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The Clemson Ghost Tour: Disrupting Rhetorical Stagnation

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THE CLEMSON GHOST TOUR:
DISRUPTING RHETORICAL STAGNATION

A Dissertation
Presented to
the Graduate School of
Clemson University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
of Doctor of Philosophy
in Rhetorics, Communication, and Information Design

by
Stephen Joseph Quigley
August 2018

Accepted by:
Cynthia Haynes, Committee Chair
Dan Harding
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Victor Vitanza
ABSTRACT

How do we teach in sick places, physically and institutionally designed to exclude? Through activism? Through inquiry? Perhaps somewhere in-between? I argue that an understanding of rhetoric grounded in an early Greek understanding of space and place is of utmost importance to our students’ ability to live among others in a more civil, just, and equitable society, a society that extends beyond physical spaces and places and into virtual ones. This dissertation explores our relationality through an ecological-ethical design approach that views writing and teaching not only as acts of disruption, but also as a means of attending to our spaces and places, especially this messy, territorialized, networked, posthuman space.
DEDICATION

This work would not have been possible had it not been for the encouragement of my fellow wanderer, dweller, and wife, Cassie and our two sons who have all shared in the work of plowing.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This project received funding and gracious support from the Clemson Humanities Hub and the Clemson Graduate School. It also received support from Clemson CCIT, and the Clemson Center of Excellence.

My neighbors and friends here in South Carolina have been generous with their knowledge, time, and tools. In South Carolina I have found many inspiring, like-minded people who value community, seek equality, and share their love of this beautiful state straddling the mountains and the ocean.

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Jan Holmevik, Dave Blakesley, Cameron Bushnell, Steve Katz, Todd May, and all contributed to my thinking, writing, and teaching during my time as a PhD student. I was lucky to study alongside an outstanding cohort that included Brian Gaines, April O’Brien, and Eric Stephens, all of whom have read parts of this manuscript and influenced my thinking as a scholar and human being. Finally, I would like to thank the anonymous
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INTRODUCTION

When Aristotle defines rhetoric as the “available means of persuasion,” he pits rhetor against interlocutor. In this power-centric schema, the rhetor’s greatest achievement is not the mere persuasion of the interlocutor’s *knowing* or *doing*, but the persuasion of the interlocutor’s *making*. I argue that the production of a *disciple*, an interlocutor persuaded to *make* on behalf of the rhetor’s interest, is perhaps the greatest achievement of an Aristotelian rhetoric. In the first decade of my teaching of composition, it was this Aristotelian definition of rhetoric, and my reading of Plato as he pitted Socrates against the Sophists, that raised my doubts about the usefulness of rhetoric. These doubts, coupled with a limited understanding of a fuller, more conceptual understanding of rhetoric, greatly (mis)informed my classroom pedagogy.

When I began teaching FYC (first-year composition) back in 2007 at IUPUI (Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis), I was instructed to teach from *The Allyn & Bacon Guide to Writing, Fourth Edition*, (2006). The writers of this textbook claimed that “At its deepest level, rhetoric aims to improve human communities by enabling people, through better cooperative dialogue, to find the best solutions to complex problems” (pp. 74-75). This definition of rhetoric never sat well with me nor my Aristotelian understanding of rhetoric. Rhetoric, I was convinced, concerned itself with power. We use rhetoric, or we are used by it.

As a result, I took a Platonic approach to my pedagogy, not all bad, which meant I attempted to foster a kind of independent learning experience for each individual (cf. Berlin, 1982, p. 771) rather than assemble a community of individuals who might utilize rhetoric to better live in communion.

And this is where I stood in my thinking about rhetoric when in 2015, I entered a rhetoric and composition PhD program at Clemson University. On the campus of Clemson, I found further proof of a rhetoric as power—a physical and institutional design reinforcing old injustices, a rhetoric of orange spectacle designed to produce disciples. A rhetoric of this scale stagnates in spaces and places, and we sicken as a result of our
inequity. Here, I am introducing the term “stagnant rhetoric.” In a homogeneous place, devoid of free speech, devoid of circulation, the violence condenses, spreads, polluting, constricting, a handsome display of Foucauldian biopower.

The question that I am pursuing is how do we teach in sick places, physically and institutionally designed to exclude? Through activism? Through inquiry? Perhaps somewhere in-between? While a university certainly needs activist teachers, what is my role as a FYC graduate teacher of record, especially in that I am part of a vulnerable teaching population?

It was not until I began considering the architectonic origins of rhetoric that a richer definition of rhetoric began to emerge. Greek rhetoric, like Greek philosophy, finds its language in the designs and building of early Greek communities. While it is true that early Greeks had not the word “rhetoric” in their vocabulary, they realized rhetoric’s importance as a tool for communicating in spaces and places as a means of reinforcing doxa, promoting habitas, and effecting harmonia in the design. Greek rhetoric emerged from the early Greeks living together within the walls of the city. Rhetoric allowed them to do so.

In my course of study as a graduate student, what has changed is my understanding and approach to rhetoric as a tool for designing a more civil, inclusive, and functional society. This has been achieved by expanding the definition and uses of rhetoric to include both the design and production of spaces and places and how we attend to them. In Placeways, A Theory of Human Environment, E.V. Walter (1988) writes of plague ravished places. That in our design of place and territorialization of space we can somehow miss the importance of relating to the Other, allowing the plague to fester on the backs of rats living beneath our abodes. For Walters, fixing such places is a matter of caring enough to fix our design.

In composition studies, Nedra Reynolds (2007) makes an argument for the teaching of space/place relationality in her seminal text, Geographies of Writing: Inhabiting Places and Encountering Difference as a way for her students to begin seeing the geographies of difference. This writing furthers Reynold’s discussion of space/place
in the rhetoric and composition classroom by exploring and testing digital intersections as a way for students to better understand the implications of spaces and places and why we must attend to our design. Technology may be our best ingress, for as Paul Dourish and Genevieve Bell (2011) argue, technology allows individuals to invent new cultural practices to counter those that are embedded in the design of the physical. This practice enables the user to reflect and condition “the emergence of new forms of environmental knowing” (p. 132).

When I revisit my earliest rhetoric textbook, *The Allyn & Bacon Guide to Writing*, its definition that rhetoric is a design tool, finally connects with my expanded definition of rhetoric and the changes that I have made in my pedagogy to teach rhetoric as inherently tied to an ecological/design approach to our spaces and place.

In this day and age, it might appear that rhetoric, more and more, is about the individual rather than the community. And this is an important point: we seem to have lost our rhetorical *ground* that connects us to the Other, what I will be referring to in this writing as our *fittingness*. I derive *fittingness* from the Greek rhetorical term *dunamis*, which rhetoricians often define as the “power” or “ability” to use rhetoric. However, I argue that our understanding of *dunamis* is complicated not only by its own etymology, but by the designs of Greek space, both mental and physical, and the inherent complexities of establishing our relationality and identity.

We no longer have to live within the walls of the city, and as a result, our rhetoric has suffered. It *stagnates*. The joints and knots that bind us together are loosed. I argue that an understanding of our rhetorical terms grounded in an early Greek understanding of space and place is of utmost importance to our students’ ability to live among others in a more civil and equal society, a society that extends beyond physical spaces and places and into virtual ones. Though our design is central to this problem of dwelling together, in this schema, even our traces, intentional and unintentional must be accounted for. Rhetorics gives us the grammar for understanding our mobility and relationality in our posthuman era—it is *the very grammar of our metaphysics*. This dissertation explores our relationality through an ecological-ethical design approach that views writing and
teaching not only as acts of disruption, but also as a means of attending to our spaces and places, especially this messy, territorialized, networked, posthuman space.
CHAPTER ONE
FITTINGNESS: A THEORY OF RELATIVE RHETORICAL VELOCITY

A Definition of Space and Place

I once imagined space as a kind of frontier—the final frontier—a corny, very American conceptualization that defined space as an open, unmarked territory, full of potential—fertile ground for the production of places within. What I have come to understand is that spaces are never open in this sense. In fact, we would be mistaken/remiss in imagining space as “openness” or space as “freedom,” for in doing so, we would neglect the many lines that run through space connecting us to the places from which we came. These lines, Tim Ingold (2007) tells us, these circuitous, crisscrossing pathways that brought us to this, our moment, this virtual/actual now, also tie us back to other who’s and what’s, and still their ties to other who’s and what’s from whence they came, back, and further back, knotting us all together into a singular plural. These lines, and their complex overlapping connections, various mappings, and degrees of influence, coupled with our respective location within these mappings, directly impact the quality of our being in specific locations. Our spaces are determined by these distances, relationships, and degrees of influence, and our relative location, what Doreen Massey (1993) refers to as the power geometries that govern our environment. In viewing the concept of space as frontier, we make the same mistake as when we fix our sights on the horizon at that moment that divides day and night, night and day, in that play of light that obscures the space between us and the horizon, that foreground, in a soft bokeh. As we stand there, thinking that we are alone, our eyes fixed on the horizon, we would do well to turn away, let our eyes adjust to the darkness, and look into the face of the Other standing just beside us. We would do well to engage that who, that what, that has always been standing just beside us, just behind us, just in front of us.

A place, meanwhile, is merely a location in a series of other places and connections. We can “be in a good place,” “have a nice place,” or “find a place.” It is the point at which we have arrived on a line; like Xeno’s paradox, it is where we are in being
and time, always between that which we were and that which we are becoming, always in relation to others. A place, of course, can also be those points at which others also locate themselves, those points at which we once were, the point to which we wander. We may choose to dwell within a place, attend to a place, or wander through space from one place to the next, but no matter how far we wander, there will always be that line that connects us back to where we once were. We can never escape this fact, only mitigate its influence. Mobility, meanwhile, relates to our power to achieve ex-stasis and new points of stasis, to wander from place to place, but also the ability to stop, the power to manage our connections, the imagination to establish new places inside and outside of other places, the ability to become, and the degree to which we might become. The concept of neutral space does not exist; rather, our movement through space is always a movement through or determined by power relations.

When we talk about “opening spaces,” what we are really talking about is not only forcing distance between ourselves and other who’s and what’s, but also managing the flow and influence between connections. To “open spaces” necessitates a degree of power. While we might think of “opening spaces” in terms of liberation, it is also an act of exclusion. Additionally, it is often the case that when we “open spaces,” we do so through acts of appropriation, in the denial of other who’s and what’s already dwelling within. Rather, when we “open spaces,” we are doing a kind of placemaking, or attending to a place as E.V. Walter (1988) would describe it. Placemaking is the managing of practices, ties, and protocols that constitute our exchange and communion with others. When we engage in placemaking, this attending to a specific location, we do so by way of rhetoric as a tool for designing and promoting a specific set of spatial practices.

In this way, space, as Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (in Leibniz & Clarke, 1956) says, is a matter of relationality with the Other. It is determined not just by our location, but by the location of others in space. In this way of seeing space as relational, we might consider Ulises Mejias (2013) who understands space to be the negative of the lines that connect us in a network (p. 160). Without this relationality, without a sense of what I call fittingness, without the time for rhetoric to connect us, there is no space, no Being. In this
discussion, we can make no distinction between the virtual and actual as it relates to space. Both the virtual and actual, as Giles Deleuze (1968/1994) reminds us, are equally real (p. 208), and thus provide structural affordances for our embodiment and our fittingness. This fittingness is not sameness. Rather, fittingness incorporates both repetition and difference, as did Ancient Greek weavings crafted upon the loom. The Greek weaver did not embroider repetition and difference into the surface of the textile, but knotted it into its construction thus achieving harmonia, or close-fittingness (McEwan, 1993, p. 83). Nor is fittingness tied to a single system, but to interlacing systems, and thus allows for complexity, a complexity whose topology can be mapped, that must be mapped, if we ever wish come to understand the geometries that determine where we are, who we are, why we are, and where we might go. This task of understanding fittingness is little different from the Greek weaver, whose craft of weaving upon the loom literally translates as “to bring to light,” or “make visible.” (p. 54). This fittingness, in all of its relations, is very much the measure of our ontological dignity.

In that I am emphasizing our relation with others in space, our movement and degree of influence, I must recall Jim Ridolfo and Dànielle DeVoss’s (2009) term rhetorical velocity. While Ridolfo and DeVoss use the term to explain how packages circulating at different vectors and speeds through space over time might be interpreted, appropriated, and repackaged by a perhaps unknown interlocutor in some unknown future, I would like to add the physics concept of relative velocity to our thinking on this and all rhetorical situations. Relative velocity takes into consideration the speed and direction of variables in relation to one another. The concept of relative velocity also connects to the work of Richard Cherwitz and Thomas Darwin (1995), who established a relational theory of rhetorical meaning, which emphasizes the triad of substance, context, and history to our understanding of meaning in the rhetorical situation. Combining the directionality and futurity of Ridolfo and DeVoss’s rhetorical velocity with the situational implications of Cherwitz and Darwin’s relational rhetoric, emphasizes the significance of our present moment and importance of our relative location as rhetors and
interlocutors. I would like to introduce this term, relative rhetorical velocity, to explain how our everyday practices, both public and private, establish our bearing in relation to packages, people, and things in places, all of which result in what Henri LeFebvre (1974/1991) refers to as the production of space. Our relative rhetorical velocity, in that it considers time, space, and the complexity of our relationality past, present, and future, is the very nature of our being. I see this as a kind of locative mindfulness of our relations and our impact, as we move through, or find stasis, in spaces and places.

It is through a mindfulness of relations in spaces and places that we arrive at LeFebvre, who sees the production of space mentally, physically, and socially in three specific modes: spatial practice, representational space, and representative space, all of which produce a kind of coding that writes spaces. I connect the three modes to Aristotle’s knowing—doing—making. Our everyday movements through space in relation to others constitutes our collective spatial practice (our makings), how space is represented through signs relates to our representational space (our knowings), and the relationship between signs and action constitutes representational space (our doings). For example, when we think of a university, we can see the interconnected social practices that produce a space of higher learning. We might understand the representations of how individuals are supposed to think in these spaces, how we represent these spaces symbolically, and how this influences our everyday practices within them.

While our location within the spaces of our relationality are governed by our habitus, by doxa, and nomos, it can be difficult to generalize the meaning of place. Still, we often do just this, attempting to characterize those who’s and what’s with a measure of certainty. We write the myths of who we think we are and where we think we are without any understanding of our relationality with the Other just beyond us, or even the Other right next to us. As Massey (1993) says, we like to draw lines around places. We like to build high walls, but in doing so we ignore how places connect to other places, things, and ways of being. In reality, it is difficult to partition off a who from a who, the who from a what, the then from now. It is far easier to connect, to mark the degree of influence between relations rhizomatically. For the topoi have soft borders, and complex
boundaries. And even in the countryside, far away from the *polis*, there are territorial disputes. Our individual movement through space is fleeting, often predetermined, and in our movement we leave traces of our *being*, signs of our comings and goings, all of which require an interlocutor for meaning. These traces are often trampled, overwritten, or rewritten by our interlocutor. This is the important part: there is no rhetoric without the interlocutor. For when the last interlocutor perishes, Michel Foucault and all his mighty talk of discourse perishes also. We require the Other, to hail and be hailed. Without the interlocutor there is no space.

The ability to make sense of our simultaneous dwelling and wandering—*for we are always doing both at once*—I will repeat this line, in that I think it holds many answers in our conceptualization of space: we are simultaneously dwelling and wandering, fixed and orbiting. In the spirit of Bruno Latour (1993), we have always, already been doing this. Long before this era of so called Postmodernity. Long before the fragments were recorded by a philosopher who sat in a cave. Sat in a cave and *wandered while sitting*. I argue that our *being* is the manifestation of this paradox, and that locating ourselves within this *stasis* and *ex-stasis*, this dwelling and wandering, is critical to understanding the practice of our relationality as a production of space. Moreover, it instructs us in the management of our complexity. This complexity of absolutes and multiplicities that, as I will next relate, plagues our *Being*.

**Homelessness: The Postmodern Condition**

Our rhetoric is complicated by the vast networks that run through our virtual and actual spaces. This hyper connectivity has resulted in what R.L. Rutsky (1999) calls “high technē,” an autopoietic system of systems that fuses nature, technology, and culture through reproduction and territorialization. Many believe we have lost the user in this complexity. In my reading of space and place, I came across time and time again what has been termed the problem of our Postmodernity, what Berger, Berger, and Kellner (1973) characterized as the “homelessness of the mind.” Here, there are two themes that
run side-by-side. First, that we have lost our identity in our affiliation with institution, bureaucracies, and in our patterns of production, consumption, reproduction, and reconsumption. Second, and perhaps as a result of the first, we have witnessed, are witnessing, what Karl Marx referred to as the annihilation of time, and what David Harvey (1990) would later call time-space compression.

With the rise of technology, the increase in the speed of Being, and the subsequent shrinking of time-space, many Postmodern thinkers worry that we have lost our ability to dwell. As a result, we have become restless, insecure, unstable, discontented. We rebel, or wander, searching for an increasingly elusive identity. Berger et al (1973) locate the problem in the rapid exchange and high volume of packages and our inability to organize meaning in the face of advancing technology. At the same time, how well we interact with evolving technology often determines our identity. In this mechanized age, how we use machines, often many of them at the same time, how we learn them, and how adaptable we are to them constitutes our value to society. The authors worry that “Modernization along broadly capitalist lines tends to produce a highly restless, insecure population” (p. 136).

Paul Virilio (1995/1997) is similarly concerned with this rapid exchange of technology, but also with the speed of or travel through space. Unlike Harvey who argues that time-space is shrinking, Virilio takes the approach that, in fact, we are speeding up, moving faster. We board a plane, over imbibe, wake up at antipodes. Our messages travel between satellites through landlines and across cell towers also arriving at antipodes faster than we can snap twice. We forget our foreground, this earth between us, its streams and hills, individual blades of grass. We forget the Other that we pass over, around, and through. What Virilio refers to as our “true velocity” and our “virtual velocity” conflate (p. 12). In fact, we begin to move at such a high speed that we hardly move at all. Virilio argues that we might think that speed shrinks distances, but paradoxically, an increase in speed correlates in a loss of mobility. As our speed intensifies we lose our perspective of time, space, and light, and as Virilio tells us, our horizon begins to disintegrate (p. 13). Without the horizon our optics lose focus, and
seeing proves increasingly difficult. Similarly, when we are everywhere at one moment, we lose our sense of place. In this high speed blending of “actual” and “virtual” we produce a biological/technological fusion, a kind of “dromospheric pollution,” from dromos…a Greek running course (p. 17). What is technological and what is natural merge into a grey ecology (p. 59). While he argues in Open Sky that our loss is in the hic et nunc (p. 138), in our inability to establish relationality with the Other, in Speed and Politics (1977/1986) Virilio turns his attention to political forces and the power they wield over technological systems designed for speed and circulation. This he likens to war. A new kind of war designed for an age of information dissemination and reproduction. As the powers that be distribute bourgeois domination everywhere at once, we supplant the polis with the spectacle. To disarm, Virilio argues, we must deaccelerate.

Rather than speed or light, Fredric Jameson (2003) focuses his attention on the absence of temporality in a society bent on cultural consumption. What is lost in our new media interface, he argues, is memory. In neglecting the importance of time we forget its implications for our futurity. In forgetting time, we forget to see change, and instead fix in our minds an image of an unchanging present, producing a culture that will never be different. A design that will never alter. Trapped in time by our modes of cultural production that govern our being within it (p. 708). He argues that our emphasis on space concerns itself with domination—especially when it is so easy to eclipse time. It is through territorializing space that the hegemony retains its power. We can trace Jameson’s thinking on culture and consumption to Theodor Adorno (1975/1991), who would add that we have little control over this present. Nor do we wholly desire control. We submit to the spectacle and consume this present, and through the quality and capacity of consumption, we locate our difference from the Other, working to maintain this difference through the grossest of means. In this way, we separate into classes, whose status we further reinforce through cycles of consumption. As we wait in line for the latest Star Wars that we secretly know will disappoint us, we can hear Marx whispering “farce” into our ears. For Jameson (2003), this emphasis on spatial dominance results in spaces territorialized into abstraction (p. 701) and correlative to a decrease in existential
meaning. Marc Augé (1995/2008) exemplifies this abstractive process in his discussion of vanishing places in this era of rapid consumption. We frequent national chains stores that use the same building designs, store layouts, products and product layouts, all replicated from one store to the next. In a sense, we find comfort in these arrangements, in that we have to work less to establish our relationality. John Urry (1995) adds a different societal effect that is no less spatially oriented: a desire for mobility when our current circumstances afford us so little. He argues that mobility is a concept to consume. For example, we will drive great distances to board the great cargo ship that is IKEA, consume its cheap furniture, and pretend that its Scandinavian design affords us a degree of mobility. Similarly, we are drawn to the spectacle of themed tourist attractions, often set in another time and place, accessed through a manufactured memory, and thus our gaze becomes yet another method of consumption. It is through this farce of mobility, Urry argues, that we satisfy a desire for identity and agency that is lacking in our daily lives.

Postmodernism paints a bleak picture of a desperate world. It readily analyzes our systems of reproduction and consumption, but does little to attempt to disrupt them. Antonio Gramsci (1948/1995), imprisoned though he was, offers a modicum of hope to those of us who desire change in that he locates our collective agency in this present through the education of the Other, of the ALL, and through this collective doing, this practicing of philosophy, Gramsci believes we might come to resist these systems. I, like Gramsci, am an idealist. What kind of teacher would I be were I not? Virilio will have us believe that we are virtually and actually hurtling towards a horizonless doom? Massey (1993), though, is quick to point out that for many individuals, those long since displaced by globalization, this speed that so bothers Virilio, or perhaps this time-space compression about which Harvey writes, might actually be a good thing, and in fact may be good for humanity as well. Perhaps, Massey argues, the complexities inherent in the shrinking of time-space will finally push individuals and society towards an understanding of our local/global context (p. 63). Personally, I wonder how this shift in time-space might disrupt the ethics of the hegemony in local and global contexts, and
perhaps how in this disruption, we might come to realize our local and global “collective agency” through our attending to the Other. Or, perhaps in the least, that in thinking about the shrinking of time-space, and in recalling Deleuze and Félix Guattari (1980/1987), we might begin to think more nomadically about the territorialization and deterritorialization of spaces and places, in that the nomadic path offers a route by which we might claim some agency within the crushing geometries of our superstructures.

**Tools for Dwelling and Wandering**

A thread that runs through all of these Postmodern works is the question of technology. Heidegger. Tools. For the Postmodern thinker, capitalism manifest itself through technologies of domination, displacement, and division resulting in a shrinking of time-space. Harvey, for example, adopts a reactionary approach towards technology and generally rejects tools, a perspective that Massey (1993), for one, finds oversimplified (p. 64). Instead, Massey proposes that we consider how technology connects individuals and provides mobility for those who lack it. As our corpus of technology has burgeoned, many have blamed it for what they interpret as a corresponding rise in nihilism, but that I would argue is rather a misunderstanding of the theory of knowledge in the face of competing episteme, and additionally, our continued privileging of the dialectic over the dialogic. As a craftsman and educator, I for one will argue that we need tools. Tools to speak. Tools to hear. To touch, to be touched. Tools for understanding. And tools for realizing the dialectic and the dialogic. In this schema of technology as mediation, rhetoric establishes itself as meta tool we utilize to establish this relationality between us, even when this relationality is one of difference. This is not to say that technology is without agency or perhaps desire: What does technology want? The disgruntled Postmodern will tell you it wants to be invented. To produce and be reproduced. To dominate, displace, divide time and space. And they are right—but only partly.

The Postmodern critique longs for a home, for stasis as if stasis can be fully
achieved, as if it has ever been fully achieved. Heidegger (1954/1971) tells us that we are dwellers. That we are meant to build dwellings and live in them, that we have lost the ability to satisfy this design that grounds us in nature. I argue that this is only partly true. As Hannah Arendt (1958) reminds us, “No human life, not even the life of the hermit in nature’s wilderness, is possible without a world which directly or indirectly testifies to the presence of other human beings” (p. 22). We are relational also and thus moving in and out of stasis in relation to the Other and in relation to the infinite knowledges encompassed in our Otherings. Because of this, a dwelling’s design, private though it may be, is only as good as its affordances for this relationality. We do more than dwell. For we are wanderers also. We are moving in and out of stasis while we are simultaneously grounded at other points. It is this complexity of moving and not moving in the actual and the virtual that provides the anxiety in the Posthuman psyche. Posthuman Being dwells not in the oversimplification of meaningless, but the complexity of our meaningfulness. This complexity and meaningfulness of knowledges results in the dialogic, and for many, this subsequent anxiety. Perhaps we should instead be asking what does technology need? I argue that technology needs us to be relational. It needs us to move. To stop. To calibrate. To proceed. Technology needs us to interact. We would do well to consider how we might use technology as another enclosure, like the walls of the topoi, an architectonic design for facilitating this relationality. An enclosure, like the walls of the topoi to bind us together in our difference. Technology mediates our modes of experience through affordances and constraints, good or bad, ethical or unethical, grounded or ungrounded, allowing for our stasis and ex-stasis.

But tools and technology do something else beyond mediation. They offer new media for calibrating and recalibrating our relative rhetorical velocity in relation to others by amplifying the very rhythmic vibrations our being produces. Our being and Being produce a vibration. To describe the vibrations of our being, Heidegger (1962) uses the word “Stimmung,” a term his translator notes applies both to mood and the tuning of musical instruments. Heidegger also uses this root in the word Gestimmtsein which translates to “Being-attuned” (p. 172). It is this “Stimmung,” that of the tuning of an
instrument, that so intrigues Richard Coyne (2010) and pushes his thinking towards technology as a tool for both calibrating the rhythms of place. Rather than turning away from technology, it would be wiser to ask how we might use this technology, this rhetoric, to locate ourselves and others in space, and time and in calibrating the tunings our being and Being produce. How might we do this before moving forward, so that we might do so in a more ethical manner. These better questions are those that we call the questions of stāseis, of our standings, but which I refer to as the questions of our relative rhetorical velocity. Stasis theory is both spatial and temporal: here, there, nowhere, past, present, and future. These relational questions of conjecture, definition, quality, and policy tell us about where we are and where we’re moving through space in relation to others, tell us about power relations, and perhaps even the connections between our theory, method, and practice: what we say we are, what and how we are, and where we are going in our making. We might argue that stasis begins with homelessness, assumes a homelessness, but moves towards establishing ground by languaging the geometries of where we stand.

Once we have calibrated this relationality, Coyne similarly wants us to consider how we might use technology as a tool for recalibrating ourselves and the spaces in which we inhabit by mediating the variables that constitute our relationality towards Gestimmtsein, “Being-attuned.” Coyne asks us to think about the role digital technologies play in our spatial practices and their resultant production of space, the sum total of which produces the rhythms of our being and Being. To do so we need to understand the connection between ourselves, our tools, and the Other in the space. In music, we use the word “timbre” to describe the quality of the vibrations a musician produces in conjunction with their instrument. The ability to produce these sounds depends upon both the spaces in which a musician plays and the location of the who that hears it. The instrument, player, space, and audience connect through this vibration. We similarly search for this timbre in the digital tools we use in new media and in the relationality these vibrations afford us with the Other.
Greek Space

Though Hemagoras often receives credit for inventing *stasis* theory in the second century BCE, his contribution seems to be more of a codification of what Early Greek *rhetors* were already doing as a process of languaging how they related to one another (Crowley and Hawhee, 2004, p. 53). Though it has been debated as to whether we can see elements of *stasis* theory in Aristotle’s *Rhetoric*, Book III (cf. Liu, 1991), we can assume that *stasis* theory emerged out of an Early Greek practice of ordering the chaos of space through the design of language and place.

Here I am arguing that Latour (1991/1993) was right when he claimed that *we have never been Modern...that we cannot be Postmodern*. Rather, we are that same philosopher who *wanders while sitting*, little different from the Pre-Socratic thinkers. In this present we merely possess different technologies for mediation, but this same essential *techne*. Nor have the modes of spatial production changed much, be they *virtual* or *actual*. All that has changed is that our relationality is more complex, overlapped...*and we can never go back*, as Latour says (p. 110). As a result, I have made the argument that an understanding of space and place is of the utmost importance to our students’ ability to learn to live amongst one another amid all of this complexity. This is because our understanding of rhetoric emerged from the Early Greeks as rhetors tried to understand the processes that we have long, long, been using to relate to one another, ever since the first engagement between rhetor and interlocutor.

As George Lakoff and Marc Johnson (1980) remind us, our language is metaphorical, wrapped up in our understanding of space and place. “We are *coming* to an understanding.” “You don’t *see* my point.” “Darling, there is too much *distance* between us.” From these foundations we form our language for our thinking. Reddy’s conduit metaphor introduces words as containers, what we might consider meaning-filled building blocks used to construct ideas and concepts in spaces, places and time. Call them *Being* blocks.

Our canons of rhetoric are also spatial. For example, when we invent, we explore
the spaces of the *topoi*, or wander into that unruly countryside, into that womb of becoming, the *chora*. Invention is always a way of *seeing*, from the Greek *theoria*, which connects to our *knowing*. When we explore the *topoi* of arrangement, we organize ideas into parts, deigning the architecture of our language. Style is a matter of how we move through space, the rhythms we emit, our sound, whether or not we do so in a spatially high or low manner. Memory has long been connected to space; it is the ability to effectively move through the labyrinth of mind, understanding the correct route amid the chaos below. Lastly, and most significant to my argument, is the canon of delivery. Delivery, especially in this era of “high *techne,*” corresponds to a movement into the complexities of futurity, a movement towards the Other.

*Rhetoric requires an interlocutor.*

That interlocutor may be standing right beside us, even without us *knowing*, or might arrive long after we have departed this earth. That interlocutor might or might not be human. But without the interlocutor, we cannot deliver rhetoric, and there will be no relationality. While it is true that the process of rhetoric may begin prior to communication, rhetoric only *works* when our interlocutor engages, acknowledges us or the package, and derives some sort of meaning, affectual or otherwise.

Lloyd Bitzer (1968) claims that rhetoric occurs when the rhetor engages an exigency, but this exigency happens, as I argue, through our relationality with others. It is our relationality with others—people, things, packages, and our environment—that brings us to an exigency. While the canon of delivery connects theory and method, it is only through an interlocutor that we *make*. This is not to say that we do not travel great distances in our private spaces, that we are not always thinking, and moving, and changing, and that rhetoric is not also always happening here. But while rhetoric happens in private spaces, it is always happening in relation to others, not independent of them. We are, in this case, the interlocutor. When we are busy writing, or sleepily dreaming, we are connecting with others as an interlocutor. But what we do in private, our writing, our
thinking, our making, even our movement, only becomes rhetoric when our own interlocutor engages our makings. It is only through this rhetorical relationality that we produce space.

