

The Icon Across the Street

Harriet Malinowitz

Motherhood, Rhetoric, and Remembrance: Recovering Diane Nash

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Coalition Talk: Feminist Historiography: What's the Digital Humanities Got to Do With It?

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Coalition Talk: The New Archive: Women, Writing, Work

Phyllis Thompson

Review: *composing(media) = composing(embodiment): bodies, technologies, writing, the teaching of writing*

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Review: *Hope I Join the Band: Narrative, Affiliation, and Antiracist Rhetoric*

Andrea Riley Mukavetz

Review: *Presumed Incompetence: The Intersections of Race and Class for Women in Academia*

Hui Wu

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Peitho seeks to encourage, advance, and publish original feminist research in the history of rhetoric and composition and thereby support scholars and students within our profession. For submission guidelines and requirements, please see <http://www.peitho.cwshrc.org>.

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Editors' Note

3

Articles

The Icon Across the Street
Harriet Malinowitz

6

Motherhood, Rhetoric, and Remembrance: Recovering Diane Nash

14

Lindal Buchanan

Coalition Talk: Feminist Historiography: What's the Digital Humanities Got to Do With It?

40

Jessica Enoch

Coalition Talk: Finding their Voices: Feminist Intervention, Public Narratives, and Social Media

46

Letizia Guglielmo

Coalition Talk: The New Archive: Women, Writing, Work
Phyllis Thompson

54

Book Reviews

composing(media) = composing(embodiment): bodies, technologies, writing, the teaching of writing

66

Julie Platt

Hope I Join the Band: Narrative, Affiliation, and Antiracist Rhetoric

72

Andrea Riley Mukavetz

Presumed Incompetence: The Intersections of Race and Class for Women in Academia

80

Hui Wu

Editors' Note

Dear Readers:

In this Spring/Summer issue (15.2) of *Peitho*, we are pleased to present two pieces that are in keeping with *Peitho's* mission of exploring history, feminists and feminist activism in our culture, both academic and general. Although very different in genre, "The Icon Across the Street" by Harriet Malinowitz and "Motherhood, Rhetoric, and Remembrance: Recovering Diane Nash" by Lindal Buchanan explore the different ways in which motherhood occurs: physically, intellectually, rhetorically, socially, culturally. Malinowitz explores a scholar's relationship to an "Icon" of feminist thought and how this experience shaped her own growth and thinking while Lindal Buchanan's piece recovers 60's activist Diane Nash by exploring how pregnancy and her pregnant body reverberated in her activism and various public representations of her and her work.

The next three pieces represent a commitment that *Peitho* made in 2009, when it was still a newsletter and that the journal has continued. *Peitho the Newsletter* began publishing the minimally revised, non-peer-reviewed presentations from the Coalition's Wednesday night meeting at the Conference on College Composition and Communication to make this work—in its original format—available to those Coalition members who were unable to attend CCCC's. *Peitho The Journal* continues this tradition with the publication of Jessica Enoch, Letizia Guglielmo, and Phyllis Thompson's presentations. While minimal edits were made for clarity and comprehension, readers who attended the presentations will recognize them. We hope you enjoy them.

This issue marks the last issue of our editorship and we are saddened to have completed our work here. The editorial board, the reviewers, and the authors who have submitted manuscripts have made this a pleasurable and memorable experience. They have been wonderful to work with. We specifically thank the reviewers, many of whom responded to a cold-call email request from one of us with generosity and speed. A hearty (but in no particular order) thank you to them: Wendy Sharer, Rory Ong, Tarez Graban, Courtney Kelsch, Krista Ratcliffe, Lynee Gaillet, KJ Rawson, Jenn Fishman, Stephanie Vanderslice, Karen Garner, Patti Baker-

Hanlon, Whitney Myers, Jessica Enoch, Jami Carlaccio, Alison Donnell, Cara Minardi, Will Banks, Michele Eble, Wendy Hayden, Bridget O'Rourke, Katherine Fredlund, Susan Jarratt, Deb Balzhiser, Kate Adams, Marguerite Helmers, and Nan Johnson.

Peitho and the Advisory Board of the Coalition welcomes Jenny Bay and Pat Sullivan, both at Purdue University, as the new editors. The fall issue (16.1) will be their first. Personally, we have benefitted from their wise council many times and we know they will be similarly generous in their work with authors who submit to *Peitho*.

Peitho welcomes a wide range and length of smart, thoughtful, and provoking submissions in a variety of genres. Please address any correspondence regarding manuscripts to peitho@cwshrc.org.

Finally, we once again thank Cheri Lemieux Spiegel, who has done amazing and speedy layout work. We wish her well on her endeavors and hope to work with her again in the near future.

Sincerely,

Barb and Lisa

The Icon Across the Street

Harriet Malinowitz

I think it is accurate to say that there has been no one, other than those with whom I have had some sort of intimate human relationship, that I have loved—and I mean that term seriously, if unconventionally—as much as I loved Adrienne Rich. It's not that I didn't know her at all; I did have a fair amount of real, direct contact with her—but every moment of that contact involved a sort of “double consciousness,” to appropriate W.E.B. Du Bois's term (16). What I mean is that I would talk to her, as one person to another, pretending she was a normal human being, while at the same time, there loomed over her shoulder the specter of her other self—incandescent, iconic, and incorporating an elusive spiritual consequence for me. It was like being in a crappy TV show, where the setup is that the ghost is talking to you and you have to pointedly ignore it in order to hear what the mortal before you, who must be kept unaware of the ghost's presence, is saying.

In 1979 I was a graduate student in an MFA program at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. I had also just discovered women's studies and become a devotee. My first, and very overpowering, lesbian love affair had recently come and gone, leaving me terribly depressed. Since being in nature offered some solace and I wanted to finally live without a roommate, I moved twenty minutes out of town to the tiny, picturesque, Robert Frosty village of Montague. I had a couple of acquaintances there, a nice apartment in a house that had been divided into four rental units, and lovely country roads to walk on which both salved and poignantly bolstered the melancholy in which I steeped.

Amidst that year's flood of feminist and lesbian reading—ranging from the theoretical to the creative—two books had taken on biblical status for me, and both were by Adrienne Rich. One was her essay collection *On Lies, Secrets, and Silence*, and the other was her poetry collection *The*

Dream of a Common Language; both had been recently published by Norton. Adrienne (which is how I'll continue to refer to her, since that's what I called her) was, first and foremost, a poet, and alas, I am not much of a poetry person, so it was via a great leap of fervor that I embraced her poetry, while cherishing most of all her extraordinarily poetic prose. The most luminous essays in *On Lies, Secrets, and Silence* were, for me, these:

- her piece on *Jane Eyre* (“I would suggest...that Charlotte Bronte is writing...the life story of a woman who is *incapable* of saying *I am Heathcliff* (as the heroine of Emily's novel does) because she feels so unalterably herself” [91]);
- “Vesuvius at Home,” her essay on Emily Dickinson (“Her niece Martha told of visiting her in her corner bedroom on the second floor at 280 Main Street, Amherst, and of how Emily Dickinson made as if to lock the door with an imaginary key, turned, and said: ‘Matty: here's freedom’” [158]);
- her “Teaching Language in Open Admissions” (51-68), which she dedicated to Mina Shaughnessy and which unveiled for me, for the first time, the possibility of a future in composition;
- and above all, her “Women and Honor: Some Notes on Lying”:

An honorable human relationship—that is, one in which two people have the right to use the word “love”—is a process, delicate, violent, often terrifying to both persons involved, a process of refining the truths they can tell each other.

It is important to do this because it breaks down human self-delusion and isolation.

It is important to do this because in so doing we do justice to our own complexity.

It is important to do this because we can count on so few people to go that hard way with us. (188)

These tomes were always out in my apartment, like part of the furniture, and I agonized over them daily. So it might seem as farfetched as a crappy TV show when I tell you that Adrienne and her partner, Michelle

Cliff, just happened to buy the house across the street and move into the little hamlet of Montague shortly after I did. My reading chair in the bay window, my bed, and my desk all had perfect views of her house, a feature that outdid the claims of my most wildly-imagined real estate ad. Sometimes I think of another of her famous essays as “The Politics of Location, Location, Location.”

One day, soon after they had moved in but before I had met them, I spotted them walking just yards ahead of me on the main street of Amherst. What an incredible behind-the-scenes-of-genius opportunity! My brother was visiting me, and I engaged him as my accomplice to find out what they were saying. At my behest, he sped up and passed them on the sidewalk, whereupon he heard Michelle say, “We'll roast a chicken tonight,” and by the time I caught up with him, I had gleaned further information from Adrienne: “and make a big salad.”

One afternoon soon after that, I was napping when the phone rang. Those were the primitive days when you had no way of knowing who was on the phone before you picked it up, and if you happened to be abruptly awakened from a nap, it was especially confusing. It was Adrienne—or “Adrienne, from across the street,” as she put it, as if I didn't know which Adrienne it was—calling to ask about an article that she'd appreciate getting a copy of from the *Valley Women's Voice*, an earnest local startup feminist newspaper; I was in the editorial collective. I can't remember much of the rest of the conversation; I do remember she said the *Valley Women's Voice* was one of only four newspapers she now read, which did not include the *New York Times*. I hung up the phone still dazed, ruining my unrehearsed performance.

I felt worse when, a few days later, she stopped in to get the article. A gay male friend was visiting—who I simply failed to introduce, as if there were no male person of the species visiting me at all. Lou Reed was rasping on the stereo turntable with the arm lifted up, so that it played over and over; and as Adrienne looked around the room, her eyes came to rest on a print of Gustave Klimpt's *The Kiss* above the stereo. It was just a pretty thing that a poor grad student could afford at a yard sale, but I suddenly saw, in the mirror of Adrienne's dubious gaze, how the woman's neck was practically snapping off in acquiescence to the man's crippling embrace. Oh God, it all seemed so canonically male-centered and heterosexual! How could I possibly explain myself?

After that, I would sometimes run into Adrienne in Montague's little post office, and she would always talk to me as if it were a perfectly normal thing to do. Soon, we became classmates as well. Gloria Joseph, who taught at nearby Hampshire College, ran a year-long seminar attended by undergraduates, graduate students, faculty, and administrators from around what was known as the Five-College Area. Entitled *The Significant Role of Black Women in Women's Studies*, the seminar was informed, more than anything, by its roster of guest speakers—which included Adrienne, Michelle, Audre Lorde, Betty Shabazz, anthropologist and later first African-American woman president of Spelman College Johnetta Cole, literary critic Andrea Rushing, and many others. It was a hub of what was then called “confrontational politics,” and I always took my calm-down vitamins before I went. Nonetheless, it was a life-changing event for me. After they had each led one class meeting, Adrienne and Michelle stayed for the rest of the year and participated in class discussions like anyone else.

Eventually, I left Montague, moving to New York, and sometime after that Adrienne and Michelle moved to Santa Cruz, because the New England climate had a terrible effect on the rheumatoid arthritis from which Adrienne suffered from her youth until her death last year. From my coveted vantage points of my reading chair, desk, and bed, I had seen the extremity of the illness wax and wane, as she assumed, and then shed, and then assumed again, a cane. Once in the post office, she told me of yet another upcoming operation in Boston, and it struck me that her remarkable output over the years had continued amidst recurrent surgeries and what for most would have been mentally and creatively thwarting pain.

In the years that followed, in our own way, we each got involved with the politics of Central America and the other ravages of the Reagan and then Bush years, and later still, with the need to speak out as Jews about freedom and justice for Palestinians. As a result, there were various occasions when our paths again crossed. Each time, I felt first overtaken by an importunate shyness, as the contrast between the multitudes of admiring people this woman encountered every month and the comparative littleness of my own sphere left me unbelieving that she could possibly remember me. But it seemed that Adrienne Rich remembered everyone. Once, at a benefit reception, I saw her hesitate at

the threshold of a large Manhattan loft, scan the room, see me, and then set out, in her steady limp, across the room to embrace me. We talked for about fifteen minutes, and again, I did her the gross injustice of being so preoccupied with marveling at her presence that I couldn't follow what she said. Another time, she introduced me to one of her sons, and again, I could barely sustain the give-and-take of conversation as I wondered, “Wow, how does he feel about the way she wrote of his childhood in *Of Woman Born*?”

I was up very late at my computer one night, almost a year ago, when I glanced at the online *New York Times* as it reloaded its latest update onto my screen, and I saw her name accompanied by the years “1929-2012.” The gasping feeling I had came simultaneously with the thought, “I always knew this would happen someday.” She is the only person outside my own private life whose loss I braced myself for, years in advance, as I did for family members.

And though what I have described of my response to her probably suggests all the puerility of a teenybopper's crush on a rock star, it really wasn't that at all. It's truly not that I idolized her. Yes, for me, an inveterate atheist, she was sort of like God, but not the omnipotent, Old Testament sort that one adores and beseeches and cowers before and thanks and obeys. She was God for me almost as a sort of transcendent fiction that one can invent and summon up at any time for comfort and strength, in much the same way that I understand Jesus and heaven to work for many people. Her astonishing complexity, seriousness, moral intensity, and meticulous use of language were qualities I longed to have access to in my daily life, and I had dreams in which she approved of those things about me with which I most struggled: my need for solitude; my tendency to prioritize reading and writing over social relations; my inability to go with the flow about matters that seemed highly significant to me, even if they did to no one else; my inability to distinguish between describing life and living it; my drive to use language precisely, not carelessly.

These days, I often summon up my inner God of Adrienne Rich when I am forced to deal with Outcomes Assessment. I think these words from her poem “The Stranger,” from *Diving Into the Wreck*, presciently speak for many of us in contemporary higher education:

*I am the living mind you fail to describe
in your dead language*

As some of our own colleagues in English and Writing departments devote months of their working lives to an enterprise that seems more the bailiwick of Party hacks in George Orwell's *1984* (or George W. Bush's White House) than of members of a discipline supposedly committed to language and meaning, I think of Adrienne Rich. I think of her refusing to accept the National Medal of Arts in protest of the Newt Gingrich-led attack on the NEA, the NEH, and PBS—"I could not participate in a ritual that would feel so hypocritical to me" ("Why I Refused" 99)—and I wonder why many more of us don't much more simply refuse the narcotizing gibberish of *objectives* vs. *goals*, *best practices* and *rubrics*, *inputs* and *outputs*, *good verbs* vs. *bad verbs*, *outcomes* and *stakeholders* that betray and vitiate the critical, reflective, and creative values they purport to safeguard.

I sense my inner Adrienne at campus re-accreditation prep meetings looking from dean to colleague, colleague to trustee, and she is as astonished as the four-legged window peepers in the final passage of *Animal Farm*: "The creatures outside looked from pig to man, and from man to pig, and from pig to man again; but already it was impossible to say which was which" (128). She frowns as terms such as "excellence," "culture of evidence," "institutional effectiveness," "open discussion and dialogue," and "transparency" are dribbled about by the team like basketballs—"pimped," as she might say, much as she wrote in "Arts of the Possible," "In the vocabulary kidnapped from liberatory politics, no word has been so pimped as *freedom*" (147). In that same 1997 lecture, she went on to ask—though it was capitalism she was speaking of at the time—"Where, in any mainstream public discourse, is this self-referential monologue put to the question?" (148). In the lecture hall, my inner Adrienne whispers to me from the preface to the earlier (1993) *What is Found There*:

the society I was living and writing in...smelled to me of timidity, docility, demoralization, acceptance of the unacceptable. In the general public disarray of thinking, of feeling, I saw an atrophy of our power to imagine other ways of navigating into our collective future" (xiii).

