comparative research with refugees and other stakeholders while calling for representational practices that provide dynamic understandings of comparative care and its definitions in transnational health context. This means leveraging the rhetorical power of comparative logics to design interventions that not only stress the importance of cultural sensitivity or that provide qualifying statements about translations and diversity but that also continually draw upon refugees' insights and care preferences, allowing for the emergence of bodies, subjectivities, and identities in medical encounters.

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10   In light of the 2011 'Syrian Civil War,' millions of women and children have suffered rape and sexual assault at the hands of the regime forces of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad. The Assad regime has used "rape as a tactic" (Forestier) to silence, oppress, and torture Syrians who opposed the government, especially Syrian women and children during house raids, in prisons, and at checkpoints (Andrzejewski and Minano; Mattar; Thomas-Johnson).

11   Arabella Lyon call this "a performative understanding of comparison" (245).

12   Bo Wang calls this "a geopolitical approach to rhetoric" (235) and Rebecca Dingo et al. refer to this as "cogent analyses of globalized power" (518).

Women's Health Issues

Reproductive Health

A recent study assessing the health status of women presenting to six regional primary healthcare clinics in Lebanon found that 65.5% (N=452) of women between 18 and 45 years of age were not using any form of birth control. Within this group, the mean age at first pregnancy was 19 years. Additionally, 15.4% were pregnant during the current conflict. Of note, 51.6% of all women surveyed reported dysmenorrhea or severe pelvic pain. 27.4% were diagnosed with anemia, 12.2% with hypertension, and 3.1% with diabetes [23].

Family planning services are available through the Jordanian healthcare system; however, such services are only provided to married couples [24]. Birth control and family planning services are available in the Zaatari Refugee Camp, where many Syrian refugees reside. However, studies indicate that only 1 in 3 woman of reproductive age are aware of birth control options in the camp [24]. A survey of Syrian households in Jordan found that most women (82.2%) received antenatal care, with an average of 6.2 visits during pregnancy [25]. Furthermore, 82.2% delivered their infants in a hospital with 51.8% of births taking place in public hospitals and 30.4% in private hospitals [25].

Decisions regarding contraception and family planning are often made by the man and woman together. When offering birth control education, healthcare providers should consider providing contraception counseling to individual women and, with their consent, including male partners in these discussions [26].

Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C)

Little published research has documented the prevalence and distribution of FGM/C in the Middle East. However, anecdotal and circumstantial evidence suggests that FGM/C exists throughout the region, including Syria and other Arab countries [27]. The extent to which FGM/C is practiced in Syria is unknown. FGM/C has been documented in countries where Syrian refugees are seeking asylum, including Egypt, where more than 90% of girls and women between 15 and 19 years of age are reported to have undergone FGM/C [28].

FGM/C is a cultural or social custom, and is not considered a religious practice. Communities that practice FGM/C often do so with the conviction that FGM/C will ensure a girl's proper upbringing, preserve family honor, and make a girl suitable for marriage [28]. FGM/C exists in numerous countries with large Muslim populations. FGM/C is carried out by followers of various religions and sects. FGM/C has been legitimized by certain radical Islamic clerics; however there is no basis for FGM/C in the Quran or any other religious text [27].

Gender-Based Violence

Sexual violence is a concern for women and girls in Syria, as well as in countries of first asylum. Fear of sexual violence perpetrated by other refugees or by host country nationals may cause Syrian refugee women to stay home and only venture outside when accompanied by family members [9]. A recent study found that 30.8% (N=452) of surveyed Syrian refugee women reported experiencing conflict related violence, with 3.1% of surveyed women reporting non partner sexual violence [23].

Early and Forced Marriage

Early and forced marriage is a growing problem for young Syrian girls. Many international groups (the International Center for Research on Women, Amnesty International, the United Nations, and many others) and governments worldwide view child marriage as a human rights violation due to the child's inability to consent to the marriage. Instances of child and forced marriages have been reported among Syrian refugees in Erbil (Iraq), Lebanon, Egypt, and Turkey [30]. Some Syrian refugee families believe that child marriage is the best way to protect their daughters from the threat of sexual violence in refugee camps or urban slums, and is a means to alleviate poverty [30]. As a result of early or forced marriage, girls are denied education, are unable to take advantage of economic opportunities, and are left at increased risk for early pregnancy and resulting maternal mortality, stillbirth, and other obstetric complications, as well as gender based violence [30,31].

Figure 2: Screenshot of the subsection "Women's Health Issues" (pages 8-9 of the profile) from the larger section "Healthcare Access and Health Concerns among Syrian Refugees Living in Camps or Urban Settings Overseas."

This excerpt is a subsection from "The Syrian Refugee Health Profile" titled "Women's Health Issues," which includes a lengthy discussion of concerns framed as specific to Arab and Syrian women. Specifically, this subsection provides definitions and statistics about violent practices, attributing this violence

predominantly to the patriarchal nature of Syria and other Arab countries ("Syrian" 4). Read through ULCs, this subsection reverts to familiar rhetorical strategies deployed historically in the form of US exceptionalism together with rhetorics of victimization, repeatedly (re)producing the colonial trope of the brown woman in need of rescue (Alhayek; Dingo, *Networking*; Grewal and Kaplan; Hamzeh; Hesford; McKinnon; Mohanty; Narayan; Spivak).[13] Additionally, ULCs add to these critiques by examining how the depiction and amplification, indeed the centering, of gender-based violence (GBV) can serve colonial racial capitalist logics that have had detrimental effects on the health and well-being of Syrian women and children since 2011. This aspect of ULCs specifically attends to how local encounters (those between US health providers and Syrian refugee women) are inextricably connected to global encounters (those between health providers and Syrian women across the globe) and, therefore, must inform the construction of cultural interventions in refugee health contexts. My reading of this subsection focuses explicitly on the material violence the US nation-state has committed and justified against Syrian women and children in refugee camp contexts. For example, on April 3, 2017, the US, under the Trump administration, cut all its funds to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), which is commonly defined as "the United Nations sexual and reproductive health agency" ("About"). These cuts were an extension of the Trump administration's attacks on reproductive rights that limited women's access to abortion, contraception, and other screenings related to reproductive health in the US and around the world. For Syrian refugee women and children, withdrawing the UNFPA funds meant cutting 80% of the budget of a maternity clinic located at the Za'atari refugee camp in Jordan. The clinic, named The Women's and Girl's Comprehensive Center, supported Syrian refugee women and children, providing them not only with resources to deliver babies and vaccinate children but also with routine health screenings, counseling services for mental health issues due to the War, and outreach programs to spread awareness about GBV and early and forced marriages (Alabaster; Dehnert; Ibrahim; "Safe"). In an Aljazeera report, the clinic's leading gynecologist, Dr. Rima Diab, describes the clinic as "the cradle of the whole camp" that carries the souls "of the mother and baby" (Ibrahim). Although the Biden administration reinstated the UNFPA funds in 2021, the four-year period of fund suspension has put thousands of Syrian women and children at the risk of death, violence, and disability at a critical time for displaced Syrians in Jordan, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic (Ibrahim; UNFPA, "Statement," 2021). Reflecting on the impact of the cuts, UNFPA Jordan Representative Laila Baker explains that the US's decision will inevitably result in the closing of numerous refugee health centers in Jordan and a significant reduction in the health services and outreach programs provided by the Women's and Girl's Comprehensive Center (Dehnert).

Since its founding in 1969, the UNFPA has promoted the health and wellness of women and girls worldwide, especially in countries affected by wars, famines, and natural disasters. In a letter to the Committee on Foreign Relations Chairman, the US State Department invoked the Kemp-Kasten Amendment to justify the $32.5 million budget cut from the UNFPA. In an enclosed memorandum of justification (dated March 20, 2017) that fails to supply evidence, the US State Department claims that the UNFPA "supports, or

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13   Such strategies have not only historically rationalized US's colonial and imperial legacies worldwide but have also erased two-thirds world women's agency and the resilient, relational, contextual, and creative acts of resistance they are performing to counteract patriarchal and political violence.

participates in the management of, a program of coercive abortion or involuntary sterilization [in China]" (United States Department of State). Following the US's decision, the UNFPA released numerous statements over four consecutive years (2017-2020) denying these accusations, seeking evidence as to the veracity of these claims, and inviting the US government to reconsider its decision and visit the UNFPA office in China for an open dialogue (UNFPA, "Statement," 2017; 2018; 2019; 2020; 2021). In all these statements, the UNFPA also reiterated its mission, which is "to deliver a world where every pregnancy is wanted, every childbirth is safe and every young person's potential is fulfilled" ("About"). The resulting material violence against Syrian women and children from cutting such vital funds, especially in the name of safe childbirth and fulfilled potentials, demonstrates how global racial capitalist logics have organized and shaped medical encounters in global and local contexts since the 2011 escalation of the refugee crisis.

Constructing cultural interventions that facilitate responsive encounters with refugee women necessitates analyses of globalized power that name and identify all sources of GBV as well as the connections between localized and globalized violences. Such analyses equip stakeholders (health providers, policymakers, health organizations, and technical writers) with critical strategies to compose definitions of care that bear witness to violence without revering to unexceptional logics that justify and insist on depicting violence as something alien to and distant from the US, violence that is the property of "particular geographies and particular women's bodies" (McKinnon 10). Identifying and naming these connections acknowledges not only how the amplification of GBV furthers (neo)imperialist and (neo)colonialist interventions globally but also how this amplification can obscure and divert attention from the violence perpetrated against the very same women and children the US claims to protect and care for. For example, the "Syrian Refugee Health Profile" attributes GBV to the "patriarchal" nature of the Syrian society that limits the Syrian woman's rights to control her reproductive rights or consent to marriage ("Syrian" 4; 9). This depiction detaches GBV from the global racial capitalist and heteropatriarchal logics that have organized care encounters for refugee women and children in global contexts and (re)attaches this violence to the brown man's body being the synecdoche of patriarchy. Here, ULCs make visible the occlusion of macro relations and processes that have enabled and exacerbated these violences in the first place. Thus, accounting for this critique in cultural interventions means considering and naming the operation of globalized power and its concomitant logics in making health care (im)possible for refugees in global contexts. This consideration raises health providers' awareness of ways to read, negotiate, and respond to GBV in cultural interventions, such as health guidelines.

"Evidence" about GBV

Besides connections to health encounters across the globe, ULCs attend to how definitions of care in cultural interventions recognize, legitimize, and manage evidence about GBV. Because of its historical entrenchment in colonial and imperial logics, evidence about gendered violence in the Global South must be carefully examined and negotiated in the construction of cultural interventions. Specifically, in addition to the (re)production of colonial topoi and tropes, ULCs invite us to examine what counts as evidence about

GBV before making claims about its existence. This point becomes clear when examining the management of evidence cited under "Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C)," which is derived from information from international health and human rights organizations. The CDC acknowledges the dearth of research on FGM/C in Syria in this section. What is available, according to the CDC, is limited to anecdotal and circumstantial evidence of this practice within the Arab region ("Syrian" 9). While this passage defines FGM/C as "a cultural or social custom [that is] not considered a religious practice," it contradicts this claim by asserting that this practice "exists in numerous countries with large Muslim populations [and is] carried out by followers of various religions and sects" ("Syrian" 9). The section then adds that "FGM/C has been legitimized by certain radical Islamic clerics; however, there is no basis for FGM/C in the Quran or any other religious text" ("Syrian" 9). The claims in this section are not only based on anecdotal and contradictory evidence riddled with misunderstandings of culture and religion, but they also legitimize and normalize the lack of evidence about gendered violence as evidence. Based on these statements, evidence about GBV does not seem to matter, given what is assumed to be known about Syrian and Arab women. These statements show how care in cultural interventions can derive its rhetorical force from deeply entrenched colonial and imperial relations and evidential misperceptions as well as Islamophobic sentiments rather than from available, relevant, and verifiable evidence. This (mis)management of evidence calls for an examination of what counts as evidence, and importantly, it directs attention to relations and processes that warrant the inclusion of particular pieces of evidence in cultural interventions. Therefore, using ULCs to read the management of evidence in (transnational) health contexts invites questions about the politics of mattering and politics of recognition: *what*, *how*, and *why* does a particular piece of evidence *surface* and another *recede* (see Ahmed, *On* 185) when it comes to the construction of care models for vulnerable populations?

In her work, Christa Teston studies biomedical practices and scientific methods that medical professionals use to respond to uncertainty about bodies in "perpetual flux" (1). Teston poses questions about ways biomedical evidence becomes rhetorical or "comes to matter" when stakeholders make decisions about diagnoses and prognoses while responding to uncertainty about such evidence (125). Teston also argues for an ethic of care that recognizes bodies' "perpetual flux" (1), which is the result of continuous intra-actions and entanglements between human and nonhuman actors, insisting that "possibilities for future action [must be] the result of coconstructed evidences" (167). Although Teston's argument is about care ethics in a different context, her questions can be useful to engage with how health organizations and policymakers use and legitimatize evidence to construct two-thirds world women in general and the Syrian woman subject in particular. In this sense, ULCs invite stakeholders to negotiate evidence about GBV in two ways: 1) it necessitates evaluating the logics informing the production and circulation of evidence in transnational health contexts that (re)produce rhetorics of US exceptionalism, victimization, and erasure; and 2) following Teston, this framework calls for negotiating the uncertainty that the refugee crisis has brought with definitions of care and meaning-making practices that privilege the co-construction of evidence in rather than *before* the encounter. This co-construction insists on foregrounding rather than backgrounding refugees' narratives and counternarratives about their health and embodied experiences as the basis for negotiating and including evidence and providing care.

The subsection "Women's Health Issues" illustrates how rhetorics of cultural competence and care can (un)intentionally fail refugee women by reverting to rhetorical strategies that silence women's voices and bodies. Bearing witness to violence, however, necessitates critical analyses of globalized power that uncover how and why cultural interventions deploy GBV and, in the case of this project, how evidence about GBV matters in definitions of care and refugee medical encounters. These analyses direct attention to how the depiction and amplification of GBV might limit engagement with *what* is recognized as evidence and *who* and *what* is presenting evidence to inform the composition of cultural interventions: is it the refugee and her body or organizations that have historically appropriated human rights discourses to (re) produce two-thirds world women through tropes and topoi that extend the colonial and imperial reach of the US worldwide (see Hesford)? Importantly, attention to ULCs necessitates engaging and tracing ways such depictions can impact how policymakers may use the lack of real evidence as evidence when writing refugee health policy. These questions resonate with the work of RHM and TPC scholars (Harper; Frost; Molloy) who have conducted feminist analyses of medical and technical rhetorics to reveal and intervene in the ways medical discourse constructs women and gender-nonconforming people, especially from marginalized populations (see also Moeggenberg et al.). ULCs extend these analyses by turning to the geopolitical production and circulation of care, including care that is recognized as cultural but that (re)produces logics and rhetorics of US exceptionalism, victimization, and erasure.

Marking the Boundaries of (Health)Care Encounters

Building on the work of RHM and TPC scholars, this essay proposes ULCs as a methodological framework for reading and reimagining the construction of cultural interventions intended to support refugees and health providers in health contexts. Through attention to the possibilities, complexities, and occlusions of care, ULCs disrupt the either/or approach to care that asks whether we should or should not care and moves instead to questions of how we care and mediate care in ways that unsettle asymmetrical power relations between recipients and receivers of care. Similar to what Natalia Molina, in the context US immigration, calls "racial scripts" (Molina, *How* 7),[14] ULCs provide tools that illuminate how care rhetorics are related, implicated, and imbricated in asymmetrical power relations that can reinforce the *fixation* rather than *emergence* of bodies and relations in medical encounters. In the case of the "Syrian Refugee Health Profile," this framework has engaged with questions about the rhetorical force and function of the logics of comparison, (re)victimization, and recognition of evidence about GBV, particularly how and why particular tropes, topoi, and pieces of evidence are recognized and come to matter in transnational health contexts. Through analyses centering the role of globalized power and its logics of composition, ULCs can be useful for stakeholders to evaluate and create health and medical guidelines attuned to historical and contempo-

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14   Racial scripts show how "once cultural stereotypes, attitudes, practices, customs, policies, and laws are directed at one group, they are more readily available and hence easily applied to other groups" (Molina, *How* 7).

rary entanglements of care in local and global contexts. This engagement makes apparent how certain logics of composition can persist over time and (re)surface to inform the production of care rhetorics about/for marginalized populations. In this regard, ULCs direct attention to how textual productions circulate within racial and colonial ecologies that have long pathologized and medicalized bodies of migrants and refugees and that can participate in (re)producing care as/through occlusion. This consideration invites stakeholders to create cultural health interventions including guidelines that look with and beyond inclusion and toward representational practices that emphasize epistemologically and ontologically emergent rhetorics of care. Because of its emphasis on intercontextuality, ULCs also urge stakeholders to create health guidelines that link so-called local encounters to global micro and macro encounters. In other words, creating care rhetorics attuned to the politics of representation, care, and occlusion necessitates an engagement with the geopolitical and material conditions constantly shaping the health and well-being of refugees and migrants living across and crossing transnational borders.

In this sense, ULCs emphasize the relationship between cultural interventions as meaning-making practices and the well-being of patients, particularly those from historically marginalized communities. Jay T. Dolmage articulates this relationship to meaning-making in a different context *as* care for the body, "care about how we persuade and move ourselves and others [toward bodies]" (4). While an examination of how cultural interventions constitute and mediate refugee bodies cannot rectify the complex web of health inequities faced by refugee populations today (Lamb and Smith; Matlin et al.; Ng; World Health Organization), these inquiries help identify and mitigate some of these inequities and their potential effects on refugees and health providers in care encounters. This objective is in line with the overarching goals of recent empirical studies that advocate for an ecological framework aimed at dismantling barriers to equitable healthcare for refugees at *all* levels (Alfeir; Rashoka et al.; Reihani et al.; Teoh et al.; Worabo et al.). Transnational feminist rhetorical analyses represent a critical step toward reducing such barriers through an emphasis on the (geo) politics of care, representation, and inclusion that can obstruct refugees' access to embodied, situated, and relational care, if unintentionally.