The early Greek thinker, Anaximander said that our thinking emerges out of doing. An idea that Aristotle later refined as knowing—doing—making. Here, we have the relationship between theory, method, and practice, the one informing the other, or not, in what constitutes the production of space. The early Greeks were sailors who abandoned their oars for the rocky shores of Ithaca. In the boat, they depended upon one another. Each was required to be able-bodied, vigilant, eat no more than his daily ration, but also tend his oar in the rhythms of his benchmates, and in the larger rhythms of the other oars working fore and aft, starboard and port. This effort required listening. It required muscle memory. Skill. But also power, endurance, and pace. It required a sense of fittingness. On land these sailors assembled into tribes choosing to live within the high walls of the topoi. Their ability to thrive on their rocky peninsula depended on each’s ability to live amongst others. The walls of the topoi offered many challenges for these sailors, but their earlier experiences at sea, their understanding of fittingness, would play a role in their understanding of how to proceed. Along with the use of daidala to describe high quality weavings crafted upon the loom, Indra Kagis McEwan (1993) explores how the term daidala was also used to describe a ship’s joinery, but also how the crafts of weaving and joinery were used as metaphors to describe harmonia, a term that means well-adjusted but also something like close fittingness (p. 83-84). A shipwright’s joints were daidala only when he oriented planks, mortises, and tendons at right angles to one another. Homer writes of Odysseus:

Twenty trees in all did fell, and trimmed them with an axe; then he cunningly smoothed them all and made them straight to the line. Meanwhile Calypso, the beautiful goddess, brought him augers; and he bored all the pieces and fitted them to one another, and with pegs and morticing did he hammer them together. (qtd. p. 49)

For the Ancient Greeks, the ship’s hull that lacked this relationality of parts and positioning could not achieve this harmonia and would therefore leak. Daidala is
characterized as having been both well cut and well fashioned together and finds its origins in the name of Daedalus, the master craftsman who invented not only the axe and the plumb line, but architecture also. As a result, he is credited with making the connection between the design of space and its impact on humans. The word for this impact is *kosmos* which translates to a rhythm or order, but also a kind of wellness (p. 42). It is through *techne* that the craftsman designs *kosmos* into their work.

The story of Daedalus is important here for the significance of two of his designs: the labyrinth and the *choros*. McEwan finds both the labyrinth and the *choros* to be important symbols in the complex relationship between design and *chaos*. The ancient Greeks described chaos as the gap in space that marks the division between the sky and earth, but also as a mass of confusion. This concept relates closely to *aporia*, the Greek riddle, perhaps a problem that prevents us from *becoming*, but also a problem that must be overcome so as to *become*. It is this challenge to overcome chaos that links *aporia* to the design of the labyrinth. The labyrinth is especially important in that it is designed, fixed upon *chaos*, harnessing the power of *chaos* to provide this challenge one must overcome so as to *become*. In this way, McEwan compares the labyrinth to the design of a map, or *ges periodos* which translates to “circuit of the Earth”—another important tool we use to relate and to *become*. In addition to the labyrinth, Daedalus also designed the dancing stage, or *choros* where the dancers performed the ordered rhythms or *kosmos*. Like the labyrinth, the Greeks connected the dancing stage to a place of designed chaos, but similarly a place of becoming in that *choros* derives from *chora*, the womb of becoming. The term *choros* was also used to describe a body of people acting together, what we refer to in drama or song as chorus, and additionally a group of people who decide to live together within the walls of the *topoi*. After the death of Icarus, Daedalus found himself in Sicily and Sardinia where he extended his work into the practice of designing *kosmos* into the built environment. It was here that he began to *attend* to cities by constructing the walls around the *topos* of Sicily, and in Sardinia the *gymnasia*, law courts, and other works of public good to promote well-being (p. 76). In the tradition of Daedalus, the Ancient Greeks sought to design *kosmos* into their city. They referred to
the center of the agora, the center of the polis, as the choros. Dancers upon the choros served an important symbolic meaning framing the chaos of creation, the chaos of a body of people, of the polis, and our ordering of it by way of design. Upon the choros, dancers brought forth rhythm from the chaos through dances that like joinery and weaving, fitted together time and space. These dances performed the design the Greeks used to harness the power of the chaos so as to realize their becoming. Choros is related to chora, the receptacle of becoming, a place of constant renewal. Both are places of becoming, apt symbols for the Greek polis. McEwan argues that citizens needed to be attended to the topoi if they wished to achieve harmonia. This process of fixing was not always one of renewal, but repair and attention to design. As an example, she examines the case of Piraeus, Athens’s unruly port city, a wild place overrun by foreigners who spoke in incomprehensible tongues and practiced vulgar religions. It was by way of concern, that Pericles tasked Hippodamus of Miletus to bring order to the little port town. The latter did so by instituting streets at right angles to one another, like the weavings of the loom, or boards joined at right angles to one another (pp. 84-5). Through design, Hippodamus of Miletus intended to make an unruly people fit. The result had unintended consequences. The redesign of this once wild, unruly, chaotic space transformed its peoples’ perceived weaknesses, their diversity and mobility, into strengths. Little Piraeus, once a dependent, grew into a booming port town shifting the dependency from Piraeus to that of Athens, whose own design strategically placed it on the high ground of the citadel so as to prevent an attack by way of the sea. Again, McEwan’s point is in the Greek’s understanding of attention we must pay to chaos in our design. For the Greeks, it is only through our design, in our attention to this tension between fixedness and unfixedness that we become. It is for this reason that the Greeks celebrated the labyrinth and the dancing stage as symbolic of the tools and design needed to create kosmos. Tools necessary for harnessing the power of this chaos to realize both our becoming and our harmonia.

McEwan makes the point to say that craftsmen and legislators were one in the same. The builders of cities are also craftspeople. John Lewis (1995) argues that the
rhetoric of Greece corresponds to the design of its architecture, that the Greek rhetoric
and architecture were not only mutually constitutive, but mutually reinforcing. He
focuses on the Athenian Agora which “…embodied the ideal relationships between
members of the demos: equitable, equal, participatory relationships” (p. 16) resulting in a
democratic dialogue that began under Solon but found its apogee in the Periclean Age.
The Greeks used the term isegoria to denote an equality that the legislators attempted to
design into the structure of the agora. Perhaps this democratic dialogue was due to the
actual site of the Greek Agora which was not a level place, and as a result the demos were
ever inclined towards the Other, and the Other towards anOther. By moving through the
Agora, the slope placed individuals in different relationality to one another and in
isegoria. While a raised platform would have been useful for making speeches, Lewis
notes that the early Greeks initially avoided any hierarchal design inside the Agora
despite the inequality exercised outside by way of the Greek aristocratic society (p. 44).
Inside the Agora, the Greeks favored the dialogue that emerged rather than a rhetoric that
might privilege one over another (p. 50). Through their rhetorical practice, there appears
to be a Greek understanding of the tensions inherent in our fixedness and unfixedness in
time and space. Dialogue requires rhetoricity, the ability to persuade and be persuaded.
The Agora was similarly designed to bring the most and least powerful together as equals
in dialogue. Especially important in this construction were the stoas, which granted
symmetry and shelter to all who sought it. The protection of the stoas in inclement
weather, the view they offered of the choros below them, and especially their thick pillars
protecting this equality, were symbolic of the Athenian isegoria (p. 152). However, this
tradition of isegoria would be broken as the Greeks looked towards securing their empire
against the Spartans and their allies. As a result, Lewis argues that as the rhetoric of the
Agora evolved from dialogue to that of oratory, the design of the agora similarly
changed. During the Periclean Age, trees lined the paths of the Agora, but in the Hellenic
period statues of mortals were placed on pedestals and orators began speaking on raised
platforms. These design changes were not only spatial, but temporal in that they adjusted
the memory of the Agora, the practices within, and point the direction to which Athens
set its ambitions.

**Fittingness**

What emerged from the architecture of the early Greek *topoi*, was a languaging of the art of rhetoric that allowed for communion. The early Greeks established this communion by utilizing a different rhetoric for the past, present, and future. And most importantly, they established a rhetoric that recognized and benefitted not only the rhetor, but the interlocutor. At the peak of democracy, the spaces of the agora were designed to promote equality and *fittingness*. Ancient Greek rhetoric and the design of space have important lessons for our own students and for our own communities as we calibrate our *knowing—doing—making* for the business of living in communion with others in space and place.

I have already established how we use *stasis* theory to calibrate our relational rhetorical velocity. I would like to now discuss Aristotle’s three branches of rhetoric: judicial, epideictic, and deliberative, to which he assigns a corresponding time: past, present, and future, and how these branches also help us calibrate our relationality in space. Rhetoric, like architecture considers the past, present, and future in its design. We often misuse these three branches in our contemporary rhetoric, through conflation, or by privileging one branch over the others, when instead, Aristotle meant for the three branches to inform one another. We must remember that Aristotle did not *invent* these branches of rhetoric. Rather, he described what had emerged out of the Greek *topoi*. We can see examples of this pre-Aristotelian rhetoric in the Greek drama of Sophocles, in the *Iliad*, Homer’s *Odyssey*, among other texts. What is important to know, is that these three branches of rhetoric emerged out of *knowing—doing—making* in the Greek topoi, as the early Greeks used rhetoric to try to make sense of their spaces and places in times past, future, and present, and to establish their relationality and *fittingness* with one another in them.

When Aristotle speaks of judicial rhetoric, he speaks of the past, of “what
happened?” A question whose ontological implications will never be fully understood. While the Latin root “Judicial” is clear, this branch of rhetoric is also referred to in Latin as forensic rhetoric. Rhetoric of the forum, or fora, “out of doors.” This is the rhetoric of our stasis, attempting to see and understand the spaces from which we came, the first steps to understanding our relative rhetorical velocity. While Aristotle suggests that we might use this judicial rhetoric to accuse or defend, I argue that when we think of these three branches of rhetoric holistically, to be used holistically, judicial rhetoric proves better suited as a tool for gaining perspective, not consensus on a version of the past. Judicial rhetoric is always the starting point of doing rhetoric. “So what happened?” We know as rhetors, that more often than not, judicial rhetoric leads us to more questions than answers. This is especially true when we allow more people, different people, into spaces of discourse. While the judicial is the rhetoric of knowing, we might also argue that it is the rhetoric of not knowing. Knowing, that ultimately we are located in different places, or that we are relationally from different places, and at different trajectories. Still, through the judicial, we attempt to build a workable episteme of certainty and uncertainty, that if anything might inform the other branches of rhetoric.

I am making the argument that these branches of rhetoric are to be used together to help us fully consider our relational rhetorical velocity through space in the context of past, present, and future as our knowing—doing—making. This is also, I argue, the rhetoric of attending to place as defined above. Judicial rhetoric, when used alone, hampers our becoming. When we are trapped in the rhetoric of “what happened?,” especially in the certainty of “what happened?,” it has implications for our present and future. When we concern ourselves too much with this rhetoric of the past, we fail to attend to what Jacques Derrida (1994) refers to as the actual-now, the present, or even what he calls the present-future, a present directed towards where we are going rather than circling back to where we have been. Similarly, when we partition off the rhetoric of the past, consider it a settled matter, we fail to permit our method and practice to inform our theory. We fail to augment and adjust our knowing. If anything, our rhetoric of the present and future should bring more questions to our judicial rhetoric, more perspective,
more complications. Both of these mistakes isolate judicial rhetoric from rhetoric’s other branches, thus limiting the telos of present and future discourse. I have another fear of judicial rhetoric and how it is misused. We can isolate ourselves in what Derrida calls the present-past, forgetting to focus on the present-future. If we have learned anything from the house of Atreus, it is that we will never achieve justice in the present past alone, and that ultimately one person’s justice is another’s injustice. For judicial rhetoric is always an ontological dilemma, the result of our speculative, differing perception. Because of this, we must also be thinking of where we are going, for when we fail to use the three branches holistically our design never changes. And in this mode of living in the present-past, injustice repeats itself into futurity. We perpetuate the farce.

Our epideictic rhetoric is the rhetoric of our present, of our actual-now. The word even comes from the Greek dxis “to show” and epi “upon.” The epideictic is the rhetoric of praise and blame, the rhetoric of doing, the buffer between this uncertainty of the past, and this uncertainty of the future. Not only a buffer, it is equally informed by each, a brackish, liminal space, that cannot be separated from the spaces on either side. This is the rhetoric of what I have been referring to as fittingness. Fittingness is very much an understanding of the present, its relationship with the past and future, and a call. A calling made possible by a break in time, this break between past and future. Thus, we do not find ourselves in the epideictic, we are called to it in a moment of kairos. When we use epideictic rhetoric to judge the past, through praise and blame, we always do so in relation to where we are with others in time-space, this present, here and now. Judgment in the epideictic is therefore both necessary and pragmatic as it has implications for our deliberative rhetoric. And in fact, we often hear the opposite to be true, that we should not judge historical figures in the present period. I argue the opposite, that it is necessary that we do so. For this is the very purpose of epideictic rhetoric—it is how we establish our ethics moving forward.

The present is our only moment of certainty.
It is thus a paradox that the epideictic is always changing, always informed by our movement through time, the tie between “what happened” and “where do we want to go?”

Deliberative rhetoric is the rhetoric of the future, the rhetoric of desire and design, not certainty. It is often seen as the rhetoric of the dialectic, the rhetoric that establishes ground. While sometimes achieved, the dialectic is not a given. Instead, I would like to use Mikhail Bakhtin’s (1981) dialogic and Richard Sennett’s (2012) application of it to explain the complexity and uncertainty of deliberative rhetoric. While the dialectic strikes a certain note—the same note perhaps played at different octaves, the dialogic strikes a chord. Both result in *harmonia*, but the dialogic allows for difference. The dialogic *harmonia* can be seen in the practices of Greek architecture, as cities were designed and redesigned to try to locate this dialogic *harmonia*—the different parts of the *topoi in tune* with one another. The dialogic is a better explanation of what emerges out of the rhetoric of space, place, for we can never fully know the Other, never be completely sure of our relative rhetorical velocity. *There is always a margin of error.* While the dialectic establishes ground between two rhetors, the dialogic results in divergent thinking, emerging by way of our interlocution. Rather than mere ground, the dialogic establishes *groundS.* This is achieved by engaging the Other, and by being engaged. *Our being requires the Other.* And this is why the Greeks chose to commune within the walls of the *topoi*. They did not always find consensus, nor should we expect it. Sennett is helpful here, he reminds us that we are craftspersons, makers, designers. We need to invent. We require it. I am searching for a rhetoric of dialogic *harmonia*, not a rhetoric of dialogic *cacophonia*. Difference, but communion and harmony. Again, judicial and deliberative rhetoric are uncertain. Only the epideictic can be made certain when it is informed by the judicial and deliberative. We use the three branches together to establish an ethical understanding of our *actual-now* so that we might construct a workable episteme and a method for moving forward in a more ethical manner. Shannon Crowley (2006) reminds us that ultimately, we need argument to engage with the Other, to solve problems, so that we might avoid what Derrida (1993/1994) calls our “circular becoming.” Without these
three branches of rhetoric, and without their being used in the appropriate circumstances of past, present, and future, without using them holistically, we fall into this pattern of circular becoming.

There is a final element, one that has been bumping into this wandering bark at different times in the writing of this chapter, one that I consider crucial to this theory of rhetoric and relative rhetorical velocity: what I have called fittingness. In her study of ancient Greek rhetoric, Crowley discusses the importance of what Aristotle calls *dunamis*, or “power,” the skill of the rhetor. Crowley works from Debra Hawhee (2000) who defines the term as “can-do-ness.” While the ability of a rhetor is important, I argue that looking at other Greek translations of *dunamis* may be more telling. I say this as I think back to our oarsman on his bench, and wonder how “power” alone might help him at his work. How could “power” alone propel those boats across the sea? It couldn’t. And in my investigation of the term *dunamis*, I discovered that, like other Greek terms, it possessed many uses and applications, the different parts informing the whole. While in early Greek the term did in fact refer to “power” as in capability and “force” in terms of war, it was also used to explain the worth of currency and even equality in numbers, and the connection between sign and meaning. *Dunamis* is part power, part can-do-ness, parts equality, worth, significance, all emerging…converging…from its proto-Indo-European root of *dewh*, a concept of fitting. Together they contribute to what I have been calling fittingness. Our oarsman cannot rely on power alone. He must also know his equality, significance, worth, which together constitute this concept of fittingness. This Proto Indo-European root that preceded the early Greeks, and this oarsman at his bench.

In the discussion of *dunamis* in the context of relational velocity, I think we as rhetoricians would do well to move towards the more complicated definition that I am proposing here. One that takes into consideration the fittingness of both the rhetor and the interlocutor in the rhetorical situation through a kind of collective agency in our actual now. It is an ethical imperative that we be rhetorical. When we restrict the meaning of *dunamis* to Aristotle’s definition of power, or even can-do-ness, we forget the requisite relationality between rhetor and interlocutor in the production of space. Fittingness
acknowledges this relationality, making possible our *being* in time-space. We are equally called to rhetoric. For each must possess this *fittingness*—for our rhetorical relationality is both a requirement of our *being* and a quality that emerges out of it. *We forget this.*
“If we do not change the common dwelling, we shall not absorb in it the other cultures that we can no longer dominate, and we shall be forever incapable of accommodating in it the environment that we can no longer control.”

–Bruno Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern*

**Introduction**

But it’s not just humans who can never go back…our environment can’t either. The traces of our technology can never be washed away, cannot now be disconnected from this our super ecology. The question of what defines the “natural” has lost its meaning as human technology alters our ecology and environment. Little that happens now can be called “natural.” Just as ecologists argue that there are no “natural” disasters, Bruno Latour (1991/1993) and Donna Haraway (1991) argue the same is true of humanity—what is “natural” is more and more separated from the constituencies of our *being*. We are connected by this technology in permanent and yet ever emerging ways. It is not just the technology of rhetoric that connects us, but also an unnatural biology—our bond is cellular, chemical, toxic, genetically altered. We have removed the *ground* beneath our feet and we cannot put it back in the earth. And somehow…*none of this even makes us modern*. Let us remember that “ecology” finds its root in the Greek *oikos* meaning *home*—perhaps home was an apt term when it was coined in the late nineteenth century—*but now we find we can never go back to that same home again*. Tis true Wolfe, “*You can’t go home again.*” And yet, we must attend to this dwelling and the relationality it affords.

In my previous chapter, I discussed how we use rhetoric as a grammar in the calculation of our relative rhetorical velocity, the result of which engenders the production of space. I argued that without this relationality, there is no space. And that therefore, through a more complex understanding of *dunamis* as *fittingness*, we are called
to rhetoric. In this chapter, I will consider our *relationality* in the context of posthuman networked spaces and places as well as the power geometries that regulate circulation and *fittingness*. I am using the term “networked ecology” to discuss these connections and systems that run between people and things in virtual and actual spaces, and how we might write and read these spaces, reminding ourselves that we are called to do so.

**Ecology and Composition**

Ecology and composition emerged from the social constructionist turn in composition. Marilyn Cooper (1986) first proposed an ecological model of writing that considers the writer part of the larger, socially constituted system. She encouraged the field to consider not just the social context of the writer, but also the relationship between the writer and reader, and how meaning might also be derived from a socially constituted system. At the time, Cooper challenged not only the dominant theory of her day, that of process pedagogy, which argued that writing incorporated several universal moves, that of pre-writing, writing, revising that many scholars universally supported (cf. Hairston, 1982), but all of the models Berlin (1982) delineates in his “Contemporary Composition: The Major Pedagogical Theories.” The shift to process, she argued, was a shift in agency away from the teacher-centered model to one whose focus is the writing student. Writing is a “goal-driven” process, a cognitive one at that, an act that the writer-agent alone controls separate from other variables. This construction produces a solitary author working in isolation from others. As a result, this author believes their “ideas and goals as originating primarily within himself and directed at an unknown and largely hostile other” (p. 365). Instead, Cooper called for an ecological model whose “fundamental tenet is that writing is an activity through which a person is continually engaged with a variety of socially constituted systems” (p. 367). She continues:

An ecologist explores how writers interact to form systems: all the characteristics of any individual writer or piece of writing both determine and are determined by the characteristics of all the other writers and writings in the systems. An important characteristic of ecological systems is that they are inherently dynamic; though their structures and contents
can be specified at a given moment, in real time they are constantly changing, limited only by parameters that are themselves subject to change over longer spans of time (p. 368).

Cooper’s was a systems approach to writing that considered the writer ever at the relative center of a vast network of interactions weaved together through time-space. Writing provides not only a way to locate ourselves in spaces and places, but a means to move through it (p. 373). For Cooper, a writing ecology, with its displaced center and complex agency, only complicates this mapping and this movement.

Building on Cooper’s turn, Margaret Syverson (1999) identifies how exactly writers are situated within ecologies, which many compositionists prior to her work, had hereto characterized as “messy.” She agrees that:

Writers are situated in ecology, a larger system that includes internal structures, such as pens, paper, computers, books, telephones, fax machines, photocopiers, printers process, and other natural human constructed features, as well as other complex systems operating in various levels of scale, such as families, global economies, publishing systems, theoretical frames, academic disciplines, and language itself. (p. 5)

Rather than accepting “messy” as an apt descriptor of this network of actors and agents, she theorized a better, less reductive languaging for thinking about the complexities inherent in the writing process. Working from the research of cognitive scholars (Hutchens, 1991; Valera, Thompson, & Rosch, 1991), Syverson was the first to conceptualize and test for the four attributes she identifies as governing writing ecologies and cognitive processes, these areas being distribution (time and area), emergence (assemblies), embodiment (virtual, material), and enaction (when practice informs theory). Writing, she argues, could not be understood without also understanding how the writer is situated in an ecology using this framework. Distribution explains the development of cognition and processes across space and time. When we think of information packets traveling through space and time, their velocity is altered by way of mediators which include protocols, interlocutors and other actors, by way of local and global mappings representing a rhizomatic nexus of connectivity, but also by the power
geometries inherent in these interconnected networks which themselves produce both affordances and constraints on mobility. Emergence refers to how these packages alter or are repackaged as they move through space, and how mediators augment or refine the mass and characteristics of these packages. We cannot understand a given package by merely analyzing its parts; rather, we must examine how the package emerged from other designs. Syverson stresses that often entropy is excluded from this process; rather, she argues entropy is an important stage in the development of emergence. When we think of embodiment, we might consider the biological and non-biological forms a package exhibits as it travels through virtual and actual networks, both affectually and otherwise, alone or through assemblages, or even assemblages of assemblages. And finally, we must consider how the role enaction plays in our interpretation of these packages, which themselves constitute our relationality with yet other actors and agents. That is, our interpretation of packages is often constituted by our location within networks. Enaction explains how our theories, methods, and practices are thus situated and informed by praxis. Additionally, Syverson sees five analytical dimensions that may be used to flesh-out our description of ecologies: 1. virtual/material 2. social 3. psychological 4. temporal 5. spatial (p. 18). For example we might think about the distribution of a packet and the implications this packet distribution may have in each of these five dimensions, and in contrast, the implications these dimensions might have on the given package. We can consider the package’s social and psychological impact, and its exigency in relation to variables of time-space in virtual and actual contexts. She contends that

… composing, like many other human cognitive processes, is irreducibly social and inextricably embedded in specific environments that are not merely supportive of but integral to the process of thinking, writing, and reading. Further, I argue that our goals for improving or even understanding reading, writing, and thinking cannot be achieved without a careful consideration of the ecological systems within which these practices occur. (pp. 25-26)

Her methodology for this praxis is less complicated than one might imagine. For Syverson, like Cooper before her, ecological writing and reading serves as a method for exploring our relationality. When we explore our relationality so as to garner meaning,
we do so by way of our networked situatedness, as we consider the distribution, emergence, embodiment, and enaction of our cognitive processes.

Cixous’s writing provides a case for thinking through Syverson’s ecological distribution, emergence, embodiment, and enaction. For Cixous, the practice of writing and reading serves as a method for mapping an ecological ontology, one that does not belong to her, but one through which she locates herself, and one through which she moves. In *Stigmata* (1988), she asserts that she weaves time as she writes…for paper is her *chora*…and she with it weaves time-space, connecting her networks as she goes, but managing power relationships along the way (p. 198). Here we see a concept of nomadic writing, acknowledging structure, but moving counter to it. Cixous reminds us that we have to be nomadic to understand our ecology: “Writing is the movement to return to where we haven’t been ‘in person’ but only in wounded flesh, in the frightened animal, movement to go farther than far, and also, effort to go too far, to where I’m afraid to go” (p. 97). Rather than combating the idea that one loses individuality by being part to the whole of a superorganism, Cixous writes the *superorgan* by examining power relations and positioning herself in relation to these structures in an effort to realize and redistribute agency. Kristakis and Fowler (2009) argue that rather than shunning our networked ecology, we should realize its meaningfulness as achieved only through our connectedness: “Seeing ourselves as part of a superorganism allows us to understand our actions, choices, and experiences in a new light” (p. XVI). Along with our ties to the other, Cixous similarly embraces the connectedness manifest through the assembly of language—a distribution that extends equally to both our posterity and our dead. In *Three Steps on the Ladder of Writing* (1993), Cixous insists that there is no conclusion to our writing. Instead, these distributions through time and space are elliptical. Our words go on. Repeat. They were not ours to begin with…and they are not ours now. This ecological distribution through time-space impacts our use of language, but at the same time, we possess the power to impact that same distribution, rewriting our networked ecology.

The emergence of ideas depends upon our position within these networks, our
access, our connectivity, our privilege. Our writing is mediated by both our use of language, its affordances and constraints, and by those who have used it prior to us in our networked ecology. It is itself a negotiation of power geometries, but also a way to transcend them. Distribution is also a tuning in and a tuning out. “The texts that call me have different voices,” Cixous attests. “But they have one voice in common, they have, with their differences, a certain music I am attuned to, and that’s the secret” (p. 5). Any movement through time-space is an act of inclusion yet equally an exclusion. But regardless, this grammar of language runs through pages, runs through speech, leaves traces in the dirt, and we track through them, our course altering as we too tread in, out, with and against these rhythms. Cixous reminds us that we travel just as language does. “I wonder what kind of poet doesn’t wear out their shoes, writes with their head. The true poet is a traveler. Poetry is about travelling on foot and all its substitutes, all forms of transportation” (p. 64). We either travel these distances between us or we repress these drives working within us. “Go forward to foreign lands, toward the foreigner in ourselves. Travelling in the unconscious, that inner foreign country, foreign home, country of lost countries” (pp. 69-70). Embodiment plays out in the motif of this palimpsest. Inscription on top of inscriptions. Writing over the top of bodies, through bodies, and back into the earth. “We must work, the earth of writing. To the point of becoming the earth. Humble work. Without reward. Except Joy” (p. 156). I don’t like this last sentence. I have cut it and put it back. Cut it out and stitched it back. But in Stigmata (1988), Cixous makes sense of this joy she connects to love:

It’s the moment, it’s the place to go, the one thanks to the other, at the depths of the instant, finally realizing the dream of all human beings, which is to take the present root. We all who live in truth live only for this hope, and in reality renounce it most of the time. We all who almost always make everything except love, and we are entirely invaded by exile and bordered by solitude. Now it’s only in the act of love that one finally attains the present’s speed, the intelligent, interior, slow speed, the non-measurable, precise, unknown speed, that transports us into the incalculable, deep, borderless, strangely marine instant—because in joy, as we know, we swim […] (pp. 102-103).

And by love she means our love for the other, our engagement with the other. Without
joy, without love, in uncertain contexts, we can’t realize our fittingness in this ecology, and instead we numbly swim through these entanglements, not realizing we are caught up in them. Yet, there is a rhetoric to our ecology that makes this embodiment possible. And to understand this grammar Cixous in Three Steps on the Ladder of Writing (1993) believes we must be reading writers and writing readers. Other people, things, and packages, places are not only present at the scene of writing, but writing with us. Embodied, consciously or unconsciously. Enaction relates to our engagement, to our tuning, and to the shifts in our production of space. It is why Cixous goes up and down her ladder through time-space, for when we do nothing we change nothing. Ascending and descending, arguing with ghosts through time-space, managing our relationality on every rung. With the ladder, inclined against this networked ecology, we can write a kind of justice on the page, create a place of peace through this choric papyrus, and perhaps in the actual as well. (p. 156). For Cixous, writing is a kind of construction. deconstruction. reconstruction. Attending to language. Attending to thinking. And also our ecology.

The ecological turn in composition studies that bloomed the decade before and after the turn of the century, was represented elsewhere in academia as scholars pondered the meaning of ecological literacy in a time of expanding digital networks and diminishing natural resources. Science educators (Berkowitz, Ford, and Brewer, 2005) elided civics and ecological literacy stressing that both literacies prove essential for understanding and actuating changes within systems (p. 228). For these scholars an ecologically literate individual possessed the following seven components:

-Scientific or evidence-based thinking
-Systems thinking
-Trans-disciplinary thinking
-Spatial thinking
-Temporal thinking
-Quantitative thinking
-Creative and empathetic thinking

(p. 238)

Cleary, a civic/ecological pairing emphasizes individual actions recognizing that each of us are change agents, for good or bad, in our networked ecology. It was in this spirit of ecological and civic literacy, but preceding our previous source, that Sidney Dobrin and
Christian Weisser (2002) introduced the term “ecocomposition” to rhetoric and composition studies arguing that a theory of writing ecology and practice should recognize both humans and non-humans as composers of discourse. They argue that “Ecocompositionists delve into ecological and environmental issues not to extend our territory in the intellectual landscape, but to improve our understanding of the connections between these related disciplines, discourses, and epistemologies” (p. 4). Dobrin and Weiser make a point to explain that Ecocomposition emerged from Ecocriticism and Ecofeminism, but that it holds more in common with the latter. While Ecocriticism searched for the interconnections in text as a form of literary criticism, Ecocomposition is more concerned with the interconnectivity and interdependence located at the site of writing. However, it also positions itself as a movement rather than a mere mode of analysis, and therefore leans towards the activism inherent in Ecofeminism, which works to identify and resist oppressive practices (p. 34).

Ecofeminism’s goal centers on placing nature on equal footing with gender, race, and class, but does not shy away from locating and combatting all forms of domination, and in fact, warns that our failure to do just this, will lead to a reoccurrence in violence. The term “ecology” proves important in this end, as Ecofeminists see domination as an ecological problem, and that locating one’s position in relation to these power structures is paramount in combatting them. Until we flesh out these relations, analyze their interconnectivity, and calibrate their power, we cannot locate ourselves in time-space. Expanding on Ecofeminism, Dobrin and Weisser argue nature’s place in the discourse, “not only as a text that we may read and learn from, but one we may write, or more precisely, one we may write in, on, with, or about” (p. 52). This theory of writing does not privilege human over other non-human writers. Instead, “Ecocomposition identifies languages and signs other than human languages as critical to the notion of ecological communication and seeks to give voice to nature in its own right rather than simply as a subject about which humans assign voice” (p. 53). Animals speak to each other, and to us:

The message of a rattlesnake’s rattle or a cotton mouth’s hiss does not leave much room for interpretation; the message is clear and succinct.
Misinterpretation has great material ramifications. The message spotted and striped skunks send are easy to read. (p. 54)

Dobrin and Weisser even extend ecological communication to other life forms such as plants. Their example being that the palmetto warns us not to be too careless in our passing or handling of it. Especially important in their theory is the concept of “language” in that it is not reserved as merely a “human endeavor.” They stress that “only by recognizing that other lifeforms communicate in and through their environments will we be able to more adequately theorize our roles as language users” (p. 55). As Dobrin and Weisser progress through this project, they fail to extend Ecocomposition to non-living forms—the timing was not quite right. While, they emphasize the importance of place, they do so with a description that limits itself to the relationality of living organisms within those spaces as the elements that compose our networked ecology and thus our environment. Ecocomposition promotes a cooperative ecological ethos among all living things centered on sharing and preserving natural resources. This cooperation extends to its pedagogy, in that Dobrin and Weisser stress a “Friere-inspired concept of critical consciousness” (p. 116) and a focus on recognizing the many forms of discourse that inform any scene of writing. The authors write:

Much like social ecology, which examines the relationships within and of societies, discursive ecology examines the relationships of various acts and forms of discourse. This branch of pedagogy asks students to see writing as an ecological process, to explore writing and writing processes as systems of interaction, economy, and interconnectedness. […] Teaching ecological literacy enables students to understand the principles of organization of ecological communities (ecosystems) and apply those principles to their own lives and communities. (p. 116-117)

In this last sentence we see an attention to ecology as an attention to design. This begins with an understanding of the design so that we might better understand our own location with it. With this understanding of ecological design, we might attend to our ecology through the implementation of smarter, perhaps more ethical designs.