When I found out that she died, I immediately set about organizing a tribute to her on my campus, Long Island University-Brooklyn. I envisioned this as a somewhat impromptu, in-house event, not necessarily something that would be publicized to the community, so I was greatly surprised to receive an email, sometime later, from Pablo Conrad, one of her three sons. He lived in Brooklyn, he said, and he'd heard about the event afterward and wished he'd been there. Would I tell him about it? We corresponded for a few rounds—he was really nice—and I told him about having lived in Montague—a coincidence he seemed to enjoy. I also wrote to him:

[Adrienne] had an almost uncanny impact on the psychological lives of some women writers (and, I suppose, others)—including myself...I presume that being her son must have been a complicated and extraordinary experience—galaxies beyond the experience of those like myself who simply introjected her as a sort of "alternative" mother (without her knowledge or permission, of course!). (4/17/12)

And there you have it. I imagine that there are hundreds of us walking around with little pieces of Adrienne implanted in us. And if she doesn't exist anymore, well, in my view, God doesn't either, but so far, that hasn't lessened his effect upon the world.

Acknowledgment

I would like to thank Aneil Rallin for organizing the session at CCCC-2013 in Las Vegas at which I first presented this, and Aneil, Anne Shea, Andrea Lunsford, and Ian Barnard for all making the session such a wonderful experience. I would also like to acknowledge Sondra Perl and Chuck Schuster for publishing a different version of a couple of these passages in my essay "E-Love," which appeared in *Stepping on My Brother's Head and Other Secrets Your English Professor Never Told You* (Heinemann, 2010).

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About the Author

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Motherhood, Rhetoric, and Remembrance: Recovering Diane Nash

Lindal Buchanan

[Civil rights activist] Diane Nash Bevel was tried in Jackson for teaching the techniques of nonviolence to Negro youngsters; the charge was "contributing to the delinquency of minors" and she was sentenced to two years in jail. Four months pregnant, she insisted on going to jail rather than putting up bond, saying: "I can no longer cooperate with the evil and corrupt court system of this state. Since my child will be a black child, born in Mississippi, whether I am in jail or not he will be born in prison." After a short stay in prison, she was released.

Howard Zinn, *SNCC: The New Abolitionists*, 80

When Diane Nash entered the Hinds County Courthouse on April 31, 1962 to begin serving a two-year prison sentence, the twenty-three-year-old leader of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) was not only protesting southern injustice but also sending a message to the civil rights community. Nash was convinced that the movement was relinquishing the jail-no-bail policy honed in previous desegregation campaigns, and she feared the ruinous financial demands that bonding and bailing out large numbers of protesters placed on cash-strapped organizations like the Southern Christian Leadership Council (SCLC). She also believed that imprisoned activists helped draw media attention to the South and thus exerted moral pressure on white Southerners, two fundamental principles of nonviolent resistance. To ensure that her viewpoint and values were clear to others, Nash detailed the problem with current practices as well as her proposed solution in a short press release

and three-page letter to civil rights workers. These statements circulated widely in the press and reinvigorated movement discussion about the potential of mass incarceration.

Both the two-paragraph press release and eighteen-paragraph letter detailed why the movement should immediately return to jail-no-bail policy; each text also devoted a paragraph to Nash's physical condition, addressing the perceived irreconcilability of pregnancy, politics, and prison:

Some people have asked me how I can do this when I am expecting my first child in September. I have searched my soul about this and considered it in prayer. I have reached the conclusion that in the long run this will be the best thing I can do for my child. This will be a black child born in Mississippi and thus wherever he is born he will be in prison. I believe that if I go to jail now it may help hasten that day when my child and all children will be free—not only on the day of their birth but for all of their lives. (“A Message” 1)

Nash employed a variety of appeals in order to justify activating her sentence while expecting: Arguing that immediate incarceration would serve her child's long-term best interests provided sound reasons for her action; referencing soul searching, prayer, and contemplation regarding imprisonment's possible consequences for her pregnancy created ethos; and expressing faith that self-sacrifice would promote black children's freedom stirred emotion. Each appeal alluded to and garnered strength from the rhetor's impending motherhood.

Nash incorporated motherhood brilliantly in the one paragraph devoted to the topic but did not otherwise employ the *topos* in either the press release or letter. The activist may not have fully grasped or exploited the available means afforded by pregnancy, but subsequent chroniclers of the event did. For decades, historians focused on Nash's motherhood and elided her principles and policy objectives in their accounts of the event, reshaping it in troubling ways. The tendency is apparent, for instance, in the Zinn epigraph, which presents a noble, self-sacrificing mother bravely entering a racist stronghold in order to ensure black children's freedom, a dramatic portrait that does not even mention the term *jail-without-bail*. Other writers followed suit, portraying Nash as a courageous,

committed, pregnant activist while ignoring her strategy and impact on the movement. These depictions relegated her to the background of civil rights history.

Motherhood, then, enabled Nash to create a stirring and unforgettable message but also contributed to her marginalization within the official record. As Nash's predicament suggests, motherhood is a Janus-like rhetorical resource that can benefit and also impede women. On one hand, it affords them maternal authority and credibility; on the other, it invokes debilitating stereotypes that reinforce inequitable systems of gender, race, and power. To date, the puzzle and paradox of motherhood in public discourse has received relatively little attention within rhetorical studies. However, with women's entry into public life and the academy as well as the emergence of the field of feminist rhetorics, gendered topics like motherhood are ripe for exploration. Indeed, scholarship produced by Leslie Harris, Nan Johnson, Mari Boor Tonn, Julie Thompson, Patrice DiQuinzio, and Sarah Hayden has begun to unpack motherhood's rhetorical terms, construction, circulation, and effect upon women.¹

¹ Within disciplines other than rhetoric, motherhood has inspired an enormous body of research for which I am grateful. My analysis here, however, is chiefly informed by feminist rhetorical scholarship, particularly the work of historiographers who have recovered women rhetors and rhetorics and theorized persuasion through a gendered lens (Buchanan and Ryan, xiii). Important feminist recovery efforts include Karlyn Kohrs Campbell's *Man Cannot Speak for Her: A Critical Study of Early Feminist Rhetoric*, Cheryl Glenn's *Rhetoric Retold: Regendering the Tradition from Antiquity Through the Renaissance*, Shirley Wilson Logan's "We Are Coming": *The Persuasive Discourse of Nineteenth-Century Black Women*, Jacqueline Jones Royster's *Traces of a Stream: Literacy and Social Change among African American Women*, Carol Mattingly's *Well-Tempered Women: Nineteenth-Century Temperance Rhetoric and Appropriate[ing] Dress: Women's Rhetorical Style in Nineteenth-Century America*, Nan Johnson's *Gender and Rhetorical Space in American Life, 1866-1910*, Roxanne Mountford's *The Gendered Pulpit: Preaching in American Protestant Spaces*, Wendy Sharer's *Voice and Vote: Women's Organizations and Public Literacy, 1915-1930*, Jessica Enoch's *Refiguring Rhetorical Education: Women Teaching African American, Native American, and Chicano/a Students, 1865-1911*, Suzanne Bordelon's *A Feminist Legacy: The Rhetoric and Pedagogy of Gertrude Buck* and edited collections by Catherine Hobbs, Andrea Lunsford, Molly Wertheimer, Christine Sutherland and Rebecca Sutcliffe, and Hildy Miller and Lillian Bridwell-Bowles. Feminist theorizations of rhetoric that inform my project include Glenn's *Unspoken: The Rhetoric of Silence* as well as Krista Ratcliffe's *Anglo-American Feminist Challenges to the Rhetorical Traditions: Virginia Woolf, Mary Daly, Adrienne Rich and Rhetorical Listening: Identification, Gender, Whiteness*.

I build upon their efforts by examining Diane Nash's persuasive use of motherhood and tracing its impact upon her historical legacy, a chain of events that began with the rhetor's crafting of maternal appeals so compelling that they became the centerpiece of subsequent accounts of the incident. Historians created dramatic narratives that commemorated Nash as a mother rather than a leader and positioned her in a supporting role within the movement. Fortunately, scholarly recuperation of women's neglected contributions to civil rights is finally bringing overdue recognition to Nash's efforts and accomplishments. This article, then, also considers how recent accounts of her resistant action negotiate motherhood and civic engagement. Why do these historical representations merit attention? Because they constitute a significant site that reflects how motherhood functions as a cultural construct, as a *topos* that generates persuasive means, and as a rhetorical resource that works for and against women. Indeed, this particular case illuminates how motherhood compromised Nash's rightful place in public memory for decades.

Motherhood in Public Discourse

To appreciate motherhood's rhetorical and historical impact, one must consider its relationship to the overarching system of gender. Per Michel Foucault, I envision motherhood as part of a symbolic order comprised of discursive formations, loosely organized bodies of knowledge that establish "regimes of truth," encode power relations, and produce speaking subjects ("Truth and Power" 131). Discursive formations have an epistemic function, flagging certain objects as worthy of attention, generating information about those objects, and encouraging acceptance of purported truths about them (truths embedded within assumptions, values, and world views). Motherhood is part of the discursive formation of gender and so reiterates its prevailing constructs of male and female, masculine and feminine. Like gender, motherhood's meaning is contextually bound, its central tenets and associations forever in flux rather than fixed, its constitution varying across historical periods and cultures. Motherhood, then, both reflects the network of power relations that undergird gender and makes those relations appear to be normal, unchanging, self-evident expressions of "the way things are" (Barthes, *S/Z* 206). Stated somewhat differently, motherhood functions as "an

abbreviated version of the entire system" of gender (Silverman 31) and brings that system to bear upon subjects, social practices, and rhetorical texts.²

Susan Miller's *Trust in Texts: A Different History of Rhetoric* sheds light upon the connections between motherhood and persuasion. Subjects, she observes, are educated into a cultural matrix that establishes shared "ideas about standards of credible behavior," "fitting responses to specific situations," and "appropriate ways of talking about them"; these conventions, in turn, promote a sense of community based upon emotion and its corollary, trust (22-23). The rhetor must seek common scripts, constructs, and values capable of inspiring collective feeling (anger, fear, enthusiasm, admiration, etc.) and earning the audience's trust—all of this must occur *before* persuasion becomes possible. To adapt Miller's framework to the topic at hand, motherhood is part of the cultural matrix, and enculturation entails learning the role's associations and values, standards of credible behavior by and toward mothers, and appropriate ways of discussing mothers, mothering, and motherhood. To those schooled to its cultural meaning, motherhood invites—perhaps even commands—prescribed emotional responses, including respect, obedience, love, and so on. The construct, thus, provides subjects with an opportunity to recognize and respond appropriately to dominant scripts and ideologies and to create socially legible character. Due to its role in subject formation and collusion with the discursive formation of gender, motherhood is easily invoked but difficult to resist in public discourse. When it surfaces in a rhetorical text, it (re)interpellates the audience, placing members in familiar subject positions, eliciting conventional feelings, and inspiring trust.

Richard Weaver's discussion of *god terms* further clarifies the cultural significance and rhetorical impact of motherhood. Societies make sense of the world by discerning (I would say by agreeing upon) absolutes of good and bad; they, then, use these absolutes to sort objects and experiences, to evaluate them and create hierarchies, and to systematize relationships between attractive and repulsive terms (212). A *god term* is an expression of ideas and ideals that subjects feel "socially impelled

² My understanding of motherhood as a cultural, historic, and semiotic construct and my rhetorical framework for decoding its operations in public discourse are detailed fully in *Rhetorics of Motherhood*.

to accept and even to sacrifice for” (212-14). The Mother, I argue, operates as a god term within American public discourse and connotes a plethora of positive associations, including children, love, protection, home, nourishment, altruism, morality, religion, self-sacrifice, strength, the reproductive body, the private sphere, and the nation. The Mother’s rhetorical force derives from its cultural resonance and centrality: It provides speakers with an immediately recognizable figure or stereotype comprised of well-known qualities and attributes. That stereotype, however, is imbued with inequitable and restrictive gender presumptions (holding, for example, that mothers belong in the private rather than the public sphere). Women—especially mothers—who fail to manifest characteristics associated with the god-term Mother stir negative emotions and garner distrust, thereby running serious risk of ethical diminishment and social rejection. The power and peril of motherhood in public discourse derives from the god-term’s complicity with dominant systems of gender, knowledge, and power. To explore its (dis)advantages, I return to Diane Nash’s rhetoric and movement objectives as she readied herself to enter a Mississippi prison.

Nash as Strategist and Rhetor

In 1962, Nash was already well known within civil rights circles and well versed in jail-without-bail strategy. Her involvement in the movement had begun in 1959 when, as a Fisk University sophomore, she completed Reverend James Lawson’s workshop on nonviolent resistance and quickly emerged as a leader of the Nashville sit-ins, a sprawling campaign that lasted from February to May 1960 and successfully integrated many of the city’s lunch counters and public venues. Nash’s first experience with jail-no-bail policy took place during this period. In a coordinated effort to exert pressure on the system and heighten community awareness of racism, arrested protesters refused to pay their \$50 fines and opted for jail instead. Nash, serving as spokesperson, explained their reasoning to the court: “We feel that if we pay these fines we would be contributing to and supporting the injustice and immoral practices that have been performed in the arrest and conviction of the defendants” (Westmoreland-White, n.p.). Nash also helped found SNCC in April 1960 and subsequently guided many of its direct-action desegregation efforts in the South, endeavors that often led to her

imprisonment. In early 1961, for example, she and three other SNCC members joined students in Rock Hill, South Carolina—where sit-ins had been ongoing for a year with little effect. In hopes of reviving the campaign, Rock Hill students agreed to change strategy and began to refuse bail following arrest; Nash showed support by spending the month of February in jail alongside them (Jones, n.p.).

Her next major encounter with jail-no-bail policy involved the Freedom Rides, a drive that began in May 1961 when black and white passengers departed from the nation’s capital, determined to test whether interstate buses and bus terminals were, in fact, desegregated as federal law mandated. Their journey through the Deep South was initially uneventful. When they reached Alabama, however, mob violence led to the burning of a freedom bus outside Anniston and the beating of riders in Birmingham, events that brought the effort to a halt (see Arsenault). Nash was convinced that allowing violence to stop the endeavor would spell the end of the civil rights movement, so she resuscitated the Freedom Rides despite U.S. Attorney General Robert Kennedy’s pleas for a cooling-off period (Nash, “Inside” 53). She arranged for a steady stream of college-age passengers to ride interstate buses from Alabama to Jackson, MS, where they were immediately charged with breaching the peace and arrested. Nash persuaded them to forego bail, so, between May 24th and September 13th, 1961, 328 riders filled city and county jails as well as the infamous Parchman Prison (“A Short History,” n.p.). This endeavor demonstrated to the movement “that ‘nonviolent direct action’ and ‘jail—no bail’ offered a successful way forward” (“A Short History,” n.p.) and shaped coming desegregation campaigns in Albany, Birmingham, and Selma, efforts that Nash had a major hand in strategizing and planning.