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"It Helps Me Feel More Comfortable": Creating an Affective Public to Build Confidence on Instagram

Faith Kurtyka

Abstract: Because Instagram activism is subtle and because social media usage is constantly changing, feminist media scholars continually need new mechanisms for recognizing and representing it. Via an ethnographic study of Instagram usage in a college women's fitness group, I argue that Instagram can be used to create an "affective public," or a community of people united online by a common emotion (Papacharissi). This affective public offers writers confidence, which inspires them to collaboratively and publicly imagine how the seemingly strict rules of a composing platform might be altered by a community that bonds together with shared emotions and hashtags, which I identify as a kind of everyday activism. While confidence is often dismissed by feminist scholars as a brand of popular feminism, I contend that it can be built and spread collectively to intervene in an existing emotional structure, specifically the exhausting emotional labor expected and normalized on Instagram. My choice of ethnographic methodology in this work reflects the way I am trying to see this group as a community of users who influence and encourage each other rather than individual, isolated users. In my conclusion, I recommend that feminist media scholars use ethnographic methods to reveal community norms and standards of Instagram and more clearly portray the way group affect emerges on social media.

Despite the pervasiveness of social media as a composing practice in our everyday lives, the field of rhetoric and composition continues to have a complicated relationship with students' social media usage. Based on their survey on students' online composing practices, David Gold, Jathan Day, and Adrienne E. Raw note the high popularity of photo-sharing social media sites like SnapChat and Instagram and optimistically suggest that these sites "may serve hitherto undervalued writing goals" (30). Tonally, however, Gold, Day, and Raw seem disappointed with students' social media usage. They characterize students' usage as "narrow," and they contrast students' frequent writing to friends and family as distinct from "civic, professional, or creative purposes" (6). They write that the "idealized purpose" for social media is "debate and deliberation," but students self-reported "less frequently engag[ing] in deliberation about controversial topics of the sort we encourage in academic writing and hope to promote in public sphere settings" (13). The article implies that students do not use social media for being an engaged citizen, articulating their beliefs, or taking a stance on a controversial topic. In a 2019 article titled "Writing to Assemble Publics: Making Writing Activate, Making Writing Matter," Laurie Gries praises the recent work of "student activist campaigns" but focuses on activism that involves assembling large groups of people together in a physical space, like demonstrations and walkouts (329). In both articles, we can see an unstated elevation of rhetoric that is explicit, word-based, rational, and public. We can also see an approach to students' social media usage characterized by fear instead of curiosity or optimism. Gold, Day, and Raw's article is titled "Who's Afraid

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of Facebook?" in a similar vein to Elisabeth H. Buck's article "Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter—Oh My!" which equates these social media platforms to "lions, tigers, and bears."

Students' social media practices are important not just because students spend a lot of time on them; these practices are important because social media can be a site of activist work. Crystal Kim and Jessica Ringrose note that the activism of young women on social media is often met with "indifference and skepticism" because it does not look like the traditional activist practices of older adults, namely, "sustained in-person action, group solidarity, publicly strategic efforts, and a collective intent on achieving institutional change" (49). In her study of young women's feminist blogging, Jessica Keller notes that we still need better frameworks for recognizing the activist practices of "education, community-building, and making feminism visible" in online composing (72).

Activism on Instagram specifically can be easy to overlook because it capitalizes on social media's "intimate screen," meaning it is subtle and focused on everyday life rather than large-scale protests or demonstrations (Alexander and Hahner 224). For example, rhetoric scholars have studied how social media activists have used the everyday-ness of Instagram to advocate for adopting children with special needs (Alexander and Hahner), self-acceptance of women over 50 (McGrath), and reproductive rights (Carlson). Communication scholars have studied Islamic fashion Instagrammer Leah Vernon, a self-identified fat, Black Muslim woman whose posts offer a feminist intersectional critique of "typical" uses of Instagram (Peterson), as well as pop star Lizzo, who uses her Instagram to assert her identities of blackness and fatness in the pop star and fashion world (Pickett Miller and Platenburg). Kara Poe Alexander and Leslie Hahner describe these kinds of digital activism as "not the mass spectacle of the public screen but rather an approach that impacts the viewer through familiarity and intimacy with [the social media user's] life" (226). In these cases, Instagram "activism" functions by normalizing and giving visibility to daily lives or experiences that might otherwise be invisible or even taboo.

Notably, however, these previous studies of political or activist uses of Instagram focus on professional Instagram influencers with thousands or even millions of followers. These studies, then, tell us less about the way everyday people, like the college students in our classrooms, might use Instagram for political or activist purposes, much less how the composers themselves might understand and articulate their purposes. How might social media "activism" look for a busy college sophomore who mostly scrolls on Instagram and posts infrequently? How does a first-year college student navigate a desire to stand up for a political cause on social media with her anxieties about what her brand-new friends at college will think of her? What do "politics" and "activism" even mean in these situations?

Because Instagram activism is subtle and because social media usage is constantly changing, feminist media scholars continually need new mechanisms for recognizing and representing it. Via an ethnographic study of a college women's fitness group, I argue that Instagram can create an "affective public," or

a community of people united online by a common emotion that allows women to imagine what Instagram could be like if it wasn't ruled so pervasively by influencer culture (Papacharissi). The affective public offers writers confidence, which inspires them to collaboratively and publicly imagine how the seemingly strict rules of a composing platform might be altered by a community that bonds together with shared emotions and hashtags, which I identify as a kind of everyday activism. While confidence is often dismissed by feminist scholars as a brand of popular feminism, I contend that it can be built and spread collectively to intervene in an existing emotional structure, specifically the exhausting emotional labor expected and normalized on Instagram. Because women have so many toxic social media experiences, I find the CHAARG Instagram account worthy of study as a microcosm of the way young women actively navigate an emotionally fraught digital landscape and create content that builds confidence for the anxieties other women experience as they do so. My choice of ethnographic methodology also reflects the way I am trying to see this group as a community of users who influence and encourage each other rather than individual, isolated users. In my conclusion, I recommend that feminist media scholars use ethnographic methods to reveal community norms and standards of Instagram and more clearly portray the way group affect emerges on social media.

This study focuses on the construction of the Instagram account of a college women's health and fitness group called "CHAARG," which stands for "Changing Health, Attitudes, and Actions to Recreate Girls," a national organization with chapters on 111 college campuses ("About CHAARG"). I first discuss the social media presence of this group as a whole and a "typical" post to explain the kind of activism work this group does. Then I discuss the methodological choices I made to understand this group's unique form of activism. To situate the Instagram activism of CHAARG, particularly for readers who may not spend a lot of time on Instagram, I explain how young women feel that only "perfect" images belong on Instagram—a finding from my interviews that is supported by other research on how young women view Instagram. Via six interviews and two follow-up interviews with women associated with my university's CHAARG group, I show how this group of young women envision themselves as strategically using Instagram to push back on the pervasive effect of Instagram influencers who post perfectly crafted images and captions. I present data from my initial round of interviews in 2020-2021, and then, to trace the emotion of confidence built in the affective public, I present data from two follow-up interviews a year later, along with images from one user's account and an interviewee's personal statement for physical therapy school. CHAARG presents an opportunity and exigency for the women I interviewed to carve out a space for themselves. Their anxieties about Instagram perfection are somewhat alleviated by the goal of spreading the positive message of CHAARG.

I do not contend that the CHAARG Instagram is on the same level of activism as professional Instagrammers. I also do not argue that the CHAARG Instagram is some kind of feminist utopia. Many of the posts have a problematic rhetoric of individualism and could certainly do more to directly address the institutional, cultural, social, racial, and economic barriers to women's health and fitness. Neither does the CHAARG Instagram ignore, disrupt, or upend the standards of Instagram. Nonetheless, I attempt to privilege these women's own conceptualizations of their activism, suspending my own judgments about whether their Instagram posts are "activist" or "not activist enough," and I ask my readers to do the same. I am

inspired by Hannah Taylor's 2022 *Peitho* article about the BodyShame conference, which featured women discussing their affective experiences of shame. Taylor explicitly resists the "critical turn" that would show that the research participants did not, in fact, question the larger structures that cause shame because Taylor's goal is "to meet the women where they are and grapple with their experiences as they see and describe them." Similarly, my use of ethnographic methodology to capture these women's orientation to their activism serves to understand their style of social media activism from their point of view.

Methods

Walk into a rec center on any university campus, and one is likely to encounter two groups: (1) young women trudging slowly on the elliptical machines, typically bent over in a kind of prostrate suffering and (2) fit young men (sometimes called "gym bros") dominating the space of the weights and other fitness equipment. According to the national organization's website, CHAARG's goals are to "liberate girls from the elliptical + show them that fitness can [+ should!] be fun… + that working out is better with friends!" ("About CHAARG"). Each campus' CHAARG chapter has its own Instagram account, usually run by an executive team member, but, significantly, individual members are encouraged to create an Instagram account separate from their personal Instagram account specifically to document their experiences with CHAARG and wellness in general. For example, if a user's personal Instagram account is @firstname_lastname, their CHAARG Instagram account would be @firstname_lastname_inchaarg. Unlike member's personal accounts, which are kept on private settings, their CHAARG accounts are set to "public" so they can be found by members searching the hashtag #inchaarg anywhere in the world. The Instagram accounts of the CHAARG chapters showcase individual member accounts, pictures of members eating healthy food in small groups, and posts reminding members about workouts (which would normally be done in person, but because of restrictions due to COVID-19, were being done on Zoom at the time of this research), including hip-hop dance, yoga, meditation, and strength training.

I conducted this research during the 2020-2021 school year, when COVID meant that a lot of the group's community-building work took place on the Instagram account. Because student organizations were prohibited from meeting in person on campus, the CHAARG Instagram account was the primary hub for recruiting members, explaining the group's philosophy, and alerting existing members to upcoming events. Through the Instagram account, potential members learn about the group, and current members connect to each other, become invested in the group, find out what the group is doing, and even participate in the group through filling out template posts for their own social media feeds.

The use of hashtags and tagging other accounts allows interlinking between members of a certain university's CHAARG but also among members of CHAARG groups nationwide. Members of my university's group post photos of themselves working out or group photos post-workout linked with the hashtag #[university]inchaarg but also with the hashtag #inchaarg to link their accounts to the national group. There are also CHAARG-specific hashtags for different activities, such as #SweatySelfie for a picture taken imme-

diately following a workout, #CHAARGRunClub for a photo of a run, or #CHAARGEats for food.

Image 1 presents a typical post that one might see on an individual member's CHAARG Instagram account.[1] A typical post features a photo of the CHAARG member with another CHAARG member (or sometimes a photo with the whole CHAARG group) during or just after the workout, sweaty with messy hair, and a caption that comments on the difficulty of the workout and a sense of pride that the member has completed it. The user may also include a screenshot of stats from her fitness watch.

Figure 1: A typical CHAARG Post

Caption: Completed my first Orange Theory workout today! I got my sweat's worth! [three orange emojis]

After hearing students in my class speak glowingly about CHAARG and the way the group was effectively building community for them in the isolated time of fall 2020, I wanted to learn more about them. Perhaps most significantly for researching social media usage, CHAARG Instagram accounts are spaces where young women are actually creating social media content, as opposed to just reading or commenting. Gold, Day, and Raw note that students were highly likely to read social media feeds, somewhat likely to respond to others' posts, and unlikely to write their own content. They note that "digital 'participatory' culture may not be as participatory as we imagine" (11). Suggesting additional research into the rhetorical environment of social media (11-12), their article asks: why are students so eager to read, consume, and discuss social media but so hesitant to post themselves? I had wanted to conduct research on Instagram for some time but was hesitant to interview students about their personal Instagram accounts; CHAARG offered the opportunity to interview students about content they had created for a public audience.

After receiving IRB approval from my university, I interviewed six undergraduates who were members of the CHAARG community in interviews lasting 30-60 minutes. All identified as women and used she/her pronouns. One identified as Asian, one identified as Asian-Pacific Islander, and four identified as White. Four women were on the executive leadership team: one was the founder and current president, two oversaw

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1   To protect the privacy of my interviewees, the images I use in this article are not their images but are instead re-created by friends of mine (not students). I received approval from my university's IRB to include these "dramatic re-enactments" in this final manuscript.

the group's social media accounts before and during COVID (2019-2021), and one oversaw membership and recruitment. I selected these women to interview because they were leaders in the group and active on their personal CHAARG Instagram accounts. My two other interviewees were first-year students who were new to the group and found out about it via Instagram. I interviewed these women to understand how newcomers perceive the group. All were currently enrolled students at my university, a mid-size Catholic liberal arts college in the Midwest. One year after these initial interviews, I re-interviewed both the founding president and the founding social media chair—who had at that point moved up to become the new president—to understand their continuing work on Instagram.

I asked my interview participants about how they came across CHAARG and how they became involved. Then I moved to specifically asking questions about the group's CHAARG Instagram account and their individual CHAARG Instagram accounts in contrast to their personal Instagram accounts. To talk about specific Instagram posts, I borrowed from Julie Warner's methodology, selecting specific posts from the university chapter's CHAARG account or their personal CHAARG accounts that "break with the norms of use for that platform" to "provoke participant discussion around the norms of use and the cultural models that guide participation in these spaces" (169). As I'll discuss in the next section, "The Exhausting Work of Instagram," Instagram is dominated with images of "influencers," typically white, conventionally attractive cis women in exotic locations. I thus asked my participants to talk about the composition of Instagram posts that did not fit this model, and I asked my participants to select specific posts that were personally meaningful to them and talk about the composition of those posts. I also acknowledge the small sample size of this study. To strengthen small interview sets, qualitative researcher Kathy Charmaz recommends mixing in other qualitative methods—like observational, archival, and documentary research (107). I do so by adding in follow-up interviews with two of the more involved members and an analysis of the personal statement for physical therapy school written by one of my interviewees.

Once I had completed all my interviews, I segmented each interview into "topical chains," or discursive units of text that mark where a speaker understands her words to be about a certain topic, essentially 1-3 sentence units differentiated by topic (Geisler and Swarts 79). I then used grounded theory coding to create four categories (Charmaz 113): (1) Instagram ideology—beliefs about what Instagram is and/or what it could be as a medium for communication; (2) community building and participation—stories or ideas about building a community or being part of one; (3) beliefs about bodies—ideological beliefs about women's bodies, either the speaker's own beliefs or those she found on the Instagram; and (4) the CHAARG Instagram—choices about what to put on the Instagram or reflections about the Instagram.

In the interest of transparency, I want to say that my work is the product of attempting to conduct research in the peak era of COVID: fall 2020 through spring 2021. All interviews were conducted on Zoom, which in some cases inhibited my ability to build rapport with my interviewees. I would have liked to interview more participants and conduct longer interviews, but I wanted to be conscious of Zoom burnout and the stress of time management during 2020 and 2021. Fortuitously, however, without our campus' annual

student involvement fair, frequent tabling or other in-person recruitment methods, the Instagram account carried the task of recruiting women to CHAARG in a way it would not have in a regular year, leading the women to be even more reflective and strategic about how it was used.

The Exhausting Work of Instagram

To those who don't spend a lot of time there, it is easy to dismiss Instagram as a waste of time or something that people don't take very seriously. In her study of social media influencers, however, Brooke Ellen Duffy stresses the effort and energy Instagram requires for young women. Duffy's study found that many young women approach social media as a kind of "aspirational labor," promoting content "with *strategy, purpose,* and *aspirations of career success*" (48, emphasis in original). The influencers in Duffy's study are responsible for the exhausting endeavor of "building and maintaining one's social networks, curating one's feeds with a digital cocktail of informative, yet thought-provoking, and witty content; and ensuring the consistency of one's self-brand across the sprawling digital ecosystem" (11). Even more exhausting is that you can't make it look or feel like work: Duffy notes these influencers must use their Instagram fame to sell products and services to their followers while remaining "authentic" and "real" (6). For the young women I interviewed, Instagram is dictated by social media influencers: conventionally pretty, cis, young white women who post flattering photos and videos of themselves ostensibly in their daily lives.[2]

One interviewee, Emily, specifically noted the way influencer culture had already trickled down into the Instagram accounts of sororities on campus:

> Things have gotten more like influencer-based and everyone wants to seem perfect. . . Going through sorority recruitment right now it seems like sorority Instagrams, they're like, "Look at how great our members are and how pretty they are and how involved they are."

While none of the young women I interviewed identified as influencers, the way they talked about their personal Instagram accounts reflects rules common to influencers. But instead of selling products or services like influencers do, they were selling themselves as friends. Emily described her personal Instagram as a kind of advertisement for her friendship: "I feel like for my main Instagram account it's like almost as my commercial, like if you're gonna follow me and you want to be friends with me here I am." Monica described her personal Instagram as similar to a modeling portfolio: "Mine's almost like a just a portfolio of just me looking my best at random locations." Monica later explained that "most people, including myself, actually we use our Instagrams to just put forth the most ideal like perfect version of yourself and it's all filters, angles everything that you would think of [to make it] most appealing to the world."[3] Instagram works as a kind

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2   For those unfamiliar with influencer culture, see the following Instagram users as examples: @louisemontgomeryblog and @charlidamelio. For fitness influencers specifically, see @millyg_fit, @kk_fit_, or @jordynt_fit, though these images can be upsetting to those struggling with eating disorders or body dysmorphia.

3   Notably, a study published in the journal *Body Image* in 2021 found that women aged 17-40 experienced "significantly higher negative mood and body dissatisfaction" viewing influencer images ("thin, attractive, white female[s]…in artistic, lifestyle, and travel selfies") than a control group viewing nature images (Lowe-Calverley and Grieve 1). This negative mood and body

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of textbook for teaching women how to recognize the ideal physical appearance both in reality and how it should appear on social media. Perhaps anticipating Instagram influencer culture back in 1993, Susan Bordo writes, "Culture not only has taught women to be insecure bodies, constantly monitoring themselves for signs of imperfection, constantly engaged in physical 'improvement;' it also is constantly teaching women (and, let us not forget, men as well) how to *see* bodies" (57). For the women I interviewed, scrolling on Instagram created such high expectations for what Instagram-worthy images should look like that they felt like they could not post at all. This is likely why, as Gold, Day, and Raw found, students resist composing in these spaces over concern about how "intended readers" might react (20). If your Instagram is literally an advertisement for being your friend, it's easy to default to just not posting anything at all for fear that you might post the wrong thing. This was particularly true during COVID in 2020-2021, where students had to rely on social media even more to get to know people they couldn't meet face-to-face.

> Significantly, the two first-year students I interviewed, who were the most socially vulnerable as they were new to campus, told me they posted the least on their personal Instagram accounts. Two first-year students as well as one upper-class student told me that they are "not a social media person." I initially thought this meant that they didn't have accounts at all, but when I asked further questions, I realized this meant only that they didn't post often. They all had Instagram accounts and spent significant time looking at and reading Instagram.

> Annie: I'm not a super huge social media person . . . but I really like to see what other people [are] doing.