Dobrin argues his ecological approach to writing as post-process in its attempt to remove the writer from the writing subject/scene, one that places writing in advance of
the actual scene of writing, in advance of the thinking subject. While I embrace the theory of writing ecologies, I am reluctant to answer the call of Kent or any other post-process theorist to remove the writer from their agency at the site of writing, or to throw out process altogether. Yes, we must extend agency and influence to others, human, non-human, living and non-living. Yes, we must concede that writing precedes the writing scene, but at the center of the rhetorical situation, in that present networked moment, stands the individual and the choice to be relational.

As with other post-compositions, Ecocomposition cannot be divorced from publics. In that Ecocomposition stresses our interconnectedness and interdependence, it is also a call for public intellectualism, that we are called as educators to address our ecology through our pedagogy and our public activism: “Our private efforts are necessary in bringing about public change through writing and physical work. Ecocomposition must recognize the material consequences of producing public writing and make use of the ability to effect change” (p. 112). That is, in that we are influenced by an ecology, we also influence our ecology through writing in the network, which in turn raises questions about how to engage in publics with our students in the classroom. Rosa Eberly (1999) argued the classroom space as a “protopublic” where writers might test their theories as was done in the Greek Padia, as practice for the public sphere. However, I want my students to very much understand the classroom as a public space, rather than a protopublic one. For if we hold these theories of writing ecology to be constitutive, then any relationality, whether outside or inside a classroom, is a public one. If we adhere to writing ecology theory, that our writing is socially constructed, we should also attend to the public through public writing. This is another kind of enaction where theory informs practice, and practice informs theory. It is through enaction that we attend to spaces and places in which we commune and to the networked ecologies that connect us, and the spaces and places in which they reside. In attending to the public, we are in a circular, ecological sense, also attending to our own constructions. Nathaniel Rivers and Ryan Weber (2011) provide a good example of this praxis arguing this is the kind of enaction with which we want our students to engage when they circulate their work into the public
sphere. If writing is socially constructed, then we would do well to attend to the social and its constructions through our writing. And when we work to connect our classrooms to a larger public, we write in and over what is written, working as change agents within our degrees of influence.

Not only does an ecological approach to writing complicate the agency in the rhetorical situation, it also complicates exigency in time-space. Jenny Edbauer (2005) calls on us to recognize that individuals engage rhetoric in both public and private settings, that the scene of rhetoric bleeds through time and space, resulting in an engagement with the interlocutor that might begin in a different time and place, perhaps as an affective response, but one that none-the-less might bloom into an emotional one. Her theory complicates the site and exigencies of our situational rhetorical relationality. Ideas linger. Conversations linger. Images linger. Even when we are unaware of their existence in us and influence on us. The lines between public and private blur, or as Edbauer puts it, bleed into one another. Edbauer’s theory is important to my dissertation in that she complicates the site of rhetoric. The site is not bordered, but boundaried. This site is contested, relational, often uncertain. In that I argue Being calls us to this scene of rhetoric so that we might establish our relationality in space and time, through Edbauer, I can now explain the scene as one that transcends a specific site in space and time, public or private, one which is ever emerging as long as we allow ourselves to be interlocutors, to be engagable, to be affected. Being calls on us to engage these exigencies, because in engaging the other we constitute our own being. We are called to the site, and to attend to it. This is what Thomas Rickert argues in his pursuit to define what it means to be embodied and situated. Drawing on affect, materiality, embodiment, and the world, Rickert (2013) claims Being gets entangled in entanglements. This entanglement, he argues, is by design an interpellation, but also an invitation to disclose, dwell, and build within these entanglements. In Distant Publics, Edbauer, now Jenny Rice (2012), locates a similar situational interpellation, one which calls us to inquiry. To question—that as interlocutors we are called to do so.

A decade after Ecocomposition began, Dobrin (2011) deemed the movement a
failure in that most practitioners used the term to characterize environment-themed composition courses rather than a theory that granted agency to *wild things* (125). He never gave up on the movement, but instead found ways to extend and update his rhetorical ecological framework into the non-human quarters both virtual and actual as a pliable framework for examining the complex assemblages that constitute subjectivity and objectivity in our world.

**Resilient Ecologies**

When ecologists discuss the strength of an ecosystem, they refer to the system’s *resilience*. Lance Gunderson and Crawford Holling’s (2001) work on resilience theory considers nested adaptive resilience models that theorize large, intermediate, and small feedback loops, known as panarchies, from the Greek God of nature, Pan. Rather than representing a system in a single register, panarchies express the complexity of a given system in that it functions at different scales in an environment. These panarchies consist of large feedback loops that are representative of slow variables that add to the robust nature of a system, intermediate feedback loops that serve as buffers, and smaller feedback loops that have faster variables and are thus more susceptible to change and recovery. In Gunderson and Holling’s theory, these large, intermediate, and small loops inform one another resulting in a kind of enaction. That being said, small loops are often the tell tales of coming thresholds. If an ecosystem is not composed of enough large, slow variables, if it does not possess a number of intermediate buffers, it may be unable to adapt to system changes and may be susceptible to thresholds. Gunderson and Holling liken large, slow variables to areas where knowledge is stored. Meanwhile, the small, fast variables are spaces of experimentation and discovery. The middling zones are areas of organization. When a system experiences change, the small fast variables revolt, which causes the middle loop to absorb the shock, reorganize, thus allowing for the large, slower variables to adapt and learn should the system experience further disturbance. Interestingly, ecologists define the resilience of a system not by its ability to recover in a
specific instance, but rather by the distance between thresholds.

We may similarly use this systems theory to describe the workings of the Clemson ecology. Clemson has large, slow variables that are responsible for our university knowing. These include our architectural design, archives, alumni board, and administration. The intermediate variables consist of the doings of departments, faculty and student senate, campus and student organizations, labor practices, forms and procedures, communications, especially in Clemson’s case, propaganda. Clemson’s fast variables incorporate our makings: the classroom space, teachers and students engaged in learning, workers laboring, people moving in relation to one another. We can use this framework to examine the workings of Clemson’s panarchy by relating some of the events of the student protest in the spring of 2016. While student protest at Sikes Hall figured in the smaller feedback loops, these revolts were buffered by changes in the rules that allowed for student assembly, the rerouting of tours for prospective students and parents so that they ran around Sikes Hall, the publishing of administrative documents proposing a plan for addressing inequality on campus through new structures and funding schemes, the arrest of students by university security—all of which served to protect the large, slow variables of the administration and our board. Clemson University, over the course of its history, has proved an uncommonly resilient ecology. This is not to say that it hasn’t faced dangers from outside its ecology. Ecologists use the term dual-phase evolution to explain how ecologies adapt through “local” and “global phases,” or fail to do so, which results in a threshold, a state of sudden change. Over its long history, Clemson has encountered “global phases” such as its admittance of women, desegregation, the sexual revolution, but has been able to learn from enaction and reorganize its intermediate variables to either deter or minimize thresholds. This process is exemplified in the naming practices and rhetoric used in relation to Fort Hill, John C. Calhoun’s plantation home at the center of Clemson University’s campus. My archival research documented in chapter 3 will examine how the university has been able to utilize changes in policies and procedure at key moments in history, moments when the rest of the world was changing. Instead, the administration and board were able to reorganize
and protect the university hegemony, its memory, and either prevent or mitigate the impact of a given threshold.

Giles Deleuze and Félix Guattari (1980/1987) use the analogy of a forest ecology to describe such systems in their characterization of rhizomatic versus arborescent species. Arborescent species are hegemonic, power centered, hierarchical, closed. Rhizomatic ones are nomadic, distributed, anarchical, open. In established forests, invasive species are kept at bay through a number of means including canopy and root development, but also through chemical and biological processes. In forest ecologies, ecosystems may or may not recover from fires, logging practices such as overcutting and clear cutting, or invasive species such as bamboo in hollows, wild hogs in oak beach forests, wooly adelgid in our hemlock forests, or fungal outbreaks such as those that destroyed our utilitarian chestnuts and shade elms. In contrast to the arborescent ecology, Deleuze and Guattari turn to another system they find more nomadic in nature: the rhizomatic system. The rhizome, in contrast to arborescent, is open, connected, distributed, singular, plural.

While Deleuze and Guattari’s arborescent and rhizomatic models are valuable in explaining how power is structured in a system, when we discuss how movement occurs in a network, we in rhetoric more often borrow analogies that derive from the field of aquatic ecology. We discuss “circulations,” which Gries (2015) thinks are important in that they “(a) draw attention to rhetoric’s dynamic movement and fluidity; (b) reconfigure theories of rhetoric and publics to account for discourse’s dynamic, distributed, and emergent aspects; (c) rethink composing strategies for the digital age; and (d) revamp pedagogy to account for writing’s full production cycle” (p. xix). However, in this discussion of circulation, we must also think in terms of “flows and blockages,” analogies for which Chris Mays (2015) thinks serve a useful purpose in examining what he calls our diachronic, rhetorical and arhetorical systems. In his research, Mays examines unproductive arguments, especially the stubbornness of an interlocutor in doxa driven argument, which he considers a form of rhetorical blockage. His work considers why it might be beneficial to use a system’s approach to address those who refuse to be affected
by rhetoric. In my own use of the aquatic ecology metaphor, I would like to borrow and 
apply the terms “stagnant” and “stagnation,” which ecologists use to describe lentic 
ecosystems. Freshwater ecosystems are either lotic, flowing, or lentic, stagnant. These 
latter ecologies can be the result of lakes and ponds forming naturally in craters or due to 
glacial activity, or by way of human construction; however, in aquatic ecology, the term 
stagnation does not preclude circulation, or even flows. Nor does it preclude the 
circulation of packages, nor embodied mobility in general. For, as we all know, fish can 
swim and thrive in lentic systems. The metaphor of stagnation, as occurring in a lentic 
ecosystem, is a better metaphor for examining how hegemonic systems function and how 
their practices can come to dominate particular spaces and places through human design. 

Though not the earliest example of how humans impact the earth at scale, the 
human-made reservoir is perhaps the best example of how we might use technology to 
rewrite whole landscapes with minimal effort. The process of writing on the earth began 
when early humans introduced burning to their hunting practices, wiping out huge swaths 
of brush and forest. The Wonderwerk Caves in South Africa provide the earliest evidence 
of these practices dating them to over 100,000 years ago. For these early people, the 
charred remains of their environs must have filled their minds with wonder and terror, 
that this thing, this technology—a word they knew not—could produce such large scale 
destruction to the very spaces and places they inhabited. Later, humans used controlled 
burns for agricultural purposes, both as a means of deforestation and renewal. However, 
humans began rewriting the actual topography of the earth at scale when civilizations 
first began building cities around the 8th century B.C.E. Not only did these civilizations 
quarry out hillsides, reshaping the earth for the procurement of construction materials or 
for protective purposes, they also began building large structures out of the earth that 
could be seen from miles away. With the invention of dam around 3,000 B.C.E., the 
Egyptians mastered the flow of water, and in so doing, reshaped the earth to a scale that 
had never been seen before. More than any other technology, the invention of the dam 
symbolizes how humans might utilize technology to overpower and dominate their 
environment, not just rewriting landscapes, but controlling them. Perhaps there is no
greater rhetorical ecological metaphor for hegemonic ecological design than this one.

In my research, I have been thinking about human-made reservoirs and the problems that plague these lentic systems, from fertilizer contamination to more sinister industrial contaminations, and how these different bodies interconnect through various political and social assemblages. While the very design of these reservoirs damages our earth’s topography, the secondary damage stems from the hegemonic design of these spaces and places that result in the displacement and exclusion of life, both human and non-human, but additionally to non-living things. And finally, the tertiary damage results from the byproducts of our lifestyle. That is, in our attainment of the perfect lawn, the building of the perfect dwelling, the idealized mobility inherent in the leather-lined SUV, we become disconnected from the harm we cause our ecology through the design of our being. We succumb to the propaganda of a capitalist lifestyle, and this chemical run-off feeds into these same human-reservoirs producing algae blooms. We swim in asbestos waters. We eat radioactive fish. We drink this water along with all that we have dumped into it. Through our practices, we not only damage the earth, we also damage ourselves. Our factories leak asbestos into our drinking water, our industrial nuclear facilities leak toxins that make our spaces and places uninhabitable. In my digital praxis I am going to talk about three such human-made designs and their implications: Geist Reservoir in Indiana, Clemson’s own Lake Hartwell in South Carolina, and Par Pond at the Savannah River Nuclear site in Aiken South Carolina, all examples of interconnected public rhetoric as viewed through a rhetorical ecological framework.

It is interesting that when Carl Folk (2006) and other ecologists discuss systems, they use terms like “management” and “education.” What is telling about this approach is that as managers, humans maintain the subject position. Does this imply that our human tinkering has gone too far, and that now our ecology, once autopoietic, requires human management to maintain itself? I want to do some thinking from the other direction: I would like to think that we might also have a good deal to learn from ecologies that are not managed, left alone by humans, and thriving. Places where humans dare not go, for we have ruined these sites. Chernobyl, Three Mile Island. No-go Zones, along which
battlefronts waxed and waned, demilitarized zones that separate hostile enemies like that which separates North and South Korea. Here we find humanity’s ugliest traces, yet these sites are teeming with life. I am interested in these ecologies because of our biological and rhetorical connections with these spaces, and from what they might have to teach humans about their posthuman condition.

Much of ecology studies focuses on how we might prevent thresholds by building resilient ecologies mitigating damage done by global phases. I am coming from the opposite direction. I’m studying resilience theory so that I can understand how to disrupt an already resilient one highly resistant to deterritorialization. Clemson represents the white, supremacist, capitalist, patriarchy of South Carolina. The human-made reservoir’s influence extends to all parts of life in South Carolina, including my children who have been raised and educated here, and who call this place home. Clemson ecology has significant implications for other ecologies and ecosystems in our state and in our posthuman networked super ecology. We are in a moment where we can do great damage or bring about real change.

**Posthuman Ecologies**

As I related in my first chapter, the shift from grids to networks, from structure to post-structure, has generated a great deal of human angst that began in the postmodern era but has continued on to perhaps my very reader. *Being*, as Rickert (2013) says, gets entangled in entanglements and what was once ordered, linear, palpable, now appears chaotic, disjointed, and impervious, or at the least, unfathomably complex. The ancient Greeks, in their spatial understanding of the universe, had little difficulty seeing their way through such complexities, and may perhaps offer some insight for posthumanity. Here, I want to return to the Greek concept labyrinth, the symbol of design overlaying chaos. For the Greeks, the labyrinth held choric powers as *ges periodos* or “circuit of the Earth,” a mapping, a route that one must travel to become. For the Greeks, the purpose of the labyrinth was not to still or control the chaos, but to attend to it, a way of harmonizing
themselves within the resultant complexity. In the context of a more developed technology and multidimensional episteme, our understanding of these mappings requires a change in our seeing that will surely be aided by relating two further unfoldings in writing ecology studies: actor-network theory and complexity theory, both of which provide the theory for the methodologies and practices posthumanity must undertake to ensure its posterity.

In their various projects, Latour, Callon, and Law are credited with developing actor-network theory (ANT) to expand our thinking on actors and agents in our networks by including non-living things into our conceptualization of nodal power and agency. This move redraws our once human-centric network while simultaneously reoperationalizing networks’ functions. In composition and rhetoric studies, at least in my circles, things have generally been accepted as writers, a fact that is especially apparent amid a superabundance of algorithms and artificial intelligence. It is not just the Hardian landscape that bears influence over the novel’s character, it is the amalgamation of assemblages within assemblages of living and non-living things, themselves influenced by amalgamations of assemblages within assemblages. Some interesting work done in ANT includes Clay Spinuzzi’s (2007) explication of a network in “Who Killed Rex?” which produces tracings of technological, actor, and action networks; Ian Bogost’s (2012) argument as to why we should apply ethical ontological methodologies of ANT that explore our relationship with things so as to establish an ethico-relational value; and Jeff Rice’s (2012) offering of an ANT inspired methodology for writing these living/non-living networks that run through time-space. For all of these writers, the value of ANT is in both the degree of significance we might afford the non-living and in the establishment of inter-responsibility in relation to this inter-agency. In expanding our definitions of networks, nodes, and modalities, we also expand our definition of fittingness. Not just a fittingness with us in relation to other nodes, living and non-living, but to the degree to which we not only fit, but connect…not on a surface level, but in a biological and chemical one also.

In addition to ANT, Taylor’s In a Moment of Complexity: Emerging Network
Culture has led to discussions concerning the difficulties of describing our rapidly emerging technology and evolving world. This description is not one of order—as the humanist once believed possible—but having encountered chaos, we find that we are now at a place when we might begin to see chaos’s organization and understand it as complexity, but similarly at a place where we know we can never return to the order we once believed we knew (p. 146). Rather than certainty, complexities will open to further complexities. We might argue that this epistemological moment Taylor so aptly identifies circles us back to the Greek world, and to their understanding of chaos, chora, and the role of the topoi in that through design and community, we might attend to chaos. Under the microscope we find patterns of randomness. We tune ourselves to the approximate frequency to hear rhythmic arrhythmia. What was lost between, the anomaly, finds its home on a spectrum. Even the field of composition and rhetoric has found itself at this moment of complexity on a spectrum between chaos and order, existing in a space between open and closed. What is good writing? That’s quite a long story. Byron Hawk’s A Counter-History of Composition Studies (2007) searches for this complexity in an effort to locate and promote methods Hawk refers to as “investigative vitalism” that might create “A new paradigm built around complexity [which might] produce a post-dialectical understanding of contemporary pedagogies of invention for the emerging scene produced by digital technology” (p. 7). Hawk identifies Victor Vitanza’s dissoi logi, Dobrin’s work in ecology, and the oeuvre of Rickert as examples of composition scholars working in this tradition of vitalism.

While both ANT and Complexity Theory help to expand our thinking about networked spaces and places, the later work of Guattari provides important insights on how we might understand and conceptualize our fittingness within the complexity of actor-networks, and perhaps explain how exactly this all fits together. My goal here is to explore how dunamis, what Deborah Hawhee identifies as rhetorical power and what I argue as rhetorical fittingness, might be located in the transversality of network Being, and perhaps provide further explanation as to why we, as tiny dependent nodes, are called to the other, called to act. To move towards this end of fittingness, I will use Guattari’s
concept of ecosophy as developed in The Three Ecologies and Chaosmosis.

In The Three Ecologies, Guattari (1989/2000) explains the ecosophy as an “ethico-political articulation” that functions through the three registers of our environmental ecology, social ecology, and mental ecology. Any event, from a school shooting to a forest fire will have ramifications for, and may be interpreted through, this ecological triad. As such, Guattari encourages the individual to map out the “movement and intensity of evolutive processes” as they relate to the deterritorialized and territorialized spaces and subjects, a process he characterizes as “fixing-into-being” (p. 44). These practices are intended to locate spaces of both territorialization and singularization so as to better understand the development, movement, and interplay of these assemblies, and in doing so, promote environmental conditions that foster singularity amid state structures of domination. Guattari’s intention is to identify and exhort a kind of tangled heterogeneity across his three ecological registers.

It is to be hoped that the development of the three types of ecological praxis outlined here will lead to a reaffirming and a recomposition of the goals of the emancipatory struggles. And let us hope that, in the context of the new ‘deal’ of the relation between capital and human activity, ecologists, feminists, antiracists, etc., will make it an immediate major objective to target the modes of production of subjectivity, that is, of knowledge, culture, sensibility and sociability that come under an incorporeal value system at the root of the new productive assemblages. (p. 49)

Especially important are the practices of the individual in society. At every opportunity the individual should dériver, or bifurcate from a territorialized trajectory into a deterritorialized one more suitable for human dwelling. (p. 52) Here we see the disconnected Flâneur trope. Wandering. From Benjamin to de Certeau to Bachelard. However, Guattari hardly promotes an individualized deterritorialization as the sole approach to the problem, rather, he suggests this as a first step. For Guattari, this is an ethico-political endeavor that begins with individual thinking and then assembles across
the registers of the social and ecological. Individuals are tasked with attending to their singularity through the…

promotion of innovatory practices, the expansion of alternative experiences centred around a respect for singularity, and through the continuous production of an autonomizing subjectivity that can articulate itself appropriately in relation to the rest of society. (p. 59)

Singularization will assemble through systems by way of “heterogenesis,” what Guattari refers to as “processes of continuous resingularization.” At this stage the focus extends to social and environmental registers that will similarly allow for subjectivity. By way of this heterogenesis, he argues “Individuals must become both more united and increasingly different.” (p. 69) It is of note that while weary of the role mass media plays in homogenizing society, Guattari does not adopt an anti-technological stance, rather, he remains hopeful that scientific and technological advances could help to resolve our most pressing ecological issues, but that this will not be possible if we do not attend to the social and mental registers of our ecology (p. 31). In this way, he reminds us that ecosophy proves an ethico-political move, one that calls on the individual to attend to not only oneself, but our society and environment as well.

In *Chaosmosis* (1992/1995), Guattari turns his attention to identifying and analyzing the autopoetic assemblages that utilize decentralized systems to maintain hegemonic control in striated spaces. These hegemonic systems are composed of infinite symbiotic assemblages, what Guattari refers to as *complexions*, within and across the environmental, social, and mental registers. We are, each of us, all of us, living and non-living, infiltrated by these machinic assemblages. Working across decentralized locations, they inscribe themselves upon us, writing our identities, populaces of identities, across networked space. We do not, as we think, connect to others as individuals in a network, rather these transversal, autopoetic assemblages connect us to others through affectual means, and thus determine our associative identity. Guattari’s attempts to identify how this complex system of assemblages works to create a media generated, ordered, and thus *controlled* identity across individuals. Having identified these distributions we might, as individuals, attend to our own deterritorialization, which in turn may…
trigger creative sparks, that will engender pockets of awareness capable of deploying constructive perspectives. New collective assemblages of enunciation are beginning to form an identity out of fragmentary ventures, at times risky initiatives, trial and error experiments; different ways of seeing and of making the world, different ways of being and of bringing to light modalities of being will open up, be irrigated and enrich one another. (p. 120)

To this he adds an attention to aesthetic and analytical engagement to “create new systems of valorization, a new taste for life, a new gentleness between the sexes, generations, ethnic groups, races…” (p. 92). Having already located the ethical ground of ecosophy as an ethico-political movement, this aesthetic invents new assemblages, reorganizes the old, working towards what Guattari sees as the ideal of a leaderless alterity.

The value in this vision of machinic systems is the framework for identifying the designs used to institute control over chaos, but that might similarly be used to produce different societal outcomes. Our rhetorical ingresses are these same assemblies that connect us to the other. They must be travelled if ever we wish to persuade the other. Guattari wants to create polyphonic, enunciative, complex assemblages that cultivate what he calls “an existential stickiness” (p. 115). We are, through these assemblages, relational, connected, but as Guattari reminds us, also ethically obliged to act on behalf of our society and our ecology, none of which Guattari believes will survive the night if we do not act. It is, again, an aesthetics of difference, he believes, that will unite us.

According to Guattari, by attending to our aesthetic, and thus our affectual response, we might reconstitute our own identity and perhaps how identity forms in the rest of society. Rather than a hopeful philosophy, Guattari attempts to explain how an invisible machinic force controls the formation of individual identity in society and thus maintains a decentralized, hegemonic power. In that we are relational and thus bound by assemblages, we must take up an ecosophy as the theory that guides the production of machinic agora rhythms more in tune with the polyphony of Being.
Writing Posthuman Ecologies

How do we interrupt our circular becoming? When we let ghosts haunt our past, we bog down in the rhetoric of “what happened?” We wallow in questions of inheritance, justice, truth...forgetting the questions of the present-future, questions that direct us towards a deliberative rhetoric for an ethical futurity. Perhaps we would do well to think about releasing our ghost into our future—not the future we keep repeating, that of the future-past, full of future hauntings, but a new, deliberative one. In Spectres of Marx, Derrida (1993/1994) ponders why we let this present-past haunt us, and how we might move into a present-future. In my first chapter I argued that our fittingness requires us to attend to our being in this present, this place of union between the dead and the unborn. The ghosts of the past are still here. Will we continue to feed them?

We write posthuman ecologies to change our spatial practices. Without thoughtful praxis there is no enaction of our knowing—doing—making. Any such method must trace out the mappings that overlay chaos. But like Daedalus, we must invent the labyrinth anew, and in so doing attend to this chaos. Writing posthuman ecologies uncovers the transversal assemblages that bind us to the other, but also the bifurcations that separate us and our thinking, and in so doing we realize our differences despite our fittingness. As Guattari (1992/1995) argues, “The primary purpose of ecosophic cartography is thus not to signify and communicate but to produce assemblages of enunciation capable of capturing the points of singularity of a situation” (p. 128). For Guattari, the practice of writing posthuman ecologies leads first to individual singularity, and then enaction within our networked Being, thus the production of deterritorialized spaces where we might together form an alteric communion, an ecosophy of polyphonos fittingness.

In my multimodal project, The Clemson Ghost Tour, I intend to adopt a systems approach and apply both the forest and aquatic ecology metaphors in a discussion of the Clemson ecology. This will be a mixed metaphor, mixed media, multimodal project utilizing virtual reality. The Clemson Ghost Tour will be an example of ecology writing, writing the ecology as an act of disruption, but also an act of attending to spaces and places, as Walter reports the theoros did in Ancient Greece, providing another way of seeing, another episteme. Guattari (1995) says “The work of art, for those who use it, is an activity of unframing, of rupturing sense, of baroque proliferation or extreme impoverishment, which leads to a recreation and a reinvention of the subject itself” (p.
Virtual reality technology is the Daedalian labyrinth that I will design upon our networked chaos. It is the circuit through time-space for my becoming, for our becoming. Both ANT and complexity theory lay out the groundwork for the methodology I will pursue for my project of exploring the ecology of Clemson, a methodology that will draw on Jeff Rice, Latour, Derrida, and Ulmer.

In *Digital Detroit*, Jeff Rice (2012) provides a method and example of an ontographic practice for writing posthuman ecologies by attending to people, things, packages, and environments in digital and actual space. Rice uses Latour’s ANT to complicate his understanding of place, actors, and our agency in it. In his own text, Latour (2005) reminds us that ANT is not a conspiracy theory, but instead a method for recording movement and transformation across networks, locating the agent by way of the act. “The presence of the social has to be demonstrated each time anew, it can never be simply postulated. If it has no vehicle of travel, it won’t move an inch, it will leave no trace” (p. 53). In that ANT examines movement, circulation, reproduction, but also stagnation, it is also an analytic process that examines design affordances, constraints, mappings, and feedback in the location of actors and agency. We can use Bogost’s (2012) term “ontological carpentry” to show how the craft of writing might be used as a method for meaning making in these material instances, especially as we consider how our own writing is constructed through a variety of ecological factors. For Rice, the network is not a concept—it’s here…at least for the moment. For the network is always in a state of movement through virtual and actual space, an idea which further complicates its writing. *We write the network*. It is an active process, not an activity that may be finished. Though we might use stasis to arrive at, and fully consider the scene of writing, our networks, and our relationality, are always changing. In writing about the scene and teaching of his writing at Wayne State University, Rice connects the network of virtual and actual places through space and time to other spaces and times, identifying surprising actors, relating multiple subjective epistemes and power centers that each, in turn, produces new spaces and affects new networks—all of which combine, in all of their multiplicities through various power geometries, to constitute Rice’s own exigency at the scene of writing. Rice
sees rhetoric as the affective link between these various networks connecting different times and places, people, things, packages, and environments. For Rice, rhetoric is the link in these assemblages. Especially important to my project is Rice’s attention to multimodality and its ability to multiply the interfaces by which we might derive meaning from the networked scene. As an example, Rice examines the power of the historic photographic as a scene frozen in time, stuck in its actual-now, from which, in our own time at the same location, our own actual-now, we might relate. It is through this juxtaposition as I see it, that we are able to answer questions about “what happened?” that might be appropriate for pivoting, or moving towards both our epideictic and deliberative rhetorics. Without this interface, there is no exigency to do so. We write the networks while the networks are simultaneously writing us. We can flail against them, or drift in their channelings. Floating. As Eckermann, Goethe’s secretary, floated along with Goethe (Ronel, 1993). There is a touch to the keyboard. A helm, or vibration as on the sailboats tiller. It is the touch of the rudder moving through water, but also the feel of the wind on your face. Knowing your course, but tolerant of the headers and lifts that will alter your course. The same is true when we write the networks. When we write networks, we unfold the page, unfolding into the page.

Rice’s method for multimodal writing emerges partly from Ulmer’s work on electracy as developed in Teletheory, Heuretics, and Electronic Monuments. It is difficult for me to separate these works, especially in that they rewrite each other in different ways as Ulmer develops his theory on electracy as a way to explain technology and Being in the world. In every sense, Ulmer’s work focuses on Dasein: the writer at the scene, the networked ecology, our resistance or acceptance of this location, and the evolution of the self as we enact our becoming. Ulmer very much writes with Derrida, alongside him, using Derrida to unground his thinking as a way to be both playful and inventive. In a deOedipalizing sense, Gregory Ulmer’s electrate method offers us a strategy for interrupting our own circular becoming. In Teletheory (1989), he asks us to consider video as memory—video as a kind of dreaming in memory—and how we might ourselves become contributors, or players in that memory. In this sense, we seize agency
by becoming inventors of meaning. It is here that Ulmer introduces the idea of tourism and how we might use this concept to build memory as a way of developing and considering theory. He uses the term chorography, which he borrows from E. V. Walter (1988), to describe a method for seeing a space, as the ancient Greek theoros did. Chorography is not just the sketching or mapping of place, it is an act of invention rather than passive observation. And by this attending to place, both Walter and Ulmer argue that we participate in therapia, therapy. In attending to memory, we attend to the site and to ourselves, reinventing memory in our actual present, but simultaneously gaining agency in this our actual-now, setting the stage for a different future.