To oversee the Jackson leg of the Freedom Rides, she moved to Mississippi in the summer of 1961 along with SNCC cohorts Bernard Lafayette and James Bevel, whom Nash would soon marry. The trio encountered such entrenched racism and intimidation that they had little success recruiting adult riders and so began training volunteers as young as fourteen. Nash, Lafayette, and Bevel were soon charged with and convicted for contributing to the delinquency of minors (Halberstam 391-93); they were tried and sentenced in city court and then freed

on bond while awaiting an appeal hearing.³ However, by the time her hearing arrived, Nash was no longer willing to cooperate with the state of Mississippi (“Dianne” 1, 6). Her letter to civil rights workers detailed the absurdity of fighting segregation, undergoing arrest, bailing out of jail, and then placing matters in the hands of an “evil and corrupt court system” (Nash, “A Message” 2). Protestors, she argued, would never receive justice in a system where they were arrested on spurious charges (such as breaching the peace, criminal anarchy, conspiracy to violate trespass law, and corrupting minors), were tried in segregated courtrooms, and were required to “pay the bill for this humiliation in court costs” (“A Message” 2). Nash was also alarmed at the “skyrocketing expense” of bailing out protesters and was convinced that the practice undermined the movement’s potential: “I think we all realize what it would mean if we had hundreds and thousands of people across the South prepared to go to jail and stay. There can be no doubt that our battle would be won” (“A Message” 3). Leaving jail, she reasoned, deprived the movement of its most powerful tool, “truth force and soul force.” Imprisoned protesters not only put pressure on the system but also exemplified “redemption through suffering,” thereby promoting the possibility of real change:

When we leave the jails under bond we lose our opportunity to witness—to prick the conscience of the oppressing group and to appeal to the imagination of the oppressed group and inspire them. . . . Gandhi said the difference between people who are recklessly breaking the law and those who are standing on a moral principle is [. . . willingness] to take the consequences of their action. When they do this a whole community, indeed a whole nation and the world, may be awakened, and the sights of all society are raised to a new level. (“A Message” 2)

Expressing faith that the actions of “a few people, even one person, [could] move mountains,” Nash was determined to do what she asked of others: “[E]ven if we cannot honestly foresee great effects from our stand,

³ According to the *Jackson Advocate*, Nash was charged with four counts of contributing to the delinquency of minors. She was tried and sentenced to two years’ imprisonment as well as a \$2,000 fine by the City Court; the case was appealed to the County Court, and she was free on bond while awaiting the hearing (“Dianne Nash” 1, 6).

it is my belief that each of us must act on our own conscience—do the thing we know in our hearts is right. . . . I think each of us—regardless of what others may do—must make our own decision, alone and for ourselves. I have made mine” (“A Message” 3). Her commitment to spiritual principle and self-sacrifice as well as her vision and courage created formidable ethos and stirred emotion in readers. Most of her letter, however, marshaled logical proofs to support the claim that justice was best served by resisting a corrupt system and staying in jail. In all, fourteen of the document’s eighteen paragraphs detailed financial, organizational, tactical, and spiritual arguments for jail-no-bail policy. Reasoned analysis, then, was the rhetor’s preferred means for influencing others.

Nash, however, could not make a compelling case without also addressing her physical condition. In fact, before halting the appeal process, she anguished over the potential consequences of resistant action for her pregnancy: “I sat out in the cotton fields and thought about my strategy for a very long time” (2008 interview). Although she did not want to serve time while pregnant, give birth in jail, or risk separation from her child, Nash decided it was imperative to set an example in order to urge widespread adoption of jail-no-bail policy with no exceptions. She, therefore, devoted a paragraph to her impending motherhood in both the letter and press release. The short media announcement ended with the motherhood paragraph, which brought the document to a moving and memorable conclusion. However, she positioned the motherhood paragraph early in the letter—where it was the fourth of eighteen paragraphs—and diluted its impact considerably, suggesting some discomfort with the *topos*. (Nash herself later attributed her limited use of maternal appeals to being unaware of pregnancy’s rhetorical force [2008 interview].) The ethical and emotional power of motherhood, then, played a relatively minor role in the missive to civil rights workers when compared to logical exposition.

Understanding Nash’s broader objectives helps to explain why, upon entering the Hinds County Courthouse for her appeal hearing, she elected to sit in the white-only section of Judge Russell Moore’s courtroom. Determined to contest segregation and enter jail one way or another, she refused to move to the colored section when ordered and immediately received a ten-day sentence for contempt of court. After she

finished serving the ten-day term, Judge Moore released Nash despite assurances that she'd return immediately to freedom fighting (Carson, *The Student Voice* 53, 56). He eventually ruled that she could not abandon her appeal but suspended her original two-year sentence. Therefore, Nash was at liberty when she gave birth to her first child, Sherrilynn, on August 5, 1962 (Theoharis 835-36).⁴

Nash's appeal revocation (more specifically, the explanation offered in her letter and press release) may be viewed as a *rhetorical refusal*, "an act of writing or speaking in which the rhetor pointedly refuses to do what the audience considers rhetorically normal. By rejecting a procedure that the audience expects, the rhetor seeks the audience's assent to another principle, cast as a higher priority" (Schilb 3). Although it defies audience expectations, a rhetorical refusal, nevertheless, attempts to persuade even as it violates protocol. Schilb characterizes such refusals as deliberate, purpose driven, and atypical (3), and Nash's decision to enter jail rather than cooperate further with Mississippi's "justice" system certainly meets these criteria. It was deliberate, undertaken to make a statement and change minds; it was purpose driven, intended to encourage other arrested protestors to stay in jail; and it was atypical, disrupting conventions of law, race, and gender. Regarding law, Nash's action moved counter to the procedural assumption that pursuing an appeal was preferable to being in jail. Regarding race, her critique of state systems, refusal to cooperate with them, and voluntary incarceration flouted southern expectations of African Americans, who were "supposed" to accept the status quo subserviently, passively, and silently. Regarding gender, the expectant mother's willingness to enter prison defied prevailing norms of maternal conduct, which mandated that women prioritize pregnancy over politics and sequester themselves in the private sphere.

Nash, as a woman and a person of color, faced a complex audience and rhetorical situation in her negotiation of gender. Her press release

⁴ Nash has stated that her pregnancy created a public-relations predicament for Mississippi authorities ("Interview" 2008). Although Moore gave her a ten-day sentence for openly defying segregation in the courtroom (chiefly because he felt compelled to reassert authority), she believes he was simply not willing to deal with the negative publicity that would have followed from sending a high-profile expectant mother to jail for two years. After all, pressure and attention are focused on the system when protesters are imprisoned; keeping Nash out of jail alleviated both ("Interview" 2008).

addressed a national readership likely to uphold dominant gender conventions that positioned mothers within the home, encouraged complete devotion to husband and children, and dictated distance from public affairs. The expectant mother's willingness to go to jail, her dedication to civil rights, her efforts to promote social justice, and her immersion in public life clearly moved counter to convention, so Nash risked appearing "unfeminine" and "unmotherly" to a national audience, potentially eroding her character and credibility. She, therefore, justified her actions, arguing that her unorthodoxy served a higher—and decidedly maternal—purpose, "hasten[ing] that day when my child and all children will be free—not only on the day of their birth but for all of their lives" ("A Message" 1). Her reasoning called upon assumptions about motherhood that were familiar to audience members and easily invoked through suggestion (rather than explicit statement).⁵ Stated fully, her enthymeme might run as follows:

Major Premise: Mothers do/should suffer for their children's best interests.

Minor Premise: Nash is a [soon-to-be] mother.

Conclusion: Therefore, Nash does/should suffer for children's best interests.

By drawing upon shared beliefs about mothers, mothering, and motherhood, Nash framed her entry into prison as right conduct. She privileged her child's—and by deliberate extension, all children's—long-term welfare over her own short-term discomfort and thus successfully aligned herself with the god-term Mother (despite what, at first glance, appeared to be serious divergence from it). What is more, the enthymeme presented her self-sacrifice as noble (creating ethos), her courage as

⁵ John Gage describes the enthymeme as "any statement made in reasoned discourse that is accompanied by substantiation in the form of one or more premises" likely to be known by the audience (223). A rhetor rarely presents an enthymeme's entire line of reasoning (in the form of major premise, minor premise, and conclusion) and instead omits material familiar to her audience. According to Aristotle, the audience's ability to supply missing premises is crucial to the creation of enthymemes, for it connects "the assumed beliefs of the audience with the conclusion of the rhetor by means of invented arguments" (Gage 223). The real determinate of an enthymeme, then, is not that it has a missing premise but that its premises invoke common beliefs inculcated through shared cultural scripts and codes.

admirable (creating pathos), and her appeal revocation as sensible (creating logos).

Race, however, also shaped the meaning and interpretation of Nash's resistant action. While her decision to enter jail while pregnant was likely perceived as a gendered rhetorical refusal by audiences operating from within the dominant gender framework, it may well have seemed reasonable and responsible to those familiar with African American traditions of mothering and motherhood. As Patricia Hill Collins explains, cultural assumptions that dichotomize "the public sphere of economic and political discourse and the private sphere of family and household responsibilities" have never reflected the lives of women of color, who routinely traversed those realms in the course of sustaining children and employment. Further, their maternal obligations typically encompassed both the personal and the communal, prompting them to safeguard their families while also ensuring "group survival, empowerment, and identity" (Collins, "Shifting" 58-59). To negotiate these duties, African American women developed distinct maternal practices, serving as *bloodmothers* to their offspring, as *othermothers* to their kin's and neighbors' children, and as *community othermothers* to the larger black collective (Collins, *Black Feminist Thought* 189-92). The strong sense of social responsibility that accompanied these roles—particularly that of community othermother—prompted many educated black women to become political actors within the public sphere throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (see Giddings; Higginbotham; Logan). Nash's appeal revocation connected her to a long line of African American women who coordinated motherwork with racial uplift and social justice. To illustrate, both Frances Watkins Harper and Mary Ann Shadd Cary combined mothering with public speaking in the 1860s, advocating abolition and emigration and recruiting black soldiers for the Union Army (see Buchanan, *Regendering* 177-78, 148-50). In 1896, anti-lynching crusader Ida B. Wells Barnett gave birth to her first child and almost immediately returned to the lecture circuit, remarking, "I honestly believe that I am the only woman in the United States who ever traveled throughout the country with a nursing baby to make political speeches" (Giddings 377). As a result of women's prominent, public roles as community othermothers, African American standards of maternal decorum differed significantly from those of the dominant

culture. To black audiences, the pregnant Nash's entry into prison may well have appeared to be gender-as-usual rather than a gendered refusal.

As historians took notice of Nash's appeal revocation and incorporated it into their accounts of the civil rights movement, motherhood moved center stage and pushed the scope and purpose of her resistant action into the shadows. Her portrayal as an emotional, brave mother not only erased her strategic thinking and movement objectives but also distorted her rhetorical style. Ironically, although Nash enacted a rhetorical refusal that (for many) defied dominant gender conventions, historians cast her as an exemplary Mother, and she has been remembered as such. More distortion was created by writers' selective use of Nash's rhetoric: They often focused on her maternal appeals and elided the legal, economic, and spiritual reasons underpinning jail-no-bail policy, thereby converting her farsighted action into a minor interlude in the chronicles of Great Black Men of the civil rights movement. I explore an illustrative example next.

Nash as Mother and Activist

Kimberlé Crenshaw provides a useful framework for examining historical representations of Nash's appeal revocation. She observes that women of color are positioned "within at least two subordinated groups that frequently pursue conflicting political agendas," namely eradicating racism and obliterating sexism (1252). Antiracist (civil rights) groups often make gendered assumptions that normalize black men's experience while antisexist (feminist) groups make racial assumptions that normalize white women's experience. Both groups, therefore, "fail women of color by not acknowledging the 'additional' issue of race or of patriarchy" that constitutes their double burden, thereby oversimplifying the "full dimensions of racism and sexism" and strengthening the oppressive "power relations that each attempts to challenge" (1282). Crenshaw encourages scholars to investigate depictions of African American women in order to identify how "prevalent narratives of race and gender" perpetuate their displacement (1282-83).

I respond to Crenshaw's call by considering how histories written from an antiracist perspective render Nash's appeal revocation in ways that perpetuate an inequitable gender system privileging men and cast the civil rights movement chiefly as their handiwork. I am especially interested in antiracist historians' invocation of the god-term Mother,

which subsumed Nash, the accomplished movement strategist, and projected a simple, authoritative stereotype in her place. To appreciate the god term's rhetorical impact here, one must recall that the Mother reflects and sustains the network of power relations that undergird gender. Through constant repetition, the Mother presents the "social, the cultural, the ideological, [and] the historical" as natural, thereby converting the gender system's "contingent foundations" into "Common Sense, Right Reason, the Norm, General Opinion, in short the *doxa*" (Barthes, "Change the Object Itself" 165). Gendered *doxa* circulate uncontested in antiracist depictions of Nash's appeal revocation, which present men and women in ways that naturalize motherhood and reify the gendered status quo.

I concentrate here on one account—that presented in Taylor Branch's *Pillar of Fire: America in the King Years, 1963-65*—and refer readers interested in more comprehensive analysis to *Rhetorics of Motherhood*. Branch's version consistently subordinates Nash to the men around her through three rhetorical moves: its gendered assumptions and invocations of the Mother, its selective use of the activist's rhetoric, and its failure to contextualize her action within the civil rights movement. Branch starts by foregrounding Nash's pregnancy, calling her "the young lady who [dared] Mississippi to make her give birth in jail" (55). He then introduces a spiritual precept from Rev. James Lawson, whose workshop introduced Nash to nonviolent resistance and inspired her commitment to the Nashville sit-ins, namely that "oppression requires the participation of the oppressed" (*Pillar* 55). The reverend's tenet, Branch explains, turned in his student's mind "until she saw her felony appeals as participation that soothed Mississippi with a false presumption of justice." The account suggests that Lawson's convictions prompted Nash's appeal revocation, a puzzling attribution as the activist's press release and letter detail the spiritual principles and economic imperatives guiding her action and give evidence of a formidable and independent thinker.

The historian then dramatizes a wildly confrontational courtroom scene that begins with Judge Moore banging "down an additional ten days for contempt when Nash refuse[s] to sit in the colored section of the courtroom." Branch describes the chaotic aftermath:

Bevel, serving as her lawyer, made a speech to the court, and Nash herself read from an apocalyptic statement on why she chose to give birth behind bars. "This will be a black baby born in Mississippi," she declared before being led off to the Hinds County Jail, "and thus wherever he is born, he will be in prison . . . I have searched my soul about this and considered it in prayer. I have reached the conclusion that in the long run, this will be the best thing I can do for my child." (*Pillar* 56)

Despite their revolutionary fervor, Bevel and Nash adopt fairly conventional gender roles: The husband handles legal matters, addressing the court on his wife's behalf, while she confines her remarks to pregnancy, childbirth, and progeny. Culling material from Nash's motherhood paragraph, Branch invokes the Mother and creates impressive ethos for the activist, portraying her as a brave, self-sacrificing woman of color who voluntarily delivers herself into racist hands in order to benefit her child and the larger black collective. He makes no mention of her efforts to persuade arrested protestors to stay in jail and forego bail, an omission undercuts Nash's agency, agenda, and acumen; relegates her to a supporting role; and casts her chiefly as Bevel's expectant wife. Branch's vivid, memorable, and moving courtroom scene is also inaccurate: Nash was represented by a lawyer, not her husband, during the hearing and was not permitted to utter a word, making the delivery of an "apocalyptic statement" about birth behind bars impossible (Nash, 2008 interview).

The troubling gender assumptions embedded within Branch's narrative become even more apparent in the next scene. After Nash is dragged off to jail, the setting shifts to the judge's chambers where Moore and Bevel debate principles and priorities. The judge urges the husband to protect his young, vulnerable, expectant wife and insists that Bevel's "first duty in all his roles—as lay attorney, citizen, husband, and expectant father—is to keep Nash *out* of prison, not in it":

"You know, son," he said ruefully, "you people are insane."