> Faith: What do you mean by "social media person," like what does that mean?

> Annie: I'm not a big sharer so I really don't post a ton. This sounds bad, but I like to use my social media to see like what my friends are doing and I like to keep in contact and like see what others are doing more than post myself.

Annie thinks it "sounds bad" that she "likes to see what other people [are] doing" on Instagram profiles but does not consider herself enough of a "big sharer" to share her own images. Perhaps because she is self-conscious about whether she matches up to the standards of images on Instagram, Annie chooses to remove herself entirely. David Gold, Meredith Garcia, and Anna Knutson note "the anxiety of present audiences" on social media which students sometimes address by "avoiding audiences" entirely. This lack of confidence disproportionately affects women: Jen Almjeld observes a "digital gender divide" where men feel more empowered and experienced with technology, meaning that "women and girls internalize certain spaces and technologies as off-limits" (57). Rather than try to keep up with the exhausting standards of Ins-

dissatisfaction persisted *whether the Instagram accounts they were viewing had a lot of followers or not.* So even if one avoids major, highly paid influencers (>100,000 followers), if a friend from high school posts similar kinds of images to her 300 followers, the viewer's mood will still be negatively affected (Lowe-Calverley and Grieve).

tagram influencers, it's easier to just disappear entirely.

Finding Purpose in the CHAARG Instagram

CHAARG, however, presents an opportunity and exigency for the women I interviewed to carve out a space for themselves. The women I interviewed were happy to take up CHAARG's mission to influence the way women feel about their bodies via their CHAARG Instagram accounts. Emily notes that on her personal CHAARG account, she posted a photo of her with her leadership team because she was proud of the team's work, even though she did not feel confident in the way she looked in the photo:

> So [I thought] maybe I will post this photo, maybe even though it's been a long day. Like I'm wearing a scarf with that outfit like, what in the world was I thinking? Like I can take that photo and be like, yes, this is a good moment and I want to share this with people. So I think instead of just like looking for an aesthetic content or perfection it's now more of, I guess, like the meaning or like the purpose behind a post.

The central anxiety of "Is this photo perfect enough to be on this platform?" is alleviated on the CHAARG Instagram account because the goal is not perfection but rather to spread the positive message of CHAARG. Recognizing that most Instagram photos are posted solely for their "aesthetic content or perfection," Emily feels empowered to post a picture of herself and her friends because she sees the way the photo could spread the message of the group. Monica also found a similar sense of purpose in her CHAARG Instagram: "[My personal Instagram] is almost like a just a portfolio of just me looking my best at random locations so that's definitely not what my CHAARG is. There's definitely like more purpose to my CHAARG posts and their aim is to spread a message as opposed to just I look pretty."

Nicole found purpose in posting on her CHAARG account because she knew that the people who followed that account (as opposed to her personal account) were interested in her "fitness journey." It therefore alleviated some of her stress about whether or not her audience would find her posts interesting:

> The majority of the people who follow you on your CHAARG [account] are other CHAARG girls whether they're like in your chapter or not. I feel like you already know the vibe of who is seeing you. So you feel more comfortable and I feel like there's something because it's so fitness-based that makes you more comfortable because once you're comfortable like showing yourself working out. There's just this gratification and this like self-assurance. And especially, for me, the biggest thing for me, I think, is I really like focusing on all aspects of health. So as much as I like doing that on my own personal account, not everyone is going to . . . not that they won't appreciate, but they're, you know, like it might just be empty space or another story. You know, at least on CHAARG you know like, yes, like girls want to know about like your goals, your fitness. So it's like you have this audience that's already interested in this aspect of your life. And it's like, so relaxing, fun.

Concerned that her social media can appear either meaningless ("empty space") or thoughtlessly consumed (just "another story"), Nicole thinks her posts on her personal CHAARG Instagram account belong there because she is building a community or inspiring someone. By offering an alternate mode of using Instagram, CHAARG provides these women a new way of experiencing emotion on social media: What if, instead of a portfolio of pretty pictures of me, this was a space that reflected my community, my values, or other things I care about? This sense of purpose, in turn, makes users feel like they belong in the space. Gold, Garcia, and Knutson note that digital anxiety may arise for students because of "permeability," when "a message crafted for one audience in response to one rhetorical situation will be consumed by another audience outside the original context, generating an entirely new and unanticipated rhetorical situation that invites—or demands—further response." Rather than try to please the broad audience of her personal Instagram account, Nicole finds purpose in being able to post for the narrowed audience of her CHAARG Instagram account, an audience whom she knows will find meaning in her content.

Building Confidence Via an Affective Public on the CHAARG Instagram

I identify the everyday activism of CHAARG as creating an affective public that collectively pushes back on the seemingly intractable rules of Instagram as determined by influencer culture, and affectively, builds confidence in users to post more freely. My university's CHAARG Instagram—with its group account, individual member accounts, and use of hashtags to connect accounts across universities—forms what Zizi Papacharissi terms an "affective public," or "networked public formations that are mobilized and connected or disconnected through expressions of sentiment" (125). In Papacharissi's explanation of the workings of affective publics, social media allows us to go beyond simple declaration of thought to infuse our thoughts with affect; this infusion of affect into an everyday statement can be "a potentially powerful political act" (114). Social media allows people to unite with other people who don't just think the same way, but who *feel* the same way. Using the Arab Spring as an example, Papacharissi writes, "These people felt their own way into that particular event by contributing to a stream that blended emotion, drama, opinion, and news in a manner that departed from the conventional deliberative logic and aligned with the softer structure of affect worlds" (117). Papacharissi is less interested in whether this kind of Twitter activism "works" and more interested in the way the emotions that Twitter allows for unites people who share a common political sentiment.

Papacharissi's definition of an affective public is useful because it demonstrates a way that collectives use social media to intervene in existing structures of emotion. On Instagram, where viewers have internalized rigid genre requirements about the kinds of images that are acceptable to post, CHAARG offers users a social media space connected to others via hashtags and shared goals: spreading the positive message of women's right to take up space in gyms and fitness centers, posting photos that aren't perfectly posed, and creating a receptive audience that supports you and is interested in the content you create.

I want to take a moment to pinpoint what I mean by "confidence" here. In *Empowered: Popular Feminisms and Popular Misogyny,* Sarah Banet-Wiser critiques the emphasis on confidence in popular feminism because it does not challenge structures of inequality: "Confidence is positioned as the primary, if not the only, resolution to gendered inequalities, and it is a resolution that depends on individual men and women, not on cultural and social structure" (93) As a result, confidence is an "empty resolution that is more about individual attitudes than challenging structured inequities" (94). That's certainly true if confidence is defined as an *individual* emotion, but as feminist rhetoric scholars, we know emotions are always shaped along systemic lines. In fact, feminist rhetorical scholars have long argued against the denigration of emotion in argument, contending that emotion is a key component of how we become invested in ideas, people, communities, and world-views, and that emotion "creates an economy of feeling that constitutes and transforms who we are and what we do" (Micchice 42).

Therefore, I find it important to not dismiss confidence as an individual feeling but to instead take it seriously as a collective emotion transmitted via the social media accounts. Specifically, the CHAARG Instagram gives the women the confidence to actually post (rather than just lurk) and to imagine a world beyond the rigid genre requirements of Instagram. As such, the women engage in what Papacharissi calls "public dreaming," or "a collaborative imagining of other ways of engaging the platform" beyond its common genre uses (111). Monica, the current vice president of media, seems to be aware of the importance of "public dreaming" when creating the CHAARG Instagram, particularly in the time of COVID when the Instagram account had to get first-year students to wonder about what their participation and involvement in CHAARG might look like. The main account for CHAARG at the university reflects the personal "journey" of the vice president of media, rather than just reflecting group activities or announcements. I asked Monica about the significance of that personalization:

> It's just supposed to be, we're all like in this like journey together and it would help to have someone to like maybe base it off of. And just to give you a good look at like what everyone else's or they are all at and maybe to just find some sort of inspiration from that, as opposed to just it being like, here's when our next event is. But you can see like "Oh Monica is, like, she's making friends in the group and I can make friends too."

It might appear that Monica's Instagram use is just to make friends, but her quote above demonstrates the connection between community formation and activism. By combining a sense of purpose with building community, Monica creates a group of allies who can bond together over fitness in a positive way, dissipating some of the negative emotions surrounding the appearance of young women on Instagram and the way they feel about fitness and their bodies. Monica sees her Instagram use as an opportunity for inspiring other women and giving them the confidence to dream about what their own "journey" in the group might look like.

And it seems to work. Mia, a first-year student who found out about CHAARG from the Instagram, picks up the sense of wonder Monica was trying to create and imagines herself in solidarity with other wom-

en attempting to belong to the male-dominated space of the campus rec center:

> I think that having like a group of girls, where we could even if, like we all didn't know what we were doing to like have people to struggle with together and kind of learn with together made it a lot more fun to do, and it was a lot more comfortable to do it when you're doing it in a group of people who are struggling versus just by yourself.

The CHAARG Instagram account inspires Mia to dream about fitness as a community building activity where women have fun by "struggling" together. Drawing from Erving Goffman, Luna Dolezal notes that women are socialized to see their bodies from the perspective of an outsider, meaning that "the body's appearance and comportment is self-consciously regarded as an object for a present or imagined third-person spectator" (364). Instagram naturally invites the gaze of a third-person spectator as the Instagrammer imagines how others will interpret their photo and caption. In the above quote, Mia sees her body as third-person spectator would and is worried she won't look like she belongs in the space. But looking at the CHAARG Instagram account leads her to imagine and wonder about how "a group of people who are struggling" together would make working out more fun, giving her the confidence to take up space.

Growing Confidence: The Affective Public One Year Later

I conducted the initial round of interviews in late 2020 and early 2021. From this first round of interviews, I could see how the CHAARG Instagram functioned as an affective public that built confidence regarding posting on Instagram. I still wanted to know, however, if this confidence persisted and if and how it shaped the women's identities. In their work on writing after college, Jonathan Alexander, Karen Lunsford, and Carl Whithaus found that "confidence" came up regularly when participants described how they felt about their writing in the professional world after college (572). Would the confidence built from the affective public of the CHAARG Instagram stick around? A year after my initial interviews, in spring of 2022, I re-interviewed the founding president of CHAARG, Emily, and the former vice president of CHAARG, Monica, who had now become the president. Because I only have two interviews for this section, I did not code these interviews with my scheme but instead switched to a case study methodology to track the individual trajectories of members rather than patterns of language across interviews. To account for this limited data, I include several images from the Instagram accounts and one interviewee's personal statement for physical therapy school.

In this second interview, I asked Emily to look at her CHAARG Instagram and point out a post that was personally significant.

Figure 2: "I did feel confident"

Figure 3: "Just a photo of me at the library"

Caption reads: "Shout-out to [my sister] for helping me in the #chaargrunclub 10K yesterday—talking, playing music, and making sure I got that #sweatyselfie at the end…birthday girl kept me going! [Celebration emoji; Running emoji]

Emily: Okay, I have two. So the first one is this one, which is just like a photo of me at Joslyn Castle. … This is an example about how this photo [see Image 2] has nothing to do with like fitness at all. . .. But it was just like a photo I felt really confident in and I didn't feel like posting that on my main account and having so many people see it, but I still wanted to share it

This excerpt demonstrates some of Emily's growing confidence in posting on social media. She expresses relief in posting a photo that doesn't make her "worry about anyone perceiving me in a sort of different way." Emily's "confident" photo (Image 2) is much more typical of what one would see on an Instagram influencer account: hair and makeup done, posed in a flattering position in an interesting locale. Despite the fact that this image lives up to the standards of her regular Instagram account, Emily does not post it on her main account just on the off chance that it will result in someone "perceiving [her] in a different sort of way,"

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demonstrating how audience anxiety creeps in even for photos seemingly perfect for the rigid standards of social media. Emily still feels cautious about how the third-person spectator will perceive her. And yet she posts it on her CHAARG account because she wants to "share it with people." She juxtaposes it with a "not so confident" image of her at the library (Image 3), perhaps to offset looking overconfident and perhaps because she knows that the CHAARG Instagram is a welcome place for a more relatable self.

Figure 4: "I'm about to throw up"

Caption reads: "Shout-out to [my sister] for helping me in the #chaargrunclub 10K yesterday—talking, playing music, and making sure I got that #sweatyselfie at the end…birthday girl kept me going! [Celebration emoji; Running emoji]

Emily goes on to explain another meaningful post (Image 3):

> Okay, and then [there is] this post one where I'm literally about to throw up. My sister [posed in the foreground] is way more fit and has way more capacity to do anything [athletic-related] than I have and over Thanksgiving we did a 10K and she was the one who's like, "You have to post this on your Instagram," even though I was really literally like heaved over on the bike trail, and I think it shows growth because I would never post that on my main account. It's also people in my life right now seeing, like noticing when I'm posting and noticing when I'm growing, she's like "People need to see this."

Even though Emily finds the bike trail photo unflattering, she still feels it's worthy to post because it "shows growth," both in terms of her actual fitness and in terms of confidence in posting what's going on with her on Instagram. That said, Emily is also demonstrating the pervasiveness of looking at her Instagram with an internalized audience or "third-person spectator" view: when she says she "feels confident" in a photo, what she means is she feels confidence in posting the photo on social media. Emily is appreciative that her sister has picked up on the confidence-building work of the CHAARG Instagram and encourages her to post the picture not because it's a perfect photo but because it shows "growth."

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In my follow-up interview with Emily, she noted the way her confidence grew because of her interactions with the CHAARG members and how her personal CHAARG Instagram account increasingly reflected that confidence. She mentioned that she had written about her work with CHAARG in her personal statement for physical therapy school, which she graciously shared with me and I received IRB approval to use. She states explicitly how the confidence she built in her work with CHAARG transfers to her ambitions for physical therapy school:

> "Believing that owning your fitness is owning your life" is CHAARG's motto and has also become my own. "Changing Health Attitudes to Recreate Girls" is a student organization I brought to campus that started as a way to give college women the confidence to exercise. It went on to transform my college experience. It has given me the strength and resources to overcome academic obstacles and become an ally to those who can benefit from our events. It has sparked my passion for comprehensive wellness and inspired me to turn my passions into purpose. Most of all, this organization has invigorated and prepared me for the field of Physical Therapy.

It would be presumptuous to draw a direct line from confidence built on Instagram to confidence built in one's personal life or career choices, but Emily's personal statement certainly speaks to the fluidity of confidence to transfer between online and offline worlds and the useful work of an affective public to collectively shape individual's mentalities and life choices. Particularly because current generations experience a "context collapse" and "seamlessness" between online and off-line worlds (Warner 168; boyd), it makes sense that confidence might flow naturally between the two. Emily's language later in the personal statement speaks more specifically to the power of the affective public: "My team and I, after only one year of CHAARG on our campus, have built a community of over 50 committed women to workout with, encourage each other, and spark a passion for wellness in their own lives. I have grown in my confidence and am empowered by the very community we have built."

For Emily, the CHAARG group and the CHAARG Instagram provides an affective public to emotionally support women who have negative emotions about both an online space (Instagram) and a physical space (the campus rec center) which have seemingly rigid rules for participation.

In her follow-up interview, Monica told me that she was proud that 26 women in the group now had personal CHAARG Instagram accounts, up from just a handful a year ago. I asked her why she thought so many more women were choosing to create a personal CHAARG Instagram account:

> Monica: We try to advertise it as something where you can be your like authentic self and you don't necessarily have to post your like best clean, polished-up version that you would on your personal [Instagram account] with the filters and stuff like that. Now [the CHAARG Instagram] is just like something [to] relax [and] no pressure, just, I don't know a space to vent or share something fun

that you did.

Interviewer: Has that changed your views of Instagram and all? That you sort of have this place where you don't feel like you have to post, like the perfectly filtered photo?

Monica: Um, I guess, I mean I've always known that social media can be toxic and everyone shows their perfect life, where they're going what they're eating how good they look. So, if anything, I don't think it's changed my perception it just like helps me feel more comfortable. I haven't posted as much on my like regular Instagram because [my CHAARG Instagram] is still like more fun for me. And yeah the connections that I make [on my CHAARG Instagram] as opposed to like comments that you say "Oh you look good," but now on [my CHAARG Instagram], like girls will be more interactive as far as like "Oh you like ate that or made that." Stuff like that it's like the interactions too are more authentic as well.

I want to highlight a phrase Monica uses that aptly represents the effect of the affective public: "I don't think it's changed my perception [of Instagram], it just like helps me feel more comfortable." She still understands the rules of posting on Instagram, but her community built in her the confidence to imagine that it could also be something different—a "comfortable" space where she belongs. In describing the work of affective publics, Papachrissi encourages us to look past overt political statements on social media and into how play constitutes a form of political action "as a strategy for dealing with the fixity of norms" (95). Posting on her CHAARG Instagram gives Monica a means of playing with the fixity of rules on Instagram. Her CHAARG Instagram gives her a chance to play with a different kind of identity, one with more confidence in posting and one connected to other people who care about what she's doing rather than just how she looks. Papacharissi argues that imagining and performing behaviors on social media is empowering for individuals because it allows them to "rehearse and reinvent behaviors" (97). Not only has the performance of the CHAARG Instagram allowed Monica to experiment and play with the normed practices of influencer-centric Instagram, but it also allows her to see the contrast of how people respond to her differently when she does so. She notes that when she posts a flattering picture on her regular Instagram account, people merely comment on her appearance ("Oh you look good") but the CHAARG Instagram people make what she calls an "authentic" connection or have an authentic interaction with her.

Conclusion: Feminist Social Media Use and the Activism of Young Women

At first glance, it is easy to dismiss the CHAARG Instagram as a kind of "popular feminism." Characterized by an absence of collectivity and a lack of critique of social structures, popular feminism relies on confidence within an individual, proclaiming that sexism and misogyny can be overcome with an individual, can-do, "lean in" attitude (Banet-Wiser 54). As Banet-Wiser writes, "it is the responsibility of individual women and girls to love their bodies, regardless of how much, and how often culture tells us we should hate them" (74). Reading Banet-Wiser's book, I felt that her framework for popular feminism was

too simplistic to describe what was happening on the CHAARG Instagram. While the CHAARG Instagram is still technically a kind of popular feminism because of its connection to "confidence," it also offers us a more nuanced view that demonstrates (1) how confidence moves on social media via a peer collective and (2) how this emotion of confidence intervenes into the existing emotions built into social media. I thus want to suggest that feminist media scholars study social media using ethnographic methods aimed at revealing community norms and standards instead of just the practices of individual composers.