In Heuretics (1994), Ulmer builds on his chorographic method by adding the concept of “transduction” as a tool for investigating and connecting the differends of experience. Rather than moving through the network in a linear fashion, transduction offers us a way to move across them. By way of transduction, chorography becomes a method of connecting across sites, things, people, packages…bringing together the differends of Being. In this way, I am working to connect the practices at the Savannah River Site to our own practices at Clemson University. I argue, that both emerged from the same hegemonic episteme used in the formation of the human-made reservoirs. In Electronic Monuments (2005), Ulmer begins to think in terms of publics and how we might move from critique to problem solving. “A goal of EmerAgency, through theoria, as an Internet practice, is to conjoin the activities of tourism and consulting to create an electrate civic sphere” (p.29) He compares monuments to the superego of a nation, and through our intervention, attention, and by complicating its memory, we similarly attend to a new present-future. To see a memorial in its multiplicity, rhizomatically, ties individuals together, in a decentering, nomad forming exercise. Here we see how electrcity and chorography might be used methodologically to create an epideictic/deliberative rhetoric that better serves the future of a community. This seems to correspond to Massey’s (1993) conception of chorography not as a method for drawing borders as on a map, but as a method for connecting people across space and time.
CHAPTER THREE

THE SWINEHERD, THE MYTH, AND THE ARCHIVE

“Carmina vel coelo possunt deducere lunam”

–Virgil, Bucolica.

When Odysseus returns to the house of Laertes, Athena brings him by way of a narrow stone path that begins at the harbor and climbs up through the wooded hillsides to the lush tops where herders graze their livestock among the grasses and oaks. Here, on a particularly fine, open plane ideal for grazing, lives one of Odysseus’s most faithful servants, the swineherd. The swineherd has lately built a dwelling surrounded by a high stone wall designed to safeguard his master’s pigs, one of many such improvements to the property made in the some twenty years since Odysseus had first departed for the Trojan War. Odysseus finds the loyal swineherd, ever industrious, fashioning himself a pair of ox hide shoes. When the swineherd sees Odysseus, whom Athena has disguised as a common beggar, he rises and welcomes the stranger into his home as was the Greek custom. After settling Odysseus at the warm hearth, the swineherd kills his master’s two fattest pigs, cooks them, and serves the best parts to his guest, who unbeknownst to swineherd is this same master.

After they have eaten, the “honest swineherd”—for this is his Homeric epithet—professes to the beggar his contempt for Helen, whom he holds responsible for the launch of the Achaeans ships, and ultimately resulted in the loss of his master, Odysseus. Though he openly harbors doubts that his master will ever return, the swineherd maintains the myth of Odysseus’s homecoming and devotes his life to this end. After his story is told, Eumaios, the swineherd, sits and listens to the beggar recount tales of the Trojan War and his own journey home. How Zeus sent his ship to Egypt where his men were killed, and how he alone was saved, and lived among the Egyptians for eight years. The story has elements of divine intervention, fate, courage, and most importantly, fortitude—all story elements the “honest swineherd” holds dear. Indeed, this beggar tells the swineherd that
he has even heard Odysseus was sailing home to Ithaca with enough gold and bronze and wrought iron to fill Ithaca’s coffers for ten generations.

This scene gives us a glimpse into the workings of myth and propaganda as Eumaios, the swineherd, confirms his being not merely in the telling of his own narrative, but in the hearing his master’s narrative. In his master’s narrative he hears not only the myth of a hero, but the ontological tools needed to construct and confirm his own identity associatively. This is possible because the elements that tie the listener to the story are thematic and symbolic ones, not mere plot points. The themes and symbols in what I refer to as dominant narratives serve to reify our own sociocultural constructions of identity and thus provide the relationality to constitute our being.

The dominant narrative in all of its forms proves especially powerful in that it represents a story outside our own being, outside of our knowing. Thus, it is easier to maintain suspension of disbelief even when we know the narrative to be untrue, for we will never know the truth of another, and this is how myth blurs into symbolic and thematic constructions by which we plot our course through life. Our own comparative narrativity offers us this ability to order our thinking and calibrate our ethics and aesthetics so as to better prepare ourselves for the doing and making that will confirm our being. And in the case of a dominant narrative like that of Odysseus’, its sociocultural symbols and themes come to master our thinking, practices, territorializing the spaces we produce.

As the night and the story wears on, the swineherd grows ever cognizant of his duty. He provides a place for his guest by the fire, bedding him in thick sheepskin coverings. Yet, the swineherd himself does not sleep at the hearth…instead he exits into the cold night to fulfill his duty. Homer says that…

[…] Odysseus was pleased that he was so careful of his master’s property when the master was not there. First Eumaios slung a sword over his strong shoulders, then threw over him a heavy cloak to keep off the wind, and upon it a fleecy goatskin, lastly chose a sharp javelin to defend him against man or dog. Then he went to lie where the tusker boars were sleeping, under a rock which sheltered them from the north wind. (Rouse, 1937, p. 168)
The swineherd, who represents the prototypical worker in society, establishes his identity associatively by submitting to sociocultural assemblages. He need only be reminded of the myth and the assemblages of the state episteme are reinforced within him. Simple as they are, these associations are enough to exhort him to fulfill his duty doing and making in the interest of his master.

Were there not other voices in Ithaca to which the humble swineherd might have listened? Is there not, as Arendt (1958) says, always a polis about us? Perhaps, but the swineherd did not listen, choosing instead to attend to his pigs. Homer tells us that he avoided the market in that the suitors congregated about that place. And though like the swine, their fate lay in slaughter, I wonder if there might have been at least one suitor amongst their number who, in the absence of Odysseus, might have instituted a better plan for living as a community in Ithaca. Perhaps, we might argue, the myth of Odysseus was so embodied in the swineherd and the citizenry of Ithaca, that it undermined the political function of the polis. Totalitarianism is, in fact, the absence of the polis, and in Ithaca’s case, totalitarianism was fueled by myth from that first day Odysseus departed its shores. We can classify totalitarianism as a kind of epidemic, from the Greek epi “upon” and démos “people.”

We have long known the awesome power of narratives, for they are the “Charms,” as Virgil tells us, designed to “draw the moon from the heavens” (1826, p. 41). We use them for both entertainment and identification, to relate to the Other, or to distance ourselves. Rather than facts and logic, we prefer the poetics of the narrative, and in so doing, we consume its manifold entailments and enter into its assemblages. Consequently, we lose not only our own unique narrative, but our own chance at subjectivity. It is not as James Joyce’s Ulysses illustrates, our own story that matters. Rather, it is Odysseus’.

In Myth of the State (1946), Ernst Cassirer, explores the connection between mythos and totalitarianism. Cassirer does not define myth in opposition to logos per se (p. 13), but sees its formation as a prelogical one (p. 11). Myth, he insists, finds its origins deep within our human emotions (p. 43), a result of our wrangling with inclination and its
consequences. He defines myth as a “mass of ideas of representations, of theoretical beliefs and judgements [...] a phantasmagoria” (p. 23). This mass, related through narrative and iconography, takes on a subject position in relationship to the individual in society, and by virtue of this relationship, the individual is stripped of agency, and ultimately reduced to an object. In his treatment, Cassirer pays particularly close attention to two critics: Thomas Carlyle and Arthur Gobbineau, both of whom he believes laid the groundwork for the myth and totalitarianism that found its zenith in Nazi Germany. Carlyle’s lectures, “On Heroes, Hero Worship and the Heroic History,” perpetuated the myth that history necessitates great men and our reverence for those great men, for a society lacking in these characteristics cannot be feasibly maintained. In fact, an ideal society is one in which the individual worships the hero with “heartfelt prostrate admiration, submission, burning, boundless, for the noblest godlike form of man,” (p. 192) for this, Carlyle noted, is the basis of Christianity itself. As relates to society, logic proves inferior for Carlyle: “To attempt theorizing on such matters would profit little; they are matters which refuse to be theoremed and diagramed; which Logic ought to know that she cannot speak of” (p. 193). Carlyle’s philosophy of hero worship was itself a driving force in the justification of British Imperialism. Tennyson’s (1833) poem “Ulysses,” reflects the “heroic” attributes and ideals of this period connecting the adventurous spirit of the British people to the mythical Odysseus in a move that appropriates the Greek manifest of cultural and territorial supremacy.

'T is not too late to seek a newer world,  
Push off, and sitting well in order smite  
The sounding furrows; for my purpose holds  
To sail beyond the sunset, and the baths  
Of all the western stars, until I die.  
It may be that the gulfs will wash us down:  
It may be we shall touch the Happy Isles,  
And see the great Achilles, whom we knew. (ll. 57-64)

Along with Carlyle, Cassirer (1946) identifies Gobineau as another important figure whose ideology enabled the rise of totalitarianism in Europe. In his *Essai Sur l'inégalité des Races Humaines*, Gobineau argues that equality and universality threatens to divide
the races and in so doing jeopardizes humanity itself. His treatise identifies difference as
the basis for establishing one’s supremacy over the Other, providing an environment
where individuals compete to maintain supremacy in systems of hierarchized difference
(p. 241). Gobineau’s theory prognosticates that the last men on this earth will be of mixed
races, happy sheep in a field, unaware of their imminent demise. This is another sort of
myth, one which leads us to believe that difference will be eradicated to our detriment.
Science, on the other hand, has proven otherwise—that difference always reappears—that
difference is the way of nature.

The mixing of racial politics and hero worship, Cassirer believes, set the stage for
the rise of Nazi Germany. The totalitarian state practices a controlled ritual in which
everyday actions become political signifiers, reminders of the state narrative. For
example, the de riguer usage of “Heil Hitler” as a salutation. Cassirer also recognizes the
role Nazi propaganda played in the reification of myth. In the totalitarian state,
iconography becomes important vehicles for disseminating narrativistic themes and
symbols requisite for maintaining state control. He concludes that only intellectual,
ethical, and artistic drive can keep the myths at bay, keep us from becoming the object of
the totalitarian state (p. 298). It is interesting that Cassirer, himself, turns to The Odyssey
at the end of this work. He relates the scene in which Circe transforms Odysseus’ men
into animals to the speed with which the Nazi regime came to power in Germany,
wondering at the ease with which that totalitarian state manipulates individuals and how
quickly humankind returns to ignorance:

[H]ere are men, men of education and intelligence, honest and upright
men who suddenly give up the highest human privilege. They have ceased
to be free and personal agents.” (p. 286)

If individuals are not recognized, if the narratives of the state can manipulate a swineherd
to do its bidding, if we choose to submit to the symbols and themes bound up in
narratives, stories of myth and heroism, stories that favor totality over individuality, then
we endanger the very notion of the polis.
The Archive: Part 1

By virtue of my location at Clemson University, through my work, through my being here, I am one with John. C. Calhoun. I am one with Thomas Clemson and Ben Tillman, the racist founders of Clemson University. But I am also one with the slaves born to this place or purchased to work this land and condemned to die here. I am football. I am one of the “Clemson family.” Temporality is insignificant in this hyperconnective Dasein. For Being transcends and connects, assembling—not a solid mass…but an assemblage binding time, the living, the dead, along with what is yet to become—our posterity. We paint this assemblage solid orange—but it resists coloring, peeling away in layers—cracking, blistering, asking to be seen, to be recognized in its various colors.

Historian Shelby Foote once remarked “a university is just a group of buildings gathered around a library” (1993, p. 162). At Clemson University the center is not a library, but an old green-shuttered white house on a low hill. Students pass by this house, officially known as Fort Hill, not fully aware of what it symbolizes, nor wholly knowledgeable about its former owners. There is no historical marker on the most frequented path linking the student union to the library. If there were, would it indicate that this was the plantation house of John C. Calhoun, a statesman who dominated American politics with his fiery rhetoric defending slavery and States’ rights, that this was the man that paved the way for Secession and eventually the Civil War, that he mastered hundreds of slaves who worked this land, that he continues to master us still? The historical marker intended to summarize this man’s life, located on a less frequented path, tells only of Calhoun’s accomplishments as a statesman: “Congressman… Secretary of War… Vice President of the United States… Senator… Secretary of State.”

Back on the busy path, the next nearest historical marker lays in the shadow of a heavily girthed red oak tree. Rather than a reminder of our complicated past, this brass plate is dedicated to philanthropic giving—what is officially referred to as our “Clemson Legacy,” whose source we attribute to the will of Thomas Clemson, son-in-law of Calhoun, who willed the land that is now Clemson University. Where is the marker
explicating the entangled histories rooted in this same monocultured lawn? Where is the memorial to our Other legacy? At Clemson, we have not entered the postcolonial. We are so very far from the post-postcolonial, if such a state were ever attainable. Any such move from where we stand requires a different rhetoric, grounded in a different ethic. And in our failure to enact this Other rhetoric, we at Clemson continue to live and work under the auspices of John. C. Calhoun and the white patriarchal hegemony that uses difference to legitimate its supremacy. Our memorializing and monumentalizing serve a normative function, informing what we know, how we do, and the skeuomorphs that repeat in all that we make. In this writing I use Arthur Danto’s (1985) definition of memorial as that which “ritualize(s) remembrance and mark(s) the reality of ends,” and monuments as those which commemorate the memorable and embody the myths of beginnings.” As Danto says, “We erect monuments so that we shall always remember, and build memorials that we shall never forget” (p. 152).

In the case of our sick campus, we will never find peace for our collective psyche or passage into some more ethical future without addressing the epideictic in all of its complexity. Sharing the same root as epidemic, rhetoric’s epideictic derives from the Greek epi “upon” and deixis “showing.” It is through the ethical administration of the epideictic, that we address the epidemic from which we, the demos, suffer in all of its totality.

The old green-shuttered white house on the low hill, our Fort Hill, the house to which pilgrims once travelled far and wide to mourn the loss of the Southern Antebellum, which served as both a memorial to Calhoun and a monument to his ideals, was never de-monumentalized or officially re-memorialized; we have not moved on and this monument and our memory remains. Perhaps this is not wholly true: on a rainy April 12, 2016, in a tent among a few dignitaries, among a few of our handful of African American faculty, the board of trustees and school administrators dedicated plaques to just this sort of end. These memorial plaques mark the sites of the Fort Hill slave quarters and the convict stockades that held the Jim Crow era African American prisoners who labored to build the university (Sams, 2015). However, these plaques will not mark Fort Hill or its
lawn. Instead, they reside on a less travelled path far away from Fort Hill. There will be no memorial for our center—no show of complexity. No just epideictic action here, and thus no change, no healing.

Rather than centering its attention on Fort Hill as it should, Clemson University has turned to distraction. In the early 1980s, the University realized football greatness, winning the National Championship. But while the celebration bells were still ringing, the NCAA Committee on infractions sanctioned Clemson with a two-year probation for 150 documented infractions and 69 charges in seasons running from 1977 through 1982—important years building towards Clemson’s only National Championship in 1981. In consequence, the NCAA publicly reprimanded Clemson and barred them from participating in two subsequent postseasons and banned them from live television coverage for an additional two. Despite these low years, Clemson has rebuilt a tremendous football program bolstered by alumni and fans across the state and country and another championship has been won. The fans, be they alumni, students, or otherwise, unite in Memorial Stadium, what is known as “Death Valley,” to form a different kind of monument, less interested in memory, what Kracauer (1963/1995) deems mass ornament:

The structure of the mass ornament reflects that of the entire contemporary situation. Since the principal of the capitalist production process does not arise purely out of nature, it must destroy the natural organism that it regards either as means or as resistance. Community and personality perish when what is demanded is calculability. (p. 78)

The different is destroyed. The stadium roars: We are Clemson. We are solid orange. A body of bodies formed into the hillside in concrete. A reservoir. A planktonic algae bloom. Change is not desirable at this monument. Remembering the different is not necessary. Remembering at all is not important.

The stadium, its orange synchrony, its beer and circus, is as Kracauer says both pleasurable and legitimate (p. 79). A drama of man’s age-old contest between myth and reason—a battle between nature and logos. Our gregarious orientation, our common chant, one body, one soul. “Stupidity begins when we replace the ‘I’ with ‘we.’” (Musil
qtd in Ronell, 2002, p. 65). And thus, in these moments we are transported into the mythologies of old. Kracauer (1963/1995) adds:

Enterprises that ignore our historical context and attempt to reconstruct a form of state, a community, a mode of artistic creation that depends upon a type of man who has already been impugned by contemporary thinking—a type of man who by all rights no longer exists—such enterprises do not transcend the mass ornament’s empty and superficial shallowness but flee from its reality. (p. 86)

How did we arrive here? Or perhaps, why do we remain here? How do we change that which we choose to remember, what we choose to honor in our practice? In *Electronic Monuments*, Ulmer (2005) says that monuments are to a nation what the superego is to the consciousness (p. 14). In Clemson University’s attempts to decenter Fort Hill in favor of a new center, Memorial Stadium, we fail to *attend* to our spaces and places, and fail in our stated mission, to become what Clemson, the son-in-law of Calhoun, referred to in his will that the university should become a “high seminary for learning.”

**The Archive: Part 2**

I am concerned with a monument, an old green-shuttered white house on the low hill, Fort Hill, and the question of how Clemson University has chosen to address it or ignore it since the time of the university’s founding? The answer to this question is found in the Strom Thurmond Institute, a kind of bunker built into the side of a hill. People who tread the campus pathways above the structure seldom realize that it lies below their feet, that it is the very ground upon which we walk. Only the façade is exposed, the rest of the building disappears into the hillside. The Strom Thurmond Institute holds Clemson University’s special collections: documents that chronicle the university’s development along with the papers of various statesmen who impacted both South Carolina and United States policy. Thurmond, of course, made a national name for himself as a Dixiecrat leader and defender of segregation. He was also a great supporter of Clemson University, his alma mater. As Governor of South Carolina, he was instrumental in negotiating deals for the Savannah River Site, a nuclear facility near Aiken, South Carolina that
manufactured heavy water, tritium, and plutonium supplying the majority of the United States’ nuclear weapons stockpile. The Savannah River Site is now an ongoing superfund site, a designation we give to ecological disaster zones. A monument to Thurmond’s policies, and to our own. A monument to our epidemic.

Like a stadium, the Strom Thurmond Institute’s arching façade rises in stacks of windows arranged in steps up the hillside, skyboxes stacked one upon the next, with several wide, steep concrete staircases ascending to the campus above. The subterranean interior of the institute consists of long, dark hallways burrowing through the hillside, eventually opening into rooms bound by these same windows emanating light along the far wall. Rather than opening up the room to the world outside, the windows confine, trapping the individual within these spaces of memory. The architectural design of the archive is “another way of making power relations functions in a function, and of making a function through these power relations” (Foucault explaining the panoptic mechanism qtd. in Deleuze, 1986/1988, p. 36).

It is in this archival setting that we will apply Michel Foucault’s methods as explored in The Archaeology of Knowledge (1969/1972), a method tracing the “thresholds” indicating where language changes, for it is in these changes that we find the formations of knowledge which in turn allow us to understand our epistemological structures. Questions about who assembled these files and why some documents are privileged over others prove useless to this practice. Instead, Foucault says that “what it wishes to uncover is the particular level in which history can give place to definite types of discourse, which have their own type of historicity, and which are related to a whole set of various historicities” (p. 165). Before we proceed, it is helpful to consider Michel Serres’s argument that architectonic systems are more tightly linked than they are perceived to be. Though discussing the development of scientific thought from the pre-Socratics to the present, Serres argues that there are filiations that link the development of systems. He says:

I have discovered a relative stability where I was expecting a variation, a series of upheavals, stages, or ruptures, changes of paradigm, and so on. This is because we have ideas about history, one or more discourses of
Serres remarks that instead of sudden shifts in epistemology, instead of ruptures, he sees an unbroken connection linking Democrats to Lucretius to the present. What may look like upheaval at the surface of a body of water in fact masks the equanimity and connectivity, below. He advocates that “History must work from a model that “associates, combines and integrates different times together” (p. 201) as these different times are layered, or “folded.” Serres’s method involves a disregard for surface variations, focusing instead on discovering the connectivity below. We can think back to the lentic ecologies in the previous chapter and to a system’s ability to respond to change and various levels upon the surface or even at a more epistemic level. “As we experience time—as much as our inner senses as externally in nature—it resembles this crumpled version much more than the flat, overly simplified one” (p. 90). But when we think in terms of levels, Serres finds a tension between our ordering of the surface—what we perceive as chaotic—and the concealed order, folded into dense layers, deep within our depths.

The Strom Thurmond Archive makes for an interesting case in that it was formed, not collected. It reveals a subsurface arranged, controlled, and protected. What can be traced in terms of episteme in such an archive? How do we read the discourse of power? In Archaeology of Knowledge (1969/1972), Foucault gives us some clues: “The problem is no longer one of tradition, of tracing a line, but one of division, of limits; it is no longer one of lasting foundations, but one of transformations that serve as new foundations, the rebuilding of foundations (p. 5). Foucault seeks not a structure of unity, but a method to discover “autochthonous transformation that is taking place.” In our practice we construct new meaning. In Archaeology of Knowledge he states that “These elements that I am proposing to analyze are of rather different kinds. […] some are characteristic of a particular period, others have a distant origin and far-reaching chronological import” (p. 59). In our case, the task of the archival researcher involves reading through collections of newspaper scraps, board minutes, press releases, yearbooks, once private collections,
and other miscellany. Primarily, I worked from two collections: the James Corcoran Littlejohn Collection and the Fort Hill Files. Littlejohn, a Clemson Graduate in 1908, became Clemson University’s financial officer (1910-1954). These two collections were the basis of my “mapping” of what Foucault would call the “discursive practices” (p. 116). Like discourse, many of the stories added to, answered, and even contradicted prior contributions. Throughout *Archaeology of Knowledge*, Foucault tries to connect the discourse. Our constructions are not a fluid chain of cause and effect, an object of intelligent design.

A discursive formation is not, therefore, an ideal, continuous smooth text that runs beneath the multiplicity of contradictions, and resolves them in the calm unity of coherent thought; nor is it the surface in which, in a thousand different aspects, a contradiction is reflected that is always in retreat, but everywhere dominant. It is rather a space of multiple dimensions; a set of different oppositions whose levels and roles must be described. (p. 155)

As interesting as it is to ask questions about the context of the clippings and meanings of the documents, these musings are not the purpose of our research and will tell us nothing of moment. Instead, they are parts of a greater whole that we are trying to sketch out.

Foucault insists: “We must reconstitute another discourse, rediscover the silent murmuring, the inexhaustible speech that animates from within the voice that one hears” (p. 27). The task of the researcher is to uncover that which is embedded in the structure of the discourse. “We must grasp the statement in the exact specificity of its occurrence; determine its conditions of existence, fix at least its limits, establish its correlations with other statements that may be connected with it, and show what other forms of statements it excludes” (p. 28). Through Foucault’s method, the discourse becomes another sort of monument. Even that which is levered through the mold, can yield information about how we formed our structure. Foucault’s section on the formation of objects is especially important to my work. Our end is to identify a sort of *ontography* in the naming practices, rituals, and associations that identify the relationship between signifier and signified. We must find the first mentioning of the house and discover how the Calhoun and Clemson
family, visitors, students, and reporters described and characterized Fort Hill, how it was memorialized and monumentalized, and how this changed or remained the same over time.

The Archive: Part 3

—Traditionally, history tried to “memorialize the monuments of the past, transform them into documents. [...] in our time, history is that which transforms documents into monuments.”

—Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*

Foucault’s method is an analysis of language as it appears in the process of *doing* and *making*. “The use of concepts of discontinuity, rupture, threshold, limit, series, and transformation present all historical analysis not only with questions of procedure, but with theoretical problems” (p. 21). And in this sense we are always looking for fractures in the collections, that may indicate shifts in theory as well as the strategies used to institute the changes (p. 67-68). One such example is the shifting usage of the name of the plantation house at Clemson University sometimes referred to as the “Calhoun Mansion” and at other times “Fort Hill.” Despite an official shift in usage, certain terms remain in the discourse, remain in our colloquial knowledge. Analyzing diction used to describe the plantation house considers the signifier, signified, and referent. Foucault reminds us that the “ultimate meaning springs up through the manifest formulations, it hides beneath what appears, and secretly duplicates it, because each discourse contains the power to say something other than what it actually says, and thus to embrace the plurality of meanings” (p. 118). In our case we want to look at the diction especially in terms of the statements that compose a signature that links text to text. Foucault goes on, “One can see in any case that the description of this enunciative level can be performed neither by a formal analysis, nor by semantic investigation, nor by the analysis of the relations between the statement and the spaces of differentiation, in which the statement itself reveals differences” (p. 92). Deleuze (1986/1988) might analogize the fact that the term “Calhoun Mansion” reappears over and over again in the discourse to that of the
example of A-Z-E-R-T—the dominant keys on the Francophone keyboard—to exemplify
the almost unconscious repetition of statements that collect into families of statements
that not only dominate the discourse but also found the very positivism that situates itself
in the discourse. Such words and phrases are the manifestations of power but also our
opposition to it (p. 17). In these statements, power is operationalized, idealized. These
repetitions and even contradictions appear again and again—contradictions are
“ceaselessly reborn through discourse.” Deleuze imagines these moments of repetition to
be like dots on a page that the researcher connects so as to form diagonal lines that will
permit the study of these terms at different levels (p. 3). But unlike Serres’s claim, there
is no line. Only dots. As researchers we draw the line.

Ultimately, Foucault (1969/1972) wants to disregard the individual authors and
the context of their writing (p. 172). This is, instead, a holistic psycho-social undertaking
in search of regularities:

This other history, which runs beneath history, constantly anticipating it
and endlessly recollecting the past, can be described—in a sociological or
philosophical way—as the evolution of mentalities; it can be given a
philosophical status in the recollection of the Logos or the teleology of
reason; lastly, it can be purified in the problematic of a trace, which, prior
to all speech, is the opening of inscription, the gap of deferred time, it is
always the historico-transcendental theme that is reinvested. (p. 121)

Foucault’s method of archeology tries not to define thoughts, representations, images,
themes, preoccupations that are concealed or revealed in discourses, but to focus instead
on the discourses themselves. Nor does the method seek to discover the continuous
transition of discourses. Nor does the method look for significant moments, unemotional
in practice (p. 139). We must realize that the discourse is a monument unto itself.

[I]t is in order both to translate [contradiction] and to overcome it that
discourse begins to speak; it is in order to escape that contradiction,
whereas contradiction is ceaselessly reborn through discourse, that
discourse endlessly pursues itself and endlessly begins again; and it is
because contradiction is always anterior to the discourse and because it
can never therefore entirely escape it, that discourse changes, undergoes
transformation, and escapes from its own continuity. Contradiction, then,
functions throughout discourse, as the principle of its historicity. (p. 151)
The point of Foucault’s method is found in one of his most interesting explanations, that of the distinction between *savoir* and *connaisance*. The discursive practice is the *savoir*, the practice of knowledge, in which we see the institution function, the propaganda apparatus (p. 183). This connects to Aristotle in that though one may internalize a practice, there can be disconnect between Aristotle’s *knowing* and his *doing* and *making*. Foucault used his method to examine how “prohibitions, exclusions, limitations, values, freedoms, and other transgressions of sexuality, all its manifestations, verbal and otherwise, are linked to a particular discursive practice” (p. 193). It is in the *savoir* that we see how the institution acts, and not in what it says it knows or acknowledges. We find the positivity in the thresholds of the *doing* and *making* (p. 187). Of Foucault’s method—which I find to be the only method that might treat a privileged discourse—Deleuze (1986/1988) offers a pointed commentary.

In a certain way, Foucault can declare that he has never written anything but fiction for, as we have seen, statements resemble dreams and are transformed as in a kaleidoscope, depending on the corpus in question and the diagonal line being followed. But in another sense he can also claim that he has written only what is real, and used what is real, for everything is real in the statement, and all reality in it is openly on display. (p. 18)

**The Archive: Part 4**

Again, my archival method is a mapping of doings, statements across time and space referring to “Fort Hill” or the “Calhoun Mansion” as a way to trace the structure of this monument. I am not sketching a shift in epistemology, nor constructing a genealogy tracing epistemological shifts. In fact, I cannot claim that there has been an epistemological shift. In fact, there is nothing in the archives to make us believe that we have moved beyond the colonial here at Clemson. I can only use these clippings in the Littlejohn Papers and Fort Hill Files to reveal the monument itself as it is formed through our practices. That the monument was once a house, but now we at Clemson University choose to focus our attention on the monument of football. In Chapter 2, I discussed Gunderson and Holling’s (2001) work on resilience theory, the nested adaptive resilience
models that theorize large, intermediate, and small feedback loops, known as panarchies. In that section, I mapped the Clemson panarchy to reveal large, slow variables that include Clemson’s architectural design, archives, alumni, board, and administration, our knowings; the intermediate variables relate to the doings of departments, faculty and student senate, campus and student organizations, labor practices, forms and procedures, communications, especially in Clemson’s case, propaganda; and our fast, small variables that involve our makings including the classroom space, teachers and student engaged in learning, workers laboring, people moving in relation to one another. Foucault reminds us to look to the doings of the system, this middling section, these buffers between the fast and slow variables. Here we might begin to map out the monument, understand its mechanical workings, its role in the production of space.

The archival files reveal a resilient Clemson panarchy, adept at shifting intermediate variables just below the lentic surface to protect larger, slower, deeper ones, representative of our university knowing. Following the death of Calhoun, Fort Hill served as a monument to Calhoun and his work to defend the institution of slavery and states’ rights. After her brother Andrew’s failed attempt at running the plantation, and at the close of the Civil War, Calhoun’s daughter Anna Calhoun Clemson inherited the property and upon her own death in 1875, the property passed to her husband Thomas Clemson. Throughout this period, the house was celebrated as “Fort Hill,” but during Clemson’s ownership, the house fell into disrepair. He lived as a miser on the property, and became a curiosity to visitors who commented on his peculiar nature and habit of living amongst his former slaves. Clemson desired that upon his death, the house would continue to function as a monument to Calhoun and the Southern Cause and that a college might be established to serve as “a high seminary for learning.” This vision came true when Clemson University was founded in 1889, a year after Clemson’s death. During these early years, visitors made “pilgrimages” to see what was more often referred to as “Fort Hill” to pay tribute to this monument to Calhoun. In the 1930’s the Daughters of the Confederacy restored and refurnished the house in an effort to reclaim its former glory and to preserve it for posterity. At this point in time, the house name was
commonly referred to as the “Calhoun Mansion.” While some efforts were made to change the name back to “Fort Hill,” the tradition of calling the house “Calhoun Mansion” occurs more frequently and clearly reflects the need to monumentalize Calhoun and his works. This tradition of reverence towards Calhoun continued through the 1970s and the 1980s amid the school’s rise as a football powerhouse. But in the 1990s the university began to alter its language and narrative regarding the house, officially changing the name back to “Fort Hill” and at the same time disassociating itself with the Daughters of the Confederacy who up to this point had funded much of the house’s upkeep. It was also during this time that the university shifted the meaning of this monument, adding the narrative of Clemson, renaissance man, noble founder of the university, a narrative I complicated in my work “Welcome to the letters of Anna Calhoun Clemson: An altered book” (Quigley, 2018), a narrative I will further complicate in chapter 4. Through a number of restorations, Fort Hill has been refitted for its current use as a museum house associated with university scholarship and training in tourism management and historic preservation. The Daughters of the Confederacy and the Confederate Flags are no more, but at the same time, the house was never de-monumentalized, nor does it serve as a reminder of our shameful past through a more complex memorialization. As a result, we repeat ourselves, our fingers dancing unconsciously upon the keys. We walk past it never thinking twice about what it means, what it meant, or the stories that complicate this place. Instead, we are fed the propaganda that Thomas Clemson gifted this university to us so that we might walk these paths and cheer our team onto our new monument of concern, the field of play. As a result, we are left with no memorial on this lawn, no epideictic rhetoric, only a monument to the legacy of what we ourselves might give. Nor are we wholly sure what to make of this space. I have listened to freshman orientation tours in which the tour guide refers to Fort Hill as the “Calhoun Mansion.” And on these tours, no mention is made of slaves who worked this land, the slaves that also contributed to Clemson’s legacy. Still, this narrative, this monument, press against us at every depth. We may hold our heads above this reservoir, float upon our backs, but these assemblages are always consuming a part of us. We float
through its totality, bodies across bodies drifting through the orange algae bloom. The surface may reveal intermittent disruption, but it does little to disturb what it protects beneath.