"Judge Moore, you don't understand Christianity," Bevel replied. "All the early Christians went to jail."

“Maybe so,” said the judge. “But they weren’t all pregnant and twenty-one.” Bevel held his ground during the standoff, assuring Moore that Nash would renounce any court-appointed lawyer who tried to reinstate her appeal. Moore eventually ordered her release and simply ignored the uncontested two-year sentence. (Branch, *Pillar* 56)

By this point in the story, Nash has been reduced to the silent, offstage object of men’s negotiations, her maternal body configured as the site of racial struggle. Bevel “wins” the battle, holding “his ground during the standoff” through his willingness to keep his wife in jail; her release and suspended sentence stem, instead, from the judge’s somewhat confused sense of chivalry.

Branch also fails to mention a critical point here: Bevel and Lafayette, Nash’s SNCC colleagues in Mississippi, also incurred fines and jail time for “corrupting minors,” and they, too, ultimately had their sentences suspended (Halberstam 394-95).⁶ In overlooking the similar treatment of Nash’s male cohorts, Branch implies that pregnancy afforded her special privileges with the court, a suggestion that again promotes problematic gendered *doxa*, including, for instance, that expectant women are emotional and vulnerable and that men are reasonable and women’s protectors. These *doxa* highlight Nash’s maternal role and undermine her recognition as a movement leader, for mothers presumably lack the intellectual acumen and strategic capacity to direct organizational policy. Branch presents Nash as a good girl—a faithful student, a trusting wife, an idealistic mother-to-be—whose actions and fate are determined by the men in her life, whether Lawson, Bevel, or Moore. The historian’s antiracist agenda not only reifies gender hierarchy but also attributes civil rights advances to men like Bevel, Martin Luther King, Ralph Abernathy,

⁶ Bevel and Lafayette faced five charges for “corrupting minors,” each carrying a potential fine of \$2,000 and two-year jail term (Halberstam 394). The men spent two weeks in jail until NAACP lawyer Jack Young plea bargained a suspended sentence for them, with the proviso that they agree to leave Jackson. The SNCC activists, however, rejected the concession, fired Young, and represented themselves at trial. Bevel declared that he was not the one corrupting black children; the true culprit was the state of Mississippi’s “system of segregation which denied them their basic rights as well as decent schools and decent jobs, and their innate dignity as American citizens” (Halberstam 395). Although the judge sentenced Bevel and Lafayette to the maximum jail time and fines, he suspended their sentences, warning them to expect no mercy if they appeared in his court again.

Fred Shuttlesworth, and Medgar Evers. In the process, Nash is reduced to their sidekick.

Branch’s primary interest in racial politics, his repetition of gendered *doxa*, and his rendition of motherhood elide Nash’s strategic efforts to influence the movement on this occasion. He derives powerful ethical and emotional appeals from Nash’s motherhood paragraph but leaves unmentioned everything else in her press release and letter, including her reasons for halting the appeal process. Without philosophical ground, organizational purpose, or movement context, Nash’s resistant action is moving and unforgettable but somewhat pointless. Such critical elisions, Crenshaw observes, occur whenever race or gender becomes the sole concern, in either case placing women of color in “a location that resists telling” (1242). Branch’s account reveals this process at work; his portrayal of Nash as a good student, wife, woman, and mother (rather than an independent agent, thinker, and leader) effectively relegates her to a “location that resists telling” and a minor role within his history of the movement.

Nash as Civil Rights Leader

Women’s contributions to civil rights are, at long last, receiving recognition thanks to intersectional scholarship that considers the interplay of race, gender, class, region, and religion on movement participants, initiatives, and events.⁷ In consequence, more nuanced examinations of Nash’s appeal revocation are appearing that acknowledge her pregnancy *and* her underlying motives. Reclaiming the rhetor’s reasons and objectives, long hidden beneath the mantle of motherhood, is an important step in redressing gender imbalances and distortions within the historical record. Belinda Robnett’s *How Long? How Long?: African American Women in the Struggle for Civil Rights* presents the

⁷ These works include Bettye Collier-Thomas and V.P. Franklin’s *Sisters in the Struggle: African American Women in the Civil Rights-Black Power Movement*; Vicki Crawford, Jacqueline Anne Rouse, and Barbara Woods’ *Women in the Civil Rights Movement: Trailblazers and Torchbearers, 1941-1965*; Davis W. Houck and David E. Dixon’s *Women and the Civil Rights Movement, 1954-1965*; Peter J. Ling and Sharon Monteith’s *Gender and the Civil Rights Movement*; Lynne Olson’s *Freedom’s Daughters: The Unsung Heroines of the Civil Rights Movement from 1830 to 1970*; Belinda Robnett’s *How Long? How Long?: African American Women in the Struggle for Civil Rights*; and Rosetta Ross’s *Witnessing and Testifying: Black Women, Religion, and Civil Rights*.

most comprehensive account of the incident to date, and it is particularly instructive for its recuperation of Nash's strategic purpose and rhetorical acumen and for its positioning of the activist within the mainstream movement. Like Branch, Robnett acknowledges and even foregrounds Nash's pregnancy and impending motherhood; however, she resists the temptation to show the activist primarily in that light and instead incorporates information and acknowledges complexities ignored elsewhere. Robnett's attention to detail and to context effectively redirects the spotlight away from the Mother and onto the multifaceted young woman of color, SNCC organizer and tactician, wife and soon-to-be mother. The writer accomplishes this by connecting the activist's decision to enter jail with her promotion of jail-no-bail policy and by situating that action within the wider movement. In fact, she identifies Martin Luther King as Nash's primary rhetorical audience.

Robnett begins by acknowledging the overlap of women's roles as social actors and mothers: "Just like their male comrades, women risked their lives for the movement. Some even risked the lives of their children" (106). She then introduces Nash, establishing her marriage to Bevel and her pregnancy of four months, and details the nature of Nash's pending charges for "contributing to the delinquency of minors." Unlike Branch, the writer greatly condenses subsequent courtroom events, simply relating that Nash "was sentenced to two years' imprisonment but served only ten days" (106-7).⁸ At this point, Robnett segues from Nash's incarceration to King's earlier participation in and arrest for a December 16, 1961 desegregation march in Albany, Georgia. Although the minister announced his determination to stay in jail, he bailed out hours later, a decision that deeply disappointed the SNCC organizers who spearheaded the Albany campaign. Robnett presents Nash's advocacy of jail-without-bail policy as a response to King's departure from his Albany cell and cites an extended passage from her April 30, 1962 letter to civil rights workers.

⁸ Robnett's purpose is to demonstrate women's leadership role within the civil rights movement, and it sometimes leads her to gloss over complicating factors. She does not mention, for instance, that Nash posted bond and left jail after her initial sentencing (fall 1961) or that her decision to suspend her appeal and serve her term occurred months later (spring 1962). Telescoping events in this manner enables Robnett to tell her tale concisely, to present her protagonist as decisive from the outset, and to focus on Nash's rhetoric and strategy instead of the events leading up to them.

With this setup and background in place, the reader can almost hear Nash addressing King directly:

I believe the time has come, and is indeed long past, when each of us must make up his mind, when arrested on unjust charges, to serve his sentence and stop posting bonds. I believe that unless we do this our movement loses its power and will never succeed. We in the nonviolent movement have been talking about jail without bail for two years or more. It is time for us to mean what we say. (qtd. in Robnett 107)

Robnett incorporates eleven sentences from Nash's letter, and the activist's voice, logic, and values become audible and distinct. Incorporating material other than the oft-cited motherhood paragraph, the account acknowledges Nash's philosophical and organizational arguments for jail-no-bail policy (a term missing in Branch's version) and captures the rhetor's preference for logos. Nine of eleven sentences present reasons for arrested protesters to forego bond; only two concern Nash's pregnancy. Compared to Branch, Robnett devotes far less space and attention to the rhetor's impending motherhood (although its incorporation at the episode's beginning and end emphasize the point). She also explicitly links Nash's pregnancy to her policy objectives and situates her letter within the larger trajectory of the civil rights movement. Arguing for the effectiveness of the activist's discourse and action, Robnett attributes King's subsequent decision to return to and serve his sentence in the Albany jail to Nash's influence.⁹ This rich, contextualized, intersectional analysis produces a well-rounded portrait of Nash as an African American committed to racial justice and a woman within a male-dominated organization. Robnett's attention to the dynamics of race and gender renders motherhood *an* element, rather than *the* element, of the narrative. In consequence, Nash comes out of the shadows and can be recognized for her impact on the movement.

⁹ Indeed, one might make that case that King's appreciation for jail-no-bail policy profoundly influenced his future actions, culminating in his arrest and imprisonment during the 1963 Birmingham campaign and production of the acclaimed "Letter from Birmingham Jail."

I hope that this brief examination of Diane Nash's appeal revocation, rhetoric, and historical remembrance suggests how motherhood contributed to her initial displacement from public memory. Motherhood's paradoxical capacity to generate powerful persuasive resources and to reduce women to gender stereotypes comes sharply into focus in this case. Nash astutely employed maternal appeals to make her actions moving, memorable, and comprehensible to others. Ironically, those same appeals overshadowed her discussion of jail-without-bail policy in antiracist accounts, which typically commemorated Nash as a courageous African American mother fighting segregation rather than as a proponent of nonviolent resistance, a spiritual practitioner, or a movement strategist. Stated somewhat differently, antiracist histories displaced the complex woman of color and substituted the god-term Mother, a constellation of positive maternal attributes that is immediately recognizable and deeply meaningful to cultural insiders. In so doing, they undercut Nash's leadership role in and influence on the civil rights movement.

Motherhood, however, not only affected Nash's representation in antiracist histories but also shaped her rhetorical practice in ways that contributed to her marginalization as well. Nash relinquished public work following the birth of her children but did not end her engagement with the movement. From home, she continued to strategize major initiatives with her husband, including the 1963 Birmingham desegregation campaign, the 1963 March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom, and the 1965 Alabama voting rights campaign ("Nash"). The couple alternated pitching their ideas to SNCC and SCLC leaders although Bevel typically coordinated their projects in the field while Nash remained home with the children. Such collaboration links her, once again, to earlier generations of women whose cooperative partnerships with friends, family, and servants enabled them to negotiate conflicting maternal and civic obligations, produce and deliver rhetoric, and gain access to public forums (see Buchanan, *Regendering* 131-40).

There were, however, serious disadvantages to Nash and Bevel's collaboration, namely that her efforts were ignored while his reputation soared within the civil rights community. As SNCC organizer Ivanhoe Donaldson observed, Bevel eclipsed Nash following their marriage, and she "faded into his background while his star was out there shining"

(qtd. in Olson 211). Similarly, Andrew Young acknowledged that SCLC ministers overlooked Nash's part in the couple's projects, equating her behind-the-scenes contributions with those of their wives, who ran "the choir," "Sunday school," and "women's fellowship without any compensation" but their husbands' salaries: "It is not to our credit that we followed that model with Diane" (342). Organizational disregard of Nash's collaborative role, which she assumed in order to reconcile motherwork with social justice, also contributed to her sidelining within the movement and its histories.

Despite intersectional scholars' recuperative efforts, there is a long way to go before Nash receives the recognition she is due, as was all too apparent on the fifty-year anniversary of the Freedom Rides. In May 2011, a reunion and five-day conference took place in Jackson, MS, featuring an extensive series of lectures, exhibits, tours, celebrations, and showings. The name *Diane Nash*, however, did not appear once among the proceedings, lists of riders, or historical blurbs featured on the event website (see *Return of the Freedom Riders, 50th Anniversary Reunion*). Such disregard of the activist who not only revived the Freedom Rides after violence brought them to a halt but also coordinated their final leg into Jackson reflects the snail-like pace of women's incorporation into civil rights history.

Cheryl Glenn assures feminist rhetorical scholars that "history is not frozen, not merely the past" but instead presents "an approachable, disruptable ground for engaging and transforming traditional memory . . . in the interest of both the present and future" ("Comment" 463). I undertake this study of motherhood, rhetoric, and remembrance with faith that uncovering gendered and raced processes of marginalization can, indeed, disrupt traditional memory and make history fairer to and more inclusive of women.

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Coalition Talk: Feminist Historiography: What's the Digital Humanities Got to Do With It?

Jessica Enoch

Feminist Historiography: What's the Digital Humanities Got to Do With It? If Tina Turner was to revise her famous question in this way, many feminist historiographers might respond by shaking our heads. We might say we don't do digital work or that we're just sick of hearing the term "digital humanities" and the evangelical resonance it carries. In many ways, there is good reason for such response and such resistance. Not only does it seem that much of the digital humanities work being discussed today has little to do with our historiographic concerns (I'm thinking here of projects that involve gaming for instance), but it also feels as if the learning curve to enter into these discussions is just too steep, since many of us have not been brought up with the kinds of digital competencies as our colleagues in computers and composition. Thus, we might (gladly) conclude that the digital humanities does *not* have much to do with feminist historiography.

In this presentation, however, I join with the small number of feminist historiographers who would respond to my revision of Turner's question in a different way (See Graban and Sullivan, Enoch and Bessette, Solberg, Ramsey, and Ramsey-Tobienne). Here, I consider what one specific digital conversation and one particular digital innovation have to do with feminist historiography. I do so not because the digital humanities seems to be the newest and hippest kid on the block but because this particular kind of digital work speaks directly to our concerns as feminist historiographers.

To my mind, the most obvious connection feminist historiographers have to digital humanities scholarship is through the latter's deep engagement in and the consequent proliferation of digital archives. Any historian who scratches the surface of online databases would see that digital archives are everywhere. Sites such as *Hearth: Cornell's Home Economics Archive*; *Digital Schomburg: African American Women Writers of the Nineteenth Century*; *Indiana University's Victorian Women's Writers Project*; and *Harvard University's Women Working, 1800-1903* would likely incite a bit of archive fever in most feminist historiographers. However, one particular digital tool could change the way we encounter digital archives and the way we produce feminist scholarship. That tool is Omeka.

Developed by digital historian Tom Scheinfeldt and his colleagues at the Center for History and New Media at George Mason University, Omeka is a free and open source web-publishing platform created specifically for the "purposes of displaying library, museum, archives and scholarly collections and exhibition" (Omeka). These scholars attest that creating a digital archive is now easy, as simple, they promise, as "launching a blog" (Omeka). In addition to the ease of creating digital archives, Omeka offers another feature. It invites user contributions to the archive by enabling visitors to tag items and even add their own content. Omeka, then, offers us a number of exciting historiographic possibilities. Here, I explore two of them and raise a few methodological concerns that I believe are critical for us to consider.

Possibility #1: Archival Access

By enabling scholars to build their own archives, Omeka prompts a kind of archival proliferation that allows other researchers to access materials without incurring the time and expense often required to visit physical archives. There's no doubt that feminist scholars might benefit from researching at such Omeka-enabled sites as "*Martha Washington, A Life*" or "*Frances Perkins: The Woman Behind the New Deal*." However, it is significant to note that many of these archives are generated because of *specific* scholarly interests. Scholars often build these sites because the materials help to shape and inform their particular research questions.

Given the unique nature of these archives, we might revisit the warning Wendy Sharer offered in 1999 regarding curation practices for material

archives. Sharer writes, "We cannot afford to ignore the various material processes—acquisition, appraisal, collection management, description, indexing, preservation, oxidation, and de-accession—that affect the corpus of records on which we may be able to construct diverse and subversive narratives" (124). Such concerns should gain new meaning in light of Omeka-enabled archives, as they prompt us to reflect upon questions such as these: How can we gain a sense of individual scholars' decision-making practices in these particular archives? And how might these practices occlude or even erase the rhetorical significance of women or feminist rhetorical intervention?