First, I have attempted to demonstrate here the movement of the emotion of confidence across a collective on social media. Though Instagram ostensibly exists for the individual user to document their life through photos and images, the ability to use hashtags, tag other people, and the ease of switching between multiple accounts allows users to build community and a collaborative visual-based culture (Leaver, Highfield, and Abidin 16). Because social media moves so fast and changes so frequently, it can be difficult to capture the collaborative network behind individual social media posts, but my interviews clearly suggest that these women see themselves in community with other users, and their posts reflect this sentiment. It would be wrong to identify the emotion of confidence in any one of the women I interviewed as an individual feeling; rather, users take up the group's mission to change the way people feel about their bodies existing in a certain space and to transmit this feeling to new and existing members. They talk about imagining different ways they might exist on social media, trying out different kinds of posts, and gauging audience reaction and interaction. They encourage and inspire each other to do hard things like a difficult workout but also to post a less-than-perfect photo. This emotional labor of the group is diffused to new members of the group who in turn imagine what their participation in the group might look like, loosening the restrictive genre rules of Instagram, even if just for a moment and just for a specific community.

Aware of the way that influencer culture has come to dominate the space of Instagram, the women in this group create posts that do not fully disrupt the norm to post a flattering picture but push back and play with the idea. The collective transmittal of the emotion of confidence on Instagram renews the women's energy and enthusiasm for posting online. Papacharissi challenges researchers to think about how "the performative contexts afforded by social media reproduce social norms so that we have the opportunity to engage and reverse them through our personally political performances" (95). The CHAARG Instagram authorizes these women to try on a different social media persona that imagines just a bit more freedom on social media and gives them a purpose in posting and a supportive audience for doing so.

It is easy to dismiss the work of CHAARG Instagram as a kind of popular feminism if it's studied as an individual practice. Had I interviewed just one CHAARG member, I might have just written an article condemning the hyper-individuality of popular feminism and agreed with Banet-Wiser that the burden of confidence gets placed on "individual girls and women, while sidestepping the social mechanisms and structures that encourage girls and women to have a lack of confidence in the first place" (100). But because I approached this research as more of an ethnographic study, trying to discern how emotion moves through this collective of women, I can see it more clearly as an activist practice. I can see how these women share a

similar attitude about the toxicity of social media and its anxiety-provoking standards. I can also see how the women bond together to intervene in these emotions with a newfound confidence, imagining other, more thoughtful uses of social media and how they pass along these emotions to new members.

I thus want to conclude by suggesting that feminist media scholars study social media as the practice of a community, using ethnographic methods aimed at revealing community norms, emotions, and practices. Rather than just focusing social media research on individual users, it might be more useful for feminists to look at the peer collectives that influence an everyday user. The women I interviewed clearly saw their individual social media use as arising from the accepted cultural practices of Instagram and influenced by the way their newfound community functioned on social media. I would further suggest that ethnographic studies of social media can show how seemingly small or mundane practices can be a kind of everyday activism, uniting a community together in resistance to a dominant emotion, and claiming a space for new ways of imagining the uses of social media.

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When Ethics Get in the Way: The Methodological Messiness of Analyzing #MeToo

Caroline Dadas

Abstract: This article uses a queer methodological approach to explore ethical concerns that emerged while the author was conducting research on the #MeToo movement. It incorporates the queer concepts of failure and intentionality to argue that researchers must be open to the possibility of failure if they are to proceed ethically with sensitive topics. The piece also addresses how research in digital environments can yield ethical quandaries, which was the case with the planned #MeToo study. It concludes with reflections on how researchers who experience similar kinds of methodological tensions might reframe the goals and trajectories of their projects.

Since its inception as an online social justice movement in 2017[1], #MeToo has demonstrated how progress toward a more just reality is not linear but rather proceeds in fits and starts. The founder of #Me-Too, Tarana Burke, in her five-year assessment of the movement, states that "It's up and down and up and down all the time" (Kantor and Twohey 2022). When a social justice movement plays out primarily on social media, how do researchers of digital rhetoric capture the breadth of the movement's digital activity, doing so in a way that captures its ebbs and flows? Seven years after an explosion of activity on Twitter attesting to the systemic harassment of women and other gender minorities, #MeToo represents a groundswell of outrage that poked holes in the status quo, leading to serious repercussions for several high profile people and organizations such as Harvey Weinstein, Andrew Cuomo, Matt Lauer, and the Southern Baptist leadership. Having begun to conduct research on #MeToo by archiving #MeToo-themed tweets, I wondered if this back-and-forth type of progress might be evident within these tweets attesting to the average person's experiences. I envisioned a compilation of #MeToo tweets as my project's centerpiece: a repository of information about people's perceptions of the movement and how that perception changed over time. Considering the millions of #MeToo tweets that were published, I hoped that studying this archive would yield a rich portrayal of an online social justice movement.

My hope did not come to fruition. I write this article to share that this project, as initially envisioned, can be seen as a kind of failure: a rhetorical orientation that I will explore from a queer perspective throughout this piece. In many ways, this article focuses on what I didn't do: namely, include a collection of #Me-Too texts (i.e., people's public tweets) in my project. Ultimately, I never developed an empirical, replicable method for analyzing the most well-publicized artifact of the movement. As I will detail below, this research

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failure was born of a deep concern and care for what the tweets chronicle and represent: people's trauma, struggles, and intimate inner lives. As a researcher interested in how people conduct activist work online, I was immediately drawn to #MeToo as it played out on Twitter; the movement's entrance into the cultural zeitgeist reinforced my desire to study it in further depth. At the same time, its very nature–a public telling of stories that we are often socially dissuaded from sharing–also rendered it a thorny topic for scholarly attention. In sum: how would I move forward as a researcher while honoring the survivors and avoiding the exploitation of their stories?

Before addressing where I ultimately landed with this research, I first want to detail my initial research plan. In 2017, I began collecting #MeToo tweets using Gephi, amassing an archive of Twitter activity with this hashtag. As I considered what an analysis of these tweets might look like, however, I began to have doubts. The content of these tweets potentially represented some of the most traumatic moments of people's lives: stories of violent assault, ongoing harassment, and personal betrayal. Regardless of what shape my analysis took, did I have the right to take these tweets out of the kairotic environment in which they were composed and then (re)present them in a publication? Could the authors have ever envisioned their tweets being published within an academic context when they took to Twitter to tell their stories? Might they feel any regret about revealing what they wrote, now that time had passed? Would I be justified in quoting from the tweets, leaving open the possibility that I might drive unwanted attention to the authors' Twitter feeds and other parts of their online presence?

With these questions as a foundation, I use this article to reflect on the considerations that I took into account while researching the #MeToo movement from a queer, feminist perspective. Informed by work in digital rhetoric, especially social network analysis, I use this article to surface thorny issues that I encountered while attempting to construct my research methods and conduct my analysis within a feminist framework. While I consider my #MeToo research plan a failure, I explore how within a queer methodological framework, failures can yield valuable insights into how we approach future digital research.

A Queer Framework

I come at this study from the perspective of a queer scholar who has published on the ability of queer methodologies to productively transgress our assumptions about research practices. In the collection Reorienting Writing Studies, William P. Banks, Matthew B. Cox, and I identify three rhetorical orientations that queerness offers: rhetorics of intentionality, failure, and forgetting (12-16). The first two orientations–intentionality and failure–were foundational to my thinking about how to engage with #MeToo tweets; these orientations are, I believe, particularly relevant for research within digital environments, which experience a frequent state of flux. Rhetorics of intentionality place an emphasis on intention over outcome, a transgressive practice that challenges the primacy of the finished product (12). A heteronormative rhetoric emphasizes data-driven methods and particular kinds of outcomes; within a research context, this kind of rhetoric would encompass assumptions about what methods and methodologies grant a research

project rigor. Research grounded in a rhetoric of intentionality will be at odds with research practices celebrated within other areas of our field, as I will show with my discussion of social network analysis below. This approach of intentionality allows researchers to see nuance in the research process in ways that we otherwise might not, confined by expectations of what counts as measurable, observable, replicable. Rhetorics of intentionality also allow for failure as a viable endpoint. We may have intended for a research process to unfold in particular ways, but when it does not, that failure is not cast in a negative light. As Sara Ahmed, Jack Halberstam, and other queer theorists have argued, the neoliberal preoccupation with success forecloses pathways that might generate new clearings and understandings. G. Patterson builds on this perspective in their chapter "Queering and Transing Quantitative Research" by arguing that the outliers in our data–often thought of as failures within the scope of the research question/framework–can generate important insights or new directions for inquiry. Thinking of a research project through the frames of intentionality and failure, then, shifts our focus toward processes, detours, and the messiness of research: all areas worthy of our scholarly attention.

As a queer-identifying individual, I also value maintaining research practices that are capacious and non-normative in their orientations. While queerness still marks individuals as aberrant and susceptible to discriminatory practices (as I write, legislation targeting queer individuals is being proposed and enacted across the country), part of the power of queerness is its potential to interrogate normative practices. The freedom that queerness allows to propose new approaches, ways of living, and epistemologies can inform our research methodologies, even when studying presumably "non-queer" subjects. Specific to this project, I have reflected on what would be gained from analyzing #MeToo tweets and at what personal cost to their authors. With this queer methodological frame in mind, I also drew on feminist methods as I considered the ethics of whether to incorporate #MeToo tweets into my research. Next, I will review how the principles of reflexivity and an attention to power dynamics informed my decision-making process for this project. In doing so, I hope to both draw distinctions and highlight resonances between a queer methodological approach and feminist methods.

North Star: Feminist Research Principles

The decision that I made to not incorporate #MeToo tweets into my project came as a result of engaging in practices that I first learned as a feminist researcher. Decades' worth of Writing Studies scholarship on feminist research practices has offered guidance for scholars seeking to disrupt patriarchal assumptions while upholding an ethical relationship between the researcher and participants / those implicated in the research. Feminist research practices of online spaces in particular have long advocated for researchers being careful and respectful; committed to social justice and improvement of circumstances for participants; critically reflexive; flexible; dialogic; and transparent (McKee and Porter 155-156). In particular, Writing Studies' interest in technofeminism has yielded a rich body of work that offers guidance for conducting research in the ever-shifting landscape of online environments (Blair, Gajjala, and Tulley). Two characteristics of feminist methodologies that informed this project are the importance of researcher reflexivity and an attention to the

power dynamics of the study.

Reflexivity

Key to my research process was consistently being reflective about whether my plan could reasonably unfold as I had intended. As I became more immersed in the data, my concern about the ethics of sharing #MeToo tweets became the driving factor in my decisions about how to structure this project. In fact, I questioned whether I should move forward with the project at all without the quoted tweets. A constant negotiation with uncertainty and unpredictability in our research is what is truly demanded of us–even when putting parts or the whole of a project in jeopardy–if we are to proceed from a place of honesty and vulnerability. In her book, Surrender: Feminist Rhetoric and Ethics in Love and Illness, Jessica Restaino explores the uncertainty that can confront the researcher-writer in the course of a project, particularly one that engages with trauma. Her collaboration with Susan Lundy Maute, who was living with terminal breast cancer during their research together, required detours from accepted methodological practices within the discipline in order to stay true to the nature of their relationship and what they were trying to capture as they documented Maute's final months. Restaino uses her experiences from this project to build on the feminist methodological practice of reflexivity by encouraging researchers to engage in "an open process through which researchers can more fully investigate their own experiences: the confusions, the cracks, the falling-to-pieces of the work itself that indeed not only function as knowledge making in feminist rhetorical study but also remake the researcher-writer with newly defined roles, responsibilities, and capacities for doing the work itself" (79). As Maute became increasingly ill, Restaino had to make choices about how she would move forward without her friend and collaborator: what she calls the project's "refusal of full clarity" (92).

With my uncertainty about whether I could incorporate the traumatic stories contained in tweets about #MeToo, "the confusions, the cracks, the falling-to-pieces of the work itself" became more pronounced. At several junctures, I worried I no longer had a project without the #MeToo tweets. Restaino urges researchers to engage in this type of methodological soul-searching in the pursuit of knowledge-making about the researcher's "roles, responsibilities, and capacities." While I held a scholarly desire to share the rhetorical richness of my archive of #MeToo tweets, further reflection on the ethics of this approach opened up a new scholarly direction, as represented in this article. Doing so required that I foreground my responsibility to the stories told in the tweets; to the people who were telling the stories; to #MeToo as a movement of profound vulnerability as well as strength. We must be willing to work along the edges of a project's implosion if we are to be truly honest with ourselves about our motivations and the possible repercussions of our actions as researchers.

Feminist research methods have long championed reflexivity, but as our research projects engage new contexts, particularly those that involve trauma, reengaging a commitment to this principle can benefit not only our individual projects but also our communities and disciplines. While feminist reflexivity

may seem reminiscent of a queer rhetoric of intentionality, I distinguish between the two by highlighting the degree of emphasis that they place on outcomes, respectively. While feminist methods embrace messiness in the process of attaining one's research outcomes–the writer's roles, approaches, and directions of the research project may morph and shift over time–queer methodologies are not necessarily attached to outcomes. In the spirit of rejecting normative framing, queer methodologies acknowledge that the whole project, as we intended it, might fall apart–and there is value in that. Drawing from our intentionality, we can use our lack of success to envision new directions for future research in this or other areas of inquiry.

Power dynamics

The second aspect of feminist methodology that I emphasized in making my decision represents the core of any feminist project: paying attention to how power circulates. For decades, scholars doing work in digital rhetoric have pointed to how employing a feminist methodology necessitates a focus on marginalizing practices and discourses. According to Mary Hocks, "When done well, feminism works in the interests of all underrepresented and oppressed groups, including gender as simply a part of constructed social identities, and it interrogates and works against dominant cultural ideologies" (236). As Hocks maintains, feminism "when done well" critiques all dominant discourses, including those related to race, class, ability, religion, or sexuality–as well as a gender spectrum. In this regard, feminists over many decades have established a foundation that queer methodologies have built upon, calling attention to who is being privileged at the expense of whom. Studies of digital contexts such as Paige Banaji's work on the hashtag #SolidarityisForWhiteWomen have used an intersectional analysis to identify instances when feminism does not center the concerns and voices of Black women. In their work on the feminist possibilities of social network analysis (SNA), Michael Faris and Patricia Fancher argue that while SNA can easily be used to replicate unequal power dynamics, researchers must be committed to asking questions about who is marginalized and make interventions whenever possible. Particularly in digital contexts that sometimes have been thought to level the playing field of equity and access, feminist scholars working in digital rhetoric have been attuned to the need for an explicit focus on how power circulates in and as a result of online environments.

I use the term "circulates" above to invoke the research area of circulation studies, which has garnered significant traction in recent years despite not having engaged at length with the role that power plays in the "dynamic, ubiquitous flow of discourse, ideas, information" (Gries 5). Circulation studies is concerned with how arguments are taken up and propelled forward across material and virtual networks (Gries, 2015; Ridolfo, 2015; Edwards, 2017; Gries and Brooke, 2018). This research informed my decision not to take #MeToo tweets composed for one media ecology (Twitter) and circulate them in another (the audience of this book). As tweets become recontextualized by users via retweets or other methods, they can move into unexpected circumstances and gain new audiences. Such is the natural life cycle of much contemporary media. However, my actions as a scholar citing #MeToo tweets in a book would push them into a whole new ecology. My access to publishing channels represents a form of power, especially in the sense that many #MeToo tweets address traumatic incidents. When they wrote their message, most people likely did not envision a

researcher analyzing it in a publication. Each tweet was composed within a network of other tweets with the same hashtag. They existed within a media ecology where #MeToo messages inspired, responded to, amplified other #MeToo messages; all of these tweets existed alongside one another temporally, created in the same kairotic moment. The nature of online networks makes it difficult for researchers to recreate this ecology as an archive, with the possibility for tweets to be deleted, and the exact sequencing of messages difficult to recreate. Because online messages circulate within a particular context, analyzing them outside of that circulation strips them of important contextual information. In this sense, I see the potential for power to function as a dynamic process rather than a static state of being; this perspective was a major driver of my decision not to include tweets in my #MeToo study. Reflecting on the potential power I held in this context allowed me to make a decision that is consistent with feminism's concern for marginalized discourses and subject positions.

With the remainder of this article, I offer an overview of how scholarship in digital rhetoric, particularly social network analysis, informed my initial goals for my research project. I then detail how those goals became untenable. I conclude with reflections on how researchers who experience similar kinds of methodological tensions might reframe the goals and trajectories of their projects.

A Social Network Analysis Failure

While Writing Studies has produced a considerable history of scholarship on ethical digital research practices (McKee and Porter, 2009; Reyman and Sparby, 2021; VanKooten and Del Hierro, 2022), online environments continue to change at a rapid pace, creating an exigency for revised perspectives on digital research practices. The scope and nature of #MeToo present an opportunity for reflection on the ethics of social network analysis-influenced methods. Social network analysis (SNA) emerged from a need for researchers to extract data from and make sense of the patterns generated by an online network. Digital media scholars in Writing Studies have focused on citation patterns (Faris and Cox, 2015; Mueller, 2017; Palmeri and McCorkle, 2018) to make arguments about trends and trajectories of the field, as well as noting which scholars and scholarship have been pushed to the margins in a given time period. In Michael Faris and Matthew B. Cox's queer annotated bibliography project, they note the lack of Black scholars being cited with frequency within queer scholarship. Derek Mueller uses academic article keywords to show what issues concerned the field at a particular moment in time. His approach to "word-watching" (73) generated a visualization based on a keyword analysis of data (507 CCC articles published between 1989 and 2013), illustrating how the field's focus areas changed over time. These studies stand as potent examples of network analysis that reveals trends and patterns that otherwise may be difficult to discern.