**Conclusion: Towards Techno Chora(l) Mappings**

*Sophocles long ago
Heard it on the Ἱεγαν, and it brought
Into his mind the turbid ebb and flow
Of human misery.*

—Mathew Arnold, “Dover Beach”

This conclusion concerns itself with the mappings of the individual in relation to the Other in the terroitorialized reservoirs of space. Not the narratavized Other, not the mythic Other, but the mapping of our *doings* as we overlay our mappings upon the mappings of other people, things, and packages in spaces and places as a means of understanding our relationality over time. I argue that we must teach ourselves to think through the design of the system, tracing the course of its assemblages, an act which itself serves as an initial disruption. A *dérive*. Mapping these systems of spatial production allows us to attend to the designs of our spaces and places, making and remaking in a present-future oriented *ethico-aesthetic*.

It is our collective attention to place through our *doings* that binds us with the Other. As a result of this influence, we utilize the Aristotelian appeal of the *koinonia*, the word for family, to derive community and to justify the community over the individual. For Aristotle, the common bonds of the *polis*, of living together, was enough to satisfy this sense of *koinonia*. He sees logos as essential to this unity because for him, the term “*polis*” indicates the place where people come together in their thinking. However, philosophers hold different positions on their thinking about what actually constitutes *koinonia*, and even whether or not *koinonia* can recognize individual *being* in the *polis*. Adriana Cavarero (2003/2005), following Arendt says that *koinonia* has more to do with our interaction in spaces and places and less to do with logos as Aristotle might argue:

*Power is generated by interaction, and exists only when actualized. It lasts*
as long as the time and space of the active relation. It cannot be accumulated; when plural action cease, power dissolves. Thus the realm of politics, unlike that of ontology, has constitutive characters of intermittence. In other words, all human beings are unique, but only when and while they interact with words and deeds can they communicate to one another this uniqueness. (p. 196)

Without the common interaction between people and a reliance on one another, there is no community. For Cavarero, we see this interaction focused less on what is said, what she associates with logos, but rather in the act of saying and the ontological recognition it affords. For her, the polis necessitates a communal space that recognizes the Other as essential to our own being. The opposite, a society that is autonomous and individualistic, causes her to worry as ...

No one means anything to anyone else; each is already complete in the self-sufficiency that encloses them in themselves, like a world apart. And thus they are prevented from ‘recognizing’ the other because what is lacking here is precisely this context of community in which each can be recognized (p. 186).

It is through voice that Cavarero’s says we recognize the Other. Perhaps Cavarero’s emphasis on voice moves us away from the dominant narratives we use in our thinking about identity in relationship to others in space and towards a recognition of the Other. It is Cavarero’s emphasis on saying, in these intermediate variables, that most interest me about her writing. And for this reason, I want to discuss her work on voice and its role in constructing the polis as it bears some similarities to Guattari’s (1992/1995) concept of the polyphonic as discussed in Chapter 2.

In her chapter on reciprocal communication in For More than One Voice (2003/2005), Cavarero relates her thinking about the problems of the polis to Jean-Luc Nancy’s (1996/2000) discussion of the “singular plural.” In an attempt to locate the singular plural, Cavarero begins with the “singular,” or what she calls the absolute local. To do this, she explains the role of the voice in the polis, again, not focusing on what it says, but on the act of saying itself. Cavarero uses the term “absolute local” to represent the individual voice in the body politic as a way to imagine a local, contextualized space that we might also share with others. But what does this look like? Her move to the
“absolute local” separates the voice from the individual body, intertextuality, and expressive limitations of the language being uttered. She leaves us only with a sound devoid of meaning beyond its symbolic representation of the Other, and as a result, recognizing the Other becomes a matter of “listening to the vocalic matrix” (p. 200). Having located the “absolute local” she can now tackle its relationship to the plurality of the polis. Her solution to this problem of the “singular plural” is the singing of the national anthem:

The national anthem carries the fusing heat of this bond. The words of the anthem, which often deal with the struggle from which the nation originates, are moreover dedicated to exalting the historical roots of the homeland and to emphasizing continuity, homogeneity, and shared values. What counts the most are not the words, which are usually ridiculous or rhetorical, but rather the fusion of individuals in the song that symbolizes their union. The song of the nation is lifted by a people who sing in unison. (p. 202)

This is not to say that Cavarero appeals to nationalism or the propaganda of anthems. Instead, she searches for a communal rhetoric of doing in the present, one that represents the “singular plural” Jean-Luc Nancy also seeks. The mixed nature of the singing of the anthem is itself symbolic of the polis. She argues that singing an anthem is an embodied, ritualistic activity that does not negate the global or the local.

The politics of the local, having finally been liberated from the cartography of nations and the individualist ontology, in fact avoids imposing cultural identities on the unrepeatable uniqueness of every human being. [This] is not a utopian politics, nor is it an ethics of goodwill. Rather, it is a position that, taking inspiration from Arendt’s thoughts, finds the generative and symbolic nucleus of politics or the plural uniqueness and relation. (p. 205)

However, it is difficult to imagine Cavarero’s analogy of the singing of an anthem as anything but utopian. It cannot, though she argues otherwise, account for the difference in a community, nor does it look for such difference. A national anthem is, inevitably one that implies territory, and one that must be sung in key. Is there a better analogy, perhaps one that transcends our conceptions of borders and the local/global? For if Arendt is right, the idea of the polis is fluid, relative to the complexities of a space contingent in a
given moment. And second, I don’t think it achieves Nancy’s singular plural at all, and rather, falls under the auspices of another kind of totalitarianism distributed through the assemblages of nationalism. Is there also a space in the polis for she who would not sing? For she who sings in another key? In another rhythm? In another language? One who cannot sing, or chooses not to do so. And what of the virtual—can a digital space recognize the individual? I posed this question to Cavarero in an interview and she was not willing to agree that it is possible. Her point was one of modality. In the virtual, while we may hear the Other, we cannot smell the Other, we cannot touch the Other (Conversation, 30 November, 2016). I hear this argument often from individuals concerned with our youth and their propensity to use electronics at every moment. Still, in considering the definitions, affordances, and constraints of the polis, I fail to understand why we cannot understand the virtual polis as one that can recognize that our youth are, in actuality, participating in a digital koinonia, recognizing the Other, relying on the Other, communing with the Other. In fact, we have long since crossed this threshold into the digital. We similarly neglect our attention to the liminal koinonia we now inhabit between the virtual and actual as we write and map ourselves across virtual and actual spaces, where the “glocal,” “the singular plural,” and the “absolute local” all intersect.

My explanation for the problem of the “glocal,” “singular plural,” and “absolute local” intersection is that of the chorus in Greek drama. The Greek chorus offers us an embodied group of individuals bound to the same space relative to the scene at hand. Helen Bacon (1995) argues that a Greek audience would have experienced a chorus in a very different way than we view it today. It would have represented a natural and necessary example of everyday interaction, but also show how we interact at both conscious and subconscious levels (cf. Willet, 1980, p. 210). Individuals performed solo parts within the chorus, but were representative of the whole. Sometimes it spoke in the singular “I” and at others the plural “We,” and their responses often had an aura of spontaneity (Bacon, p. 17). Though part of the whole, each member retained her unique individual identity, voice, rhythms, and key. Harmony was not privileged over cacophony
or silence, yet a relationality amongst the total number was always maintained. We must also deduce that this chorus allowed a choric space where creativity was permitted. Bacon states that the Greek chorus gives us “a clue to the human reality that underlies it and to the special nature of choral identity is provided by the alternation between "I" and "we" which is characteristic of choral song...” (p. 6) Choral members symbolized the *koinonia* in which the drama’s main characters lived and worked, and it is this relationship between actor and community and community and actor that is often lost on a contemporary audience. This relationship that transcends space and borders as does the “glocal,” this relationship that locates the “absolute” uniqueness of the individual, yet also achieves the “singular plural” in body politic.

Understanding how the Greek chorus works in drama in relation to the audience is fundamental to understanding how we might achieve a “singular plural” in our actual/virtual spaces. Any construction that does not afford spaces to hear the unique voice *saying* fits on the continuum of totalitarianism as such systems undermine the *koinonia* and its *polis*. When algorithms and protocols censor or commodify spaces, or allow us to partition ourselves off from one another, to hide behind anonymity of other constructions, the *polis* is defeated, as is the unique voice. But we must also rethink our classification of the voice as the “absolute local,” extending it instead to the act of doing in relation to others in the *polis*. In the *doing*, we recognize all of the interconnected acts of difference, in all of their modalities as they are being performed. Such a move returns us to the concept of the early Greek *choros* as constructed by the master craftsman, Daedalus, what we call the dancing stage, a space the Greeks believed necessary for our *becoming*. A space designed to order chaos into complexity. A space for embodiment, for bodies, moving and *doing* in space through time in relation to one another. The dancers on the stage, mapping and remapping our relationality through *chorography*. Using all of their senses, all of their modalities to manage our relationality with the Other. This is a method of attending to spaces and places, and to our *polis*—be it in the actual world, the digital one, or our everyday posthuman hybrid one. Narratives and myths trap us in the present-past, but *chorography* brings us to the idea of the “singular plural” by first
recognizing the *saying/doing* of the “absolute local” and the subjectivity that directs us towards a present-future. I do not think the “singular plural” is merely a theoretical construction, but one that can be constructed with the aid of theoretical thinking. We might start by examining how the Greek chorus functions to provide a “singular plural” epideictic rhetoric inherently epistemic, ontological, creative, political, and present-future oriented.
CHAPTER FOUR

GHOSTLY CIRCULATIONS AND DIGITAL DISRUPTIONS

“We see changes in things because of the rearrangement of atoms, but atoms themselves are eternal. Words such as ‘nothing’, ‘the void’, and ‘the infinite’ describe space. Individual atoms are describable as ‘not nothing’, ‘being’, and ‘the compact’. There is no void in atoms, so they cannot be divided. I hold the same view as Leucippus regarding atoms and space: atoms are always in motion in space. Nothing exists except atoms and empty space; everything else is opinion.”

–Democritus, Fragments 48-49

“It can hardly be expected that any Negro would regret the death of Benjamin Tillman.”

–W.E.B. DuBois

Introduction

This work of writing serves as a kind of workout...a way to work out, for myself, and for you, my dear reader, the complexities of teaching on the former slave plantation that is Clemson University. The plantation, known as Fort Hill, was built by the fiery Southern politician John C. Calhoun, on land that had been captured just decades earlier in the war against the Cherokee Nation. As a politician, Calhoun served the United States Government as congressman, senator, vice-president, secretary of state, and secretary of the war. Among his many works were those dedicated to the question of nullification, arguments that established the grounds by which the South might eventually secede from the Union. After the Civil War, Calhoun’s daughter, Anna Calhoun Clemson, inherited the property, and upon her death it passed to her husband, Thomas Greene Clemson, who deemed in his will that Fort Hill be given to the State of South Carolina for the establishment of a college in the hope of creating a “high seminary of learning.”

Clemson’s plan for a college at Fort Hill would not have been possible without the will of another South Carolina politician, the infamous Ben Tillman. Tillman, known as “Pitchfork Ben,” was a brutal character in South Carolina’s history who served as governor and U.S. senator, and who was known to brag about his role in murdering
African Americans during the Reconstruction Era. By Tillman’s (1909) own account, Clemson was a recluse whose “ideas on the university were not clear or well defined” (p. 5) and the home he had inherited, Fort Hill, was in such a poor state that Tillman “lacked the faculty of describing the appearance of things” (p. 4). Rather than the narrative that our university now promotes, Clemson as our great benefactor, Tillman claimed to have himself designed the university as a public white school organized in such a way that it could be protected from the “dangers of the negroes, who are largely in the majority of the state” and prevent the college from becoming “a school to which negroes would be admitted” (Tillman p. 5). Instead, Tillman designed a system that would be “self-perpetuating,” a system which has perpetuated to this very day.

It is our role in this present to work out the complexities of teaching and learning at this “high seminary” amid the lingering ghosts who contest these spaces. To do so, I write alongside Jacques Derrida’s own writings working out his personal and intellectual conflict with Martin Heidegger in Of Spirit (1987/1989). Through this exercise, I hope to develop a para-text that will help us consider a new epideictic rhetoric to move Clemson into a more ethical present-future orientation rather than stumbling around in the present-past, with our ghosts and our myths, as we have been these many years.

The Till

Democritus is where we should begin. His is the lesson of how we might use our minds to reason what is concealed from us. Though we are, ourselves, in the middle of things, the truth of Democritus’s fragments, and of our long struggle against its truth, as we try to assemble our own truths, provides a glimpse into the struggle of our body and our spirit and our relationality. I use the word “our” so as to realize Jean-Luc Nancy’s (1996/2000) “singular plural,” for if Democritus is right, to be embodied is to have already realized the singular plural. When we do the work of knowing, doing, and making, we never do it alone. Even in the liminal spaces of birth and in death, we are never alone.
“Millions of signs rain down and in their flood they stick to one another, they kiss.”
(Cixous, 1998, p. 187)

These “atomi,” Epicurus tells us, are prone to “clinamen,” to swerve—that is, we are inclined towards the Other, and the Other to us, each to one anOther. This “clinamen” is a problem for readers of Epicurus in that we must now ask ourselves why does it all come together? Is it in our spirit to swerve—and what makes the spirit swerve?

Memorial Stadium resides at the bottom of a rut on the Clemson University campus. Call it a drainage basin. Its upper watershed, this “high seminary of learning”—as the founder Thomas Green Clemson referred to it in his will bequeathing this inherited land to the State of South Carolina for the purposes of establishing a college — its learning/unlearning/anti-learning/ justice/injustice/equality/inequality washes down the slope and on to the field of play. This upper watershed extends to a high hill that rises above the southern stands. And on this high hill resides a cemetery, one that predates the playing football on this property. On this hill, in fact, are two cemeteries. One is concealed while the other is not. The one we can see is well maintained, orderly, lain out in terraces of either pink marble or soft grey granite, partitioning-off fine, high mossy gravestones on which the names of white men are inscribed. Some of the white men buried into this hillside were faculty members at the college, others were slave holders or members of those families who have profited by that horror. Adjacent to this cemetery, but lower down the hill, is the Other cemetery, the concealed one, a triangular piece of property where thick red oak trees have grown into a dense copse. And on Clemson game day, many a drunken tailgater will pass through this wood on their way to the stadium, some even stopping to relieve themselves as revelers will do. To a degree, these tailgaters must be pardoned, for this copse appears as copses do—wild, forgotten. In this other cemetery there is no ornament, no border to separate the living from the dead, nor stones offering a requiem for the dead. The fieldstones the tailgater’s trample, the dirt they scatter, lies above the graves of the slaves who worked John. C. Calhoun’s plantation home—what is now Clemson University. John C. Calhoun. Vice President. Secretary of
State. Secretary of War. Senator. Congressman. Author of “A Disquisition on Government.” And that unsettled cemetery dirt, and all that may be unsettled by the practice of fancy learning at the “high seminary,” washes down the slope and onto the field of play. Here on this field, on this bottom, the runoff settles into till.

Before the team takes the field, in what television commentator Brent Musburger has called the “greatest twenty-five seconds in college football,” each Clemson player places his hand on the famous Howard’s Rock, a rock relocated from Death Valley, California to the Clemson Memorial Football Stadium. This nomadic white rock, this desert rock, this symbol of journey, of living, of dying. This rock of knowing, doing, and making. This reminder that we plow the field until we cannot plow. For we are tillmen, people who till, until we become till. As Hélène Cixous (2015) says, “…to live and to plow are the same…” (p. 136).

Once the rock is touched, one-by-one, the young, sacrificial bodies rush down the incline, skipping, trampling, eroding the hillside as they go, reenacting the sacred practice of geomorphic atomic physics as the cosmic sediments of our universe, our university, of this plantation, of this stolen Cherokee land, erode down the slope and on to the field of play.

we can see
the swerve.

At least, that’s what the visitor from Kepler 186f, a planet much like our own, some five hundred light years away from this Clemson Memorial Football Stadium, knows to be true. The visitor, seated in seat 22 in the upper deck South Bleacher between aisles “R” and “S” at the tiger paw’s dead-center, was inconspicuously dressed in a bright-orange space suit. It was because of the color of the spacesuit that the visitor chose to land at this location, for while flying overhead, the visitor noticed that all of the beings below were similarly dressed in bright-orange, and seemingly inclined to one another, towards the Other. “These were friendly orange people,” the visitor had thought. “Might they also be inclined to a space alien from Kepler 186f?”
This turned out to be true. “Quite Uncanny,” the visitor marveled, for although the space alien’s visage and appendages and movement were not at all in the human tradition, none of the orange people sitting in the surrounding seats showed any fear. In fact, they hugged this visitor, posed for pictures. But soon the visitor noticed the orange people’s attention had turned away, was now wholly fixed on the field below.

The visitor watched the orange people, these watchers in the seats nearby as they cheered their orange children onto the field, watched them watch their children run across the field of till, the children organizing as lifeforms, converging, dancing, circulating, latching on to one another and dragging the Other into this hypereutrophic till. Smashing the Other, trampling the Other, being smashed and trampled by the Other. The visitor understood wholly. The field was but a sieve, performing a kind of filtration that weaves and unweaves, reordering the complexities of what was into something new. The visitor bowed before this womb of becoming. The visitor understood.

Watching, the visitor was reminded of some thought from school, some thought from a happy youth back on Kepler 186f…reminded of some problem of the universe…some old philosophical ponderings—what was that old philosopher’s name? What had been said?—something about atomi and space, the swerve…how…

*she forces the atoms
  to be bounded by the void in turn;
By altering these she gives the world
Endlessness

(Lucretius, 1984, p. 841)

“Why is it that we incline?” the visitor wondered, chuckling in complexity of the wondering—for inhabitants of Kepler 186f possess a grand sense of humor. Touchdown! The crowd exploded in cheer, and the visitor’s attention again returned to the wild splendor of the ritual, the worship of the *chora* at hand—pardon, for this is not good phrasing—the visitor actually possessed no hand—can I say the visitor prayed? Is that the
The visitor understood the complexity of this universal till, this space where determinism couples with freewill, where no matter how much we fight, we too, are inclined. inclined though we may not be inclined.

The visitor thought:

“let go...
we are
already
singular plural
in this universal
palimpsest”

We make an attempt to protect some things from the cosmic till as their preservation will help others after we are gone. We can delineate such things, can even fit them neatly into the enormousness of the internet, then house this internet in a trim, thin electronic black box we carry through the world in the front pocket of our blue jeans. But there are other things we should pass down, keep from the till—for those of us at Clemson University, I speak of an eyeball. Not one that rots when death enters, but one more durable...I am speaking of a prosthetic eyeball. A blue one. The shell that remains when the animal had moved on, rotted away into till. take it in your hand. taste it on your tongue, listen to its oceans—give us the eye so we may see! for we are a people who till the till. We are tillmen. Benjamin Tillman. Pitchfork Ben. One-eyed Ben. Senator. Governor. Murderer.

July 6, 1876. Hamburg, South, Carolina. Benjamin Tillman walked clockwise around the perimeter, what his white militia called the “Death Circle,” a circle of more than one hundred white men with guns trained on twenty newly surrendered black men, soldiers of the National Guard. Some weeks before these black men of Hamburg had armed themselves and organized so as to protect their right to vote. The white men, many of them known as Red Shirts, among whom Tillman was one of their leaders, marched into Hamburg to make sure the black men didn’t vote. Tillman, revolver in hand, walked clockwise, always clockwise around the Death Circle. He did so because his left eye socket held not a seeing eyeball, but a glass one. He walked and thought around the outside of the Death Circle, his good eye catching intermittent glances of the vanquished as framed between the silhouettes of the armed white men. Tillman was thinking just then how he didn’t want the scales of justice to even, not an eye-for-an-eye—he wanted them to come crashing down. One white man
had died in the fighting as did one of the black men. But justice, Tillman thought, is a heavy thing.

Give us this technology, this crystal ball—to see the cowering Other on the uncertain side of a gun, watch the hammer fall, the smoke rise, the disbelief in the eyes of the dying. This technology, this glass eye. Use it to watch the spirit and the body separate, undoing that which allows for being. Let us know the full terror of later incidents, witness the lynching and execution of the African American South Carolina Senator Simon Coker who came to investigate the massacre at Ellenton. Watch while Coker—praying on his hands and knees—begs the executioners’ leader, Ben Tillman, to deliver the corn crib key in his pocket to his soon-to-be widow, watch as the bullet discharges into the back of Coker’s head. Give us the eye so we may see what is concealed from us—I tell you, there are many things which have been concealed from us: our past, our future, our Other—let this glass eyeball pass to us and to our Otherafterwards.

We are plowed through and through. trodden. turned over, until we are untilled and become the Other.

Heidegger already said all of this. Sorry for wasting your time. “We are the Other and…bla bla bla.” Being and Time.

But what of the spirit?

Of this, Heidegger is less certain.

“I shall speak
of ghosts [revenant],
of flame and of ashes.
And of what,
for Heidegger,
avoiding means” (Derrida, 1989, p. 1)

“Geist”

Some of us think it our duty to seek out spirits—to haunt them as they supposedly haunt us. To spook them out. Others of us avoid such talk, such words. Heidegger uses
the word “vermeiden”: to avoid, to flee, to dodge when he thinks of the word “geist.”

Derrida, for his part, ponders why this is the case?

Could it be that he failed to avoid what he knew he ought to avoid? What he in some sense had promised himself to avoid? Could it be that he forgot to avoid? Or else, as one might suspect, are things more tortuous and entangled than this? (p. 2)

Derrida writes that in Being and Time (Sein und Zeit, 1927), Heidegger remarks that the word “geist” must not be used. Why? And why is it, Derrida ponders, that over the course of his writings, Heidegger never settles on what he means by the root word “geist?” Is it fear, Derrida wonders, that drives Heidegger to bind “geist” in quotation marks as I will do in this section, until Heidegger himself breaks “geist” free from these bonds—what does Heidegger’s grammar contain?

Derrida’s (1987/1989) reading of Heidegger and Heidegger’s “geist” is valuable in that it reflects the German’s shifting episteme as regards the “spirit,” and in so doing offers us a look into Heidegger’s relationship with words—what he says about them and what they have to say about him. So what of the “spirit”? To begin, Derrida wonders if words like “sein,” “geist,” “geistig,” and “geistlich” even properly translate for Heidegger? —How these words haunted him. In old German, “geist” was written “gast” meaning “spirit” or “soul.” Sein has gothic roots in “seele,” but its meaning as “soul” seems to have come into fashion sometime during Christianity (Arnett, 1904, p. 11). Arnett admits that there is still great confusion concerning the words’ origins, but that “gast,” when one considers its etymology holistically, seems to have a more violent connotation than does “seele.” As we will see, Derrida tries to close the meaning of these two words in his reading of Heidegger.

If the German translation is difficult, an English one is worse. We should wonder what happened to “gast and “seele” as they wandered into Low Countries, boarded the Frisian longboats and traversed “…troubled in mind, / across the ocean-ways […] forced / to stir with […] hands the frost-cold sea, / and walk in exile’s path. Wyrd is fully fixed!” (The Wanderer, ll. 2-5)…were they restricted under the Danelaw, designated as Other by
the Franks? How different they must look now to their long removed German cousins who themselves mean...so many things that can’t be written...that couldn’t be defined even by Heidegger. We can try to catch the momentary meaning... and with these quotation marks “”...we can hold the word down, “force it here”...restrain it between other words...mandate our juxtaposition, choke it a little—just a little—to scare it. Be patient, dear reader, dear writer. It will do what we want...but we should not feel good about it afterwards. In Being and Time, Heidegger writes:

“Dasein […] is “spiritual” (“geistig”) […]”

Derrida thinks of Heidegger’s quotation marks as a kind of surveillance...as if a “spirit” can be surveilled. I see the quotation mark as a kind of product warning label. For it is the manufacturer’s responsibility to warn any user when either 1. The product is known to be dangerous by the public. 2. The product is known to be dangerous by the manufacturer. 3. The product’s danger might not be known by the user.

DANGER: PROCEED AT YOUR OWN RISK. THE WORD ENCLOSED IN QUOTES IS ENCLOSED IN QUOTES FOR YOUR PROTECTION AND OURS. THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA HAS REASON TO BELIEVE THAT THIS WORD HAS DANGEROUS ORIGINS THOUGH WE CAN’T BE SURE. A HOLISTIC ETYMOLOGICAL STUDY HAS REVEALED A DANGEROUS AND OFTEN VIOLENT PAST WHICH LEADS US TO BELIEVE IT MAY POSSESS A NEGATIVE CONNOTATION. WE ASSUME NO RISK IF YOU CHOOSE TO READ FURTHER OR USE THIS WORD ON YOUR OWN WITHOUT PROPER USE OF QUOTATION MARKS.

Let’s proceed with that quote:

Dasein can, to the contrary, because it is “spiritual” (“geistig”), and only for that reason (und nur deshalb) be spatial according to a modality which remains essentially impossible for an extended corporeal thing.
(Heidegger qtd. in Derrida, p. 25, emphasis Derrida)
Did you hear that?...“because it is “spiritual” (“geistig”), and only for that reason.”

*Heidegger says it, here.* This “spirit” is what makes for Being in time. *we got “spirit” yes we do. we got “spirit” how ‘bout you? “Spirit,” Heidegger says, is not time, but what makes our time possible.*

*Anna Calhoun Clemson, wife of founder Thomas Clemson, daughter of John C. Calhoun, woke to the smell of her father. And when she sat up she saw the ghost of her long dead father standing above her. He had been dead ten years. The ghost reached out, placing his palm against her cheek, and she inclined her head against its coldness.*

For almost six years, to our knowledge, Heidegger did not use the word “geist,” but on 21 April, 1933, the University of Freiberg elected him its rector. In this position at the fore of the Nazi rise to world power, “geist” once again enters Heidegger’s lexicon. On 27 May, 1933, twenty-seven days after joining the National Socialist Workers Party, he uttered the following as part of his *Rectorship Address*:

> To will the essence of the German university is to will science, in the sense of willing the spiritual historical mission of the German people (*Wille zum geschichtlichen geistegen Auftrag des deutschen Volkes*) as a people who knows itself in its State. Science and German destiny must, in this will to essence, achieve power (*Macht* at the same time). (Heidegger qtd. in Derrida, p. 35, emphasis Derrida)

geistegen. Do you see it? You can feel it with your finger, dear reader. He frees *geist* from its quotation marks. I, myself, in *this* writing, at *this* moment, have emancipated the *ghost, the spirit, the gast, etc.* from quotation marks—as if it could ever really be controlled by a being such as me, such as you, such as him. But you see, I have chosen to *incline* it, lovingly, *geist*. Incline it towards that cosmic *Other*, that cosmic all. In this speech, Heidegger will let loose several manipulations of *geist*, all freed from their bonds, including “*Geistige kraft*” (spiritual force) and “*jenes geistige Auftrags*” (spiritual mission). Read on, to where this Nazi is going with his *Geist*, where he is marching it in rank and file…
And the spiritual world (geistige Welt, underlined) of a people […] (is) the deepest power of conservation of its forces of earth and blood, as the most intimate power of e-motion (macht der innersten Erregung) and the vastest power of disturbances of its existence (Dasein). Only a spiritual world, (Eine geistige Welt allein) guarantees the people its grandeur. For it imposes the constant decision between the will to grandeur on the one hand, and on the other the laisser-faire of decadence (des Verfalls), give its rhythm to the march our people has begun toward its future history. (Heidegger qtd. in Derrida, pp. 36-7, emphasis Derrida.)

Let us remember, dear reader, that this was the philosopher who was haunted by ghosts, who captured and imprisoned them within quotation marks “”. Derrida, in his reading of Heidegger, insists we stop for a moment in our own reading of Heidegger. Stop to clarify what Heidegger meant by this geist, and what this usage might mean for Heidegger. In 1953, some twenty years after the Rectorship Address, Heidegger offers a definition for geist while considering the poetry of Trakl. “Doch was ist der Geist?” What is spirit? Heidegger asks. “Der Geist ist das Flammende” (qtd. in Derrida, p. 84).

November 16, 1838. The wedding day of Thomas Green Clemson and Anna Calhoun at Fort Hill Plantation in Pickens County, South Carolina. The local Pendleton Newspaper prints the couple’s wedding band. The front page headline that day: “Conflagration!” Abolitionist newspapers burned on Main Street.

Der Geist ist das Flammende.

How do we locate the flame in Being…this being that without flame cannot be?

It is March 4, 1843. John C. Calhoun has just retired from the United States Senate and returned to his beloved Fort Hill Plantation at what is now Clemson University. His fellow Democrats are urging him to run for the President of the United States in the 1844 election and Calhoun is wrestling with the decision. It is approaching night and the Calhouns smell smoke. Upon investigating, they discover that someone has placed a hot coal under the pillow of the Calhoun’s thirteen-year-old son, William Lowndes Calhoun. The boy had a reputation for trouble, and was described by his sister Anna as “full of tricks as a little monkey.” Mrs. Calhoun blamed the slave Old Sawney who ran away as soon as the shout of “fire!” went out. But his fellow slaves were less convinced and soon the
rumors began that Old Sawney’s daughter, Issey, had been the arsonist. Many on the plantation, slaves included, thought she should be hanged. But Issey did not hang. She was not even punished—initially. It was two years later that Issey was separated from her family and sent to another Calhoun plantation located in Alabama. Issey should have hanged and this is a great mystery. She should have at least been sent to the fields, but she remained in her position as a servant in the house. What was it that Issey knew?

And so, Heidegger realizes his geist is aflame, releases it from quotation marks. It is not that he is unafraid—He merely wants to use his geist differently without relinquishing control.