As an extension of this concern and these questions, it also seems critical to consider how we might gain alternative reading practices for these "boutique" archives. Since these archives are in many ways personalized research spaces built for projects other than our own, how might we repurpose them for our own feminist historiographic ends? How, for example, might we approach an archive like "*Lincoln at 200*" or the "*Queens College Civil Rights Movement*" archive from a feminist historiographic perspective? How might the feminist practice of "reading it crookedly and telling its slant" function or be re-imagined in this digital archival context (Glenn 8)?

Possibility #2: Archive Building

Feminist historiographers would likely agree that the most exciting prospect of Omeka is that it enables us to easily build our own archives. I am sure many of us see the benefit of sharing the materials we have collected so that others can continue the research we initiated. The ability to build such archives, though, brings with it new responsibilities and opportunities—ones that prompt us to explore what *else* these archives could do and *whom* else they might serve.

In *Traces of a Stream*, Jackie Royster underscores the responsibility scholars have to our research subjects and the communities they are part of. She writes,

In addition to embracing the disciplinary methodologies that are current in my field, [. . .] I acknowledge, still, the need to be responsive both to the community that is the object of my

scholarly gaze and to that community's own articulation of values, beliefs, and protocols. (283)

Royster's point should gain new resonance when we imagine building digital archives of our own. We need to think beyond offering our completed research to stakeholders outside the ivory tower and to explore instead whether and how we might share archival materials with them. Furthermore, since the Omeka platform allows for *user* contributions, we should also consider how we might invite stakeholders not just to visit the archives we build but to add material to them.

As exciting a prospect as this may be, such a pursuit should be understood as a complex one. If we start to build archives that are not just personal research spaces, that is, if community stakeholders instead of academic scholars become our audience and indeed our collaborators, then we would need to reflect upon how we might shape these archives to suit their needs instead of our own. Heather Brook Adams' James Berlin Award-winning dissertation may be a perfect test case for us to consider. In her dissertation, "On Secrets and Silences: Unwed Pregnancy Since the 1960s," Adams interviews numbers of women who recall their experiences with unwed pregnancy during the period from 1960 to 1980 to explore the function of rhetorical silencing as well as to analyze rhetorical constructions of shame and blame.

If Adams were to create a digital archive of these interviews, what ethical and methodological principles should guide her work? How might she shape and compose this archive not only for an audience of feminist scholars but also for the women she has interviewed and others like them? Furthermore, in terms of taking advantage of Omeka's ability to allow for user contributions, how might Adams invite this contingent of women to participate in the archive? What kinds of outreach, publicity, and promotional work would this invitation entail? Answering these questions certainly calls us to understand how deeply rhetorical and political archive building can be. In addition, pursuing such work prompts us to see ourselves and our work differently. Here, we become public historians and even activists in addition to feminist historiographers.

I hope I've offered a convincing response to the Turner-esque question that inspired and initiated this essay: The digital humanities does indeed

have something to do with feminist historiography. I hope too that my comments have served as an invitation to investigate Omeka-enabled archives and to consider further their methodological possibilities and problems.

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Coalition Talk: Finding their Voices: Feminist Intervention, Public Narratives, and Social Media

Letizia Guglielmo

This project is made up of many stories, some perhaps that you know or have heard parts of, and others, still unknown, are incomplete. And so, this is a project about listening for voices and looking for ways to interrupt public narratives.

Part One

The first, larger narrative begins twenty-eight years ago when the Saturn Automobile Corporation was created as “a fully owned subsidiary of [the monolith] General Motors” (Sloop 67). The goal was to allow GM to compete with Japanese auto makers. This story was made public from the very beginning, intimately connected to marketing, to what was the described revolution and rebirth of the American automobile industry, and what would become the public Saturn narrative. From its inception, the Saturn Corporation branded itself “a different kind of company” characterized by quality, affordability, no-haggle pricing, and, most importantly, a new vision of automobile manufacturing that had the potential to revolutionize the assembly line and factory production in the United States. The founders of this “different” idea, the famed group of ’99 as they have been called since the beginning, realized that in order to *be* different—to do something that had not yet been done in automobile manufacturing—they would have to radically rethink every part of the process. Their vision was guided by and grounded in a cooperative model, one that included everyone: parts suppliers, workers, management, union representatives, dealerships, and even the customer for whom the automobile was being created. All would be named “team members”

in the process. For factory workers entrenched in the *old way of doing things* at other General Motors (GM) plants, or what would be referred to throughout Saturn as “the old world,” this new venture—or *experiment* as it continually would be described—offered change, job security, and an opportunity to have a say—a *voice*—as a team member and not merely a lineman or woman with no personal stake in the work.

Much has been written about Saturn, its organizational structure and innovation, with many describing “[t]he labor-management partnership between the Saturn Corporation and the United Auto Workers (UAW) [. . . as] the boldest experiment in U.S. industrial relations” (Rubenstein 197). Within this workplace, according to written accounts within popular media, academic journals, and full-length texts, all operations were driven by a “high level of organizational commitment and strong horizontal communication and coordination” (Rubenstein 206). Even beyond the production line, what was really *different* about Saturn was how it reinforced this coordination and communication at every level, grounded in a metaphor of community. You, too, might remember the ubiquity of this metaphor in advertisements featuring the rural landscapes of Spring Hill, Tennessee, of ordinary Americans setting out to do something extraordinary, and of retailers who did not assume a female buyer is only interested in the vanity mirror. Perhaps you remember the commercial from the mid 90s, featuring Erin Walling a young woman so pleased with her experience purchasing a Saturn that she, too, joins the team. And maybe you owned a Saturn, or drove one once, or visited a retailer where you were treated as part of the team and invited to join the Saturn family. And perhaps, as part of the family, you attended the reunion, the Saturn Homecoming in 1994 in Spring Hill, where more than 44,000 Saturn owners and their family members came together to tour the plant, to meet the people who had built their cars, to share a meal, and to celebrate their community.

This metaphor of community has been explored through various lenses, most often by scholars interested in the “public story,” to use John Sloop’s words, “utilizing Saturn’s story as it is represented through advertising, news stories, and trade books” (69). In their analysis of Saturn ads, for example, sociologists Mills, Boylstein, and Lorean explain that for the consumer, this ideal community constructed through Saturn’s public story was one “in which every individual is not only heard, but

recognized and respected” (130). Yet others have questioned whether this cooperative model was successful and the extent to which it truly benefitted the workers. Some accounts, though less public than the more pervasive story, suggest that team members were under enormous peer pressure, given the structure of team accountability; that the revolutionary contract guiding Saturn actually rolled back some worker rights; and that decisions often were made by management without team members’ input. Slowly, over time, what was once unique about Saturn began to more closely resemble business as usual in the old world, and eventually, a majority vote among team members ushered in a much more traditional labor contract.

The story of the Saturn Corporation is long and complicated, much longer than I can recount here, and, in 2009, in the midst of economic downturn and after the Big Three CEOs had flown on private jets to beg for a bail-out, the original Saturn plant in Spring Hill, Tennessee closed its doors without any say from its “community.” Various deals to sell Saturn had fallen through, and in the months leading up to and immediately following the end of the brand, women and men were laid-off or transferred from Tennessee to various GM plants around the country. Within the media, the public story continued to take shape. David Hanna, for example, a consultant in strategic HR and leadership, argued that “Saturn [. . .] ultimately failed because senior GM leaders couldn’t see the benefits of new ways of doing things.” Others argued that Saturn’s demise was connected to its inability to turn a profit. Largely absent from this public story, however, and from the larger narrative that preceded it, were the voices of Saturn’s team members, the women and men who worked together to make that difference.

Part Two

In late 2009, just a few months after the last car had come off the line in the original Saturn plant, and with the help of my father, a Saturn team member, I discovered these voices that had been excluded from the larger narrative in an unlikely place: Facebook. In the months that followed the end of the Saturn brand, some team members gained agency by co-opting and re-envisioning Saturn’s metaphor of community for themselves. Through Facebook groups identified by the cities to which team members had been or would be transferred (Lansing, Fairfax, Kansas City, for

example), the team members created webs of support within a unique rhetorical space (Koerber).

One such group, *GM Spring Hill Families Heading to Lansing, MI*, was created by a team member with this introduction:

This Facebook group will hopefully allow people to stay connected with hometown folk, while heading to the great white north. We may not know each other; however, we can at least help, support, direct and allow each other the opportunity to say hello to someone we know, while shopping at the local grocery. Hopefully, it will also assist people in connecting for weekend carpools from MI to TN. This would also be a good source for recommendations on apartments, doctors, restaurants, schools, etc. Welcome! (GM Spring Hill)

Beyond this invitation, what was most striking about this group was how team members maintained communication (despite a lack of distributed information from GM during the transition process), offered support and resources, and coordinated activities across miles. In spite of the company's abandoning of the communal, collaborative structure and the eventual dissolution of the Saturn brand, team members found ways to write their own community and to maintain webs of relationships, reclaiming voice through social networking. All of this occurred under the Saturn logo, which became a symbol for the group.

During a nineteen-month period from December 2009 to July 2011, team members posted 169 original messages to this Facebook page with nearly 260 original responses to those messages. The messages covered a variety of topics, including praise for the group's organizer, information about places to live and finding roommates, discount flight announcements for travel between Michigan and Tennessee, general GM news, and recommendations for schools, restaurants, and places of worship. However, in large numbers, the posts addressed topics connected to the Saturn family and community, to team membership, and to sharing information that would subvert the "old world" structure of GM, precisely the kind of "difference" team members aimed to make with the founding of the Saturn Corporation.

For example, in keeping with the Facebook group organizer's call for contributors to use the page to "help, support, and direct," some

messages served as confessionals with members reflecting on the changes to come. Two members, for example, wrote about leaving family behind in Tennessee while making the solo move to MI, and each generated 5 responses, many expressing similar sentiments, solidarity, and support:

Reality of leaving is setting in. Going to miss my sons and daughter in law [sic] and grandson. Saying goodbye to the princess really sucked.

I am soooo scared! My first move with GM and leaving my real home like so many of you did for Saturn. Hope all goes well for everyone. See you there on the 25th! (GM Spring Hill)

Beyond this shared experience, however, messages referenced family and team membership as well as the Saturn legacy. For example, the group's organizer was praised for creating the space because, as one contributor explained, "It will be great to keep up with our Spring Hill Family" (GM Spring Hill). Another wrote,

Man I hate to see so many good friends leave and go to other states to finish their time with GM but I do understand what y'all have to do for your families, yourselves, and loved ones. I know, I came up to Spring Hill, TN. with a family of 4 but now my Spring Hill family is 100s. (GM Spring Hill)

The Spring Hill Family, as indicated by these messages, extends beyond *immediate* family ties, and family members are defined by their immediate connection to the original Saturn Plant in Spring Hill. Furthermore, messages suggest that this membership is exclusive and this family unique. For example, one contributor, already in Lansing writes, "Looking forward to seeing more of 'the best' from Spring Hill arrive" (GM Spring Hill). Another offers this, "Good Luck to all that are heading north! I sure wish it didn't have to be this way. But you can show them the kind of work force we've had here the last 20 years! The best to you all!" (GM Spring Hill). Here members distinguish themselves from other GM workers by using the word "best" and with pronouns like "them" to indicate an insider/outsider dichotomy, one that further signals alignment with the original Saturn vision to be different from "the old world." This sentiment is further affirmed in the following post:

One journey ends—And another one begins . . . It is amazing that so many family members are all going to the same plant to continue what we started 20 years ago. I wish everyone the very best. We did it once we can do it again. it is a different world but at least we got each other to lean on. It is somewhat of a culture shock, but life goes on and we will make it! I've been here (LDT) [Lansing Delta Township Assembly] since August and I have to say it was an adjustment. But there is a lot of good folks at LDT that have the same mindset as us, then again there is some that don't. Don't be surprised by this. Over all [sic] I have had a good experience so far. Keep in mind it is what we make it. I hope to see you all in the plant. (GM Spring Hill)

Here, too, the contributor indicates that there is something unique about the Saturn way, that membership in this family requires a specific “mind set,” and that the goal in returning to “the old world” of GM is not to abandon this mindset but to find allies with similar values. As another contributor indicated, recently transferred to a plant in Fairfax, Kansas, “sure miss Spring Hill . . . we had it made!” (GM Spring Hill).

Part of the Saturn vision—what made them distinctly different from the rest of GM—was an attempt to rethink the organizational structure. Language use was a significant part of this strategy. For example, dealerships were called retailers, customers were considered part of the family, and factory workers were members of teams, expected to take ownership of their work in many ways: coordinating scheduling; devising a process for rotating among individual jobs; ordering supplies; and assessing and improving production processes to benefit all members in a team of 10-12. Within the Facebook group, in addition to references to family and to community, messages indicate attempts to maintain or to recreate this team membership.

In reasserting the Saturn vision on the Facebook page, contributors also succeed in subverting, in small ways, some of GM's control following its decision to close the Spring Hill plant, to end the Saturn brand, and to effectively dismantle the organizational structure by dispersing team members across various plants. One contributor refers to the Facebook page as an opportunity “to keep informed” despite “be[ing] spread throughout the plant in Lansing” and as a space to “share stories

about transitioning to the new plant” (GM Spring Hill). One such story was a detailed response to a team member's request for information on orientation and “job and shift assignments” at the new plant. This coordinated, collaborative effort was praised by other contributors and described as helping team members to “be prepared for what to expect” and “put your mind at eas[e]” (GM Spring Hill).

Certainly there are voices missing from this conversation—namely those not connected to the plant in Lansing—yet this Facebook page reminds us to listen more carefully for the voices that have been excluded within the public story of Saturn and to question how a greater representation of those voices would shape that enduring narrative. How might team members complicate the Saturn story? What might they teach us about the benefits and challenges of decentered leadership? How might their experiences shape our understanding of a factory closing?

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Coalition Talk: The New Archive: Women, Writing, Work

Phyllis Thompson

In “Feminism in the Age of Digital Archives,” Jacqueline Wernimont and Julia Flanders argue the archive is a “conduit through which [we can] experiment with new modes of scholarly intervention” (425). By re-conceptualizing the archive as a conduit, we call into question the criteria for what constitutes the archive as a physical space and the materials as physical artifacts. For Wernimont and Flanders, that space is a digitized one and those materials are print sources, but their work can be applied to physical spaces and manuscript materials. For example, Antoinette Burton’s *Dwelling in the Archive* provides us “historiographical opportunities” (5) to locate the “counternarratives” (33) that re-shape traditional boundaries and prefigure substantive changes to feminist scholarship. This re-shaping requires that we re-imagine not only the archive but also the questions we ask of it. As we ask new questions of old and often overlooked materials, we enact Wernimont’s and Flanders’ archive as conduit by recovering voices that have been silenced and by making space for voices that have not yet even been invited to the table. While this presentation follows in the archival footsteps of these three feminist scholars, it focuses on the material artifacts of eighteenth-century rural housewives to demonstrate that as we engage archive as conduit, we locate the counternarratives and, through them, construct an alternative story about women, writing, and work.