In this article I use Fancher and Faris's work as a reference point for how the SNA methods of distant reading and data visualization can be compatible with a feminist methodology. Their application of SNA provides a useful point of comparison with this study, as both attempt to reconcile feminist principles such as transparency and an awareness of power with SNA. In their discussion of various feminist research proj-

ects, Faris and Fancher focus on mapping names of scholars or historical figures in order to illustrate who is being cited/referenced most frequently. They use network visualizations as both a method for illustrating the data they gathered as well as a heuristic for generating new lines of inquiry. Visualizations such as Figure 1 below provide a compelling method for representing a sizable amount of information in a spatially-compressed format, considering that line thickness, node size, node color, and labels all represent perspectives on the network.
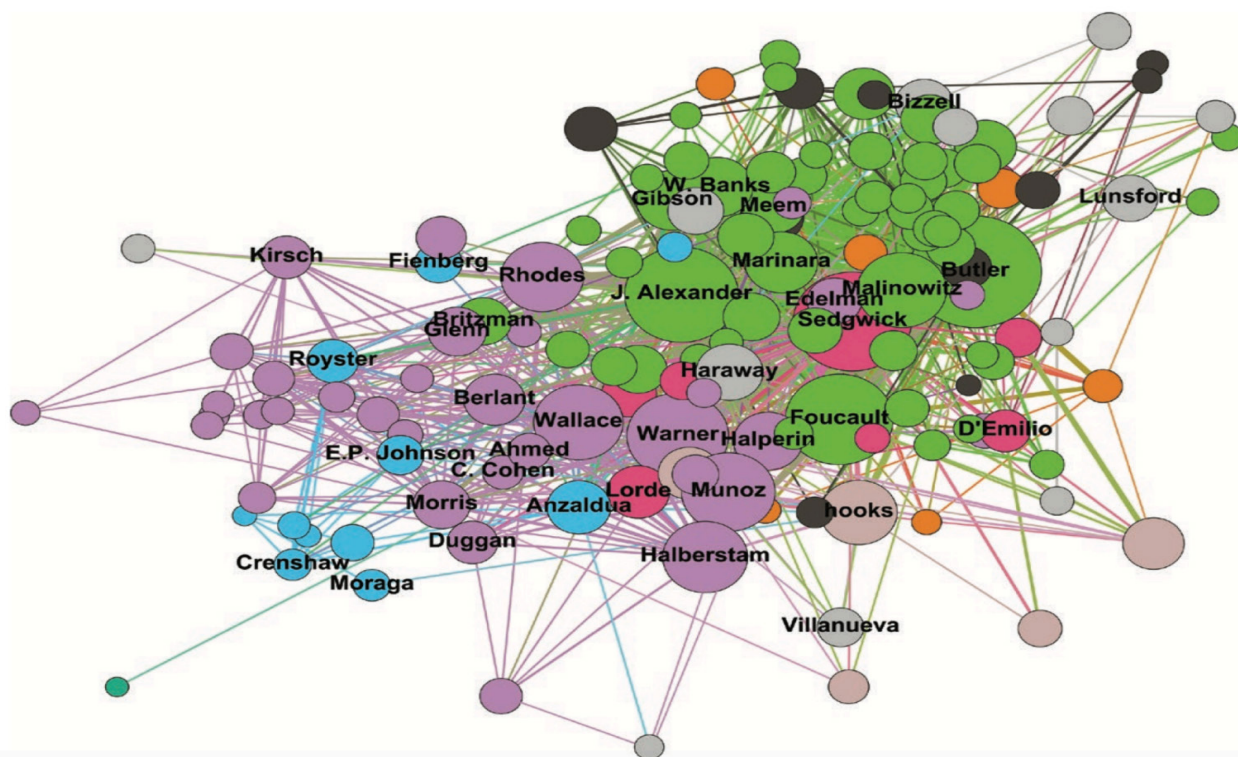
Figure 1: A network graph from Fancher and Faris' "Social Network Analysis and Feminist Methodology," illustrating queer rhetoric scholars who were co-cited at least three times

At the same time, Fancher and Faris note several critiques of the visualization method, including that "[visualizations] are often misread or presumed to transparently represent reality. This challenge is especially significant for feminist researchers who have long critiqued claims of objectivity" (140). Their invoking of the feminist critique of objectivity here builds toward their overarching argument that SNA is, in fact, compatible with a feminist methodology; when some information is emphasized, other information is necessarily excluded or minimized. While visualizing networks has its benefits and drawbacks like any method, ultimately, Fancher and Faris argue, it may offer insights into feminist research principles such as embodiment and movement. Visualizing data can open up possibilities not easily revealed by other methods:

SNA is not simply collecting data and representing the reality of networks but rather a matter of choices researchers make about how to define the network, what data to include, how the data is

collected, how the data is organized and coded, how the data is visualized and presented to read-
ers, how the data is analyzed, and perhaps most importantly, what questions are asked of this data.
(154)

Fancher and Faris describe a reflexive and malleable process that interrogates the discreteness and objectivity of a network. They emphasize how data can be sliced in a variety of ways: a reality that reveals the conditional nature of our findings in any given study. In making the choices that we do as researchers, Fancher and Faris advocate for transparency and reflection, conditions that feminist researchers have long advocated for.

My reason for dwelling on Fancher and Faris' work here is twofold. First, I want to emphasize their argument that SNA is compatible with feminist methods: an important point, given my own proj-ect. Second, their article serves as a point of reference for scholarship on current digital methods and how my analysis of #MeToo tweets failed to play out in ways that are in close alignment with those methods. Notably, unlike many projects that employ social network analysis, my #MeToo project does not incorporate visualizations as a locus of analysis. Below I explore why, in the case of #MeToo, incorporating visualization methods did not seem appropriate for this project.

Data visualization as failed #MeToo research method

When I considered using visualization methods to map the #MeToo tweets that I collected, I en-tertained two options: either visualizing keywords of the tweets (to track how the most common topics changed over time) or visualizing the authors of the tweets (to determine levels of influence over time). The keywords could serve as the basis for a network visualization, illustrating how central concerns of the movement may or may not have changed over time. Synthesizing articles into thematic foci would allow me to better understand what areas of the movement were being publicized in the press during a particular pe-riod of time. Adopting this approach for #MeToo tweets raises an ethical concern about distilling someone's trauma into an analytical unit. Considering the nature of these tweets, we as researchers can enact further violence in the coding process by removing the nuances of a person's experience in the service of conduct-ing our analysis. The risk of reductionism is one that scholars implementing a keywords approach must guard against. With the risk of stripping important nuance from the units of analysis, using keywords as a method for coding pieces of writing about traumatic experiences carries ethical risks that must be carefully considered.

The other route that I considered involved visualizing #MeToo tweet authors to better understand who the most influential actors were at various points in the movement (echoing Fancher and Faris' ap-proach in Figure 1). Twitter's "retweet," "reply," and "like" functions offer one set of guideposts–a kind of citation process–for assessing which tweets gained traction with other users. A citation-based framework for measuring influence assumes that the more that a concept or author is discussed, the more weight they

carry within the network, for various reasons (a queer approach to data analysis might honor the outliers, or those authors or concepts who do not amass significant numbers when it comes to citations and similar practices). Given the well-publicized critique of #MeToo that it has centered the voices of white women celebrities, one initial goal I had for the project was to trace in a systematic way how the perspectives of people of color were given less "attention" on Twitter than those of white survivors. However, Faris points out in reference to his own study that making determinations about the race of authors based solely on their tweets is a fraught practice because of the need to have to work under assumptions at times (150). For my project, then, trying to understand the degree to which the movement was oriented around white speakers could not be determined without interviewing authors and asking them to identify their race (an option that I ruled out because of concerns about "cold-calling" #MeToo participants on Twitter pertaining to a sensitive topic). A visualization depicting a writer's influence within a network necessarily implies levels of importance, depending on who is being cited most frequently. But would that writer want to be placed in comparison to another person tweeting about #MeToo? The difficulty of tracking down online authors, with varying degrees of anonymity and openness to being contacted, made the possibility of gaining permissions from these writers impracticable. Because it is impossible to determine a writer's intentions and hopes for their writing without asking them, I deemed this approach untenable.

After exploring these two research directions at length, I concluded that what I was trying to gain from the #MeToo tweet data was simply not worth the cost. My intent to explore the robustness of an online network via some of its primary texts (tweets) became outstripped by a concern for the authors themselves. Feminist methodologies emphasize how the well-being of participants should remain paramount in any research project. In the service of that principle, we as researchers must be willing to fail when we perceive participants' emotional, psychological, or physical safety as being in jeopardy. Framing this choice with a rhetoric of intentionality meant letting go of valuing an outcome–a visualized #MeToo network–above all else. Part of being a reflexive researcher means reevaluating one's research questions and intentions, or coming at them via different methods, when a particular approach does not pan out. Because #MeToo has played out on many platforms and across various media, this project demonstrates how it is possible to address questions such as who is being centered in the movement via research sites other than Twitter. A queer conception of failure acknowledges loss–in this case, of a plan that will not work out as intended–but celebrates the distillation of a new plan, even if it seems to fly in the face of expectations.

As I continued to move forward with this project, I wondered: If I write an article about #MeToo that does not analyze #MeToo tweets, what methodological understandings might be gained from this "lack"? Below I sketch out my answers to this question.

Considerations for Future Digital Research Projects

While Writing Studies has amassed a robust collection of scholarship on social networks, as I write, two of the dominant social networking platforms, Facebook and Twitter, have lost considerable cultural

currency due to issues around privacy protections, hate speech, the presence of bots, and private ownership. The social network landscape is changing rapidly, and it is difficult to imagine the shape of it even a year from now. Even so, millions of people continue to share their thoughts, organize, and collaborate on social media. New platforms will continue to emerge. As numerous scholars have noted, social media platforms have served as important activist spaces (Walls and Vie, 2017; Reyman and Sparby, 2021; Lockett, 2021), and vibrant communities such as Black Twitter continue to seek out camaraderie and support in these virtual spaces (Banks and Gilyard, 2018; Lockett, 2021). For these reasons, we should continue to conduct research on social networks–but do so with an understanding that flexible methods and emerging methodologies will be needed. My research on #MeToo stands as a case study in how to take up intentionality and failure as vital frames for digital research projects.

Throughout this article I have stressed how using queer rhetorical frames and feminist methods for digital research can both surface important ethical questions and also open up new vantage points for digital projects. As was the case with my project, attempts to apply current methods sometimes fall short, leaving us in what can feel like a place of precarity: we may question whether our project is out of step with current scholarship, rigorous enough, or even a valid line of inquiry. My plan to visualize an archive of #MeToo tweets, and experiencing ethical quandaries about moving forward with this approach, presented an opportunity to reconceptualize this project. Using the queer rhetorical frames of failure and intentionality allowed me to reframe what I initially interpreted as a lack–stemming from either myself or the subject matter–as an occasion for asking methodological questions about my goals and methods. What kinds of questions should researchers be asking when they put digital methods (in this case, social network analysis) in conversation with queerness and feminism? What tensions and possibilities emerge from this combination?

With the table below, I admit that I am resisting giving clear direction; I am still wrestling with the issues that I raise here myself. I offer these questions as a heuristic for researchers whose projects engage with these scholarly areas so that they may consider the ethical implications of various research designs. In the table I list several issues related to research design and execution that were most pressing in my study of #MeToo; I then summarize guidance that both queer methodologies and feminist methods may offer. Finally, given that guidance, I share questions that digital researchers might consider as they design and carry out their projects.

	Queer methodologies	Feminist methods		Digital research
Sensitivity of topic	Our work must honor those who are marginalized while not contributing to their trauma via our research.	Even when online posts are public, we must hold the rights and needs of the people behind those texts as paramount.		How can we research social network discussions of difficult topics online (sometimes written by marginalized populations) while remaining respectful and careful?
Participant / subject agency and involvement	Not honoring the outliers in a network can marginalize them.	Maintaining a concern for the well-being of those implicated in our research above all other factors. Being attentive to power dynamics and seeking to disrupt them.		When working with online texts, is it appropriate to contact the writers of social media posts for permissions, given the subject matter/timing/platform?
Adherence to original research plan	The neoliberal preoccupation with success can foreclose promising detours and even derailments	Letting go of our intended processes can occasion opportunities for self-reflexive work.		How can we make space for projects that, despite our intentions, out of necessity stray from common research practices/ methods in the field?
Rigor of the project	Intentionality is as valued as outcomes.	Messiness in terms of process or outcomes is reflective of nuance and sensitivity to the topic and/or needs of participants.		What might rigor in digital research projects look like when our original research plan fails? How can we reframe a project's outcomes around intentionality?
Treatment of failure	Failure is a productive outcome and can open new avenues of inquiry.	Researchers should adopt a stance of transparency when the project does not progress as intended.		How do we talk about / engage with scenarios where common digital research methods such as SNA do not serve our projects?

Figure 2: Common research design / implementation considerations

The field of digital rhetoric has long maintained an openness to developing new methods and methodologies to respond to ever-changing online environments. Scholarship on digital research continues to evidence the range of methodological approaches being developed (VanKooten, 2016; VanKooten and DelHierro, 2022), with some scholars specifically focusing on the intersection of feminism and digital research (McKee and Porter, 2009; Faris and Fancher, 2022). I add queer methodologies into this mix as a frame for helping us pick up the pieces when our research projects take a detour, become unsettled, fall apart. Sitting with failure and honoring our intentions may drive us away from academic standards of rigor and outcomes and replicability. But what will these new orientations allow us to see as researchers? To become more queerly-oriented in our research practices may offer new directions for digital rhetoric as we consider how the landscapes of activism and social networks continue to evolve.

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Cluster Introduction: Why Teach Feminist Rhetorical New Materialisms

Megan Poole

Abstract: When new materialist theory met rhetoric, definitions of rhetoric were expanded to consider non-human ways of communicating and making meaning. Whereas ample theory in rhetoric studies supports scholars studying rhetorical new materialisms and teaching feminist composition, few resources serve as guides for how to teach feminist new materialist rhetorics. Further, to our knowledge, no records exist of how students experience this "Big Rhetoric." This cluster conversation presents what experiencing new materialist rhetoric feels like to undergraduate students, in their own words.

Glory be to God for dappled things–

For skies of couple-colour as a brinded cow;

For rose-moles all in stipple upon trout that swim;

Fresh-firecoal chestnut-falls; finches' wings;

All things counter, original, spare, strange;

Whatever is fickle, freckled (who knows how?)

With swift, slow; sweet, sour; adazzle, dim;

He fathers-forth whose beauty is past change.

Gerard Manley Hopkins, "Pied Beauty" lines 1-4; 7-10

The world we study, philosopher of science Nancy Cartwright calls a "dappled world." "Pied Beauty," the Hopkins poem that inspired Cartwright's turn of phrase, hints at how the world speaks through its colors, tastes, and sounds. "We live in a dappled world," Cartwright argues, "a world rich in different things, with different natures, behaving in different ways. The laws that describe this world are a patchwork, not a pyramid . . . . For all we know, most of what occurs in nature occurs by hap, subject to no law at all" (1). Some evolutionary scientists stake their careers on this idea: that most of what occurs in nature occurs by hap, that non-human individuals and their radically unique tastes and habits fashion the natural world's differential

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becoming.[1] So should you propose to scientists that the world we live in is a dappled one, most would agree. For rhetoricians, however, this world may be dappled, but it's not quite the one theorized by Cartwright.

Cartwright implies that scientists are separate from the world around them, their arguments concerning the ornaments and wing songs of birds only ever channeled through discursive symbols. As she remarks:

> [Scientists] have no special lenses that allow them to see through to the structure of nature. Nor have they a special connection or a special ear that reveals to them directly the language in which the Book of Nature is written. The concepts and structures that they use to describe the world must be derived from the ideas and concepts that they find around them . . . . Always the source must be the books of human authors and not the original Book of Nature. (46)

Certainly, there is no way to translate the "Book of Nature" into forms that human animals can understand discursively. But scientists—any human observer really—may take a look, may bend an ear, and become swallowed by nature in all its magnitude. Because if we are part of that world we seek to understand, as new materialist scholars Karen Barad, Robin Wall Kimmerer, Eduardo Kohn, and others contend, then human animals share a deep semiosis with those non-human relatives under "study." This semiosis may register more on the level of the senses than the symbol, but affective, shared meaning is just as sure.[2]

When applied to rhetoric, new materialisms insist that the bounds of what is rhetorical be stretched beyond texts and discourse and, further, that the subjects involved in rhetorical inquiry feature more than the human. In *Where's the Rhetoric,* S. Scott Graham finds a Bergsonian root, via Kenneth Burke, for rhetorical new materialisms, and importantly clarifies that rhetorical new materialisms grounds inquiry in a "relational metaphysics and a flat ontology" (188), not reinforcing a hierarchy in which human discourse is privileged above other ways of knowing. Graham further identifies three main points of consensus among new materialist scholars (including, but not limited to rhetorical new materialist scholars): 1) Western thought has too long been preoccupied with dualistic thought; 2) dualistic thought has enforced a policed divide between "human" and "nonhumans"; 3) dualistic thought leads to the unethical mistreatment of others in the world (188). In response to rhetoric's historical tendency to instantiate those same borders, most pointedly between "the human" and "the animal," Diane Davis argues that what was treated as an "ostensibly ontological border" is more of "a metaphysical prejudice." "There [is] no indivisible border," Davis argues, "only an infinitely divisible limit, a site of exposure that joined what it also separated" (277).[3] Relational

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1   This idea is perhaps most pronounced in ornithologist Richard O. Prum's *The Evolution of Beauty.* There, Prum argues, somewhat controversially, for biologists to take the subjective experiences of animals seriously, rather than reducing their choices in sexual selection only to measures of "fitness."

2   Rhetoric scholar Diane Keeling and anthropologist Barbara Smuts articulate how interspecies interactions are made possible via affect and sensation. Keeling argues that "living together *socially* is possible through a shared arena of sensation," through an expansive "common sense" (236). Likewise, Smuts reports a "deep intersubjectivity" between herself and non-human animals in which "a new subjective reality—a shared language, culture, or experience—[transcends] . . . the individuality of the participants (308).

3   Diana Coole and Samantha Frost similarly define the work of new materialisms as that which asks scholars "to think in

ontologies, Laura Micchiche shows, allow scholars to *witness* this joining, this enmeshed connectivity, as she defines a relational ontology as a "radical withness" (503). For rhetorical new materialisms, Micchiche explains, "writing is contaminated, made possible by a mingling of forces and energies in diverse, often distributed environments" (503).

"Relationality," then, could be considered one of the most important keywords in rhetorical new materialisms, and while remnants of these ideas certainly flow through dominant histories of rhetoric, as Graham shows, rhetorical new materialisms also emerge from interdisciplinary roots that are decidedly feminist. The well-known turn to new materialisms, after all, is most famously found through feminist science studies scholars like Karen Barad, Donna Haraway, and Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing.[4] Here, the mark of feminist new materialisms is a radical expansion of agency that de-centers the human and extends meaning and decision-making capabilities beyond logical thought. In *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, Barad turns her attention to the Stern-Gerlach experiment (which set out to study the momentum of quantum particles) to ask how material objects under observation, and those not directly under observation, alter what can be known. Unable to be replicated with accuracy for years, the Stern-Gerlach experiment pushed scientists to uncover that sulfur from the cigars routinely smoked by one of the study's original scientists influenced study results. In this way, matter comes to be known as lively and agential, and witnessing as much comes to require feminist standpoints that challenge established norms, knowledges, and hierarchies.