What is this geist that Heidegger parades about the stage? That which he prods, molests through his grammar. Can we, thinking what we know, knowing what he thinks, continue with Heidegger? Continue with his usage of his Geist? How should we judge this Heidegger? And what of this spirit—this haunt, this spook. This thing which allows Being, this thing that we have ourselves released from bondage, let it incline as it will in our writing, freed, inclined, towards the Other—towards us all, as mothers are inclined to children, as we are called to be inclined to the Other. But here, we shall return to Heidegger’s 1933 Rectorship Address as Heidegger gives us yet another definition for geist:

Spirit [in quotation marks in the Address] is neither empty sagacity, nor the gratuitous game of joking, nor the unlimited work of analysis of the understanding, nor even the reason of the world, but spirit [here the quotation marks had already been removed in the Address] is the being-resolved [or the determined opening: Entschlossenheit] to the essence of Being, of a resolution which accords with the tone of the origin and which is knowledge.
I say again: “spirit is the being resolved to the essence of Being.” Capital B. The flameless spirit. The spirit in bondage, enclosed in quotation marks. geisterflecken vermeiden. Cold, cold spirit. Kind spirit of which we Long for in our reading. How tightly he binds you, needs you. the spirit that he fears but his readership loves. seeks. This word, this usage, is the geist we find in the Peircian semiotic object of our languaging—and we shall bow in reverence and call ye subject—that closes with the soul—our same gast, same seele, that have wandered since man first wandered. This is the Heidegger we know…knew. The one for which we seekers of Being must reconcile against the other. He continues his Rectorship Address…

Spirit is the full power given to the potencies of entities as such and in totality (die Ermachtigung der Macht des Seienden als solchen im Ganzen). Where spirit reins (herrscht), the entity as such becomes always and on every occasion more entity (seiender). This is why the questioning towards entities as such in totality, the questioning of the question of Being, is one of the fundamental questions for a reawakening of spirit (Erweckung des Geistes), and thereby for the originary world of the of a historical Dasein. And thereby to master the danger of darkening the world, and thereby for taking up of the historical mission (geschichtliche Sendung) of our people, inasmuch as it is the middle of the West.

Fuck you, Heidegger,
for what you did.
for what you did to your Geist.

Fuck you.

Anna Calhoun Clemson writes in her diary:
“I lay in bed but not it seemed to me asleep, though my eyes were shut, when suddenly, but with an evident intention to avoid alarming or surprising me, my father stood beside me.—I come, my daughter, said he, to speak with you, & I do so now, that your mind is more independent of your body, than when you are awake, that I may spare you the shock, always felt, when matter comes in contact with disembodied spirit. You are right, my daughter, not to give way to the delusions of spiritualism—I do not say there are devils, for evil is not created, but from want of
knowledge, comes error.—I cannot explain to you many things—human language has no words, for what the human mind cannot conceive, of the great mysteries on this side. Continue to strive to know & do the right, & to elevate by every measure your soul, & when you come on this side all will be clear” (Anna Calhoun qtd. in Russell, 2007, p. 112)

Now that is some crazy ass shit right there. Knowing doing making. That’s right, you read it. The ghost of John C. Motherfuckin’ Calhoun just talking some Aristotelian shit about knowing, doing, making.

Strive to know.
Do the right.
Elevate by every measure of your soul.

Hilarious!

A little context right? So that was Anna Calhoun Clemson, the daughter of the racist son-of-a-bitch John C. Calhoun, Anna the wife of Thomas Green Clemson (“founder of Clemson University”), writing in her diary about her beloved dead dad visiting her in the form of a ghost. A little backstory—stay with me—she just had a miscarriage—like a month before.

Ya.

How do we even talk about that?
How do I write this?

That’s the complexity of it all. The turning of truth. Yet we are called, in our time to judge this woman. To judge this man. These beings. This Nazi. To judge so that we, ourselves, might know better, do better, make better…judge this Anna Calhoun, and so we read and reread and unread. this devoted daughter of the son-of-a-bitch John C. Calhoun. Anna Calhoun, slave owner, a slave user. a cold woman easy to hate. Like Nazis. Like Tillman. So we juxtapose this Anna Calhoun with her peers, peers who knew better. women like South Carolina’s Angelina Grimké who abandoned her wealth and
slaves and took up the abolitionist cause against slavery. For those might have been Grimké’s anti-slavery propaganda papers burning in a barrel in Pendleton, South Carolina’s Main Street, on the very day of Thomas Green Clemson and Anna Calhoun’s wedding day:

*I appeal to you, my friends, as mothers; are you willing to enslave your children? You start back with horror and indignation at such a question. But why, if slavery is no wrong to those upon whom it is imposed? Why, if as has often been said, slaves are happier than their masters, free from the cares and perplexities of providing for themselves and their families?* (Grimké, 1836)

Where is the building at Clemson University named in honor of Grimké? Why do we not honor her? What about Simon Coker, that do-gooder murdered by Tillman? Instead, we honor Tillman, who terrorized and murdered African Americans with Tillman Hall, home to Clemson’s School of Education. *We must judge so that we might know.* What is thy verdict?

But first, what is this

*spirit*…
is this the word
we must not say
cannot say.
lost in its own etymology

I want to say something about Anna Calhoun’s pain as a being. There is misery here, much of it from her unhappy marriage, but I will give you just a small portion to add context, to turn the truth over in the till…Death followed Anna the years leading up to the miscarriage. Just a year and a half earlier…she lost a child…a cute little girl named, Nina, age three. It’s like a hundred and sixty-six fucking years after Nina died and she’s still cute in her photographs. Her name’s even cute, and that’s odd given names weren’t cute back then. what is this *spirit*? Anna also lost four of her five siblings in the five years prior to this visit by her father’s ghost. The dead, *Seek the dead if you want the truth.* The
dead, Cixous (1993) says, are our doorkeepers. Close your eyes. smell the boxwoods that line Fort Hill, the plantation home of John C. Calhoun, the center of what we now call Clemson University, the “high seminary of learning.” You know the smell of boxwoods. Breathe it in. Then place your nose in the gaps of the red oak’s corduroy bark—place it in the same tree under which Thomas Clemson napped on hot summer days—breathe in that pungent red oak smell. Admire how the great cypress leans dangerously towards the big house, ever poised to smash it in. Run your fingers along its fibrous strands of bark. There are so many doors into Fort Hill. threshold after threshold. border after border. let there also be a modicum of jouissance in this endeavor. Passing from space to space in sweet epistemological pleasure.

“To begin […] we must have death, I like the dead, they are our doorkeepers who while closing one side “give” way to the other.” (p. 7)

A key, an old lock. Perhaps a glass eyeball, a blue one.

“It’s true that neither death nor the doorkeepers are enough to open the door. We must also have courage, the desire to approach, to go to the door.”

I came here—to Clemson because I wanted to know what technology wants. so I have come to Heidegger then via Heidegger to the Ghost of Derrida.

*Ghost of Derrida: (camera close-up) [...] “it’s the art of letting ghosts come back” [...] (medium angle shot over the shoulder of interviewer) “And I believe that modern developments in technology and telecommunication instead of diminishing ghosts as does scientific or technical thought...”(zoom-in to close-up) “is leaving behind the age of ghosts, as part of the intellectual feudal age...with its somewhat primitive technology...as a certain perinatal age. Whereas I believe ghosts are part of the future. And that the modern technology of images like cinematography and telecommunication” (zoom-out to previous framing*
“enhances the power of ghosts and their ability to haunt us. In fact, it’s because I wished to tempt the ghost out that I agreed to appear in a film. It could perhaps offer both us and them a chance to evoke the ghost. The ghost of Marx, the ghost of Freud, the ghost of Kafka… that American ghost…even yours! [...]” (McMullen, 1983, blocking mine)

Thomas Watson, Alexander Graham Bell’s partner in the invention of the telephone, was known to experiment with his equipment in the realm of ghosts. Watson, who Avital Ronell (1989) says, “wrote an art of telephony” (p. 99), an art of letting ghosts come back, attended nightly séances in Salem. Séance, as Ronell tells us is French for a psychoanalytic session. “He was, for a time, a strong medium. The telephone’s genius, whose rhizomesque shoots still need to be traced” (p. 192). Though his body was lain to rest at Sleepy Hollow cemetery, his till flows through each of us. Technology, he understood, is the new medium (n.) – one who speaks with ghosts. Technology, whose essence, Heidegger says, is outside of technology. Tillman’s eyeball. blue in color. Technology, the medium for humans, the medium for ghosts. We have become post-human, we have become post-ghost.

sing technology of
where we are becoming
in this new night.

Walking

Once in this country, one doesn’t stop there. It’s the moment, it’s the place to go, the one thanks to the other, at the depths of the instant, finally realizing the dream of all human beings, which is to take the present by the root and eat the root. We all who in truth live only for this hope, and in reality renounce it most of the time. We all who almost always make everything except love, and we are entirely invaded by exile and bordered by solitude.

—Cixous, Stigmata

The world of the spirit is deterritorialized. It holds in one hand the complexities of justice and injustice throughout space and time. And so here in this earliest of countries, here we
can return to the question of judgment. For the polis needs an epideictic rhetoric so that we might know, justly act, rightly make. But truth…truth turns. truth requires forgiveness, does it not? truth requires carelessness, for otherwise we will never know the truth we do not seek. Walking is looking. walking is knowing. wandering is neither. wandering utilizes the foreign, the unconscious, the unconcealed. wandering is the carelessness of walking between poets and children.

Either way I must stress that you not mistake the wanderer for the idiot, or uncertainty for stupidity.

I seek the glass eyeball of Benjamin Tillman, Pitchfork Ben, Governor, Senator, Murderer Tillman. That body that degrades not with the body. I seek it but I dare not search for it. It is the truth that is equally untruth. It is in a box in a drawer before us, waiting to be found. With the dead we focus too often on le dire. We do not suppose that le dit can also apply. That the dead are speaking to us. Le dire and le dit. Connais and savoir. The key to the door is a glass eyeball blue in color. Ghosts, freed from the body, from Being, need us, the living. We came forth from the till so as to look at the Other. to linger with the Other. Cixous (1993) tells us that “Souls are already mature” (p. 115). I like to think that instead, they are still learning, learning as we are learning, learning with us, through us. that ghosts swerve. And maybe this is how we judge, with them present in our period. Looking forward. Inclining, together. Thinking, not knowing. Dwelling in our inauthenticity. I want to walk with Heidegger’s Geist in a way that is wandering to us both. Heidegger’s Geist on one side, my two sons on the other. The four of us holding hands, walking, until the smell of boxwood overcomes us, and we stop. Heidegger’s Geist, interestingly enough, likes to point out the wabi sabi to my children. and they listen to him, cling to him, they like how intensely he wants them to understand, to understand Heidegger.

the spirit calls on us to judge, but…
It is not a figure, not a metaphor. Heidegger, at least, would contest any rhetoricizing reading. One could attempt to bring the concepts of rhetoric to bear here only after making sure of some proper meaning for one or other of these words, spirit, flame, in such and such a determinate language, in such and such a text, in such and such a sentence. We are far from that and everything comes back to difficulty. (Derrida, 1989, p. 96)

Which Heidegger? The Heidegger I know is still learning. The Anna Calhoun Clemson I know is still learning. Even Calhoun and Tillman are still learning. We have so much learning and unlearning to do together. Omniscience is an impossibility because knowledge, as Cixous says, is cumulative—building, churning, breaking, rolling. I like to think that in death, the spirit finally comes to understand the Other. And it asks us to do likewise. “As the operator who acknowledges the blindness of the Other” (Ronell, 1989, p. 95). To realize, also, that we are the Other. The Other is inside us (p. 70). This Othering is where Ronell finds the mother in Heidegger, the mother in Freud (p. 95). The spirit is freed from the body, freed from quotation marks, from Being. The spirit, the...geist...belongs between ellipses...For these ...ghosts...gast...have no beginning and no end. I like to think that the spirit calls us to judge it. The ghost of John C. Calhoun wakes Anna in the night and tells her to rethink her knowing, doing, making. He nudges us off our point of stasis. He calls on us to change. To awaken to the tragedy we are born into. As Cixous (2015) says, “Tragedy is all the more tragic in that it is sober and elliptical” (p. 142). So which Heidegger? Which geist? We must judge. We must keep writing over the truth, over history. We must own up to our inauthenticity, to be authentic (Eigentlichkeit own-ed-ness) about our inauthenticity (Uneigentlichkeit un-own-ed-ness). What we have written is inauthentic. So we must keep writing and rewriting. Renaming buildings, rewriting monuments. And in judging what we perceive, in how we judge, we judge ourselves—

for we are but till...tillmen...elliptical...repeating...
In *Electronic Monuments* (2005), Gregory Ulmer locates the origin of the modern university in the aftermath of war, as founded by German intellectuals dismayed by their defeat at the hands of Napoleonic forces (p. xi). These intellectuals designed a new system of schooling to ensure that Germany’s next challenge would result in victory. Clemson University’s founding also coincided with military and cultural loss, ours stemming from the defeat of Confederacy at the hands of “northern aggressors.” Thomas Clemson intended to establish a college that would serve as a monument to his father-in-law and perpetuate Calhoun’s antebellum ideals while Tillman envisioned a university that would be part of his own plan to solidify white supremacy through technical education in South Carolina (Tillman, 1909). These theories became the basis for the college’s *doing* and *making*, what constitute our University’s policies and our students’ everyday movement through these spaces and places. To ensure white supremacy, Tillman designed policies and methods for terrorizing African Americans in an attempt to reduce their number and influence in South Carolina. At the close of the Civil War, some 60% of South Carolina’s population was black (Census, 1880). Today, the black population stands at less than 30% of the South Carolina’s total (Census, 2017). Tillman succeeded. Worse than that, Clemson University’s African American student population currently makes up only 6% of our total population (Clemson University Fact Sheet 2017) and as a result our general education classrooms lack the diversity and informed discourse one might expect from a leading university. At present, the name “Tillman” continues to honor the most picturesque building on our campus, Tillman Hall serving as a monument to his role in the university’s founding, rather than a memorial to his victims. Despite protests by faculty in the School of Education which is itself housed in the building, as well as standing invitation by the past and present Clemson Faculty Senate Presidents (2017) to members of the Clemson Community, the building continues
to honor Tillman and all that he accomplished through his unjust designs. Stephen Kantrowitz, the author of *Ben Tillman and the Reconstruction of White Supremacy* (2015), visited Clemson University and spoke in Tillman Hall Auditorium on October 27, 2017 commenting during his talk that if Ben Tillman were alive today, “he would tear down this building brick by brick.” I disagree. If *that same* Ben Tillman were alive today, *that* Ben Tillman would stand pleased with this monument and wonder at the aggregate success his policies have made in both his state and at Clemson University. Instead of *this* Ben Tillman, I’d like to think of Tillman as a weary ghost, wandering through our present past. This spirit has long grown tired of hate and desires rest, and for rest to happen we must change. Change the name of Tillman and change our design. We must keep writing and rewriting these spaces and places and our relationships in our networked ecology if we wish to move into an ethical present-future. Tillman was born on Chester Plantation in Trenton, South Carolina on the outskirts of Edgefield, just twenty miles from Thomas Clemson’s Cane Brake plantation in Saluda, South Carolina, a property whose sale was arranged via Calhoun. Clemson wrote of his slaves, “My object is to get the most I can for the property….I care but little to whom and how they are sold, whether together or separated…the affair should be kept as secret as possible on account of the Negroes” (qtd. in Bartley, 2009, p. 167). I conducted my research in the Clemson Archives in the Strom Thurmond Institute, named for Senator Strom Thurmond, the segregationist politician who, like Tillman, also hailed from Edgefield, as did Martin Gary and M.C. Butler, founders of the Red Shirts, a Rifle Club whose some 15,000 white members terrorized African Americans during reconstruction. An early Red Shirt leader, the civil war general, Wade Hampton, was born to a family that settled the foothills where I live in Greenville, South Carolina. General Hampton’s descendants go to school with my own children, and can be found riding bikes and skateboards with my children in the streets in front of my house, a house that resides on land that had once made up Elias Earle’s Plantation. These children were raised to be thoughtful, kind, future oriented by really great parents who understand the complexity of their positionality and privilege. The neighborhood borders Wade Hampton Boulevard, and Wade Hampton High School is
just up the street. In my research in the Strom Thurmond Institute, I combed the files of J.C. Littlejohn, the Clemson Secretary and great uncle of my next door neighbor, a local history teacher—awesome guy. Littlejohn’s own secretary was one A.B. Bryan, a leader of the Daughters of the Confederacy, the group that restored and cared for Fort Hill Plantation from 1930 through the late 1980’s, what the Daughters of the Confederacy referred to as the Calhoun Mansion, a monument that Bryan (1934) believed would “help perpetuate the culture of the Old South.” John C. Calhoun was born in Abbeville, South Carolina, the birthplace of the Confederacy, where on November 22, 1860, on Secession Hill, the state of South Carolina, citing the writings of Calhoun, became the first state in what would become the Confederacy, to abandon the Union. On May 2, 1865, it was also in Abbeville, that Jefferson Davis, standing on the porch of Burt-Stark Mansion, officially announced the dissolution of the Confederacy. Tillman’s role in the Hamburg Massacre played out in Aiken County in what had been Edgefield District, as was his involvement in the death of Simon Coker in Ellenton, South Carolina. In the Savannah River basin, we have literally washed these histories away. The town of Hamburg, built on a flood plain, was abandoned after the massacre that killed some twenty people. Similarly, the town of Ellenton, where Tillman and his gang murdered Simon Coker, was annexed in the 1950s to make room for the Savannah River Site. It was under Thurmond’s tenure as Governor that both the Savannah River Site and Lake Hartwell were built. Seneca, the Cherokee town located just below Calhoun and Clemson’s beloved Fort Hill in what is now the bottom of Lake Hartwell, was also washed away.

And my son, my eldest son, was educated by a public school teacher and principal both trained at Clemson University. The former taught my sons that some slave holders were good, that this teacher’s great, great, great grandfather was a good slave holder because he treated his slaves well, took them to church. For the latter, defending this young teacher wasn’t much of a stretch. For this principal would have himself learned in elementary school that slavery in South Carolina was not generally a bad thing and he said as much to me, for he read it in his state mandated school textbooks written by Mary Chevillette Simms Oliphant, whose home also happens to be located just down the street
from my own. In one of her famous histories, Oliphant (1941) wrote that following the
Civil War, “Most of the Negroes were ignorant and some of them almost savages. All
were unaccustomed to taking care of themselves” (p. 254), as well as “The Negroes had
been loyal and faithful to their white families during the four years of war and were
prepared to continue friendly when they were freed (p. 255), and finally “There were
more Negroes than whites in the State. The negroes were uneducated. They had no
knowledge of government. They did not know how to make a living without the
supervision of the white man. They were so accustomed to being taken care of that they
had no idea how to behave under freedom […] Regulations were made which prevented
the negroes from voting, and to this day, South Carolina has a white man’s government.
The welfare of two race living in one small state is a problem you will have to face when
you become citizens” (p. 265).

For me and for my family, for those of us in South Carolina, it all connects. This
networked ecology provides the reason for my work, my writing and rewriting, but also
the work others do to undo my own by driving their white pickup trucks through my town
and neighborhood, tail pipes roaring, confederate battle flags waving behind, an orange
Clemson tiger paw sticker on their rear cab window.

In Ulmer’s oeuvre, he returns again and again to the fact that out of a great
calamity, we might reshape ourselves in positive ways that redesign being in the world.
Can we, teachers and students in an electrate South, write a new kind of discourse in
response to the calamity of our inequality? Can we learn and write in the Gramscian
mode as a method towards disrupting our stagnant ecology? In Electronic Monuments
(2005), Ulmer attempts to write the trauma, (xxvii) as an event to which others can
respond. The agent in the electrate space—this space of plateaus, is the Deleuzian nomad,
who acts as both creator and aggressor, ever on the move, wandering, plotting, and most
importantly…guiding tours. In the case of Clemson University, choric tourism offers a
new means of breaking our interlocutor from their point of stasis, showing them new loci,
a different epistemology. The nomad must be a counter tour guide, exposing the tourists
to the complexity of our episteme and difference in our being. This Clemson Ghost Tour
proceeds in the spirit of dark tourism, a term which applies to tours of murder scenes and disaster sites, the antithesis of our Clemson propaganda that reminds us to be happy, for we are all part of the “Clemson Family.” A tour of this type falls under the category of Rita Raley’s (2009) “tactical media,” a “micro politics of disruption, intervention, and education” (p. 1). Raley goes on to describe tactical media as an examination of the practices and aesthetics that have emerged out of a postindustrial, neoliberal, globalized world (p. 3). While it is true that this project may be only a mere disruption, that these spaces, as Hakim Bey (2003) determines, will ultimately be reterritorialized, these performative acts show us another way of being, forcing the audience to take stock. Raley (2009) writes:

A skeptic might wonder what difference a temporary fix, for tactical media there is certain power and the spontaneous corruption, a momentary station of protocological control structures, creation of a temporary autonomous zones, that surely play their part in making possible the opening for political transformations. (p. 27)

An ecological framework reminds us that our greater design informs our present, be it a present-past or a present-future. The Clemson Ghost Tour attempts to utilize technology, namely the 360-degree camera and virtual reality technology as a tool for writing the network, un concea ling the design, but also affording the interlocutor a degree of play. During the time of the Calhouns and Clemsons, panoramic painting known as cycloramas, were all the rage in the United States and Europe. The viewer would enter into a 360-degree painted space that offered the viewer the sense that they were themselves in the scene. Lighting played an important part, highlighting the panorama, but leaving the floor space dark. Within the circle, the viewer could walk about, follow the linear and spatial progression of the spectacle. Often the scenes depicted great cities such as Rome, Athens, Jerusalem, or were of great historical moment, such as the Battles of Waterloo and Gettysburg. The wonder of this immersive experience led to new technologies, the stereoscopic photograph, the IMAX movie, and today, virtual reality. The 360-degree film bookmarks one end of the continuum of virtual reality, with more immersive experiences such as “Star Wars: Secrets of the Empire” (2018) on the other.
Still, my Clemson Ghost Tour project gives the user a degree of mobility to control what they see. With a nod to Nicolas Bourriaud (*Relational Aesthetics*, 1998/2002), Raley (2009) writes “the role of artworks is no longer to form the imaginary utopian realities, but to actually be ways of living and models of action within existing real, whatever the scale chosen by the artist” (p. 27). What better media exists than those that are accessible, portable, and virtual, and that might therefore play a vital role in the production and reproduction of our public spaces. When Jenny Edbauer (2005) talks of moving from rhetorical situations to rhetorical ecologies, I think in terms of changing lenses. The most apt tool I can locate, the most appropriate for achieving this end must be virtual reality. Virtual reality offers greater affordances for the user including a degree of mobility through a procedural space, a virtual space existing within the context of what is usually territorialized spaces. The virtual allows for what Ian Bogost (2007) refers to as procedural rhetoric as a means for persuasion. Bogost defines procedural rhetoric as “the practice of persuading through processes in general and computational processes in particular” (p. 3). This experiential rhetoric has far reaching effects. The case of the video game “S.T.A.L.K.E.R. Shadow of Chernobyl” (2006) is an example of another digital practice that connects to my own. In this game the user navigates the radioactive ecology of the former Chernobyl Nuclear Power Facility, and this virtual, like our actual possess aliens and ghosts with which we must contend. Play offers us a new theory, a new way of seeing; for *Theoria* undertakes tours of the *chora* (Ulmer, *Electronic Monuments*, p. 6).

Paul Dourish and Genevieve Bell (2011) also connect the user experience in a virtual space to tourism claiming, “Tourism brings these issues to the fore because of the limited spatial resources available to tourists and their internet unfamiliarity with the spaces through which they move” (p. 121). The design of the virtual space and even the narrative situation provide the basis of a tour. Within the procedural rhetoric is in fact a Virgil-like figure, guiding the user (tourist) about a space.

Regardless, the affordances created by the virtual allow for the creation of what Edward Soja (1999) refers to as “third-space,” a decolonized realm that allows for “ontological restructurings” (p. 69). How might we use this technology to create
classrooms and post pedagogies that facilitate this “third-space”? I intended for this practice to be simultaneously an act of disruption and an act of attending to, or caring for a specific ecology. In order to attend to ecologies we must concern ourselves with research, education, management, and action (Berkes et al., 2003), as well as a study of systems that include our landscape, population, community, natural resources, environment, and biodiversity. It is an attending to as a healing, not a returning, but a moving away from, towards a different future through the rhetoric of the epideictic.

Epideictic rhetoric, which relates to the Greek chorus in drama, is an important societal ritual in establishing a more just version of our Aristotelian knowing, doing, and making. This writing’s emphasis on system design does not argue that free-will diminishes within this procedural rhetoric of being as it exists within these very systems that govern our relationality. The user has agency—if he wants it—and for me this fact is essential. For the real power, I argue, always exists in the interlocutor. When our doing-making do not align with what we know, we become unbalanced, unjust, unequal. It is in the chora that we practice hermeneutics to discover and judge what we know, as well as heuristics that will inform what we do and make, (Ulmer, 2003, p. 4). It is in the chora, therefore, that we invent, realize, and decide how to be and what to make.

Perhaps the white patriarchy will never allow the nomad to operate freely in the actual, and this is why the Deleuzean virtual, this virtual reality, is so important. Clemson University is arborescent, its mythology founded in the quericus falcate, the Southern Red Oak under which the names of the University’s greatest philanthropist are inscribed. On one flank of Fort Hill is the great red oak. But just across the lawn, in the same direction as the slave quarters, is another flank: a towering rhizomatic magnolia. Walk inside his magnolia. Look on its many centers. See its connectivity with that which is above and beneath. Clemson, I argue is rhizomatic—not arborescent—it is dotted with plateaus. (cf. Deluze and Guattari, 1980/1987, p. 21).

The space that I am writing in The Clemson Ghost Tour is an ecological system of great telos. It is a mapping, not of borders, but a chorographic method connecting as Doreen Massey (1993) would have it, connecting people and things across space and
time. Not only does it explore our connection with Calhoun, Clemson, Tillman, and Thurmond it extends to my hometown of Indianapolis, to the body of water to which we would drive on Wednesday afternoons and most summer weekends, Geist Reservoir. In Chapter 2 and 3, I explored the lentic system of a reservoir as a metaphor for our knowing, doing, making in territorialized spaces, stagnant ecologies overrun by powerful assemblages, so it is only natural that I explore the connections between some other reservoirs.

The town of Geist, Indiana was once located on the reservoir’s bottom along what was Fall Creek, but Geist was dismantled when the reservoir was developed in 1943 by The Indianapolis Water Company for the purpose of supplying Indianapolis with an additional source of drinking water. My grandfather, Lowry “Chick” Davis, the son of a Virginia coalminer, who was raised in the mountains of Blacksburg by his Cherokee grandmother who he claimed to have spoken Cherokee just as Cherokee was once spoken on this land, dismantled several of Geist’s timber framed houses as well as a barn, all by hand, by himself, and loaded their hand hewn beams onto a wagon, hauling them to Fortville, Indiana, where he reassembled them the same way he took them apart. He assembled the barn first, lived in it, his wife even gave birth in that dwelling to a baby girl named Evangeline, my mother. I grew up learning to sail on Geist Reservoir, where the wind came and went, playing a capricious game with the little boat that bobbed across the lake’s surface. My father sailed a jibbed dinghy called a thistle, a boat his own father built from a kit in the 1950s. When I was growing up, Geist was wooded, with blue herons wading along its mucky edge, and only a few mansions marking its shores, homes built by prominent Indianapolis businessmen. Along Fall Creek Road were a number of dirt pull-offs, where groups of teenagers abandoned their cars, hiking through the woods to one of several muddy beaches where they built rope swings and laid out on hot summer afternoons, or skinny-dipped under the full moon. Today multimillion dollar mansions line every inch of its shore, and no beach to access by the public. My father still sails Geist, but its now oil-sheened water chops at the side of our mahogany hull, not from the fickle wind, but from the motorboat wakes and high seawalls. The pursuit of the
perfect monocultured lawn and the resulting runoff from phosphorus fertilizers along Geist’s watershed triggers huge algae blooms (Fig. 4.1), and the local paper often runs stories about the reservoir’s poor water quality and the toxic chemicals found in Indianapolis’s drinking water.

![Fig. 4.1 Geist Reservoir algae bloom. [Photo]. Retrieved from http://www.inindianawater.org/story/phosphorus-pollution-and-algae-blooms-in-the-geist-reservoir/](image)

A “reservoir” is of course more than just a symbol for our desire to keep and control as its name implies. It is also the product of our praxis, our *makings*, and thus speaks back to us about the nature of our designs and, of course, our ethics. Thus, it begs of us to think, to be thoughtful, to question, in Guattari’s (1989/2005) ecosophic manner. My relationship with Geist Reservoir as a public space in my youth as compared to the highly territorialized space it is today, greatly informs my ecological understanding of manmade reservoirs. Not only do our reservoirs write over spaces and places, concealing
landscapes and its inhabitants, these writings and erasings tell us about our human desire for control, for mastery, achieved through design, and how this need to control crashes against our seawalls and reverberates back out across the surface of the water knocking up against our own hull. Growing up I watched mansion after mansion being built on Geist, and at the same time public access to these spaces was restricted. In South Carolina’s case, Lake Hartwell and Par Pond are similarly manifestations of the calamity we reproduce through our inequality and inattention to our own networked ecology.

Lake Hartwell, a reservoir on the campus of Clemson University, was built for a number of reasons including as a source for recreation, hydroelectric power, and drinking water, but its construction was challenged as many geologists predicted its muddy banks would fail. However, “national security” provided the final warrant for its building as scientists claimed it was necessary flood control measure for the Savannah River Nuclear Site which was located downriver. Today, Lake Hartwell’s shores are still hardy, and its waters have shaped Clemson University’s design and provided recreation and access for our students and for the people of our state. However, Hartwell is also a superfund site, what the EPA (2018) refers to as the Sangamo Weston, Inc./Twelve-Mile Creek/Lake Hartwell PCB Contamination site. The EPA cites debris, groundwater, sediment, sludge, soil, and fish tissue contamination. South Carolina’s Department of Health and Environmental Control (SCDHEC) (2018) forbids eating fish from most branches of Hartwell. The drinking water Hartwell supplies to Clemson University is of poor quality (Attaway, 2017), and boil alerts for various reasons, are common.

Down river at the Savannah River Site, Par Pond was built by damming up Lower Three Runs Creek to make a 1012-hectare cooling reservoir serving Reactors R and P. The pond was originally named Par Lake in honor of, and due to its close proximity to, the Augusta National Golf Course, but the name was later changed to Par Pond for alliterative purposes.
To facilitate the cooling process, Par Pond was designed to be regularly filtered by an intricate pumping scheme that moved cool water from the Savannah River to Par Pond, and then released the effluent discharge into the Lower Three Runs Creek, and back into the Savannah River and the Savannah River basin (Fig. 4.2). In 1963, R-reactor malfunctioned due to a defective fuel rod and released Cesium 137 and other chemicals into Par Pond, Three Mile Creek, and eventually into the Savannah River. A number of studies have been done on fish and wildlife showing adverse effects to the wildlife in the area. On the other hand, due to its large size (310 square miles), this region suffers lower levels of run-off from agricultural runoff. Despite a long history of over 30 nuclear accidents at the facility, exposing hundreds of workers to high levels of radiation.
(Schneider, 1988) and releasing untold amounts of radiation into our ecosystem, nature, though genetically and biologically altered, continues to thrive in the posthuman Savannah River basin.

Fig. 4.3 SRS proximity to Savannah River Site. [Map]. Retrieved from Staton, J., Taylor, B., Schizas, N., Wetzer, R., Glenn, T., & Coull, B. (2003). Mitochondrial gene diversity of Skistodiaptomus mississippiensis in impoundments of the Upper Coastal Plain near Aiken, South Carolina, USA. Archiv für Hydrobiologie, 158(2), 215-231.