Drawing on Wernimont’s and Flanders’ work on Women Writers Online (WWO), this presentation examines women’s manuscript recipe books from the long eighteenth century that are held in archival repositories. The movement from a digital to a physical location and from a print to a manuscript format uncovers a number of issues relevant

to the feminist scholar and the production of feminist research. Access, security, and cataloging are most notable. Access is critical to feminist recovery work. For the typical American graduate student or junior colleague, working with eighteenth-century manuscript materials can be prohibitively expensive; this is especially the case if the materials are housed outside one's own country. Many archival repositories are addressing this issue by scanning materials and making them available online. Increased access benefits the field by increasing awareness about archival libraries and their holdings, making materials available to a wider audience, and providing critical attention to previously neglected women writers. Finally, both the scanned and the secured item will remain overlooked if not properly identified and catalogued. For example, an early challenge for feminist scholars using archival repositories was that women's materials were often housed in their family's collections and cataloged under a father's or husband's name, not the woman's name. Because of this, many women's materials were virtually lost in the archive. Most libraries have taken care to include women's names in the cataloging data and to revise finding aids to describe women's materials.

One area where the archive provides an historiographical opportunity to recover women's work is through their recipe collections.

Women's medicinal recipes provide scholars with details about the conditions of eighteenth-century home health care.¹ Remedies were created and prescribed as a means of eliminating pain and preventing disease and included treatments for a range of bodily ailments and infectious diseases, preventative therapies, cosmetic salves, and dental repairs. As I have discussed in "Expanding the Archive: A Galaxy of Medicinal Receipts," the most frequently asked question and, in short, the litmus test for a medicinal recipe is "does it work"? In the eighteenth century, self-medication was common practice, although exceptions were made for cases that required surgery or where bones were broken. Even serious conditions, such as falling sickness (epilepsy and convulsions) and the King's Evil or scrofula (abscess and swelling of the lymph nodes) and infectious diseases, such as plague, small pox, and consumption, were treated at home. For the rural housewife at home, medicinal recipes needed to work.

¹For work on women, health, and healing, see Catherine Field, Mary E. Fissell, Lillian R. Furst, Monica H. Green, Rebecca J. Tannenbaum, and Lynette Hunter.

Sarah Palmer's Book illustrates a common practice in this regard. The ingredients list she provides for Mrs. Essington's Cordiall Water, which she writes is "good against Infectious diseases," includes salendine, rue, syrup of poppies, sage, scordium, and sentory among other ingredients.² Her long list illustrates the common practice of using a broad range of herbs in one recipe. In Mrs. Essington's Cordiall, the salendine and poppies may have provided some analgesic or sedative effect, but the other ingredients contained no therapeutic value. The thinking at the time was that using multiple herbs improved the odds that the remedy would actually cure the patient.³ While the application of a medical litmus test would have been the first question asked of remedies in the eighteenth century and may, today, provide greater insight into the probable efficacy of treatments, this line of inquiry is far from the most interesting and highlights the difference between the questions practitioners asked in the eighteenth century and the questions feminist scholars ask in the twenty-first. It is in these questions that the counternarratives can be found.

A physical examination of the material artifact is an excellent starting point for exploring recipe books as conduit for alternative stories of women, writing, and work. Recipe books in the eighteenth century contain medicinal recipes, memoranda on their uses, and detailed instructions on how to prepare them. Most included a dedicated culinary section as well commonplace items interspersed throughout. Some collections were written in one hand, by a professional scribe or personal amanuensis, and represent recipe books produced as presentation copies and given as gifts on special occasions like the birth of a child, a baptism, or marriage. Other recipe books, like one that belonged to Johanna St. John (see Figure 1) were compiled one recipe at a time, written by a series of different hands over a period of years, and passed down from one generation to the next. This sample page from *Her Booke* reveals two different hands and strikes a sharp contrast with a recipe book that would

² Mrs. Essington's recipe and complete list of ingredients for her Cordiall Water can be found in MS.3740. Sarah Palmer and others, Collection of medical receipts, with a few cookery receipts: in English, written by several hands, but mostly by Mrs Palmer, early 18th century (Wellcome Library). While this method of combining herbs, taken in conjunction with instructions on dosages, indicates an awareness of medicinal properties, it does not suggest scientific understanding of the ailment.

³ A substantial body of work has been written on the patient's perspective. See Lucinda M. Beier, Roy Porter, Michael MacDonald, Mary E. Fissell, and Linda A. Pollock.

have been produced as a presentation copy in terms of use, quality and wear of paper, care of penmanship, organization of items on the page,

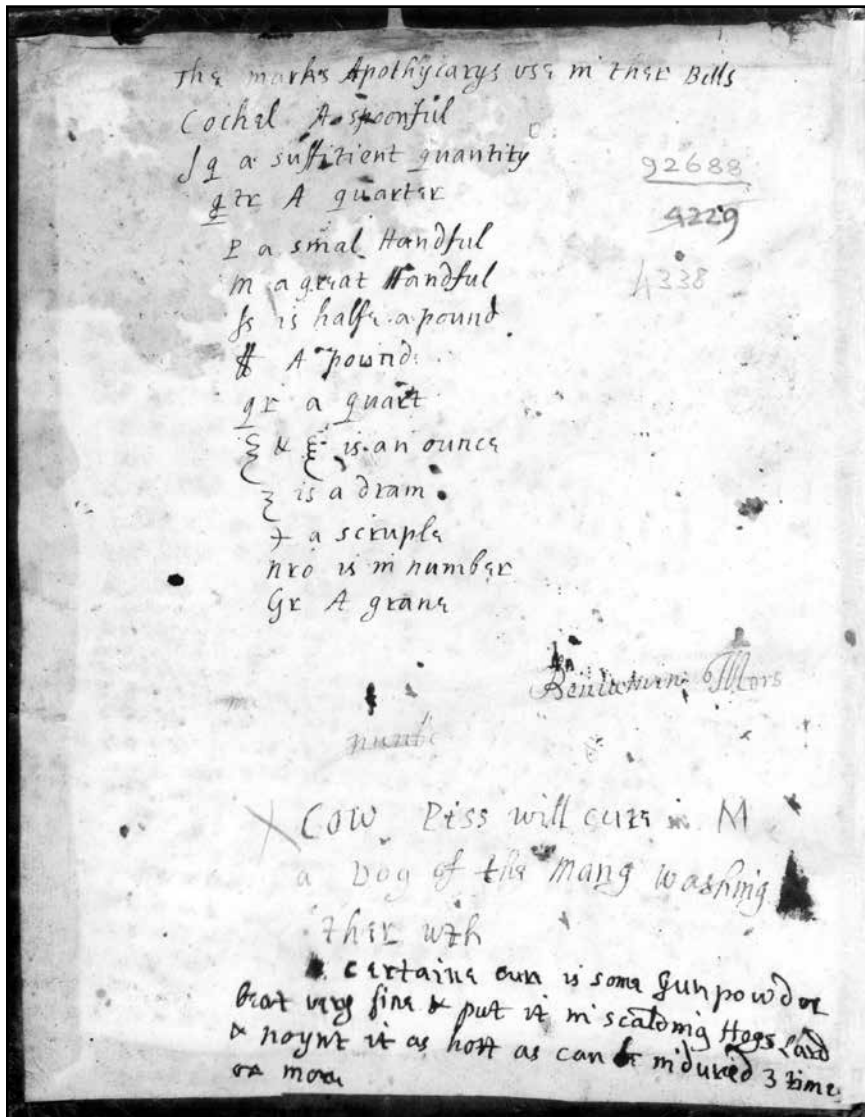


Figure 1: MS. 4338. Johanna St. John Her Booke, 1680. Recipe Book. Courtesy of the Wellcome Library, London.

and even content. Based on evidence gleaned from physical examination alone, one can speculate that this was a text that was used frequently. Even though Johanna St. John's Booke is bound in leather, with pages stitched into the binding, and inscribed "I.S.," diagonally across the front surface of the binding are several 4- to 5-inch etch marks that appear to be made by the blade of a knife. These diagonal cut marks along with culinary section of recipes in the back of the book suggest that Her Booke was stored in the kitchen and on occasion used as a cutting board. Other evidence includes the appearance of a spill in the top left-hand quadrant of the inside page of the book, torn and occasionally stained pages throughout the book, and a number of different types of handwriting. Physical examination of the book as artifact suggests not only frequent use but also a narrative conversation taking place within its pages.

The symbols at the top of the page in Figure 1 are identified as those that apothecaries use on their bills, which would be information a housewife would need easy access to during the course of her day. Since this page is the inside front cover of the book, it would provide her with easy access to these symbols. Organization would also increase ease of access. While the organizational strategies used in recipe books varied widely and often included indexes and/or tables of contents, Johanna St. John uses a series of letters as tabs to highlight the purpose of remedies (See Figure 2), that is, D would indicate a recipe for delivery, A for afterbirth, G for a glist, and so on.⁴ In Figure 1, inscribed on the right-hand bottom of the page is an "M" for Mange in a dog. To the left is a note that reads, "Cow Piss will cure a Dog of the mang washing ther with" (1v). An "X" written beside the remedy probably indicates that it did not work. A revised remedy is provided beneath the original one in a different hand and ink: "a certaine cure is some gunpowder beat very fine & put it in scalding Hogs Lard & noynt it as hott as can be indured 3 times or more" (1v). This conversation appears to be a two-part follow-up to a conversation that began on the next page with a remedy penned by the first hand "For the Itch in man or woman or mang in a Dog" (1r). Leaving

⁴ For a treatment of organizational strategies in recipe books as they relate to reading practices in the long eighteenth century, see my chapter "Uncovering the Traces Left Behind: Manuscript Recipes, Middleclass Readers, and Reading Practices" in *Producing the Eighteenth-Century Book: Writers and Publishers in England, 1650-1800*.

the verso page blank for additional comments, like the ones we see added here, was common practice in early manuscript culture.

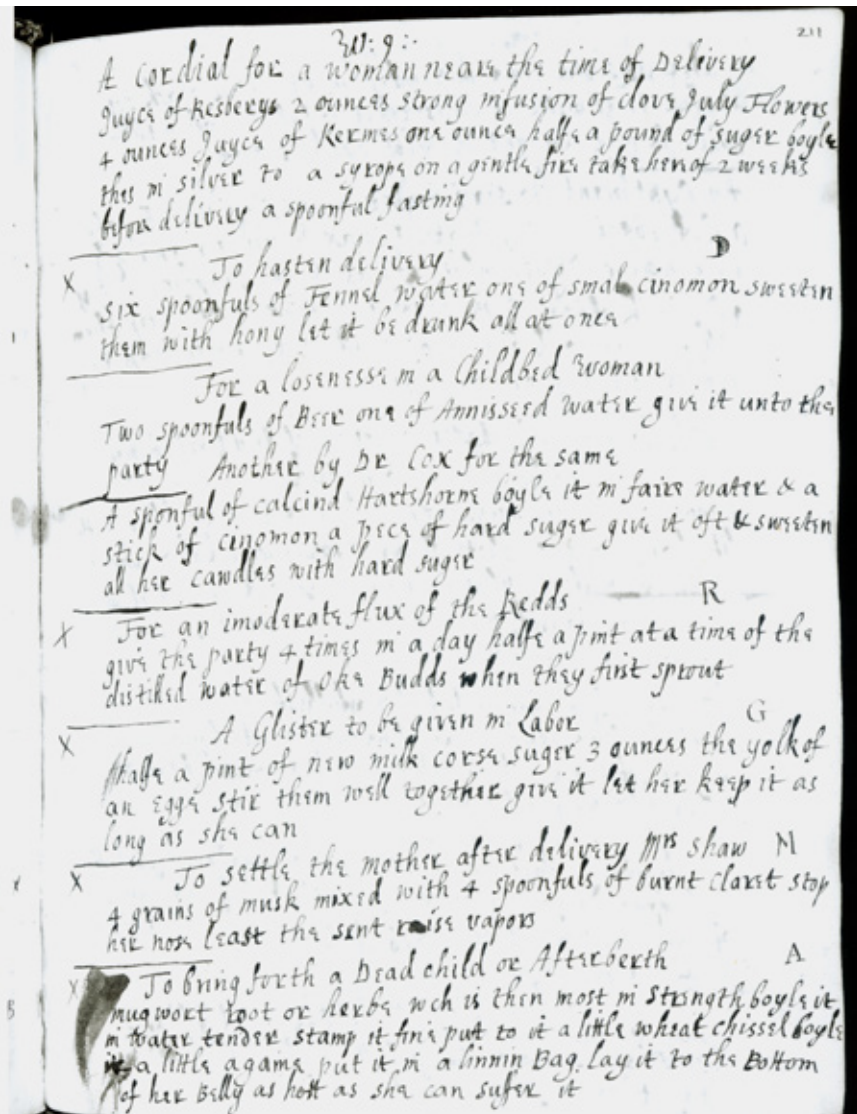


Figure 2: MS. 4338. Johanna St. John Her Booke, 1680. Recipe Book. Courtesy of the Wellcome Library, London.

Customarily, recipes open with a title that suggests use and include annotations that address efficacy and provide personal testimony. For instance, Figure 2 provides two recipes “For a losnesse in a childbed woman,” the second of which was tried and approved by Dr Cox. Three recipes below this is a recipe “To settle the mother after delivery,” which recommends “4 grains of musk mixed with 4 spoonfuls of burnt claret stop her nose least the sent raise vapors” (211r). The name “M^{rs} Shaw” is listed after the title, indicating that she had tried and approved the remedy. Recipes often include personal testimony. For instance, at the end of Mary Evelyn’s “Powder against Miscarriage,” she comments that “This hath been used by one that hath had 12 Miscarryings, and upon the use of this hath had 4 Children” (20v). In the right-hand margin of her “Medicine for the Eyes,” Evelyn claims that the remedy is “to cleane the sight and strengthen the sight; used by the Bishop of Hall and... York, who at the Age of 125 saw to read any print without spectacles whilst at the Age of 50 he could not” (36r). The implication is that recipes were tried, proven, and came highly recommended. Attribution and personal testimony were common practice in medicinal recipe books and indicate that an informal but expected mechanism of authority was in place and that a growing community of women—a network of female healers—knew one another and shared their knowledge about what worked and what did not.

While the pristine quality of a presentation copy may suggest a socio-economic privilege that a stitched gathering of leaves between what is ostensibly a cutting board cannot, frequently used recipe books provide the feminist scholar a glimpse into the circumstances of daily life, access to the conversations about healthcare that are taking place in that household, and a location for those conversations, namely the kitchen. That location bears significance. It positions family healthcare alongside family nutrition and documents the pivotal role women played in both. The pencil sketch shown in Figure 3 is from a Collection of cookery and medical receipts of a woman working in her kitchen at table with small cups and a large steaming pot on the floor chronicles women’s work and illustrates the organic and interactive nature of eighteenth-century recipe books (126v). This drawing appears to represent the passing of knowledge from one generation to the next as a mother works in the kitchen while her daughter chronicles the experience by sketching it on the very pages



Figure 3: MS. 1796. Anon. *Collection of cookery and medical receipts*, c. 1685-1725. Courtesy of the Wellcome Library, London.

of the recipe book, itself. Wellcome's brief description in the finding aid concurs; this "drawing vividly conveys the transfer of knowledge in progress: the owner works while her child watches and learns for the future" (MS 1796). The examination of location reveals healthcare's long socio-culinary heritage, juxtaposing kitchen and cooking with healing and suggesting a feminist re-conceptualization of a space that has long been conceived as private as public.