For Amanda Booher and Julie Jung, such rethinking of agency and resketching of boundaries are tasks suited to the feminist rhetorician. "Understanding how some changes happen to the exclusion of others," Booher and Jung insist, "is rhetorical work: by engaging as rhetoricians in the world's continual becoming, we can participate in remaking boundaries and meanings of difference by helping to enact alternative material-discursive entanglements" (32). Alternative material-discursive entanglements help to fashion more just, alternative worlds, and so Booher and Jung's "feminist rhetorical science studies" is not only interested in identifying non-hegemonic methods of inquiry, but also in revealing "those practices that sustain asymmetrical relations of power between differentially embodied beings" (5). These asymmetrical relations of power need not be limited to discourse, and these differentially embodied beings need not be limited to the human. For example, in "Toward a Posthuman Perspective," Sarah Hallenbeck proposes her own posthuman approach to feminist rhetorical studies through her analysis of how engaging with the everyday practice of bicycling in the late nineteenth century transformed cultural conceptions of gender and femininity. Similarly, Mavis Boatemaa Beckson considers African beads as objects that shift the balance of power and subvert the marginalization of African women's experiences. So, whereas not all rhetorical new materialisms engage feminist science studies specifically, shared interests in destabilizing dominant power and expanding agency lend itself to feminist approaches.

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new ways about the nature of matter and the matter of nature; about the elements of life, the resilience of the planet, and the distinctiveness of the human" (6).

4   In "Humans Involved," Tiffany Lethabo King argues that Black and Native scholars need not justify their theories through the work of White, Western theorists like Deleuze and Guattari. Or, as I once heard Kim Tallbear say about her work to a group of posthumanist scholars: "I did not need Latour to get here."

To put it another way, rhetorical new materialisms can work as feminist antenarratives—if we are to have more equitable futures, we must reimagine existing power relations and inequities that persist through dominant sociocultural narratives.[5] In this way, as feminist philosopher Elizabeth Grosz puts it, new materialisms shifts the focus of feminism from exclusively "how to give women a more equal place within existing social networks and relations" to "how to enable women to partake in the creation of a future unlike the present" (154). Yet, creating alternate futures must involve equitable access to this world-making. For this reason, abolitionist and decolonial scholar Tiffany Lethabo King importantly marks as feminist the "practices of refusal and skepticism" used by Black and Native writers like Sylvia Wynter, Zakiyyah Iman Jackson, and Amber Jamilla Musser who expose the violence and harm done by white, non-representational, post-humanist critical theories—new materialisms included—when they ignore that "conversations about the [limits of] the human are very much tethered to conversations about identity" (165). A decidedly feminist rhetorical new materialisms, then, must center Donnie Johnson Sackey's question: "What is a more just rhetorical new materialism?" (199).

Feminist rhetorical new materialisms thus expand rhetoric in ways that can allow us to consider multi-disciplinary, broadly agential approaches to social, environmental, and climate justice. But as a teacher of writing and self-proclaimed feminist rhetorical new materialist, I have often wondered how to bring this approach to rhetoric—in all its complexity—to undergraduate students. That is, I am hyper aware that I, and most scholars I know, encountered new materialisms late in our training in rhetoric. We had the "limits" of rhetoric and its too-often-touted dualisms in mind when Diana Coole and Samantha Frost invited us to conceive of matter in its entanglement. If students' first encounter with rhetoric came only through feminist new materialisms, how would they conceive of identities, suasion, and power relations?

This Cluster Conversation considers just that by outlining a course, titled "Talking to Animals, Listening to Nature," meant to expose students to rhetoric through feminist rhetorical new materialisms and invite them to grapple with their relations to one another as well as to animals, nature, and climate writ large. Through this conversation, you will mostly hear from the students themselves, with only necessary framing from me included to stitch their voices together. Rather than outline a coherent pedagogy for feminist rhetorical new materialisms, this conversation presents what might happen when undergraduate students contend with rhetoric's capaciousness. What results, at least for these students, has less to do with argumentative persuasion and more to do with what rhetorical wisdom comes from lived experiences, including lived experiences beyond the human.

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5   For the rich theory of "antenarrative" that originates in the work of Indigenous scholar David Boje, see Natasha N. Jones, Kristen R. Moore, and Rebecca Walton's "Disrupting the Past to Disrupt the Futrue."
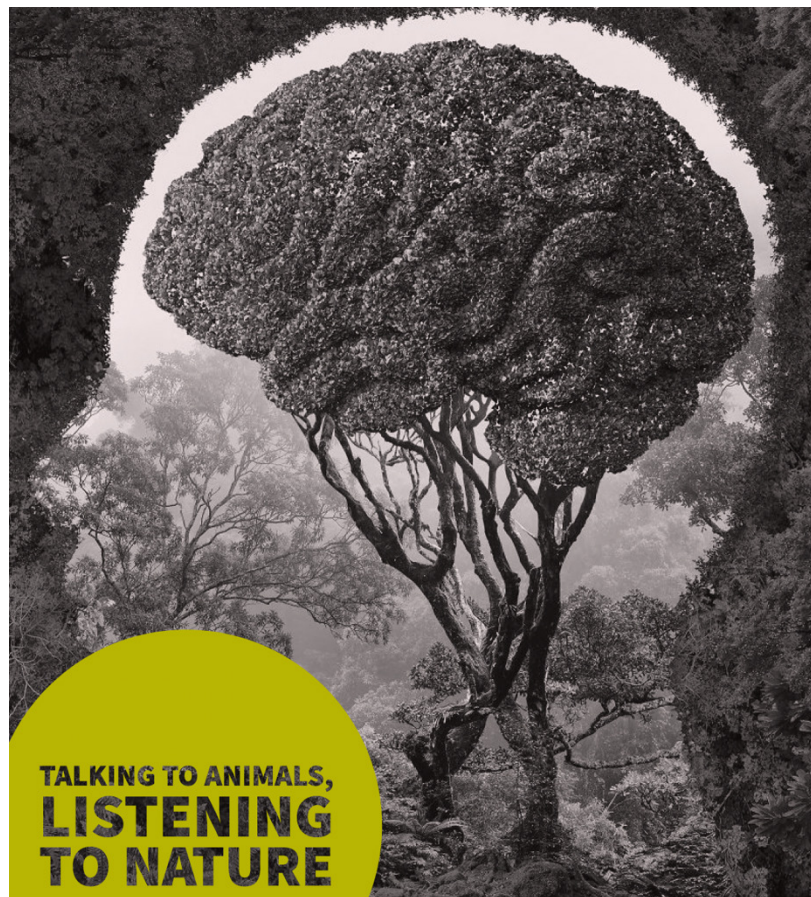
Figure 1. Cover page of syllabus. Image description: a grayscale photograph showing a tree in a forest. The top of the tree is manipulated so that the leaves look like the folds in a human brain. In the lower left corner is a green semicircle with the words "Talking to Animals, Listening to Nature."

Feminist Rhetorical New Materialisms in the Writing Classroom

"Talking to Animals, Listening to Nature" served as an undergraduate honors seminar that fulfilled a writing requirement for students at a metropolitan university where the Midwest meets the South and almost every student seems to be working through what it means to have been raised on the fringes of the Bible Belt. What promised to be an interdisciplinary course attracted mostly STEM majors, and I spent the summer realizing that whereas feminist new materialist theory and feminist composition theory is available in ample supply, there is little guidance on how to *teach* feminist rhetorical new materialisms. Two notable exceptions include Davis's "Some Reflections on the Limit," which details an undergraduate assignment in which students culled a "rhetorical bestiary" and used the intricacies of animal communication to push against the limits of rhetorical theory, as well as Yavanna M. Brownlee's "Relational Practices and Pedagogies in an Age of Climate Change," which outlines the implementation of "relational practice" into a writing classroom grounded in Indigenous rhetorics and environmental sustainability.

More broadly, Laurie Gries has considered a genre she calls "new materialist ontobiography" that "draws attention to our sensorial, embodied encounters with entities in our local environment" and accounts "for how affect and persuasion emerge through deep relationality" (302). Casey Boyle, too, considers writing as a posthuman practice, one that is always codependent on and mediated through material things (533-

534).[6] Perhaps most pointedly, Marilyn Cooper has defined the human as "the animal who writes" and argues that "writing ethically entails developing habits of paying attention to the relationalities of becoming and always entertaining the possibility that 'what everyone knows'—and what you believe—might be wrong" (6). From these touchstones, three tenets for teaching a feminist rhetorical new materialisms course emerged: theoretically, we must consider the limits and lines humans are so apt to sketch; physically, we must enter the field to learn how to attend otherwise, specifically through our senses; and socially, we must observe, revise, and maintain good relations with our neighbors, human and non-human alike.

Following these three tenets, I divided the course into three units. In Unit One, "Language and Its Limits," students read Davis, George Kennedy's "A Hoot in the Dark," and Kenneth Burke's "Definition of Man." I imagined that we would discuss why "man" has tended to hold exclusive rights to symbolizing and who benefits from delineating what and who makes a "human." In Unit Two, "Sensing the Languaging of Nature," we moved outside the classroom, into forests and fields, smelling spice bush, sighting the alligator bark of the persimmon tree, and testing everything we thought we knew about rhetoric. Students would learn, experientially, what it meant to "be there" with our subjects of study.[7] Finally, in Unit Three, "Writing for Environmental Justice," we would learn the harrowing realities of climate change, focusing specifically on the inequitable impacts of climate "disasters" as well as the everyday, incessant harms endured by communities of color who predominantly live on the fence-lines of polluting industrial facilities.

As our class progressed, I watched not only students' ideas change but also their dispositions. And maybe I should admit here at the onset that for me, teaching writing is not only about teaching how to pen words to page, but also about becoming the embodiment of our words. As Ann Berthoff reminds: "Composing—in contradistinction to filling in the slots of a drill sheet or a performed outline—is a means of discovering what we want to say, as well as *being the saying of it*" (20, emphasis added). The writing classroom, indoors or in the field, is where we discover the who, what, and why of our words, and in composing, we end up finding better ways to inhabit our worlds.

Rather than pretend to objectively detail students' experiences, I want you to hear it from them in this Cluster Conversation. Their experiences bring into relief how if we present feminist rhetorical new materialisms only as a thought experiment—read in texts and discussed in classrooms—then we do not teach radical, relational ontologies. How we are joined and entangled with all that is before us must be experienced and must be experienced *together*. For this group, as rhetoric lost its limits, it started changing their approach to the world, shifting their focus, broadening their awareness, and teaching them that the messy confusion they try to suppress is, simply, part of making meaning in a dappled world.

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6   Of course, feminist approaches to the materiality and multimodality of composition, as found in the work of Jody Shipka, Kristin Arola, Anne Frances Wysocki, and others have long considered writing as distributed and mediated.

7   This approach relies on Candice Rai and Caroline Gottschalk Druschke's *Field Rhetoric*.

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When the First Rhetoric You Hear is New Materialist

Jessica Julian and MarLee Yow

Abstract: When asked to craft a position argument defining the limits of rhetoric, students in a feminist new materialist rhetoric course grapple with the benefits and dangers of proffering "Big Rhetoric." One student narrates the worries that come with extending the bounds of rhetoric to include animals, considering that people in power will use that extension to endanger plants and landscapes. Another student expands the limits of rhetoric beyond animals and plants to all "living thought."

Context From Megan: Write a position argument defining the limits of rhetoric—that was the task given to these students. The day their rough drafts were due, a student burst into my office with a "new" finding, one that helped him better understand what we had been discussing with Burke, Kennedy, Davis, and the limits of rhetoric. "Have you ever heard of someone named Schiappa?," he asked. "He writes about 'Big Rhetoric,' and I think that may be what we're talking about." In 2001, Edward Schiappa famously defined "Big Rhetoric" as "the theoretical position that everything, or virtually everything, can be described as 'rhetorical.'" This essay came in response to critics who argued that if rhetoric was virtually everything, then it meant nothing (260). Arguably since then, Big Rhetoric has eclipsed such critiques. More recently, Ehren Helmut Pflugfelder shifted the conversation, suggesting that rhetoric's size is less important than understanding how, exactly, matter and meaning are entangled.

Following Pflugfelder, I asked students to push past the realization that rhetoric extended beyond the human and asked them to grapple with how non-human life has its own rhetorical methods of communicating and making meaning. Reading excerpts from anthropologist Eduardo Kohn's How Forests Think, *a posthumanist challenge stemming from fieldwork among the Runa people in Ecuador to that supposed ontological line between the human and everything, we questioned whether rhetoric stops where "we" can see intention. That is, we considered whether the color of flowers was rhetorical in that their beauty attracts bees, or whether how rivers shape landscapes was rhetorical. Perhaps the broadest Big Rhetoric question we posed all semester was Kohn's: does evolution think? I may have been ready for "rhetoric" to lose all meaning, but, as their words detail, many students never bargained for thinking with evolution.*

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J.J. Takes on Big Rhetoric

When I registered for this course, I thought it was going to be fun, potentially silly. We would discuss how different species communicate, listen to recordings of their sounds, watch videos, and so forth. What I did not expect was to be presented immediately with "Big Rhetoric," a new concept of rhetoric explored by rhetoricians that is very different from the typical, Western definition of rhetoric. "Big Rhetoric" challenged my previous notions of rhetoric—that is, a method of speech prepared in advance and used for persuasion—and was difficult for me to understand. To me, rhetoric was the subject studied in academic classes, used in speech and debate competitions, and employed by politicians. Rhetoric was enveloped in persuasion with a tendency for dubious application. I brought these notions into class with me as we began the course.

After some initial, dense theoretical readings from scholars such as George Kennedy and Diane Davis, the first assignment for the course was a position argument about rhetoric. Still not understanding the direction "Big Rhetoric" was taking, I argued *against* enlarging rhetoric. I thought the final product of this enlarged definition would be used as justification for politicians to create policies that threatened the environment and worsened climate change. That is, I saw "Big Rhetoric" as a misguided attempt to use language-ability as the marker of value assigned to certain species and not others.

As someone interested in preserving the planet and its species, I was concerned that even if rhetoric scholars were redefining the limits of rhetoric to be more inclusive, politicians could still exploit this Big Rhetoric, because, I thought, inevitably something will be excluded. That is, if defining rhetoric beyond the human draws the limit at meaning, then might that allow policymakers to privilege animals over trees? Or, if "meaning" could be extended to trees and fungal networks, might we exclude the soil beneath our feet, bringing humans to build more parks as they continue fracking? My fear of this potential scenario brought me to end my position argument this way:

> In summary, the discussion surrounding the definition of rhetoric has become bogged down with the unnecessary and incorrect requirement that the definition includes everything which has value. Kennedy began this deviation by supposing that rhetoric was inherent to all living things. Davis furthered the deviation by connecting rhetoric to her Darwinian revelation, proposing that redefining rhetoric could reverse the "inferiority" of animals. The crux of this deviation lies in the false correlation between linguistic ability and value and misses the importance of the rhetorical situation that Lloyd Bitzer has defined.

In this argument, I wanted to emphasize the danger I saw in redefining rhetoric for the purposes of including non-human animals or plants or any other earthly thing—this redefinition would be exploited for what it unintentionally excluded.

It was not until we read an excerpt from Robin Wall Kimmerer's *Braiding Sweetgrass* that I realized how my initial understanding of Big Rhetoric had missed the mark. In a chapter titled "Asters and Goldenrod," Kimmerer describes her entrance into the world of academia after being raised in the ways of the Potawatomi Nation. Most notably, she describes a conflict with a professor who refused to honor her desire to understand the beauty of nature around her. She wished to know why asters and goldenrods look so beautiful together, but her question was dismissed as a "non-scientific" one (40-41). Eventually, Kimmerer narrates the pivotal moment in which she realized that being an academic alongside honoring Indigenous traditions was not yet represented in her field of study; instead, she would have to pave her own path to wed the two perspectives. It is through her description of this conflict—seeing around science to value other beings in the world differently—that I began to understand the idea behind "Big Rhetoric."

Deconstructing Hierarchy Between Humans and Nature

For other students—specifically those who were not already well acquainted with a "traditional" notion of rhetoric—our disorienting entry into feminist new materialist rhetorics at the start of the semester initiated a more immediate seismic shift in thinking. Shortly before reading Kimmerer, the class discussed Kohn's concept of "living thought" to understand all the *who's* that think. Kohn's premise is that all living beings think, therefore, all thoughts are alive. As he explains, "If thoughts are alive and if that which lives thinks, then perhaps the living world is enchanted. What I mean is that the world beyond the human is not a meaningless one made meaningful by humans" (72). Similarly, Kimmerer expresses that the land and species around us have much to teach human animals about better ways of being in the world. "Our relationship with land cannot heal," she argues, "until we hear its stories" (9). She goes on to express that the land's stories are already fully articulate, if only human animals would learn to pay attention:

> In the Western tradition there is a recognized hierarchy of beings, with, of course, the human being on top—the pinnacle of evolution, the darling of Creation—and the plants at the bottom. But in Native ways of knowing, human people are often referred to as "the younger brothers of Creation." We say that humans have the least experience with how to live and thus the most to learn—we must look to our teachers among the other species for guidance. Their wisdom is apparent in the way that they live. They teach us by example. (9)

Take the asters and goldenrods, who teach us the importance of difference growing alongside one another. The purple and gold serve as complementary colors to one another, signaling to bees to drink nectar and gather pollen from both, which results in a "dance of cross-pollination" (47). Reading Kohn and Kimmerer alongside Burke, Kennedy, and Davis allowed us to think about the relationship between humans and our non-human neighbors without a strictly Western new materialist focus. This juxtaposition brought us to consider what Jennifer Clary-Lemon asks of scholars in "Notes Toward an Indigenous New Materialism," namely to acknowledge and name how new materialist rhetorics echo Indigenous thinkers and writers (2). Recognizing that we were "settler[s] on Indigenous lands" brought us to consider the harm of marking

boundaries between self and other (Clary-Lemon 3). With Kohn and Kimmerer as guides, rhetoric became less about "discovery" and more about witnessing attempts at connection.

Figure 1. A student sketch features one human hand reaching from rays of light to nearly touch another human hand reaching from among plant branches. A purple, cyclical ball of energy surrounds their emanate touch, reminding of Michelangelo's painting, Creation of Adam, in the Sistine Chapel.