Dobrin and Weisser’s (2002) term “ecocomposition” asks us to think of nature as discourse. If we adopt an ecological approach to writing as they have, what might we
learn from asking the question: *what does nature want, especially in the case this Savannah River Basin?* Nature, I argue is writing that answer. And if we pay attention, we will see that nature is inclining towards us. It has always been inclining, swerving towards us. Like us, it is forever changed and can never go back, nor ever hope to enter a *post-posthuman*. The Savannah River basin teaches us that nature is resilient. What does nature want? It is the same answer I offer for the question of technology in Chapter 1. What does technology want—nothing more than to thrive. And it will thrive, even in the posthuman, long after Foucault’s discourse of man has ended. And when our dams have given way, what lies beneath our reservoirs will be *unconcealed*. And that which is unconcealed, will incline, as it always has. Nature will write and rewrite these spaces. The question we should be asking is why is it not also in our nature to incline towards it?

In *The Clemson Ghost Tour*, I use VR to write the networks, tracing these disparate sites connecting our teaching and learning here at Clemson University with not only with EPA Superfund Sites such like the Savannah River Site, Sangamo Weston, Inc./Twelve Mile Creek/Lake Hartwell Site, or even my dear Geist reservoir in Indiana, but also South Carolina towns like Edgefield, Abbeville, Clemson, and Greenville, and the white men who continue to terrorize African Americans with guns, nuclear weapons, universities, archives, textbooks, dump chemicals into our environment, and teach my two sons of South Carolina that there were some good parts to slavery. These people, things, and sites have much to tell us about our posthuman condition, and how we might better attend to our environment and to all the humans and animals and things and landscapes with which we must find *harmonia*. While the sum total of our human designs, it seems, is only adding to the chaos, I find hope in both nature’s inclination and in its resilience.

In my writing and teaching I have come to understand ethics as the great disruptor. Ethics creates affordances for difference, and constrains the power relations that restrict equality. But to move towards a Guattarian or Rancian ideal as I have suggested, we must realize the concept of *dunamis*, not just our Aristotelian definition of *dunamis* as the power of the rhetor, but also the power of the interlocutor. As I have
argued in Chapter 1, when we explore the Proto-Indo-European root of *dewh* meaning *to fit*, we extend *dunamis*, realizing that our *power* derives from our inherent sense of *worth* and *equality* within a networked ecology. Until we move towards a more equitable design, we will not live ethically. When we return *dunamis* to the concept of *fittingness*, to the oarsman at his bench, we establish our collective agency in our actual now oriented towards an ethical future. *Dunamis* calls on us to be rhetorical, for it is the only means by which we might establish our relationality and consequently, confirm our *being*. Thus, we must write and rewrite, for rhetoric calls on us to do so.

(Historical Note: Tillman did not use a glass eye, nor an eye-cover. His eyelid was sewn shut.)
CHAPTER FIVE
COMPOSITION AND ECO-ETHICAL MAKING

“Enjoy yourself. Walk around the world examining the details of design. Learn how to observe. Take pride in the little things that help: think kindly of the person who so thoughtfully put them in. Realize that even details matter, that the designer may have had to fight to include something helpful. If you have difficulties, remember, it’s not your fault: it’s bad design. Give prizes to those who practice good design: send flowers. Jeer those who don’t: send weeds.”

-Don Norman, The Design of Everyday Things

“Design is the conscious and intuitive effort to impose meaningful order. [...] The order and delight we find in frost flowers on a windowpane, in the hexagonal perfection of a honeycomb, in leaves, or in the architecture of a rose, reflect man’s preoccupation with pattern, the constant attempt to understand an ever-changing highly complex existence by imposing order on it.”

-Victor Papanek, Design for the Real World

Introduction

Not all university experiences are idyllic, but more often than not, the classic residential university is designed to be so. For my students, the design of the university provides them with their first experience living away from the bonds of home in exchange for a condition of habitation in close proximity to other people their own age. The density of the infrastructure allows each to walk along lush manicured landscapes linking building to building or down an easy path to the adjoining town and its various eateries, shops, and bars. The paths and halls bustle with other young, beautiful people, mainly white, as they prepare for the position they will soon assume in society. Schedules fill, libraries beat, books open, and a crowd of eighty thousand gear-clad fans roar at the football games on most fall Saturdays. This design rewards the very type of student that it recruits: generally hard working, often of means, or at the least upwardly mobile. Within this design, my students realize a vigor for living, studying, constituting the moments of their day. When the state design reproduces this tropic built, represented, and lived environment of what it assumes a university should be, it realizes what Michel Foucault
(1984/1986) termed a “heterotopia,” a mirror with which we might see ourselves and our society.

The heterotopia shows us the desires of our society. Unlike a utopia, a non-place, a heterotopia is a location that defines itself in relationship to other places. Foucault gives many examples of such heterotopias, including nursing homes, museums, fairgrounds, and even a romantic imagining of a wayfaring ship…but he fails to mention the university as a heterotopia, and perhaps this may reveal a divide between French and American academic formulations in that the French university emerged in centers of commerce while American ones modeled themselves on the English during a time when American cities were unsure of their own identities. Foucault exits his essay with the example of the ship at sea as the ultimate heterotopia, slipping away from one authoritarian port society en route to the next. It’s a bit romantic, but I understand the power of his concept in that the wayfaring ship establishes a place where one might achieve an autonomy not possible in society. In the case of the university, while it is true that it is theoretically designed to serve the needs of the people, many state universities are often designed to be isolated, idealized, manicured, exclusive heterotopias, often set in valleys far from the filth of our manufacturing hubs and centers of power—though they remain inherently tied to them.

My fear is that when we work or participate in systems that are designed to reproduce inequality, we aid in the reproduction of that inequality. How can we work inside the system to disrupt this inequality? I am interested in the idea, and problems, of the state university as heterotopia in that the state university is in the ideal designed and funded to meet the needs of the state and is therefore a reflection of the desires of that state. Working the other way, I am interested in how addressing the problems of the state university might alter the designs and thus the desires of that state. Here, on our campus, we might attend to a place at a scale that is manageable, with a percentage of the population at a formative age. Here, in our heterotopia, we might challenge the inequalities inherent in our society. I like to think that in these unequal times, that perhaps within the university schema we might locate an equitable balance between local
and global networks and distributions of power, and perhaps, as a result, produce a modicum of equality within the university spaces as a way to reflect upon and improve the spaces without, those in which the majority inhabit. There is, Jacques Rancière (1992/1995) reminds us, only the great syllogism of humanity: 1. All men are created equal. 2. People live in communal societies. 3. In our communal societies people should live as equals. Rancière concedes that the first minor premise is not true, but that we must proceed as if it were. This is because, he reminds us, we establish our being through our practices. He is also realistic that total equality will never be realized, but that “A community of equals is an insubstantial community of individuals engaged in the ongoing creation of equality” (p. 84.) as it is this very pursuit of equality that shapes and defines a community. For Rancière, the place is but a setting for this practice. Nothing more.

I would like to imagine the university as a heterotopia where ethics is concerned, as a place that might be a mirror to the society on which it reflects. In fact, this section on pedagogy is written in pursuit of an ethical heterotopia. This task is made difficult in that universities are institutionally designed through policies and procedures to reproduce many of the same practices the state uses to assert its hegemony, and to ready a certain kind of student to assume their place in that hegemony. For example, my freshmen students emit a low hum as they participate in the rhythms of our campus. I call it the happiness hum. It is partly the result of the Flutie Factor (Sperber, 2000, pp. 60-61), nearly a twenty to twenty-five percent increase in enrollment applications after a university’s championship football season. The term is a reference to Doug Flutie and his 1984 football accomplishments at Boston College that resulted in a boon to admissions and subsequent growth for his alma mater. Clemson University football has achieved similar football success winning the 2017 National Championship and has seen a similar rise in admissions. In the fall of 2017, I polled my freshman students about why they came to Clemson and 100% responded that the number one reason was football. But this happiness hum is also the result of the hard work they accomplished to receive admission. As a result of higher admissions, enrollment at the university is especially
competitive. My students had to work harder than their classmates, harder than their older siblings who may also have attended Clemson, and this shows in their attitude of good faith and an expectation of excellence. But as I have spoken, they are largely white, and when I discuss this fact of their privilege the hum diminishes quite strikingly. They have rightly worked hard to be here. I would argue that indeed, they do deserve to be here, but that if we were to realize this place as an ethical heterotopia, it would look and function much differently.

Wicked Problems: Wallowing in Complexity

“Part of the difficulty of teaching critical thinking, therefore, is awakening students to the existence of problems all around them”

-John C. Bean. Engaging Ideas

For John Dewey (1916), our students’ ability to think critically depends upon their skill in engaging with problems. Dewey connects the enaction of our knowing through our doing as individuals engage in “wrestling with conditions of the problem at firsthand, seeking and finding his own way out” (p. 188). In terms of inquiry, Dewey believed “(t)he most significant question which can be asked, accordingly, about any situation or experience proposed to induce learning is what quality of problem it involves” (p. 182). It is by way of quality that we might come to consider the benefits of engaging “wicked problems” in the composition classroom. Horst Rittel and Melvin Webber’s (1973) treatise on social policy planning defined “wicked problems” as inherently ongoing problems directly connected to other problems, usually the consequence of these other problems. Wicked problems cannot be identified through a single approach, but change shape in different contexts and from different perspectives. Possible solutions are neither right nor wrong in that any one solution will not correct the problem. These can be social, environmental, or extend to any realm or field. The authors list the following descriptions to flesh out their concept:

1. There is no definitive formulation of a wicked problem
2. Wicked problems have no stopping rule
3. Solutions to wicked problems are not true-or-false, but good-or-bad
4. There is no immediate and no ultimate test of a solution to a wicked problem
5. Every solution to a wicked problem is a “one-shot operation”; because there is no opportunity to learn by trial-and-error, every attempt counts significantly
6. Wicked problems do not have an enumerable (or an exhaustively describable) set of potential solutions, nor is there a well-described set of permissible operations that may be incorporated into the plan
7. Every wicked problem is essentially unique
8. Every wicked problem can be considered to be a symptom of another problem
9. The existence of a discrepancy representing a wicked problem can be explained in numerous ways. The choice of explanation determines the nature of the problem's resolution
10. The planner has no right to be wrong

(pp. 161-167)

How do we ensure safe drinking water? How do we feed the poor? How do we land humans on Mars? How do we address the inequity on our university campus and in our state? These are wicked problems that resist oversimplification.

By now you have realized that my dissertation is a wicked problem. That’s the point. How do we attend to wicked problems? How do we stop the hauntings? How do we become something other than what we were? Wicked problems are messy, and my teaching, by design, is equally messy. Pedagogy should be messy and with a goal of disrupting stasis (cf. Postman and Weingartner, 1969). In the spirit of William S. Burrows, who reportedly once told an artist that her task was to consider how she might “short-circuit control.” (Jackson, 2017). A pedagogy of disruption calls the rhetor and the interlocutor to consider the messiness of the site, the messiness of our complex networked ecology, past, present, and future. Such practice allows students to “wallow in complexity” (Sherman qtd. in Walvoord & McCarthy, 1990). We possess a method to phrasing and thinking about wicked problems that relates to what cognitive psychologists refer to as “ill-structured” questions. Ill-structured questions (King and Kitchner, 1994; Bean, 2011; Ramage et al., 2006; Sullivan, 2014) are phrased in such a way that they preclude dialectic answers. Instead, they suggest how we might better pose questions in a
way that leaves room for interpretation. As opposed to well-structured questions that equate to finite answers, ill-structured questions assume multiple viewpoints and are therefore especially valuable to the development of individual learners as they graduate through William Perry’s (1999) scheme of the nine phases of intellectual development. This scheme begins with students who understand knowledge dialectically as right and wrong. As students progress to the middling phases, they begin to accept that there are multiple answers, but continue to subscribe to the dualistic view that there is a right and wrong way to go about a problem. The final stage is one in which the learner realizes that knowledge is continually in flux, it is case-by-case, and that it requires both our attention and an ongoing commitment to its pursuit. Inherent in this latter kind of wallowing is not just an exploration of the implications of our problem and its potential solutions, but also an acute understanding of the network of stakeholders and their voices.

Wicked problems prove especially useful in the composition classroom in that they require rhetoric to both establish our relationality with others and to promote or oppose various lines of argument. In composition studies, Richard Marback (2009) argues the importance of the wicked problem in the context of multimodal composition pedagogy, situating his own work in relation to a number of scholars who also took on the wicked problem. He begins with Charles Kostelnick (1989), who wrote at a time when other scholars, namely Jim Berlin, were shifting away from process pedagogy in a move towards other approaches. Kostelnick’s was a cautionary tale that conveyed his dissatisfaction with how process pedagogy was implemented, but also that he was not altogether prepared to abandon the theory. To analyze the rise and fall of process theory, Kostelnick compares the evolution of process theory in the fields of both composition and design. In doing so, he found that much of the criticism of process theory in the field of design emerged from its actual field application that resulted in it being “continually tested, scrutinized, and then accepted, modified, or rejected” (p. 277). This kind of enaction, he argued, hadn’t happened in the composition classroom. Instead of abandoning process theory altogether, Kostelnick argued for the loosening of the rigid structures of process theory in both its formulation and practice. Rather, he wanted to
open process theory by engaging “wicked” problems in the composition classroom, problems he distinguished from “tame” questions in that the sheer complexity of the wicked problems in a given context demands a wide engagement working through multiple models and forms of writing (p. 276). He argued that essentially there is always a process for working through our writings, but that this process can’t always look the same way as it had been taught in the composition classroom. Instead, as both theorist and practitioners, he argues that we test the theory against practice and enact changes when necessary to ensure “flexible, functional approaches to writing” (p. 278).

Marback next relates Richard Buchanan’s (1992) work on wicked design; however, before we attend to that text, I would like to zig-zag back to two other pieces, one by Buchanan and another by McKeon, that urged the compositionist to consider the relationship between technology, design, and rhetoric. Richard McKeon’s (1971) “The Uses of Rhetoric in a Technological Age: Architectonic Productive Arts,” argues for a productive rhetoric that “relates form to matter, instrumentality to product, presentation to content, agent to audience, intention to reason” (p. 63). In this essay, McKeon argued the emphasis the Greeks and Romans placed on rhetoric in the production of practical art—those deriving from the architechton, what we would refer to as a craftsman, but also expanding its uses to either the high or low sense. Aristotle, for example, in that he characterized rhetoric as the natural counterpart to the dialectic, “formulated rhetoric as a ‘universal art’” (p. 47). We would do well, McKeon urged, to consider rhetoric in the production of “things and arts, and not merely producing words and arguments” (p. 53).

For Buchanan (2001), the emphasis on design in the composition classroom begins with McKeon. In this essay, Buchanan’s purpose is not to argue that all design is rhetoric, but rather, design is a “proper term for a vast body of work in the contemporary world” (p. 188) and that in the same way that we might look for rhetoric in the production of art as McKeon suggests, we might also think of our alphabetic compositions as design (pp. 191, 204). Buchanan defines design as “the human power of conceiving, planning, and making products that serve human beings in the accomplishment of any individual or collective purposes” (p. 191), a definition that infers a critical approach to any making
process, that for me, constitutes a process, but does not limit itself to that term. Perhaps reflecting on the challenges rhetoric faced as it addresses new technologies (p. 187), Buchanan closes with an appeal that we consider “The prospect of rhetoric that we envision and we believe is unfolding today will require changes in our way of thinking about theory, practice, and production” (p. 204). In another essay, “Wicked Problems in Design Thinking,” Buchanan (1992) ponders why design problems themselves are, in fact, “wicked?” (p. 16). He notes: “Neither Rittel nor any of those studying wicked problems has attempted to answer this question, so the wicked-problems approach has remained only a description of the social reality of designing rather than the beginnings of a well-grounded theory of design.”

Instead of locating the wickedness of design in the problem, Buchanan transfers the wickedness to the process of design; it is design, its precision in balancing theory, practice, and production to satisfy both the design and the audience that is the making of a wicked design problem. Each design situation presents itself with an array of problems and considerations specific to the given instance (p. 16). “The problem for designers is to conceive and plan what does not yet exist, and this occurs in the context of the indeterminacy of wicked problems, before the final result is known” (p. 18). Unfortunately, such a claim takes no consideration of the ecological implications of designing. Designers don’t pull a plan from a hat. They steal it. Yes, design is situational, but as with any invention it emerges from repetition and difference, from visiting the topoi and wandering about the chora, but rarely from the chora in and of itself. Our intertextuality and intersymbology forbid it.

It is by privileging Buchanan’s concept of the wicked solution rather than the wicked problem, that Marback enters into the conversation. Marback’s application of the wicked solution relates to the myriad complications inherent in multimodal communication. As an example, Marback cites the work of Diana George (2002) as initiating the visual turn, but uses her text to identify what he views as the problem inherent in languaging the visual—for we are, he argues, trapped in the register of the alphabetic. Multimodality, as Gunther Kress (2000) argues, relies not on any one register,
but in the complexity of synesthesia, which for Marback proves a concept even more troublesome for our alphabetic register. Marback asserts:

We cannot fully capture in words or representations the affective responses of our bodies to machines such as computers, cell phones, or iPods. Neither can we translate our words directly into the designs of these or any other artifacts. Technologies have a structure and a pulse beyond our representations and in this way have an impact so immediately and deeply felt that we cannot express it (even if we were to fully know it. (p. 403)

This inability to language is similarly confounded by the multiplicities of meaning as interlocutor engages with packages that have sometimes circulated in other contexts. Marbach drifts into semantics:

[T]he wickedness of design thinking is the unavoidable fact that prior designs in multiple media manipulate and orchestrate the agency of the designer at the same time the designer manipulates and orchestrates them. (p. 408)

Neither the denotation nor connotation of any one gram, nor any one package is ever for certain. In that design manages so many variables whose meanings are themselves variable to the perceiver. For Marback, control of the multifarious elements of multimodal design thickens Buchanan’s claims of the wicked problem as design.

In his argument, Marback extends wickedness to any and all design problems, which I find to be a mistake. Sometimes design is just bullshit. A lark. Not a complex thing. Rather, design can be painfully simple. Flip. And most of the time we design multiple works to get across what we are trying to communicate to our interlocutor. Sometimes it takes the oeuvre, not a single work, to understand the meaning of a designer. This is true be it blueprints, multimodality, even our alphabetic languaging.

Still, neither Buchanan nor Marback believes that there is anything inherently wicked about any problem, rather, the complexity resides in the wickedness of its solving. As a designer, craftsman, teacher, and lover of wicked problems, I think they both miss the point. Wicked problems are by definition ongoing and inherently difficult, which makes for both their wickedness and their usefulness in the rhetoric and composition classroom. Yes, designs are complex, replete with both choices and pitfalls, but this is the
nature of communication—the method for solving the problem of our relationality. I reserve the concept of *wickedness* to the site, the location in space time in which a problem *resides*, rather than transferring the wickedness to our approach of it. The wicked problem plays on…and is therefore analogous to discourse. It cannot be solved, but rather, *attended to*. Addressing wicked problems involves attending to spaces and paying attention to not only our built environment, but how we represent those spaces, and how we move through them (LeFebvre, 1991).

Buchanan and Marback oversimplify the wicked problem as something that might be solved in a single sitting, or perhaps by a lone individual. There is no one person who can do this. Like the Dutch boy in the dike, we need other fingers. Sustaining fingers. Different sized fingers. Fast fingers, Strong fingers. Clever ones. Mobility. Motivation. Rhetoric. Because the site of attending to a wicked problem is complicated by both our networked ecology and the inherent complexity of wicked problems, tackling them requires not one thinker, but a community of learners. I say *learners* instead of thinkers in that wicked problems can only be *worked* on by those committed to adapting to their vicissitudes. For James Gee (2013), these characteristics include the…

ability to master new forms of complex and often technical language and thinking; ability to engage collaborative work and collective intelligence where the group is smarter than the smartest person in it; creativity and innovation; ability to deal with complexity and to think about and solve problems with respect to complex systems; ability to find and martial evidence and to revise arguments in the face of evidence; the ability to produce with digital media and other technologies and not just consume their content; and the ability to avoid being a victim of social forces and institutions that are creating a more competitive, stressful, and unequal world. (p. 202)

Gee, time and again, stresses that the problems that we have created will not be solved solely by human thinking, whether alone or in groups. We also need technology to aid us in our pursuit. Gee’s insistence on technology is important because it combines these wicked problems, working cooperatively, learning technology, and solving real world problems that matter right now. These questions…
require looking at things from different perspectives and seeking alternative viewpoints and new sources of ideas. They require humility and questioning of our own values and ideologies. They require the search for new tools and new uses of old ones. And they require knowing when to stop asking one question and start asking a better one. They require both critiques (something academics are good at) and positive proposals for better ways to do things that go beyond criticism of what is, to ideas about what realistically could be (something academics are bad at). (pp. 144-145)

A Design Classroom

“[T]he idea of reading a building as we would read Milton or Dante, and getting the same kind of delight out of the stones as out of the stanzas, never enters our mind for a moment.”

- John Ruskin, The Nature of the Gothic

My interest in making in the composition classroom centers on the connections my students forge with one another as they learn new tools in their attempt to engage their audience. Through making, I argue, they establish their relationality. While this communion is established between students, it also extends to their interlocutor as the interlocutor engages the composition. In the context of the design classroom, while I see making (practice/product) as the result of knowing (design) and doing (skill), what often goes missing in this conversation about classroom making is the larger conversation of aesthetics. We would do well to think about why conversations about making, which often involve discussions of design and craft, need also consider aesthetics.

It was John Ruskin’s rejection of industrial age design and machined practices, and what he saw as the subsequent loss of craftsmanship, that led to the arts and crafts movement in the nineteenth century. It was also an attempt to secure an aesthetic that Ruskin judged to have been lost as England shifted towards industrialization. Ruskin’s attention to Gothic architecture, especially its imperfections, provided an example for explaining his aesthetic theory of architectural design which he very much based on the labor and craft of its artisans. Ruskin’s appreciation for Gothic architecture begins with the very materials that were procured as he imagines the rude stonemason and his
requisite purposefulness and dedication as he chipped away the rock with hammer and chisel. Not only were Gothic materials imperfect, like the individuals that procured them, but the actual construction of these structures was equally imperfect. In that Gothic cathedrals were assembled over hundreds of years, they required a sustained effort of a given community over generations. There was no one architect to oversee the design, no master blueprint to speak of. Instead, the design emerged through the undertaking of the craftspeople and master builder as they set about their work. For, as Ruskin (1900) points out, if two sides/towers of a Gothic were juxtaposed, they would invariably reveal differences not only from one side to the next, but also from top to bottom. These design elements reveal an almost *ad hoc* building site where craftspeople were trusted to work as they might on a structure whose construction time would long exceed their own. A modern example of such an undertaking might be seen in Gaudi’s Sagrada Familia in Barcelona, Spain, under construction since 1882, whose design changes from architect to architect and even sculptor to sculptor and not without controversy. For Gothic Cathedral, Ruskin attributes the inconsistencies in the execution of the design to the freedom of its builders.

wherever the workman is utterly enslaved, the parts of the building must of course be absolutely like each other; for the perfection of its execution can only be reached by exercising him in doing one thing, and giving him nothing else to do. The degree in which the workmen is degraded maybe best known at a glance, by observing whether the several parts of the building are similar or not; and if, as in Greek work all capitals are alike, and all moldings are varied, and the degradation is complete. (p. 22)

He invites his reader to connect these aesthetic considerations to ethical ones. For Ruskin, there is a kind of beauty in this rude architecture. Ultimately, Ruskin wants his reader to engage in an examination of architectural design as a way to also imagine the workmanship and ethos its building required. He likens this task to the reading of a book and thus gives his reader hermeneutic instructions that might be utilized to this end. He writes, “Thenceforward the criticism of the building is to be conducted precisely on the same principles as that of a book; and it must depend on the knowledge, feeling, and not a little on the industry and perseverance of the reader […]” (p. 80). In his text, Ruskin
offers more than an approach to reading architecture…he more importantly offers a framework for adjusting our own aesthetic values to it. While Ruskin wants the reader to perhaps consider the complexity in even the rudest of designs, he also wants us to consider the ethical implications surrounding its making. In the Gothic form, he saw a worker’s dedication, appreciation of nature, and confidence that the composition would be completed in some distant descendant’s lifetime. For Ruskin, the Gothic Cathedral was truly a wicked problem, but also a wicked reason for attending to the labor at hand. But it also raises questions about the power of design and underlying reasons behind our cultural aesthetics. For Ruskin, his aesthetics were founded in his appreciation of the labor and the ad hoc process of its construction.

In one of my projects that foregrounds the FYC digital praxis I will relay below, one of my students made a film about aesthetics that caused me to question my own values. In the project, I ask students to photograph a single building at Clemson and create a video that demonstrates this same attention to Ruskin’s aesthetics. To introduce this photography assignment, I explain that we might similarly read spaces on our campus in a way that might reveal their quality. As an example of this quality in the case of Clemson University, I explain that stones from the original Fort Hill Slave Quarters were reassembled into the foundation of Hardin Hall, which houses classrooms, and that all of the bricks in our early buildings were either made by slaves, former slaves, or convict laborers. How does this complexity affect our reading of these building and of these spaces? As a result, one of my students focused on the columns of Cooper Library which he pointed out, extend the motif of the columned façade on Calhoun’s Fort Hill Plantation Home.
The student’s video focused on symmetry in an acknowledgement of the careful design of the library and its relationality with its surrounding landscape. Rather than associating our columns with the Greek stoa that provided shelter for all in the inclusivity of the Agora, we reproduce and extend this aesthetic of exclusion. For me this student’s presentation raised questions as to why the antebellum plantation aesthetic is repeated at all in Clemson architecture? What is it that we might find noble in such a design that we would repeat it? When the library was constructed in the 1960s, racial tensions were high, however, we continue to reproduce these skeuomorphs in every phase of our expansion, not fully thinking through what these columns symbolize nor how they order space. The recently built Watt Center also utilizes these columns, across which is a Las Vegas worthy digital screen, a some 209’ x 24’ Color Kinetics Media Display composed of 45,000 individual LED lights. A new 212-million-dollar residential complex, Douthit Hills, also utilizes these columns.
Perhaps if we thought more ethically about our aesthetics, we would inscribe a different memory into the design of our spaces. There is an effort to do just this at Clemson, as faculty and students take part in workshops in which they themselves take part in the making of bricks, just as our enslaved, formerly enslaved, and imprisoned workers labored in the making of Clemson University.

Ruskin’s oeuvre was further expanded by the writings of William Morris and his attention to the usefulness of craft in the context of labor and society. Morris, who was writing at the same time as Marx, approached labor in relation to its cultural value for both the laborer and society, whereas Karl Marx focused only on labor’s economic value. For William Morris (1891), the means of production provide not only economic value, but also individual happiness and freedom for the laborer as well as communion with other individuals in society. Making, for Morris was a personal and societal/cultural necessity more dear than the value of the labor itself. For Morris, making represented “hope of pleasure in our daily creative skill” (p. 21) and resulted in a more contemplative approach to being that he thought might be realized through both in our making and our consumption. Making was a personal, meaningful, sustaining act. He especially emphasizes the necessity of work and the individual’s right to the work and connected the
downfall of society to the downfall of our lack of appreciation for both labor and an aesthetic that valued craftwork (p. 33). Where Marx equated ornamentation as fetish, Morris viewed ornamentation and diversity as a reflection of its cultural value (p. 35). Like Ruskin, Morris saw the ornament, the detail in a commodity as that which adds aesthetic value and quality in a work. This is not to say that ornament need always be fanciful, but that it is achieved through the attainment of a quality that reflects the character of the worker, especially when products are made in an ethical manner (p. 36).

Through a shift in our aesthetics, we might also improve our relationality with others by little more than valuing the humanity that we find in our products. As an artist himself, Morris was interested in the power of practice and the flourishing of craft as a communal necessity. He did not like the separation between high and low art and instead sought the everyday arts and crafts realized in utilitarian goods.

In the philosophy of David Pye (1968), this aesthetic value manifests itself in the tension between tool and user as they operate in a creative continuum between certainty and uncertainty in what Pye calls “the workmanship of risk.” A workmanship of risk produces diversity in production rather than regularity (p. 68). And like Ruskin’s Gothic architecture, it leaves traces of the labor that produced it. Small tool marks, inconsistencies, imperfection. An aesthetic that values workmanship values these traces rather than the fine certainty that is produced in a machined environment (p. 81). We would do well to extend this aesthetic of diversity to other aspects in our daily living and thus change the quality of our daily consumption. However, this aesthetic of diversity and risk is not an effort to undermine the quality of any product. Pye, in fact, criticizes Ruskin for valuing the nature of the work over the quality of the workmanship (p. 123). Rather, Pye argues that it is indeed the quality of the work that creates its aesthetic value in that the quality reflects its humanity. Pye sought an aesthetic that balanced regulation and risk inherent in the workmanship. This is an interesting point in the context of today’s technology as more and more computers are passing the Turing Test. As technology continues to advance, what will distinguish humans from the writing algorithms that are slowly replacing writers? And how do we establish an aesthetic for distinguishing
between the two? The aesthetic philosophy of Ruskin, Morris, and Pye are important in that they all incorporate an ethical approach that examines why we find beauty in our makings.

In addition to thinking about ethics and aesthetics in design, makers must also address the implications of their design. Don Norman’s (2004) user-centered design approach attempts to methodize a design system to provide the user with functionality and ease of use (p. 222). Emerging out of social constructionism, it utilizes user feedback in product design and development to supply the user with what it wants—an intuitive design. Norman is famous for this system and for the eponymous Norman Door, the name given to any design that functions in a counter-intuitive manner. The concept originates in Norman’s diatribe against the design of doors that open in the wrong direction, slide when they appear to want to be pushed, or possess handles whose operation is unclear. My minor criticism of Norman is that user centered design can be boring. Not everything needs to be designed well, or work in a uniform manner. The odd door or the un-level step provide a great deal of enjoyment for those who observe others trying to figure out how to use them. We all need a clown from time to time and poor design can create the character in the overly designed world in which we reside. And is it not true that when these bad designs are mass produced they can also possess an endearing quality? This is why people love old Volkswagens with their crappy horsepower and buttons that do nothing. As with the humans we love, we learn to love, or at least live with their quirks. My major criticism of Norman is that user-centered design is just that—user-centered. My question is, why should we always give the user what they want? After all, The customer is not always right.

The work of Victor Papanek (1972) is important in this context, in that he believes designers must consider not only what the user wants, but the needs of the whole rather than the desires of a select few. Papanek very much wants us to consider the value of any new technology and how will it affect our environment. In this way, Papanek urges us to consider our designs from an ecological framework, that unlike Norman’s user-centered design which centers on user feedback, spends more evaluative time
thinking about a product’s ethical implications, such as its environmental and human impact. Papanek’s method of “Integrated Design” seeks to design products that serve as a link between the user and their environment rather than a good that only serves the user (p. 293). An ecological approach to design that considers the user and the environment is in constant flux as the relationship between man and nature changes. Papanek’s overall move is one of design evolution that might lead to revolution (p. 314). He sees an ecological approach as a means for achieving this end (p. 252). In this same way, I want my students to realize that we too, are designers, and that the agency lies with us. I want my students to think about how the design functions as a link between humans, things, and our environment. Similarly, Papanek challenges the designer to consider how a design might come to divide us, harm us, harm others, harm the planet.