In addition to the medicinal recipes and the culinary section that typically contained recipes for meats, puddings, and pies, stylistic illustrations, and detailed instructions on how to serve a

bird in its skin or set a table for dinner, commonplace items were often interspersed between recipes throughout both of the sections. Items might include account ledgers with expenses; handy price lists; useful pharmaceutical abbreviations; favorite poems; maxims to live by; beloved Bible passages; sermons; reflections on family, friends, and loved ones; and information on family births, baptisms, and burials—the family's repository of important, practical knowledge. These items give concrete detail to family life and suggest reading preferences, popular dinner conversations, and even the general tone of the times or mood of the household. A "Hymn in Sickness," found on the pages of Martha Hodges' book, reveals a common belief held in eighteenth-century homes about the relevance of religion to sickness. The lines, "Altho disease infects my Breast/...His sacred will I yet adore/Who gives & takes away," evoke a dependence on God's "sacred will," not medicine, for health and recovery (43r). Recipe books capture the complex eighteenth-century tension between remedies and religion and, in conjunction with the culinary and commonplace, help us recover the complex narratives of family life.

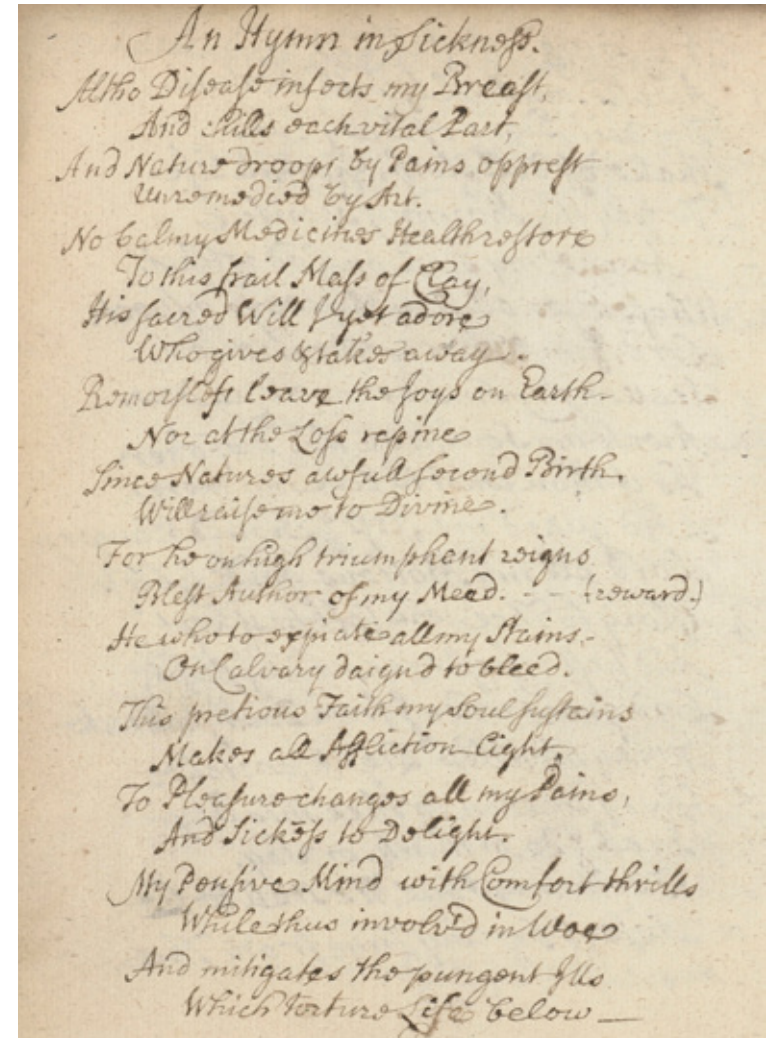


Figure 4: MS. 2844. Martha Hodges and others, c. 1675-1725. Courtesy of the Wellcome Library, London.

When we engage the archive as conduit, we have the opportunity to recover voices that have been silenced and stories that have been lost. As a result, individual women healers gain critical attention and their recipe collections, which chronicle of an ethics of care central to the practice of healing during the eighteenth century, are saved, ultimately by the ink of

their own pens. As I reflect on what and who has been saved by the pen, I am reminded of the theme of our panel. As I put down my own pen, I realize that this topic of women, writing, and work is not only about those who cook in eighteenth-century kitchens, populate the pages of recipe books, or fill archival shelves but also those who do the work and the work itself. I am reminded that there is a responsibility implicit in enacting archive as conduit and that responsibility depends on us—to engage the space, find the counternarratives, and pass on the alternative stories.

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Review: *composing(media) = composing(embodiment): bodies, technologies, writing, the teaching of writing*

Julie Platt

Arola, Kristin L, and Anne Frances Wysocki, eds. *composing(media) = composing(embodiment): bodies, technologies, writing, the teaching of writing*. Logan: Utah State UP, 2012. Print.

Early in the introduction to Kristin L. Arola and Anne Frances Wysocki's new edited collection, Wysocki echoes Merleau-Ponty and states that "without our bodies—our sensing abilities—we do not have a world; we have the world we do because we have our particular senses and experiences" (3). As I think about this statement by Wysocki, I wonder about the body that I experience, and how easily I take it for granted; how easily my body's thousands of minute workings pass beneath my consciousness. And yet, the freezing cold air of the room I am seated in chills my skin and sinks into my limbs; I am distracted from my writing by an awareness of my body as it engages with the most primal of interfaces—the air around me. Wysocki's introduction asserts that our writing, like our bodies, "modifies our sense of engagement; it shifts how we feel what is around us or how we sense those with whom we communicate" (4), leading to a realization that the tools we use (writing, media, et cetera) are as much central to our embodiment as our bodies themselves. Arola and Wysocki argue that bodies both mediate and are mediated, thus positing two "assumption sets" that serve to structure the collection. The first set of assumptions, "Media = Embodiment," suggests that "we come to be always embedded—embodied—in mediation" (4). The second set of assumptions, "Mediating

Bodies ^ Mediated Bodies,” discusses a number of related tensions, including the tensions between mind and body, word and image, active and passive, expressive and socially conscious.

The book is divided into two major sections according to the sets of assumptions that Wysocki posits in the introduction. “Media = Embodiment” groups essays that interrogate how media encourage or discourage “possibilities” for bodies and embodiment. The first essay in this section, Wysocki’s “Drawn Together: Possibilities for Bodies in Words and Pictures,” considers—through comics and graphic novels—what kinds of identities can be created when one is not limited to alphabetic text. Wysocki, examining the tension between words and images in Alison Bechdel’s graphic novel *Fun Home*, states “if the words and pictures suggest opposing possibilities [. . .] it is not to show conflict but rather to make visible certain identities that can only be lived across the clean boundaries that separate the dichotomies” (38). Paul Walker’s “Pausing to Reflect: Mass Observation, Blogs, and Composing Everyday Life,” uses as its framework the “mass observation” experiment in 1930s England in which “ordinary, hardworking folk” (46) were asked to keep diaries of their everyday lives. Walker compares writing these diaries to the practice of writing blogs, highlighting how both practices, through the evocation of perceived audiences for their so-called “ordinary” reflection, result in writers composing themselves and others. In “Authoring Avatars: Gaming, Reading, and Writing Identities,” Matthew S. S. Johnson speaks to themes of identity formation as he illuminates the similarities between how embodiment and positionality operate at two sites: avatar creation instruction in role-playing video game manuals, and essay composition instruction in first-year writing textbooks. In “How Billie Jean King Became the Center of the Universe,” David Parry casts Wikipedia as both a static, librocentric reflection of Enlightenment values and a dynamic living organism requiring constant care, thus reflecting the thematic tensions illuminated by Wysocki.

Continuing in the first section, Jason Farman’s “Information Cartography: Visualizations of Internet Spatiality and Information Flows” traces the various ways that networked spaces are and have been mapped, pointing to their shortcomings in relationship to the ways that users navigate cyberspace. Farman notes that “internet cartography can address these problems through visualizing information not as raw

data but as a lived social space experienced in a situated and embodied way” (85). Recognizing and valuing lived experience is of importance in Jen Almjeld and Kristine Blair’s “Multimodal Methods for Multimodal Literacies: Establishing a Technofeminist Research Identity,” as the authors situate feminist methodological practices in Almjeld’s dissertation work, in which she told her own story in order to complicate notions of researcher identity. To conclude this section, Jay Dolmage’s “Writing Against Normal: Navigating a Corporeal Turn,” explores the physical and metaphorical ways that so-called “norms” “coincide and perhaps coproduce bodily attitudes, positions, and postures” (112). Dolmage looks to revision as a site where the possibility for growth and connection to others is heightened but where there is an increased risk of normalizing both bodies and writing. Dolmage walks the reader through the experience of several kinds of media-facilitated revision activities, noting affordances and risks. He seeks “to reconnect mind, body, and writing” by seeing “the body (and the text) as meaningfully messy and incomplete” (Dolmage 125).

The second section of *composing(media) = composing(embodiment)*, “Mediating Bodies ^ Mediated Bodies,” collects essays that examine “productive relations” between texts and bodies that lead to new relationships and new possibilities for creation. The second section opens with “Crafting New Approaches to Composition,” an essay by Kristin Prins, who engages relational understandings of writing while proposing that we consider “craft” as opposed to “design” as a way of conceptualizing writing. Prins argues that “craft” allows us to interrogate ethical and embodied approaches to composition and offers, at the end of the chapter, numerous classroom activities aimed at positioning writing as craft. Aaron Raz Link’s “Bodies of Text” invites and challenges the reader to examine their own subject position in relationship to text and to other bodies, engaging the reader in a dramatic performance which questions the possibilities offered by academic writing: “Here in the text we are safe and bodiless, here we can have a discourse on sex and color and size and other properties of bodies. But we are talking about bodies in a zone that has excluded them, and the actual appearance of bodies in such a discourse can feel like a gauche and terrifying invasion from another country” (168). In “Whose Body?: Looking Critically at New Interface Designs,” Ben McCorkle engages the theme of the

contact zone, looking to how innovations in haptic interfaces urge us to reconsider the conversation of access, warning that “when we forget our integumental bodies, conditions are prime for a reiteration of technology as a transparent, neutral tool” (186). “Queerness, Multimodality, and the Possibilities of Re/Orientation,” a piece by Jonathan Alexander and Jacqueline Rhodes, looks to ways of refiguring queerness through such diverse, multi-mediated vectors as online queer texts and the films of Jean Cocteau. As such, “Queerness” arranges its narratives in tension and in play, in various nonlinear configurations on the page.

The second section continues with Arola’s “It’s My Revolution: Learning to See the Mixedblood,” which engages themes of materiality and representation of bodies in networked spaces. In this essay, Arola argues that “seeing” the mixedblood body is a complex and potentially fraught practice. She highlights the embodied nature of Native American powwow regalia, and analyzes the MySpace profiles of three mixedbloods, showing how their fashioning of these heavily-templated spaces creates ways to see their identities. This section concludes with two essays that triangulate activism, media, and embodiment: Karen Springsteen’s “Visible Guerillas,” which examines the visual rhetorical work of the activist group the Guerilla Girls, and Kristie Fleckenstein’s “Affording New Media: Individuation, Imagination, and the Hope of Change,” which introduces and explores the work of activist and artist Coco Fusco and her one-act performance *The Incredible Disappearing Woman (IDW)* as an inspiration for new media assignments that begin to foster social change. Springsteen argues that the Guerilla Girls trouble the subject-object dichotomy prevalent in white supremacist, masculinist art with visual rhetorical moves that challenge viewers with humor, among other approaches. Fleckenstein cites legal scholar Drucilla Cornell’s essential components for individuation—the preservation of bodily integrity, access to symbol systems, and the protection of imaginative space—as the tenants according to which transformative compositions may be created.

Each section of *composing(media) = composing(embodiment)* concludes with a subsection of pedagogical activities designed for a wide variety of writing teachers. For example, the first subsection includes activities such as developing a visual literacy narrative, wherein students use words and images to tell their stories of literate activity and mapping students’ digital connectivity, in which students log their digital technology usage

and weave that usage into a map they design. The second subsection offers such activities as evaluating and designing social interfaces, where students rhetorically analyze the design of social networking sites and exploring visual activism, where students discuss the public effects of visual rhetoric. Each activity has clearly outlined objectives and a list of considerations for implementation, offering suggestions for managing and modifying the lesson. These rich, well-designed activities explicitly correspond with the themes and arguments of the chapters and are an extremely valuable resource for writing instructors seeking ways to implement the ideas discussed in the book. The inclusion of these activities marks this book as a kind of hybrid text, engaging both critical and pedagogical concerns. As a writing teacher myself, texts like these help me to frame my pedagogical responses to theories advanced in the texts and provide ideas for developing my own writing activities.

At the beginning of one of these pedagogical sections, Arola and Wysocki state: “We experience relations between embodiment and media as we breathe, walk, talk, look, listen, sigh, read, write, and view. We feel our embodiment continually” (127). *composing(media) = composing(embodiment)* is a collection that invites us to consider the ways that our embodiment is made both explicit and implicit and how our worlds, outer and inner, are mediated. The essays and exercises in this text ask us to consider how we are positioned—and how we position others—in the tensions that comprise the ways we mediate our bodies and the world.

About the Author

Julie Platt’s critical work and book reviews have appeared in *Computers and Composition*, *Computers and Composition Online*, and *Kairos*, and her poems and essays have appeared in numerous national journals. She is the Creative Editor of *Technoculture: An Online Journal of Technology in Society*.

Review: *Hope I Join the Band: Narrative, Affiliation, and Antiracist Rhetoric*

Andrea Riley Mukavetz

Condon, Frankie. *I Hope I Join the Band: Narrative, Affiliation, and Antiracist Rhetoric*. Logan, UT: Utah State UP, 2012. Print.

I Hope I Join the Band is a beautiful piece of prose, artfully crafted to show that there will always be more work to do in antiracist movements. Condon bravely opens herself up to her readers and does not try to make herself the hero of her own history or of antiracism activism and scholarship. Instead, she carefully and thoughtfully examines what she believes to work by offering a set of rhetorical strategies built upon the work of critical race scholars, antiracist scholars, queer theorists, and American Indian Studies scholars. She brings these scholars together as her intellectual relatives to build an antiracist theory, methodology, and pedagogy.

In *I Hope I Join the Band: Narrative, Affiliation, and Antiracist Rhetoric*, Condon explores the complexity of beginning and staying with antiracist work from the perspectives of Euro-Americans. Condon situates the discussion primarily within academic cultural communities. In doing so, she ultimately addresses not only the need for antiracist work within academia, but also how it has failed thus far. In fact, it is crucial for raced-white peoples to understand how to “create conditions in which [they] might learn from [their failures] (12).” Furthermore, Condon observes that whites seldom return to learning more about antiracist work, but assume a static state of mastery (12). Condon enacts performative antiracism to provide a set of rhetorical strategies to begin antiracist work and most importantly, continue with it. These strategies are decentering, nuancing or transmemoration, and bearing witness. These

rheterical strategies “dig into ways of conceiving, thinking, speaking, and acting performatively in antiracist struggles for whites” (12). For Condon, *I Hope I Join the Band* works at the intersections of activism and scholarship—of *praxis* and *poesies*.

In Chapter 1, “Chattering with Angels,” Condon begins building a performative antiracist framework by digging deep into her history, arguing that whites must learn how to draw from their epistemological traditions and craft their own stories. She shows her readers how to do this by situating herself historically, socially, and politically and telling a series of stories that help her reflect on the moments when she was marked as raced white. For example, she shares a memory from her childhood: shopping for groceries with her mother and her adoptive, Ojibwe brother. In this story, she notices how community members marked her brother as “Other” and herself as “normal.” Condon uses this story to come to the following observation

The rules of racial standing, while serving my interests or benefiting me by establishing my status as a white girl—opening up access to social and educational opportunities for me—also broke me into pieces, sliced me away from one whom I loved dearly, passionately, crazily (in the crazy mixed-up way siblings so often do love one another). (31).