MarLee Observes How Thoughts Come Alive

My professor looked out at our class, a group I knew all of two days at this point, and asked *us* to define the key term we'd be focusing on for the next few weeks. I thought it was a nice way to engage the class, to keep us interested since 9:00 am is way too early for any college student, even on the first Wednesday of the semester. Only, she didn't give us a definition of rhetoric—for the entirety of the course really. Coming from a STEM background, I felt an internal panic as I stared at my note page littered with question marks and segments of ideas.

Yet, somewhere in that mess was something novel: room for real exploration. Throughout the first few weeks, we were given materials to read that guided our thinking, but that also seemed to contradict one other, and we came to class each day to discuss our findings. Somewhere along the way, my notebook became a collection of ideas and memories rather than a study guide. Chasing the limits of rhetoric, we each absorbed its deeper meaning. In such close proximity to an idea, we learned through process rather than fact. This was the nature of learning Big Rhetoric: as if being tossed into the sea, we each swam to a shore of our own choosing.

Most of us found ourselves on the shores of meaning. That is, meaning became our limit of what was and was not rhetorical. Meaning became the proverbial line in the sand, allowing us to parse out mundane, unintentional acts from those with rhetoric. If an action is performed with meaning, it is therefore rhetor-

ical. We were comfortable using meaning as a boundary for what is and is not rhetorical, but then Big Rhetoric expanded meaning to such an extent that it was lost in our search. Not everyone will reach this finding, but our journey into Big Rhetoric allowed for intimacy. In such close proximity with non-human others, rhetoric encompassed an empathetic process, even. While some may still find meaning through clear definitions of rhetoric, learning through experience reached deeper depths of the mind. Getting so personal with the process of learning allows for one to engage empathetic understanding as a rhetorical process. Hearing beyond what is said and seeing beyond what is shown is to experience rhetoric.

This empathetic process may not translate the rhetoric of non-human animals, but it most certainly alters how we interact with the world. Developing empathetic rhetoric implores the learner to understand beyond the physical, allowing rhetoric to extend towards the world at large. Assigning meaning is a heavy psychological concept but understanding the way the world operates encourages empathetic interactions. The individual who understands rhetoric through empathy may view every interaction as meaningful; they may see beauty in a plant turned towards the sun. Ultimately, the world becomes painted in colors to which they were previously blind without this rhetoric so full of "meaning."

It is this combination of a newly colored world and empathy that drives Kohn's concept of "living thought" (72). Kohn proposed that "all living beings think" and "all thoughts are alive," suggesting we live in an "enchanted" world (72). The human desire to assign meaning guides us away from the concept of "living thought," effectively shutting down our empathy towards beings other than humans. Kohn describes how the subtleties of a dog's bark is a "[manifestation] of their interpretations of the world" (73), and it takes an empathetic mind to understand such interpretation. Rhetoric most often turns to meaning when assigning definitions because it allows a limitation. Subsequently, meaning can also offer an extension for rhetoric to expand beyond the human. Meaning, then, is the current, guiding rhetorical discussions. It can guide a scholar toward humanistic rhetoric or a broader rhetoric based on the breeze.

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Defining the Rhetoric in Feminist Rhetorical New Materialisms

Catherine Schanie & Jessica Julian

Abstract: When defining the limits of rhetoric in a feminist new materialist rhetoric course resulted in words seeming to lose their meaning, students began learning rhetorical instruction from the plants and landscapes encountered in the field. One student considers how agriculture was a major influence of change in the evolution of human cultures. Another student considers the humility needed to learn how to value other ways of knowing without comparing those knowledges to human cognition.

Context from Megan: And so it was that as feminist rhetorical new materialisms made words lose, and, at the same time, paradoxically gain, their meaning, we left the classroom and went into nature. We hiked through a nature preserve in the middle of the city and spotted "wolf trees" with massive, sprawling branches, evidence that what is now new growth forest was not too long ago a freshly cleared pasture. We poured water over a handful of sassafras and rubbed its leaves together to create a thick, milky texture, the kind of dense substance used to thicken Louisiana gumbo in the absence of roux or okra. I hoped that, at their worst, these experiences might bring students to reconsider their relationships with the natural worlds around them. At their best, these experiences might encourage students to recognize a relational ontology with the world. Many who did flipped the script, asking not how we're rhetorically affecting nature but how nature rhetorically compels "us."

Cate Learns the Wisdom of Plants

The relationship I shared with nature prior to my exposure to this "new materialist rhetoric" was ill-defined. Even now, this relationship is complicated, as it was only a short five months ago that my thoughts were challenged by readings in rhetoric and excursions into the field. I can only honestly say that I no longer feel my place in the "hierarchy of life" as absolute. Rather than there being a center around which to revolve, everything feels dispersed, yet also somehow connected. This idea became most pronounced

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when a knowledgeable guide at the city's nature center pointed out a "wolf tree." Having just learned from Robin Wall Kimmerer how plants think, how they *love*, I felt a genuine, emotional response from a plant for the first time. A "wolf tree" is a testament to the land's former agricultural topography, a tree that was long ago not selected for tilling so that it could outstretch its branches in gratitude and provide shade to livestock and farmers. (Unfortunately, its nickname bears the sting of settler colonialism, as foresters viewed these massive trees as wolves, both of whom they believed should be hunted for consuming precious resources.) Today, the wolf tree continues to nurture forest flora and fauna.

So, plants *can* love us back. "Reciprocity" rings in my ears. I think of how much there is that I do not know, how my Western upbringing has indoctrinated me to think unidirectionally about plant-human relationships. Now influenced by thinkers like Kimmerer and Yuval Noah Harari, I wonder what continuing this way of thinking might mean for our collective existence, and I entertain the idea that plants set the limits for human development, not the other way around.

Agricultural plants exercised their rhetorical influence by *persuading* other species to assist in their reproduction. They develop colorful petals, sweet nectar, and edible flesh (roots, shoots, fruits). Evolutionary timelines reveal flowering plants appeared before insects capable of pollination, although as time progressed, plants and insects co-evolved together. Of course, such symbiosis benefits the plant. The evolutionary timing, however, suggests that plants were looking to provide, to cultivate. Like the insects, our human predecessors were also influenced by these plants' desires.

Wheat, maize, and potatoes have become some of the most geographically expansive plants in history and are often touted as products of human genius. But there is more to the story: these plants were sacrificial in nature. They experienced loss of genetic diversity at the expense of the human species' growth. The relationship between humans and plants, Harari elucidates in *Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind*, is intimate. As he puts it: "Wheat didn't like rocks and pebbles, so Sapiens broke their backs clearing fields. Wheat didn't like sharing its space, water, and nutrients with other plants, so men and women labored long days weeding under the scorching sun. Wheat got sick, so Sapiens had to keep a watch out for worms and blight" (Harari 80). If not for the development of agriculture, human population growth would have stinted—restricted to nomadic living. Without agriculture, I may not be. So, I am stuck on this idea of reciprocity. We ensure the longevity of these plants because *they* do the same for us.

Plants are some of the oldest lifeforms on the planet, and they continue to influence and speak to us as we enter new eras of development. Plants respond to their environment and communicate symptoms of poor health and distress, whether we are attuned to it or not. Fracking, deforestation, soil erosion, chemical leaching, and drastic climate fluctuations are harming our plant neighbors, and we hold responsibility. Plants will not survive or bear fruit in the hostile conditions—the poisoned Earth—we have created for them. They tell us, "Through our shared histories, we have grown together. If we struggle, you will struggle."

Plants' generosity has been grossly exploited in many modern, human societies, and we all too often ignore their warnings. If we expect to continue thriving in a sustainable world, we must learn to listen to what the plants are telling us. We must learn to consider them as our teachers, even, as Kimmerer suggests, as our mothers. "This is really why I made my daughters learn to garden," Kimmerer explains, "so they would always have a mother to love them, long after I am gone" (122).

Figure 1. On the left, two students crouch down next to a white blanket on the forest floor of Bernheim Arboretum and Research Forest in Clermont, Kentucky, to arrange a piece of art from evergreen branches and colorful leaves. On the right, a group of students walk down a grassy trail with tall prairie grasses and yellow wildflowers on either side of the path.

Embodying Good Relations (Megan Poole)

By learning feminist new materialist rhetorics as much through hiking as through reading, students were learning a way of comportment perhaps more than a way of speaking. Quintilian considered the rhetor as "a good man speaking well." We considered the rhetor "a good being, relating well," relating openly, fully. And because we spent the first two units of the semester finding ways to open ourselves to the world, to relate to our non-human neighbors, the final unit on environmental sustainability hit with an urgency none of us expected. One student remarked, "We spent all semester learning to love the world, only to find out that the world we fell in love with was dying." And many students lamented that political realities and climate activism conveyed a sense of hopelessness. For one student, though, the one for whom Big Rhetoric initially posed endless problems, the affordances of a relational ontology broke through and offered hope.

J.J. Finds that a Good Rhetor is a Humble Rhetor

The revelation that Big Rhetoric was not what I thought it was initially came in two parts. First, I came to understand that this Big Rhetoric was more about "influence" than "persuasion." The difference

between those two terms is just a subtle nuance. The contemporary use of "influence" that alludes to persuasion—think, "influencers" who advertise products from companies that sponsor the advertisement in the hopes that the influencer will "influence" (persuade) you to purchase the product—is different from another connotation that relates more to cause and effect. The cause-and-effect valence of "influence" is what I needed to understand the big picture of Rhetoric. Even at the smallest levels of matter, quarks are influencing each other, which means that at every increasing level there is more opportunity for influence, for something to cause an effect on something else. The asters and the goldenrods have an effect on humans. Their contrasting colors are perceived as beautiful, which may lead to further propagation of those flowers. Influence then takes on a less underhanded meaning in rhetoric to simply name what already happens.

Second, like Kimmerer, I realized how the strict rules and rigor of academia may be separating us as a society of learners from truly understanding the world around us. If rhetoric is a humans-only tool, then we cannot possibly begin to understand the dynamics that exist in and between other species. When these two realizations collided, the misunderstanding and hesitancy that persisted from the beginning of the course disappeared. Because I originally argued against Davis in my first assignment for the course, I returned to her "Some Reflections on the Limit." There, Davis sets out to re-evaluate where rhetoric has created walls, and she contends that a transition away from the Western view of rhetoric would allow us to encounter other species as "who" rather than "what." Like Kimmerer, Davis expresses that this transition would allow us the opportunity to learn from the other beings around us.

If we, as humans, stop asking questions that use "human characteristics" as a standard against which to measure behavior, we may begin to understand how other species have persisted for so long without the various "advancements" of which we are so proud. This new perspective of rhetoric demands humility and curiosity. It exists beyond the politicians and classrooms. It is a new way to view the interactions between living things and truly see them as they are, not as they "compare" to humans. Not only did I finally begin to understand the course, but I began to apply these revelations to my life outside of the classroom. Thinking about the issues of environmental justice with the lens of influence and interaction opened my eyes to a new, less hopeless, way to find solutions. And for that, I am grateful.

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Rhetoric in a Dappled World

Kathleen Criner

Abstract: In a feminist new materialist rhetoric course, a student plays with key ideas from different canonical definitions of rhetoric, ultimately arguing that the act of definition itself is paradoxical. To extend the limits of discourse, the student plays with poetry to capture rhetoric as a feeling rather than a disciplinary way of knowing.

Context from Megan: At this point in the cluster conversation, I fear that my students may have misled you a little. They say I introduced them to rhetoric without providing a definition of it. True, I didn't provide a definition of rhetoric. I provided 21. From Plato's "art of enchanting the soul" to Kennedy's "the energy inherent in communication," this list of rhetoric definitions allowed them to conceive of rhetoric as an art or a science, as speaker-centric or audience-centric, as discursive symbols or non-discursive energy. Maybe that's what happened: they drowned in definitions until there wasn't one.

And, as historians of rhetoric have long argued, our earliest definitions of rhetoric continue to ring most true. As a discipline, we continue to debate the importance, or not, of new materialisms to rhetoric, and in our struggles to articulate what rhetoric isn't, we often overlook emphasizing what it is. When we bring the entangled messiness of the differential becoming of natural worlds and the meaningful relations therein to students, perhaps what emerges for them is less definitional work than learning to engage in a languaging beyond the bounds of discourse. In other words, learning to articulate the dappled nature of rhetoric allowed students to find the crux of rhetorical studies not in words, but in feeling. After all, as one student argues, defining rhetoric will always be a paradox in that scholars define through discourse. To fathom rhetoric's broad expanse, she plays with discourse through poetry.

Kate on How Rhetoric is the Worn Trail that Led Us Here

It feels so good to wonder;
to breathe in ideas
and reach further.

A head nod to nature,
a reminder that I am small.
A reminder that we are all equals
on the surface of the Earth.

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My thoughts are the Trees,
my actions Earthworms.
We all consist of
the same dreamy atoms.

By the time Kenneth Burke, one of the most prominent voices on rhetoric of the 20ᵗʰ century, published "The Definition of Man," rhetorical theorists had greatly narrowed the meaning of rhetoric, trying to fit it in a box with arbitrary borders based on human narcissism. However, the definition of rhetoric has not always been this marked by boundaries. In fact, Plato's definition of rhetoric is not only one of the discipline's oldest attempts at definition, but also its most flexible. Whereas I cannot speak for a man who has been deceased for many centuries, I hope that "the art of enchanting the soul" was intentionally open-ended. In poetry it is often not the goal to make your readers agree with you, but to consider their own lives from a new perspective. In this way, poetry is rhetorical, the first autumn leaf to fall from a tree is rhetorical, and a dog begging for table scraps is rhetorical.

To successfully teach the concept of rhetoric to students, it is essential that even the most accomplished rhetoricians set aside their own knowledge base. Sure, those who have been studying rhetoric for years may fully align themselves with one rhetorical theorist or another, but to only teach that perspective would do a disservice to rhetoric. What I am asking of theorists, rhetoricians, and teachers is vital to the work of understanding abstract concepts. What if the most canonical things that have ever been said of rhetoric, even the tenets the discipline holds as "facts," were placed aside in the name of exploration? On a deeper level, I think most students already question their "position" when they hear another stance; however, we have been conditioned to fear being wrong. We believe that altering our opinions makes us appear weak. We contradict ourselves and stumble over our words to protect our honor; we are too stubborn to release ourselves to the creativity needed for greater learning. Teachers do it too.

To demonstrate the need for this level of learning, whether for new students or long-time rhetoricians, a thought experiment is required. No matter what you believe to be the definition of rhetoric, pretend for a moment that Burke's "definition of man" is the correct one. After all, blindly believing that animals are capable of rhetoric is a very slippery slope. Consider Kennedy's idea that rhetoric is *energy*. If the reason animals "use" rhetoric is because rhetoric is energy, then an educated man's speech is no more convincing than a dog hoarding its owner's socks for attention. Sure, one could argue that the components in the universe with the most meaning are not human, as the sun's energy powers every action on Earth. This energy influences *every* man, animal, plant, and rock. But if the sun's energy persuades the plant to grow, if water uses gravitational energy to map out the Earth—rivers to oceans—if the universe's very beginning was an explosion of energy, is rhetoric *God*? And if rhetoric is God, can anyone or anything exist without purpose? *This* is what Burke was trying to warn us about. Surely, this line of thinking is not productive in defining rhetoric, or defining anything for that matter. Yes, rules are important, and we must stick to them, end of discussion.

But then again, how good did it feel to stretch the brain? Maybe Burke is right. Maybe it is impossible for non-humans to be involved in rhetoric. However, it is easy to be a man like Burke. More rules equal a tidier argument, an easier workload. But rhetoric is not easy, or at least it shouldn't be. Defining rhetoric is a paradox. It needs to be. As humans write the meaning of rhetoric, the limits of language discredit the attempt. Rhetoric is meant to be beautiful; it is meant to be discussed and debated. Any definition *may be* correct, but there cannot be *one* definition. This is the very nature of the word.

Withholding an uncontested definition of rhetoric may make the teaching and learning of rhetoric harder, but there is so much to be gained from this line of thinking. What you gain by being vulnerable to new students is the key to keeping your subjects valuable in the 21st century. Be honest with yourself and your students. Be critical of the borders you use and what you seal off behind them. Finally, remember that humans were not the first animals on this earth, and we won't be the last. The natural world should never be disregarded, and I hope you experience that world alongside your students. Only then may your lessons be applied in the broader context of their lives and may your work enchant souls.

"The art of enchanting the soul"
Lies in endless thinking,
Taste-testing ideas,
A deep breath in.
On the exhale? A sunrise,
A glaring look into infinite possibility.

You almost missed this,
That the true definition is not written.
Sunlight warms the skin,
softening the rustling of the wind.
Rhetoric is the worn trail that led us here,
To dip our toes in existence.

Figure 1. A student smiles as she stands on the arms of a wooded art piece called a "forest giant" that overlooks a still lake bordered by green trees at Bernheim Arboretum and Research Forest in Clermont, Kentucky. The giant is constructed of reclaimed wood from the forest and is shaped to look like a human contemplating their image in the lake.

Notes for a Feminist, New Material, Rhetorical Pedagogy (Megan Poole)

More than anything, I believe, these students who encountered feminist rhetorical new materialisms experienced what Ann Berthoff calls the "chaos" of composition. Composing, for Berthoff, is the making of meaning, and meaning is something that is constructed from the fragmented manner through which our bodies encounter the world. As she explains: "Meanings don't just happen: we make them. Meanings don't come out of the air; we make them out of a chaos of images, half-truths, remembrances, syntactic fragments, from the mysterious and unformed" (69-70). In other words, composing is always a rhetorical new materialist act because writing is something that falls together from disparate materials, perspectives, feelings, truths. Now, I consider that when I teach feminist rhetorical new materialisms, I am teaching "chaotic composing." I encourage students to embark on a journey of questioning, teach them to find fragmented answers, and allow them to compose stories and analyses that chart their unique, situated paths.

The feminist rhetorical tool perhaps most present in the work of chaotic composing is what Jacqueline Jones Royster and Gesa E. Kirsch call "strategic contemplation," or a strategy for slowing down and paying attention to sensory, intuitive responses that emerge during research and learning experiences. For Royster and Kirsch, strategic contemplation calls attention to how "life is material, not abstract" (94). And in order to consider how our identities are part of ongoing material, evolutionary, and cultural processes, "the senses (sight, hearing, smell, taste, touch, intuition) [must be recognized] as sources of [rhetorical] information" (Royster and Kirsch 94). Strategic contemplation thus extends the bounds of knowledge- and meaning-making, considering modes such as intuition as integral to, rather than separate from, logic.