For Condon, being marked white obviously relates to her social and educational opportunities (re: privilege). Here, she theorizes how this privilege impacts how she forms relationships and makes meaning. This type of racial marking creates and benefits from hierarchy and separation; it rejects knowledge practices and relationships that acknowledge how we are interconnected. Condon’s critique does not stop there. Instead, she further examines how whiteness, an epistemology, creates and disseminates knowledge based off of tidy boundaries and categories. Drawing from Marilyn Frye and Minnie Bruce Pratt, Condon defines whiteness as “learned ways of knowing and doing characterized by a racialized (white) sense of oneself as best equipped to judge, to preach, and to suffer” (34). Whiteness emphasizes the idea that there is a clear right way to live, to work, and to be. Condon observes that whiteness hinders the ability for white folks to change or to effect change, especially while working with people of color (34). In fact, she

argues that whiteness impedes the collaborative work between whites and non-whites. For example, Condon notices how raced white people use whiteness strategies to depoliticize and simplify the stories of people of color. However, she is careful to show the distinction between drawing upon one’s epistemological traditions and using whiteness to craft narratives from white perspectives. By undoing a whiteness way of knowing, Condon argues that antiracist workers can ask important questions like “[c]an white activists, teachers, and tutors join with colleagues of color in antiracism work?...Can we possibly learn to listen, to recognize and acknowledge, without recentring ourselves, without recentring whiteness, as we attend (34)?” I believe that Condon’s answer would be “yes” to these questions, but she would encourage us to pay careful attention to the types of practices we enact to do antiracist work. Condon is upfront that crafting these stories—as she notes, re-orienting oneself is a troubling and complicated process that never ends. There is no point of mastery, but a constant revisiting and tending to.

In Chapter 2, “Wrestling with Angels,” Condon continues enacting a performative antiracist framework by exploring how racism, isolation, and violence affected her brother’s life and their relationship. Condon uses these stories to develop a set of rhetorical strategies to build an antiracist theory and methodology useful for Euro-Americans who are raced white. Condon begins with decentering,

which demands that we recognize, acknowledge, and account for the fact of racism as a composing force in our socially perceived identities as well as in our lived experience, it requires us to develop new ways of learning from and responding to those moments of failure in our performances on antiracism. (70)

Decentering does not provide a moral landscape, but offers a place to meet and form relations. Through decentering, one can pinpoint how she or he is still complicit to internalized racial oppression or white supremacy. While theorizing awareness and responsibility, Condon provides a complex discussion on how the interconnectedness of love and power is vital to understanding the ethics of decentering and antiracist work. In fact, Condon argues that we need a language to “name” how love and power are interconnected. This language will assist antiracist workers in talking about the relationship between the personal, professional, and

the impact of institutional spaces (72). Drawing from Martin Luther King Jr, Chela Sandoval, and Paul Tillich, Condon examines how power and love both have destructive aspects. For example, in the quotidian, love might convey absolute affirmation where power means to involve abuse. If we re-orient these strategies into an antiracist framework, we can use them ethically, responsibly, and transformatively. Yet, Condon argues, we must be open to flexibility as well as to dissenting and oppositional voices. For Condon, accepting these voices is an example of practicing decentering through an ethics of love and power. Thus, decentering becomes about *how* antiracist workers engage and perform within registers of dialogues.

In Chapter 3, “Angels before Thee,” Condon begins by examining the relationship between performative antiracism (“a labor that undoes the distinctions between personal and institutional work or systematic-change work” (86) and nuancing. Condon argues that nuancing is vital to performative antiracism because it “engages us in the work of recognizing and articulating critically the scope, dimensions, and impacts of existing relationships among and between the local and the global, the individual and the collective” (86). By practicing transmemoration or nuancing, one can remember their own history “without denying or effacing the memories of others and of situating our own and others’ memories within the context of the collective—not just how *I* come to be, but how *we* come to be” (85). It’s here, that Condon seeks to draw out not only the interconnectedness of these strategies, but the interconnectedness of people. Condon recognizes that these practices might appear to be similar to Krista Ratcliff’s rhetorical listening. But, she asserts, these practices are different because the goals are different. Where Ratcliff uses rhetorical listening for “multiracial tolerance and cooperation,” Condon uses nuancing and decentering to offer an account on how race is a social and rhetorical construct and from within that construction, call for negotiation and facilitation of identifications and communications (89). Condon’s insistence on how these practices are different emphasizes that antiracist work is not “multiracial cooperation,” but a reorientation to discourses on affiliation and narrative.

In Chapter 4, “An Open Door for Elijah,” Condon re-tells the story of the prophet Elijah and the story of the open door through an antiracist framework. She shows how these stories of seemingly good intentions use

whiteness strategies to create spaces and places of rhetorical imperialism or nostalgia (manifest manners). She writes, “[m]y point is not that we ought not to narrate or interrogate our lives from this place, but that, left undisturbed, habitual and learned epistemologies and rhetorics of whiteness will reproduce the conditions for their own emergence and reproduction” (122-123). In this section, Condon returns to whiteness to begin a discussion on the implications of raced whiteness—of being “white.” This discussion complicates the predicament of drawing from one’s epistemological traditions and using whiteness strategies to craft stories. Basing her work off of Malea Powell and Gerald Vizenor, Condon explores how survivance, a project created by and for non-white people, teaches her how raced-white people are also imaginary—also embedded within paracolonial discourses; “whites” must learn how to mock the idea of “white” to duck and move around their own complicity in institutional and imperial language. The work of antiracism, then, is to “defigure white as presence-absence...to evacuate the *I* that presupposes an Other” (128). It’s, in this chapter, that Condon’s analysis of whiteness and use of performative antiracism comes together as she examines how language has failed those who seek to stay with antiracist work. Condon argues that there is a certain amount of labor needed to create and sustain a “commodious language,” a language that acknowledges that people need each other to do antiracism work. For Condon, this means working at grassroots levels, being pragmatic, and learning how to organize and strategize within institutional spaces, all the while recognizing that the antiracist work done by raced white people is different than the antiracist and survivance work done by peoples of color. Condon believes that we need both labors to continue and that we need to make space for both of these labors, in order to sustain this work over time (140). Condon argues that the work of antiracism will never succeed, if people

...allow whitely ways of thinking to tame our languages and our rhetorics... We need to spend less time superimposing our unimaginative simulations of Others over and against those with whom we would make relations and more time imagining ourselves as beings capable of wild love that exceeds and transgresses the multiple purposes and meanings of an open door for Elijah. (143)

Condon ends this chapter by encouraging raced-white people to bear witness and to testify. In doing so, antiracist workers do not seek to elevate stories and histories, but rather to “unhinge” the power of universality and authority and to extend these stories beyond an individual and into a historical group. In doing so, we are able to examine how the stories by raced-whites have been suppressed and for what motives.

In the final chapter, “After the Fire, a Still Small Voice,” Condon shares a written correspondence with her friend, Dr. Vershawn A. Young, as a way to draw out further implications of committing to antiracist work. I read these conversations as further evidence on how friendships, care, trust, power, and love affect antiracist work. These public letters present a dialogue between two colleagues who deeply care and respect each other, but have different worldviews and do not always agree with each other. This conversation makes visible the difficult work of dialogue—of making space for dissenting or modifying voices. In this section, Condon’s theoretical concepts are put into practice. Here she reflects on rhetorical strategies like decentering, nuancing, and to bear witness and further negotiates the difficulty of enacting them.

Overall, I find Condon’s project to be successful. I appreciate how she takes the time to show her readers how to build an antiracist framework while drawing attention to the difficulty of doing this work. At times, I got lost in the terminology of Condon’s antiracist framework, especially as she brings together nuancing, transmemoration, and decentering. But, often, this is the consequence of telling stories to understand stories: to use story as methodology. *I Hope I Join the Band* has important contributions to Rhetoric and Composition because it provides us with strategies on how to develop a sustained rhetorical practice. Furthermore, this book seeks to maintain and cultivate disciplinary relationships with Gender studies, Sociology, and Ethnic studies by making visible how a performative antiracist framework must be made across disciplinary and intellectual communities. Lastly, as a mixed Native person, I recognize that I am not directly a part of Condon’s audience, but I felt welcomed and encouraged to listen, examine, and disagree (if I chose to) with Condon and her relations. I appreciate the physical, emotional, and intellectual labor Condon put in to building this framework and I believe that we can learn

from her on how to use performative antiracism to build theory and methodology: to work at the intersections of activism and scholarship.

About the Author

Andrea Riley Mukavetz is Assistant Professor in the Rhetoric and Writing program at Bowling Green State University. She teaches graduate courses in cultural rhetorics and contemporary rhetorical theory. Her research interests are American Indian rhetorics, cultural rhetorics, decolonial historiography, and community-based research. Currently, she is working on a long-term oral history project with a group of urban, native women from Lansing, Michigan.

Review: *Presumed Incompetence: The Intersections of Race and Class for Women in Academia*

Hui Wu

Gutiérrez y Muhs, Gabriella et al., ed. *Presumed Incompetence: The Intersections of Race and Class for Women in Academia*. Logan, UT: Utah State UP, 2012. Print.

Presumed Incompetence: The Intersections of Race and Class for Women in Academia is a must-read for higher education administrators and faculty who, by default, work more and more with colleagues and students of diverse backgrounds. This book is not about all women in academia but about women academics of color who are different and distinct in fundamental ways from men of color and white women. Because of this difference, women of color often battle a “double bind” syndrome—the combination of being a woman and a woman of color” (Wilson 66),¹ a particular syndrome that plagues them but not their white and male counterparts, a syndrome that is quite often simultaneously, and confusingly, identified as “other.” In addition to educating faculty colleagues and administrators in general about the interlocking issues such as race, gender, class, and nationality that women academics of color face on the job, this book also shares specific strategies for critically examining dominant systems in order to empower and inspire women academics of color to overcome challenges and forge ahead for success.

Forty-six academics in law, psychology, social sciences, and the humanities contribute to this collection. Six of them have held or are holding senior academic administrative positions; almost all chapter authors have experiences in higher education administration. Divided into five parts, each section introduces its chapters with a foreword

¹ All quotations are from the book under review.

written by a top or senior administrator who has decades of work experience in academia. The forewords confirm in distinct personal voices that layers of issues of race, gender, class, and nationality confront women academics of color. All of the foreword writers have witnessed what the narratives in this book present (Dovidio 113). They have observed countless women of color who enter academia only to be presumed incompetent by many of their colleagues and students and who ultimately end up leaving academia out of frustration (Allen 17). Women of color are “thawed and injured as individuals and as members of groups” (Cantor 221). With a total of fifty years of work first a faculty member and then as a university president, Samuel Smith points out that “universities have much in common with elite country clubs,” whose “perceived social orders or structure usually descends from the white males with affluent backgrounds from prestigious universities” (285). In the university, “women of all colors are usually considered below men, and their status diminishes more if they are of color, which indicates they may come from lower-income families and neighborhoods” (Smith 285). Deena Gonzáles echoes Smith in saying that “Tenure and promotion review[s] remain mysteries for many outsiders from first-generation scholars to those with working-class origins” (334). Again, Bettina Aptheker points out “the repeated efforts by contemporary white academics, lawyers, and politicians to manipulate statistics and feign liberal intentions while denouncing affirmative action” and “blaming students of color and women for their presumed ‘failures’” (xiii). While the most noticeable is the confirmation of layers of discrimination that set women of color apart from white women, the more important, yet poignant, are the authors’ insights into the outcomes of affirmative action. For example, confirming Delia Douglas’s observation that “white women have taken up the position of gatekeepers of the racial status quo (i.e. the culture of whiteness) of the academy” (61), Aptheker exclaims in her foreword—“the people who gained the most from affirmative action by any statistical analysis were white women!” (xiii).

Investigating the interlocking racial, sexual, class, and ethnic system that straightjackets women academics of color, all thirty chapters in the book focus on a mix of personal reflections and qualitative research data from surveys and interviews. The type of research approach varies greatly from traditional scholarship that usually excludes personal

voices and stories. To clarify the methodology, the introduction writers, Angela Harris and Carmen González, argue that “Storytelling by individuals, when well done, packs an emotional punch and provides the psychological detail necessary to understand a person with very different life experiences” (3). At the same time, qualitative empirical research creates a frame to interpret the qualitative data (Harris and González 3). As a result, the methodology enables authors to resonate with each other to make their faculty colleagues understand that women academics of color suffer not because they are female but because they are both female and of color. For example, in the multi-chapter Part 1—General Campus Climate—words such as “hostile,” “unhealthy,” “troubling,” “haunting,” “painful,” “torturing,” and “toxic” in a pure white institute (PWI) repeatedly arrest the eye. “Racial battle fatigue,” in Sherrée Wilson’s term (70 emphasis original), runs through the pages as a constant reminder of the discrimination, contempt, and frustration women academic of color encounter on a daily basis. Meanwhile, their white counterparts also provide additional evidence of the disturbing realities. Chapter 2, “Waking Up to Privilege,” by Stephanie Shields shares her reflection on her automatic unearned privilege as a white woman. Shields admits that “being a member of a particular intersectional group—in this case, white and educated—on its own conveyed a door-opening, step-to-the-front-of-the-line status associated with privilege, particularly the white advantage that I had neither earned nor asked for yet benefitted from” (30). It is excruciating to read her first-hand observation of what her Latina and Native American women colleagues were forced to deal with in the late 1980s and early 1990s and her reflection that “I already knew that their scholarship and teaching were constantly under the microscope” (35).

The book ends with an empowering chapter by Yolanda Niemann—“Lessons from the Experiences of Women of Color Working in Academia”—wherein she sums up most notable passages in the book and offers advice to both administrators and women academics of color: what to do and how to do it, what not to do and how to avoid it. If faculty colleagues and administrators do not have time to read the whole book, at a minimum, they should read this chapter to understand how existing academic structures create hostile environments to their women colleagues of color. Women academics of color can follow the map laid out by Niemann to navigate the difficult terrain and to enhance their

resilience and ability and learn the strategies to overcome the challenging realities. As a woman academic of color and an administrator myself, I find these tips helpful and inspiring.

In conclusion, this book presents research achieved through nontraditional methods to address real, subtle, and on-going racial, sexual, class, and ethnic problems in the academy, problems that many white academics are inclined to dismiss as “exaggerations or illustrations of ‘oversensibility’” or as unusual incidents caused by a small number of “bad actors” (Dovidio 113). This work should inspire academics to question, once again, white male supremacy; gendered agendas tailored for and by white women; and the consequences of intertwined racial, sexual, class, ethnic prejudice against women of color.

About the Author

Hui Wu is Professor of English and Chair of the Department of Literature and Languages at the University of Texas at Tyler. Her research interests encompass history of rhetoric, comparative studies of rhetoric, global feminist rhetorics, and archival research in rhetoric and composition. Her article, “Lost and Found in Transnation: Modern Conceptualization of Chinese Rhetoric,” won the 2010 Teresa Enos award for the best article published in *Rhetoric Review* in 2009. Her books include a critical translation, *Once Iron Girls: Essays on Gender by Post-Mao Literary Women* (Lexington Books, 2010) and the Chinese translation of Jan Swearingen’s *Rhetoric and Irony: Western Literacy and Western Lies* (Jiangxi Education Press, China 2004). She and Swearingen are completing another book titled *Guiguzi, China’s First Book on Rhetoric: A Translation and Comparison with Ancient Western Rhetoric*.