Teaching feminist rhetorical new materialisms through chaotic composing and strategic contemplation is to understand the work of the classroom as bell hooks does, as "not merely to share information but to share in the intellectual and spiritual growth of our students" (13). Such growth empowers students to find their voices and use them to engage more fully in the worlds of which they are a part. Most importantly, hooks warns that this empowerment "cannot happen if we refuse to be vulnerable while encouraging students to take risks" (21). We must learn to take risks in the teaching of writing. We must learn to "fail" alongside our students as we navigate the chaotic, entangled web of rhetoric. We must take students in the field and acknowledge that we are but one, and perhaps not the best, teacher of rhetoric. We must invite students to meet other teachers in fungi, in fields, in feathers. Our pedagogy, like our worlds, must be dappled.

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Book Reviews

Review of: *Writing for Love and Money: How Migration Drives Literacy Learning in Transnational Families.*

Nelesi Rodrigues

Months ago, my mom was taking a graphology course offered by one of her friends in Venezuela and asked me to write a few paragraphs on the topic of family so that she could use it for practice (that is, to try to "read me" through my handwriting). Despite initially resisting this request (what might my writing *actually* reveal about myself?), I complied, obedient older hija that I am. In the process, I realized that it had been a long time since I had last handwritten anything in Spanish. When I sent her the photo of my composition, I captioned it: "Qué raro escribir en español" (*How strange to write in Spanish),* to which she replied: "No lo pierdas, hija… Has [sic] ejercicios que te lo recuerden." My mom's plea to keep my Spanish alive reveals her understanding of how language and writing keep us connected to our loved ones and our cultural roots. Writing in this story is not only about love and relationships, but also about money: having immigrated to Portugal four years ago, my mom was also taking this course to support her friend's side hustle as a graphology teacher back home in Venezuela. My handwriting contributed to my mom's desire for closeness and to her friend's efforts towards financial stability.

In the Introduction to *Writing for Love and Money*, Kate Vieira states that "migration, often undertaken in response to problems of the pocketbook, also poses problems for the heart" (1), and that to address them both, families scattered across the globe often turn to literacy learning. The book joins other scholarly works that underscore the central role of community-based spaces and practices in literacy learning (Gilyard, Haas, Kynard, Lorimer Leonard, Martinez). Specifically, *Writing for Love and Money* recognizes migration itself as a context for learning, one that throws into sharp relief the practical, affective, and ideological implications of literacy. To demonstrate how migration prompts literacy learning across borders, Vieira conducted fieldwork with transnational families tethered to three geographical locations across three continents: Jaú, Brazil; Daugavpils, Latvia; and Madison, Wisconsin. Each chapter examines how migration mobilizes

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literacy learning from a different set of circumstances. What is a constant in all of them is the exchange of what Vieira calls *writing remittances;* "the communication hardware, software, writing practices, and literacy knowledge that migrant family members often circulate across borders" (4).

The first two chapters of the book lay out the theoretical and methodological foundations of the project: Chapter 1, "What's New about Writing for Love and Money?" situates the book in the context of relevant interdisciplinary conversations about literacy in general and migration-driven literacy in particular. Chapter 2, "Writing for Love and Money on Three Continents," thoroughly discusses the project's methodological approach and how research design choices contributed to the overall goal of the book. Of note in this section are Vieira's discussions about the affordances of comparative case studies (34), literacy history interviews (36), researcher's positionality (38), and collaborative and desire-motivated approaches to data collection and analysis in community-based research projects (38). Graduate- and early-career scholars interested in ethnographic approaches to research in rhetoric and composition might find Vieira's methodological discussion especially useful.

Chapter 3, "Learning to Log On: From Post to Internet in Brazil" is the first case study in the book. It builds upon fieldwork conducted in 2011 in Jaú, Brazil, "a medium-sized town in the interior of São Paulo, with a modest outmigration" (39), and its emphasis is on literacy practices and communication technologies. In the chapter, Vieira engages with her fieldwork materials through three different lenses: First, what she calls an "aerial view;" a class analysis of the circulation of writing remittances. Here, Vieira notices that lower-class family members often shuttled hardware to their loved ones "back home" to maintain connection and in the hopes of intervening in their family's socioeconomic (im)mobility. Second, through a "narrative view" of literacy trajectories, Vieira studies how individuals' sense of agency in relation to personal and communal goals can be tied to their literacy journeys over the course of a lifetime. Third and last, a "historical view" of Jaú residents' literacy experiences pre- and post-internet illustrates the contingent value of literacy practices, and the ways in which people respond to those changes.

Chapter 4, "Learning Languages: From Soviet Union to European Union in Latvia," draws on Vieira's 2014 fieldwork in Daugavpils, a city with a long history of in- and out-migration, as well as unstable borders. Here, stories of literacy learning complicate the popular narrative that equates emigration with "brain drain" for "origin countries." The stories in this case study reveal how people from a society that for generations has seen itself in flux have developed trans/multilingual orientations and practices to maintain relationships and better their chances to have financially stable presents and futures. An important theoretical contribution of this chapter is the concept of *anticipatory literacy learning*, which Vieira uses to explain how "potential migrants stockpiled languages and literacies to prepare for what seemed to be their inevitable eventual migration westward" (96). The chapter powerfully captures how sociopolitical struggles, state apparatuses, and intergenerational knowledge can converge in writing and language.

Chapter 5, "Teaching Homeland Family: Love and Money in the United States" focuses on an immigrant family from Mexico and a refugee family from Ukraine, both living in Madison, Wisconsin. The case study investigates how differences in access to educational opportunities shape migrants' circulation of writing remittances. The four migrants' experiences that this chapter centers are noticeably different from each other, but they are connected in that each interviewee infuses writing remittances with the ideologies through which they have encountered literacy in their transnational journeys. Key to this discussion is Vieira's framing of migration itself as a *fund of knowledge*, "the 'historically accumulated and culturally developed bodies of knowledge and skills' people use in their lives" (Moll et al. in Vieira, 131). This chapter further gels the argument about migration-driven literacy learning as both shaped by historical and sociopolitical factors, and tactically activated by migrants (or their loved ones) who understand and navigate their conditions for personal and collective benefit.

In the book's Conclusion, "Migration-Driven Literacy in Uncertain Times," Vieira outlines implications for researchers and educators at the intersection of migration and writing. In the context of research, Vieira calls for attention to three main ideas: 1) migration as a driver of literacy learning, 2) the entanglement of love and money in literacy learning, and 3) how space (state borders) and time (the changes that come with its passage) shape literacy practices and learning. As for educators, Vieira urges us to approach literacy teaching as the complex, entangled process that it is and to recognize and welcome community-based learning practices into our classrooms. She shares insights from her own attempts at doing this in a course titled "Fast Writing in Fast Times" that focused on the importance of learning to use literacy "just-in-time": "to move, to act, and to adapt entrepreneurially across borders on a moment's notice and often in inequitable circumstances" (166)––kairotic literacy, if you will.

Vieira's focus on migration and literacy places her book (and her overall work) in a growing cluster of scholarship that sits at the intersection of mobilities, rhetorical practices, and learning (Chavez, Hsu, Lorimer Leonard, Nordquist, Wan). Horner et al. have recently called this emphasis a "mobilities paradigm" in composition (3). In this conversation, *Writing for Love and Money's* intentional focus on members who remain in "places of origin" is important: Vieira's decision to dedicate two out of the three case studies to this side of the migrant equation echoes the call by Ahmed, Castañeda, Fortier, and Sheller to consider those who "stay put" and nonetheless are deeply impacted by migration (7). In Vieira's study, "left behind" family members are not passive recipients of writing remittances; they are active members of "circuits of literate exchange" (151-152).

Other features of *Writing for Love and Money* connect this book to feminist research and writing: The book prioritizes storytelling and dialogue in/as knowledge production. Vieira also maintains a conversational tone throughout the book, which makes her analysis of complex phenomena accessible and alive. Additionally, thorough methodological descriptions in the Appendixes section, as well as the snippets of coding that are part of each case study, show a commitment to transparency and accountability. Feminist researchers might also rightly point out that the book's emphasis on "traditional" families does not account for how writing remittances factor into the lives of migrants whose main support systems are not defined by blood and/or

marriage. I see Jo Hsu's *Constellating Home: Trans and Queer Asian American Rhetorics* (2022) as one example of more recent work that, even though not explicitly about literacy, extends questions about migration, self- and collective definition, and language and writing also present in this book.

Vieira did not claim to write the end-all-be-all of writing remittances and literacy learning, though. Her focus on families is a choice and if there is something she makes sure we are aware of from the beginning, is that the choices that she makes in this book often come from a particular position, one that includes her perspective as a mother. And as a mother, Vieira closes *Writing for Love and Money* with a Coda dedicated to matriarchs of transnational families: "Yes, these stories revealed, community ties often fray over space and time. But if we listen closely, we can hear the ever-present hum of the mothers, knitting them back together" (172). I thought of my own mother again, who insists on staying in touch with my American husband through a complicated texting scheme in which she messages him in English (so that she can practice, in the hopes of coming to visit us in Canada soon), and he replies in Spanish (so that he can know a part of our family that we need to hold onto before we lose it).

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Review of *Constellating Home: Trans and Queer Asian American Rhetorics*

Sumaiya Sarker Sharmin

Where is home? What is home? In my first language, Bangla, home means a secure place living with family. But "What is family when blood ties strain across geographical and cultural distance? What family/home will stand on decades of silence and centuries of erasure?" (9). As I read these questions in Vox Jo Hsu's recently published monograph *Constellating Home: Trans and Queer Asian American Rhetorics*, the author's identification with and defining of home intersects with my longing for making a home in a transnational diasporic space when psychically my home remains in Bangladesh. In this book, Hsu provides a critical overview of racialized and gendered diasporic experiences in the U.S. through examining the rhetorics of "Writing Rainbow," a community-driven queer and trans people of color (QTPOC) writing activist project, and the three archives of trans and queer Asian American and Pacific Islander (QTAPI) peoples. Being positioned as "perpetual foreigners," and displaced by the unsettling diasporic experiences as well as normative racialized narratives, QTPOC and migrant communities (re)create a shared archival space of home with their counternarratives which Hsu unfolds throughout the book (56). The author analyzes individual experiences of the QTAPI community to expose historical and political contexts that render diasporic identities as others, thereby, problematizing the normative notions of US citizenship, settler colonialism, global capitalism, and the politics of race, gender, and sexuality. By foregrounding counter-stories of historically marginalized communities, Hsu challenges settler colonial logics that racialize and oppress Asian Americans, non-binary, and people of color. In the process, the author also braids their community experiences and vulnerabilities, their sites of belonging/unbelonging, and their haunting/ haunted memories in a shared space of commonalities (QTAPI) through community participatory research and dialogues.

Constellating Home, according to Hsu, is an act of storytelling or homing. Hsu approaches "home as a constellation of stories that determine with whom, where, and how we belong" (9). When I read the introduction, "Constellating Home: Storytelling, Diasporic Listening, and (Re)Defining Commonplaces," I remembered cultural rhetorician Malea Powell's words, "story is anything but easy" (384). Some stories take place to colonize us. To reclaim spaces that are destroyed by the "stock stories" about racial minorities, Hsu constellates the QTAPI community stories and their experiences. By tethering formative methodological conversations with intersectional and transnational feminist theories, queer theory, critical race theory, and disability studies, Hsu delineates a spectrum of complex stories embodying people's experiences from historically marginalized communities. In their words, homing is a narration of personal experiences that fosters conjoining "social analysis, collective politics, and mobile sets of belonging" (4). Through homing, a narrator discovers "the sites of (un)

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belonging" (9). For example, in their "Ghost Passages: A Prologue," Hsu shares their trauma and reminds us about the haunting nature of traumas. "Trauma time is cyclical," according to Hsu (1). They gather information on these haunting memories related to "migration, estrangement, longing, love, and belonging" within this community through diasporic listening (12). At the same time, Hsu directs us toward understanding the possibilities of homing to create spaces built by "communal imagination" (11). Readers can take away Hsu's homing practices and diasporic listening as portable methodological tools to explore diverse narratives globally dispersed in diasporic communities.

This book adds a new dimension to the field of rhetorics, disability studies, and gender and sexuality studies with its attention to the interconnectedness of majoritarian tropes and stock stories in controlling non-normative bodies deployed by the seemingly disconnected nation-state and sociocultural agendas. For example, Hsu engages diasporic listening to closely interpret the discourses of yellow peril and model minority that construct public perceptions of the Asian American identity of success. In this publicly circulated trope, Asian Americans, who do not fit the model minority heteronuclear family shoes with shiny success stories, are the suspected/unwanted others. The model minority trope relegates working class and non-binary Asian Americans as menaces to the nation. The stories of Asian Americans are framed through these hegemonic discourses of yellow peril or model minority; consequently, perpetuating the ostracization of non-conforming Asian Americans in the US. Drawing from QTAPI archival works, this book presents counternarratives to challenge the normative rhetorics that are employed to monolithically frame the Asian American culture (15). Hsu shares their own experiences as a trans, queer, and disabled Taiwanese American through their encounter with these archives and communities. Interventionist in their approach to majoritarian narratives that weaponize nonconforming and people of color identities/bodies to promote hegemonic discourses, Hsu constellates diasporic stories to conduct transformative liberatory work. This book therefore is not about a single story as it interconnects diverse counternarratives to explore queer possibilities for social justice. Subsequently, the chapters expose how normative rhetorics perpetuate racism and hetero/cissexism and ableism, as Hsu explores the body politics of regulating QTPOC and disabled bodies.

Hsu deconstructs the social and cultural norms associated with love in chapter one, "Love in Constellation: The Dragon Fruit Project and Differential Consciousness-Raising." Situating their discussion on Chela Sandoval's "differential consciousness" theory, Hsu maps out counter-stories of diverse identities who are often stigmatized, alienated, silenced, or criminalized because of their deviancy from the normative love plot. From chapters one to three, Hsu explores how QTAPI stories are entangled with intricate social and political histories both in the USA and other countries. While narratives are used as hegemonic tools for exclusionary practices, Hsu excavates the power of counternarratives by providing non-normative narratives of "love, resilience, and ancestry" (25). Hsu analyzes multiple narrators' stories to reveal the enforcement of global capitalist, nationalistic, racial and gendered norms into their personal experiences under the guise of heterosexual familial love ideology. Hsu exposes the entanglement of "normative love scripts" with whiteness, heterosexuality, and ableism which were also evident in the history of eugenics. They further explain "racist love," a term introduced by Frank Chin and Jeffrey Paul Chan, to demonstrate how minorities are still disciplined by white America (37). For example, the story of Kim Dang shows how the US nation-state considered her queerness not only as a betrayal of heteronormative ideology but also her homosexuality was interpreted as a lack of patriotism. In Dragon Fruit Project (DFP), Dang uses homing to redefine patriotism that is supportive of queer women of color. According to Hsu, "homing, in these accounts, situates the narrator's lived experience in historical context to track the limitations and possibilities of love" (36). Building on Amy Sueyoshi's question, "What is the relationship between love and activism?" Hsu shows how homing enables the DFP narrators to constellate radical narratives of love where their queer desires are harnessed as "the groundwork for future work" (39).

Chapter 2, "Resilience as/in Homing: The Visibility Project and Transformative Taxonomies," investigates "resilience" as a topos to scrutinize how Asian Americans are racialized in the US. In response to the essayist

Wesley Yang's published piece in a literary magazine, "The Face of Seung-Hui Cho" and his book, entitled The *Souls of Yellow Folk,* Hsu points out how Yang presents the rhetorics of white heterosexual masculinity and individual heroic success as resilience without considering the systematic and structural supports that benefit white, cisgender, and able-bodied people (77). Through examining QTAPI's visibility project, this chapter expands on three components of this project — "visible resilience, archival resilience, and performing resilience" — to posit the archival power in resisting white hegemonic discourses of resilience (74). Visibility projects inform readers about the "intergenerational and interpersonal connection that have enabled QTAPI resilience" (105). In chapter 3, "Tendering Kin: Constellating Relations with the Queer Ancestors Project," Hsu builds on the discussions of colonialism and political manipulation that downplay the ancestral heritage/contribution of people of color and LGBTQ people. The archive reopens the possibilities for (re)historicizing/ reimagining QTAPI visibility through their archival project. By employing Chela Sandoval's *Methodology of the Oppressed*, Hsu reimagines creating possibilities through these counter-narratives for liberating people.

In chapter 4, Hsu envisions bodies as archival repositories. Such lens of considering our bodies and embodied experiences as storehouses of memories and histories, much like archives, is groundbreaking for excavating the epistemology of marginalized communities. What I also appreciate is Hsu's homage to the work of Gloria Anzaldúa, Cherríe Moraga, Audre Lorde, Alison Kafer, among others as they demonstrate how personal stories deconstruct the majoritarian perception of cultures. A central focus in this chapter is exploring Hsu's own story as a queer child and carefully reinterpreting their personal narrative in connection to love, resilience, ancestry, and home to reveal their places of belonging and (un)belonging. In this chapter, they bring forward their conflicts with living between two cultures much like Gloria Anzaldúa's *Borderlands*. Hsu uses "theories in the flesh," a concept by Anzaldúa and Moraga that suggests "politic born out of necessity" in describing the resistance that's formed by the embodied experiences of minorities (156). As an example, Hsu provides a detailed overview of their struggle as a queer family member which their parents could not reconcile with from their cultural perspectives. Through several examples, Hsu points out how the queer body is punishable by the nation-state in the context of both Western and Eastern cultures. Hsu also indicates a gap in queer studies as Judith Butler and Michel Foucault's epistemological contribution to queerness is rooted in the westernized notions. They don't address the realities of other queer people, including Hsu. In the same chapter, they once again demonstrate how the rhetoric of "individual resilience" is used to perpetuate health-related injustices by sharing the author's embodied experiences as a chronically ill person (167).

Hsu's book is a guide to understanding the local and global nature of injustices perpetuated by US colonialism and imperialism that transnationally control marginalized bodies. Hsu shows us how personal stories can forge resistance against hegemonic discourses through constellation and in the form of creating communities. This book invites POC, LGBTQ+, and disabled folks to find a site of belonging. As I make a departure from this review, I want to share that the homing of Hsu's experiences and the QTAPI community resonated with me as a woman of color and as a first-generation international graduate student pursuing a Ph.D. in rhetoric and composition. I find a place of restoration in this book in an otherwise home of (un)belonging in white America.

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