Papanek, contrary to Norman, would like us to ask what does the user need rather than what do they want. But if we are going to adopt an ecological approach to making, we would do well to go a little further, to instead ask the question: what does our ecology need? As a designer, rhetorician, and compositionist, I am similarly interested in how this eco-ethic that works to expand the body of stakeholders might improve Our future rhetorical designs.

**A Workshop for Choral Learning**

As a teacher of craft, I’m interested in David Gauntlet’s (2013) thinking about making and creativity as a kind of social glue. While we often think of knowledge and skill as cultural capital, we seldom see it as social capital. That through making we establish our communion with others. When Gauntlet talks about the generative affordances of tools (p. 177), he is not merely talking about the ability of the tool to help the user create, he also asks us to consider how a tool might bring different users together. “People create their own networks and experiences around the process of making things because they like to see the fruits of their labor to connect with others to feel part of a meaningful productive social process with a past and a future” (p. 184).

Gauntlett’s ideas on making are closely tied to Ivan Illich, who explored a theory of tool
use as tied to its conviviality. Illich’s term “conviviality” shuns industrialization, favoring instead “autonomous and creative intercourse among persons, and the intercourse of persons with their environment” (qtd on 168). Gauntlett also draws on Richard Sennett who shares an interested in the conviviality that one might find in a workshop working alongside others. Sennett (2012), however, focuses more on the divergent thinking processes that come about by way of experts working closely with other experts. Rather than seeing craft as something stagnant, Sennet envisions the potential for creative synergy in the shared workshop space and its potential for a dialogic response. That is, in that a workshop might be a place where different theories and methods are practiced alongside one another, the workshop fosters an environment for creativity that would not be possible if craftspeople worked independent of one another.

In my days spent learning woodcraft, I met several woodworkers who had kept to their own shop, working in their own way, mastering their own skill, but never adding to it. It is for this reason that teachers of writing exhort their students to read, so that they might learn from what others do and through this communion, add to their skill. Sennet’s theory emerges from the agency realized in the marriage of theory and craft (p. 97), but also from the workshop through the idea that we can only learn so much on our own. Sennet’s pursuit of workshop enlightenment emerges through the act of doing craft with others, not so that we will may learn to make more similarly, but so that we might expand our difference. That through working with others, we might achieve a dialogic product. This dialogic space has also been envisioned in the classroom as a dialogic exchange (Kurfiss, 1988). But what might this workshop look like, especially when skills are so diversified and laborers so distributed? The answer lies in the network interface affordances commensurate to technology. Illich (1973) was actually the first to theorize the possibility that computers might link users of similar interests. This connection between users is the basis of what Gee identifies as “affinity spaces,” where learners might experience conditions for human development including: common interests, diverse members, multiple knowledges, solution examples, and mentorship (pp. 175-177). The workshop is actual. virtual. both. at the same time. a connected classroom in
which our students are present/absent, learning/unlearning, affected/disaffected. An exigent inkling to play within the affordances of uncertainty. John C. Bean’s (2011) use of the concept of “brouillon,” typifies this drive “to place in disorder, to scramble,” related etymologically to cauldron and vortex (p. 16). Here artists might experience a “creative period of confusion and disorder. […]”

And all who heard should see them there,  
And all should cry, Beware! Beware!  
His flashing eyes, his floating hair!  
Weave a circle round him thrice,  
And close your eyes with holy dread  
For he on honey-dew hath fed,  
And drunk the milk of Paradise.

–Samuel Taylor Coleridge, “Kubla Khan”

Without the “brouillon,” Bean claims, “we have eliminated from our writing classes the rich creative source of ideas substituted instead of sterile order that leaves us obsessed with correctness, neatness, and propriety.” In this environment, individuals use tools and knowledges and apply them to their own wicked problems. Order may come later, but generally we need a space where students invent in collaborative and dialogic processes. This reflective space, Gee (2013) claims, must be tolerant of failure, where “smart” people build simulations, then act, assessing the outcome of their actions and adjusting their actions based on the results (p. 14). But, I would add, if we want to effect change in our environments, then at some point these assignments need to become very real—more than mere simulations. In short, a classroom needs to be both a workshop where students safely work through the brouillon stages of testing theory and craft, but also, at some point, a place that opens itself to public exposure. In chapter three I discussed the Greek chorus, an embodied group of individuals bound to the same space relative to the scene at hand, singing as part of the whole, though each member retains her unique individual identity, voice, rhythms, and key. That harmony was not privileged over cacophony, yet a relationality amongst the total number was always maintained. How might we locate a choric space alternating between “I” and “we” representative of a singular plural. For we cannot solve our wicked problems alone.
**Technology and Constructionist Pedagogy**

I turn now to a review of constructionist pedagogy in the field of science and engineering education to discuss some of the methods and practices of learning in situated learning environments. The rise of situated learning practices in the university has its roots in constructivist and constructionist theory developed out of the work of Jean Piaget and Seymour Papert respectively. Though Piaget and Papert’s work focused on elementary education, their theories have been adopted and touted by educators in other fields (Duch et al., 2001). This discussion is relevant to the following two sections of digital praxis for multiple reasons, the chief one being the testing of both cooperative and collaborative learning methods and the use of tools in situated learning.

Papert’s theory of constructionism emerged out of Piaget inspired constructivist pedagogies in the 1980s. Piaget (1952) argues that children’s thinking and interests develop in stages. Their views of the world are grounded in logic yet are continually evolving, expanding, plateauing. It is through experience in the world that these epistemological shifts occur. Citing Thomas Kuhn’s paradigms, Edith Ackerman (2001) notes that a child’s development is little different from the development of science as a whole, in that one theory is replaced by a better one. Kuhn (1962) explains this development of “the student” explaining that the “world will seem incommensurable with the one he had inhabited before” (pp. 111-112). Ackerman summarizes Piaget’s three main tenets to learning as follows: 1. Students don’t learn from teaching directly. Instead, they learn through interpreting information and comparing it to what they already know. 2. The conduit method of communication is less effective than we think. Instead, children learn through doing and experiencing. 3. Learning theory must acknowledge the child’s agency in learning. Ackerman argues that Piaget’s theory leaves a space for others to fill in, that it neglects learning styles, contextual learning, applied learning, and emerging media (p. 4). Papert purposely built off of Piaget’s term “constructivism” as the two scholars worked closely together in the 1950’s and 60’s. Papert’s move holds the basic tenets of constructivism, but stresses the role situation and pragmatism play in learning
(p. 5), adding that learning happens best through the assembly, be it things or theories (Harel and Papert, 1991, p. 1). Papert argues that to limit constructionism to making things misses the potentiality of the pedagogy. For example, constructionism’s focus on expressing knowledge promotes various knowledges rather than monist ones, thus adding sociocultural implications for the learning of science. His research with Sherry Turkle (Turkle & Papert, 1990) has shown that through such pedagogies, students who may not be predisposed to learning science actually enjoy a wider egress into the field (p. 132).

This idea that learning is expressed ties him to the language-focused learning theories of Lev Vygotsky. Though scholars like Vygotsky and many other constructivists discussed the role of “externals” in learning, Ackerman argues Papert’s difference manifests itself in three ways: 1. The power of the external to influence the learner. 2. A discussion of the types of externals. 3. The agency of the user in forming a relationship with the externals (Ackerman, p. 5). In that Papert was conducting research in an era when computing education was in its nascent stages, he was uniquely positioned to extend Piaget’s theories of the intrinsically driven learner within the context of emerging technologies and situated group learning.

Collaborative Learning Versus Cooperative Learning

The theory of constructionism’s influence can be seen in the attention researchers have given to developing methodologies that address situated learning environments. These include: active learning, collaborative learning, cooperative learning, and problem based learning (Prince, 2004, p. 1), which often intersect, overlap, and are sometimes conflated. In this discussion I am focusing on the differences between collaborative and cooperative learning as these are the two methods I tested as an exploration of choral group learning.

Collaborative learning involves instructional practices that utilize group learning. In this sense, one can argue that collaborative leaning encompasses all acts of cooperative learning (Millis & Cottell, 1998; Smith & MacGregor, 1992; Cusea, 1992; Bean, 2011).
It should be noted that collaborative learning is inherently group-centric, which is reflected in its assessment of the group at large. College math and science teachers began extolling the benefits of collaborative learning in the late 90s (Johnson et al., 1998; Millis & Cottel, 1997). The methods espoused a set of best practices including group selection using Myers-Briggs Type Indicators, minority distribution, grading, and similarly addressed its difficulties, which include managing transient student populations, morale, work distribution, and the dynamics of synchronous and asynchronous classes (Felder & Brent, 2001). Two different studies (Johnson, 1998; Johnson & Smith, 1998) concluded that compared to individual active learning, collaborative learning yielded greater gains in student achievement and that as group work frequency increased, the effectiveness of the strategy also increased (Springer et al., 1999). Collaborative learning also has its proponents among those researches looking for innovative ways to close the achievement gap in the sciences, some of whom have found that collaborative methods have simultaneously increased minority student achievement and retention in the sciences (Fredericksen, 1998).

Cooperative learning differs from collaborative learning in that while students are working in groups, they are assessed individually (Millis & Cottell, 1997; Feden & Vogel, 2003). The move towards acknowledging the benefits of “collaboration” is at the heart of this definition. As Nobel Laureate James Watson put it, "Nothing new that is really interesting comes without collaboration" (qtd. in Johnson et al., 1998, p. 1). Rather, creative moves happen through working and thinking in communion with other researchers working towards shared goals. To ignore this communion runs counter to the nature of doing scientific work. Not all collaborative learning is cooperative. Often times students assigned to group work don’t work collaboratively, and this is the distinction. (p. 2) Rather, cooperative learning seeks to develop each individual learner by working within the schema of a larger group through attention to the five main tenets to establishing cooperative learning in the classroom (pp. 5-6).

First, the instructor must foster a group ethos among each of the classroom groups. This interdependence is met by designing grading schemes that reward all group
members when each group member in a group achieves above a certain mark. Second, individual assessment must be achieved through individual assessment, communication assessment, and more individualized formative assessments that may be achieved through observation. This serves to foster individual agency within the group ethos. Third, an interpersonal relationality must be fostered among all group members. This may be achieved by restricting group size to 2-4 students. The smaller group dynamics raise the stakes of verbal and non-verbal interpersonal communication. Fourth, underscoring the very theories of group dynamics helps students understand how their own actions and reactions might be better executed. This kind of collaborative learning fosters the leadership and communication skills transferable to other experiences outside of the classroom. And fifth, the metacognitive step. This involves students assessing their respective group dynamics and their own role in that network. In this exercise, students must buy into the idea that their collaborative skills are ever evolving and must be ever adapted to the dynamics of a particular group and group activity. In this assessment, students think about better techniques to maximize individual and group learning, determine how to change behavior to benefit learning, determine communication tactics to be used in certain instances, and realize the successes that collaborative learning makes possible. As a teacher in a collaborative learning environment, our role is to structure collaborative learning situations, adapt the learning and control for situational dynamics, and intervene when necessary. In that cooperative learning inherently emphasizes communication skills and leadership, the studies that assess these gains are important measures of the method’s effectiveness. The research clearly shows collaborative learning positively affects these factors (Johnson & Johnson, 1989; Panitz, 1999; Terenzini et al., 2001).

**Conclusion: Dancing Between Inquiry and Advocacy**

In my classroom we attend to the wicked problem of improving our university in a culture that is resistant to change. In designing a pedagogy to achieve this goal and thus its end of an ethical heterotopia, a more ethical local/global relationality, I have
approached my classroom space using the theories and methodologies of a digital design classroom focused on critical making as performed in situated group learning environments. This pedagogy emphasizes a concept that I have explored in my first chapter, that of a sense of dunamis, our fittingness in our local/global complex overlapping networks of human and non-human relationships. As a result, this is an eco-ethical approach that recognizes that when we attend to one problem in one location, we might also affect a whole host of other factors outside of that location. Most importantly, it emphasizes interpellaion, that we are called to this complex location because ultimately we are, through our own makings, the designer of our scene. Otherwise there is a procedurality to spaces and places, to their policies and representations that begin to design us and mitigate our relationality. A pedagogy of disruption takes this design approach to the classroom space locating the student/agent at the networked scene of writing. The change-agent is us. But in our age of supermodernity, we lose ourselves in the complexity of our digital tools and their hidden functions, in this blinding speed of space-time. It is through inquiry that we slow things down, that we answer the call to the scene, but it is only through rhetoric that we establish our relationality with others.
CHAPTER SIX
DIGITAL PRAXIS

Introduction

This dissertation section details my classroom praxis utilizing a design approach to the digital rhetoric classroom. The first section details my implementation of Esri Survey 1-2-3 and Esri ARC GIS (a proprietary GIS system offered through the Esri Company) in a FYC (first-year composition classroom), in which we built smart maps and web applications for visualizing and analyzing data. The project offered a challenge to students to collect and analyze geographic data and then to tell stories and formulate arguments linking space, place, time, and rhetoric. By implementing this methodology of languaging space and place using GIS, my students came to know rhetorics as a grammar for our relationality in these spaces and places at a given time. I see the potential for GIS as an example of a post-pedagogy tool that might be used to effect a new way of seeing a campus, state, or even problems that many in a given community might tend to overlook. Through the use of story maps, these findings can easily be circulated via social media as examples of public rhetoric issuing forth from the classroom space. This article was published by *Computers and Composition Online in the Spring of 2018*.

Additionally, I relate my praxis building *The Better Clemson App* in this same FYC classroom. “The Better Clemson Mobile App” is an interactive game designed to highlight problems at Clemson University. The point of the game is to draw the user into the physical space where an actual problem occurs. To do so, my students employ basic password coding skills and QR codes to ensure the user moves through different locations around campus. By the end of the game the full rhetorical situation has been established and the user is given a choice to act. The point of the game is to offer the user an opportunity to effect change, thus transforming the user from actor to agent.

I work with GIS mapping and place-based mobile apps in my classroom to situate a re-design. Such practices, coupled with a rhetoric classroom grounded in an early Greek understanding of space and place as unfixed, in need of attention, affords a new model

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for civic education in FYC focused on exploring and testing the intersections of digital and space/place rhetorics. These pedagogies challenge my students to examine how we might utilize rhetorics as a tool for designing for a more civil and equitable society.
We might argue that GIS (Geographic information systems) are simply a way of visualizing tabular data on a map. But if we limit ourselves to such a definition, we'd be missing all that GIS can bring to the rhetoric and composition classroom. This paper details my implementation of Esri Survey 1-2-3 and Esri ARC GIS (a proprietary GIS system offered through the Esri Company) in a FYC (first-year composition classroom), in which we built smart maps and web applications for visualizing and analyzing data. The project offered a challenge to students to collect and analyze geographic data in order to tell stories and formulate arguments linking people and their movement in space, place, and time.

I argue that GIS does more than mere data visualization; it enables the user to examine human beings’ relationality in space and place over time. We can locate and visualize happy places, sad places, sick places—places in need of attention, all by looking at a GIS powered map. We can even examine how one’s perception of space and place contrasts with the reality of a given space and place in a given time. Using GIS helps my students understand how our knowing—doing—making intricately connects to not only our movement and position in space, but in our treatment of these spaces, our design of these places, and how these places, in turn, design us. Rhetoric is the grammar in all this—the very grammar that governs our relationality.

Most people don’t realize that they use GIS every day. It's that thing in our smartphones that positions us in relation to the satellites and every other GIS device or mapped location. We use this relationality to find ourselves when we are out and about, or to better understand our weather without having to step across our threshold or even get out of bed. Along with locating ourselves, we use GIS as a tool to position ourselves in spaces and places or for moving more effectively across those spaces. In that we can track our location, we are simultaneously being tracked—our location fed through algorithms that bombard us with location-based content. We must not forget that the military first developed GIS as a tool for surveying and surveilling, and that many of the
questions of its ethical application in our own period differ little from this earlier one. GIS’s progression from military to the “free market” has led to applications equally strategic and belligerent in quality. In the age of GIS, consumers not only search for goods and services nearby, they are lured to these nearby goods and services. For the advertiser in the age of ubiquitous computing, GIS governed mobility as accessed through a multi-tool such as a cell phone, allows greater affordances than any preceding advertising medium. One minute a user searches a map for a specific location or good and the next they find themselves negotiating content in other applications and pop-ups that package individualized geographic specific marketing.

Public and private enterprises utilize GIS as a tool for a wide range of applications ranging from criminal justice to agriculture, transportation and urban planning to environmental planning. Esri ARC GIS, the proprietary GIS system that runs on the majority of government, industry, and university computers, has built a massive system of databases and powerful tools for visualizing data. Esri ARC GIS requires licenses that force the user to maintain a contract rather than a one-off consumer purchase, a model that does not suit all users. There are open source versions of GIS that include Q-GIS, but these programs lack the amenities and the turnkey add-on applications that students can easily utilize to package and communicate data. Google Earth is another proprietary GIS system allowing some functionality that overlaps with Esri ARC GIS, but in industry, Esri ARC GIS remains the standard. As Adobe Software is to design, Esri is to GIS; it is therefore in any university’s interest to build GIS labs that utilize Esri ARC GIS software. The model of “shared community” within Esri ARC GIS platform allows the company to add value to the product through user labor, a shrewd practice replicated throughout digital capitalism via “community forums” whose net effect simultaneously decreases labor and increases corporate profits. In that we utilize and circulate Esri products that bear the Esri logo, we inadvertently supply labor and create capital for the company.

This double-edge to GIS technology extends to how the tool might be used in practice. If we grant GIS too much authority, it becomes another tool to mandate
fixedness. In the discourse of cultural geography, scholars warn of the longstanding power dynamics inherent in geography and the implications new technology may have on our thinking and practice. While GIS provides a geographic tool that enables the user to visualize spatial data, it does not supply the requisite theory that might effect change or garner justice. For example, Edward Soja (2010) mentions the role early GIS tools played in the consolidation and desegregation of school districts in the 1950s and 1960s, but regrets that the will to consolidate schools fairly and democratically was lacking. He blames the gap between a more ethical theoretical formulation of communal living and its everyday practice (p. 51). As researchers and teachers, we are ever blazing the clearer route between theory and practice, but if our students can't follow these connections, nor communicate them, then what is the value of the practice? Additionally, scholars like J.B. Harley (2001) worry about the authority granted to GIS, which he believes brings "a new arrogance in geography about its supposed value as a mode of access to reality" (p. 231). This proves especially concerning when one considers that GIS uses tabular data to generate data spatially, even though such mappings and visuals are only as accurate as the data they extrapolate.

We should also be concerned with the implications of research performed from both remote locations and at great distances as is possible with GIS, especially where sociocultural data is being gathered or analyzed. As David Sibley (1995) notes, “I would suggest that if geography is to represent difference authentically and to challenge exclusionary tendencies, practitioners need to transgress disciplinary and personal boundaries and to come much closer to the people whose problems provide the primary justification for the existence of the subject” (p. 185). Where sociocultural investigations are at play, especially factors that involve marginalized groups, investigations should take place as close to the sites as possible. Sibley also raises ethical questions about who is doing the work—and who is excluded from doing it. To make his point, Sibley profiles the work of W.E.B. DuBois as an example of how knowledge can be systematically excluded. As a result, instructors should take precautions as regards the kinds of projects their students explore, but at the same time, imagine what more we might explore if our
university spaces were themselves equitable. As with any tool, GIS’s utilization will only be as thoughtful as the researcher doing the work.

But on the other hand, if there is a technology that has the potential to show the *unfixedness* of spaces and places, and perhaps the *unfixedness* of the user within them, then GIS technology may be one. As an education tool, in Seymour Papert's constructionist sense, we might consider how GIS can open pathways to learning by creating new opportunities for expression and experimentation (cf. Gargarian, 1996). Constructionists often work from the writings of Lev Vygotsky, who emphasizes the mental awareness learners gain through grappling with external activities (Shaw, 1996). GIS as a tool offers new lines of inquiry and exposes students to new data, both of which students must first negotiate and then communicate. When constructionist thinkers like Gregory Gargarian consider a revolution in education or a revolution in the thinking of a students, they point to the writings of Jean Piaget’s and his notions of assimilation and accommodation wherein “the learner can assimilate new ideas that are only slightly different from his own, whereas the learner has to change his perspective to accommodate ideas that are very different from his own. Revolution requires support for accommodative thought” (p. 156). In this sense, GIS provides a ready tool to expose our students to new data that can challenge their thinking and facilitate learning.

In the constructionist sense, we need tools that can inform student understanding of location as constituted in socio-spatial terms. Sibley (1995) relates how spaces are constructed in relation to both ideology and power relations. The mapping of those spaces can reveal this difference and shed light on how institutional practices produce geographies of exclusion, but in turn, explain how these geographies reinforce individual’s thinking. As Sibley puts it, “space and society are implicated in the construction of the boundaries of the self but that the self is also projected onto society and onto space” (p. 86). With GIS we have the potential to visualize networks of flowing data and the usability to navigate its complexity. On the other hand, geographers also possess the ability to impose new borders with their data sets. Doreen Massey (1993) discusses the complexities of power geometries and the shrinking of space time as it
relates to specific individuals and groups, something that is not easily quantified through
generalized mappings, snapshots of a world in flux. Instead of seeing maps as lines
denoting stagnant borders that divide spaces, places, people, she challenges the
geographer to show how lines connect these elements in complex, changing ways. How
might we utilize GIS in the composition to map these very relations?

In recent decades, GIS has gained recognition as a science in its own right
(Goodchild, 1992; Rhind, 1992; Abler, 1993; Dobson, 1993; Goodchild, 2004) and has
inspired a wide range of writings on the implications of this technology. In 2005, The
National Research Council published a text touting the benefits of using GIS in the K-12
classroom explaining that GIS fosters spatial literacy for everyday as well as for
professional purposes. Minsung Kim & Robert Bednarz (2013) used the report to identify
the habits of mind that tend towards the spatial. These subdomains are identified by the
authors as “pattern recognition, spatial description, visualization, spatial concept use, and
spatial tool use” (p. 165). Kim & Bednarz measured how college-age students new to GIS
perceived their own growth in terms of spatial literacy over the course of a unit of study.
Their research showed that overall, students participating in GIS coursework believed
they had improved their spatial habits of mind (pp. 173-174); however, these same self-
reporters did not perceive a substantial improvement in the use of spatial tools.

GIS methods and practice have also expanded into the humanities. David Cooper
and Ian Gregory (2011) offer an excellent example of a methodology and project that
uses GIS to incorporate story maps in literary studies in examining the travels of Burns
and Coleridge in the Lakes Region. However, while humanities scholars such as Mike
Crang (2015) recognize the shifts tools such as GIS bring in terms of mobilizing texts and
archives in the humanities, he is doubtful that the tools themselves will bring conceptual
advances. Other humanities scholars (Hawkins et al., 2015) see the benefits of GIS and
other digital tools in their ability to aid in developing new types of practices, promoting
better public communication, and effecting greater political consequences. In that I am
currently teaching a student community that is largely white, privileged, and resistant to
change, it is for these generative reasons that Hawkins et al. provide, that GIS proves
interesting in my research. Due to my own positionality as a vulnerable teacher in a territorialized classroom, I see the potential for GIS as an example of a post-pedagogy tool that might be used to effect a new way of seeing our campus, state, and the problems that many in our community tend to overlook. The insights my students make can then be packaged and circulated via social media as examples of public rhetoric issuing forth from our classroom space.

For my own classroom practice, I used the model of Zhao et al. (2002) as a best practice for implementing technology in the classroom and as a checklist for designing this unit. This model focuses on the dynamics of teacher, the technological project, and the context of its implementation. In preparation for this unit, I enrolled in a semester-long GIS training session and conducted test projects to examine how I might best use these tools in my classroom. When it came time for my students to begin the project, I was prepared with specific learning heuristics as well as design constraints intended to limit our research parameters so as to yield the most significant results. After my students had gathered their data, I implemented another best practice by bringing in a GIS specialist to the classroom to help me walk my students through visualizing data and organizing it into a GIS Story Map. This proved especially important in that the university at which I teach has a GIS center where I could afterwards send my students if they had additional issues. I gratefully thank and fully credit our GIS center in that they provided me with all of the support to fully realize success in the implementation of this unit.

Theory

The ancient Greeks understood the rhetorical power of space and place. Our rhetorical terminology is even rooted in terms that denote place and geography: topos, polis, and chōra—locations one might have found on an ancient Greek map. These maps or ēs periodos, translated as “circuit of the earth,” would have guided
the great *theōros* (tourist) Solon in his efforts “to see the world,” what the Greeks referred to in the infinitive as “*theòriēs*” (McEwan, 1993, p. 30).

It is not just our rhetorical terms that are grounded in space and place. In *Metaphors we live by* (2003), George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, take a cultural linguistic approach to examining our metaphors arguing that it only follows that our language for *being* derives from our experiences in spaces and places. Spatialization metaphors are rooted in physical and cultural experience; they are not randomly assigned. A metaphor can serve as a vehicle for understanding a concept only by virtue of its experiential basis. As the authors put it, “We are physical beings, bounded and set off from the rest of the world by the surface of our skins, and we experience the rest of the world as outside us. Each of us is a container, with a bounding surface and an in-out orientation. We project our own in-out orientation onto other physical objects that are bounded by surfaces” (p. 29). In adhering to the container theory, we can discuss language as grammar for that relationality. A grammar for our *being* in relation to other *beings*, places, and things. We *move forward* in life or *fall behind*. We are *looking up* or *feeling down*.

These metaphors for space and place have implications for how we see and move through the world in our current period and how we locate ourselves in the overlapping networks of the local and global. In *Placeways: A Theory of the Human Environment* (1988), E.V. Walter discusses the Greek word *theoria* to great lengths. For the Greeks, *theoria* meant something more than seeing sights or touring ancient realms, it meant *un-concealing* the full meaning of a place (p. 2). Walter, working from Dorothy Emmet, describes *theoria* as “…a complex but organic mode of active observation—a perceptual system that included asking questions, listening to stories and local myths, and feeling as well as hearing and seeing. It encouraged an open reception to every kind of emotional, cognitive, symbolic, imaginative, and sensory experience—a holistic practice of thoughtful awareness that engaged all senses and feelings” (p. 19). *Theoria*, in this sense, is thus more akin to practice than *episteme*. Walter also relates that *theoria*, this practice of seeing, closely relates to another word of the same root "thea" (to see), that
word being “therapy” (p. 20). Therapy derives from therapia, meaning in “close attendance” when applied to places. But, as with many Greek words, its meaning ebbs, flows, flourishes in application, even in its very ambiguity. For theoria is a supple word, meaning cultivation when we think of farming, acting as a parent in the case of children, a courtship in the case of lovers, an act of flattery in the case of when one interacts with another of a higher status, or an act of worship when used in relation to the gods. Walter would refer to such research of place as “topistics,” that is, a study of placeways, an interpretation of the “experience and meaning of a place” (p. 5). Through the visualization of the data, the researcher can explore and express the nomos, the ways of being in a place, the character of a place.

Christian Weisser and Sidney Dobrin (2012) define this experience of writing in a place as “ecocomposition”: “the relationships between writers, writing and all places, spaces, sites, and locations” (p. 13). Though the term “ecocomposition” never really caught on in composition, we can see its value in that it offers a term for the languaging of networks and the rhetorics that govern these networks in the writing of ecologies. 

Nedra Reynolds (2004) continues this line of research into our relationship with others in spaces and places by formulating a writing pedagogy situated in cultural geography:

How do people experience space, and what might that tell us about how they experience other forms of the social world? How do students, writers, or learners experience spaces and places in the everyday, and how might this inform cultural and material theories of discourse? What do “sense of place,” pathways, habits, or dwelling have to do learning? (p.2)

Reynolds asks us to question why it might it be beneficial to teach rhetoric as a concept that is inherently tied to space and place? She also offers some final thoughts about how geographical literacy impacts students, explaining that …

Human geography can give students and researchers a richer understanding of place and its role in the formation of identity and the production of ideology. Critical attention to maps, what they show and what they leave out, as well as comparisons between maps and “actual” places can help students to understand the difficulties of representation as well as the complexities of fieldwork (p. 50).
A better understanding of geography, Reynolds argues, “complicates our thinking about places in that we are able to realize difference” (p. 51). In this paper, I am arguing that GIS is an apt tool for helping students realize this difference. This visualization tool offers us an ingress into spaces, places, and society’s workings within them and details the complications in the juxtaposition of our habitus, doxa, and nomos.

**Method**

From the first day of classes, I attempt to ground and unground my first year composition classroom in the rhetorics of space and place. On our first meeting, my students learn about the topoi and how we might explore or find our point of stasis within those places. We question cases of when it proves advantageous to hold ground or move off it. We discuss the polis and its intricate weaving of people and activity (McEwan, 1993, p. 81), that center of our collective thinking, that most civil of places, where we might all come together, or move nearer if we wish to live in harmony with one another. We think also about the agora, that gently sloped Athenian space of commerce and public debate. How in our digital world, we are governed by algorithmic protocols designed to aid consumption by expanding the commercial power of the agora over its public function, how these algorithms and other technologies control or impede our coming together—and what might happen if we replaced algorithms with agora-rithms—and what might this look like? We also discuss the power of the chora, that place outside of the walls of the topoi, where we become something different than what we are, that place that we wander into, wash out of. We learn that theory is a way of seeing, a way of thinking, a “way” we test, must test, through our critical practice.

We begin our GIS unit by conducting a group data collection. This task teaches students how to use the Esri Survey 1-2-3 data collection tool and it introduces them to the kinds of problems that might be interesting to research using this data collection tool. In my own research, I am interested in how designs of space and place influence behavior. On the campus where I teach, the design allows for dangerous automobile ingresses that allow cars to penetrate deep into the center of campus, thus allowing
students to drop off and pick up their friends in heavy pedestrian areas. I present this
design problem to my students using stasis theory. Stasis theory is the metacognitive
thread that runs through this project as my students fix and unfix their thinking in relation
to the problem and to one another. The following shows how this heuristic might be used
by a sample group:

1. Conjecture: Did something happen? What are the facts?
   *Our campus has a dangerous mix of pedestrians and automobile traffic.*
2. Definition: What is the issue of importance?
   *Cars are cutting through the center of campus to drop off students.*
3. Why is this an important question?
   *This increases traffic and poses a safety risk to pedestrians.*
4. What is the question you are proposing?
   *How can we track where these drop-off hot spots are located so as to draw
   attention to the problem?*

Working through stasis theory allows my students to explore the implications of this
design problem on our campus. This heuristic proves especially powerful in groups in
that each individual’s experiences add to the wealth of knowledge that will serve as
evidence for making claims. When I introduce the idea that we have many other design
problems on our campus to which we can attend, I can see the skepticism on many of my
students’ faces. Most of my students are really happy to be at Clemson University. Really
excited that we have a good football team, and not quick to find fault. But once they
engage in critical thinking and conversation, students tend to agree that we do have
problems on our campus and that we need to consider their many implications. Most of
my students have witnessed accidents or near-accidents on campus involving buses, cars,
bikes, and pedestrians. I also hear groups taking parts in conversations about health
concerns, aesthetics, as well as other matters concerning our general campus culture and
well-being.

The next step in this practice is teaching my students to learn how to make,
manage, and disseminate data collection tools. I begin by requiring my students to
download the Esri Survey 1-2-3 app onto their phone which turns their mobile phone into
a data collection tool. To teach students to collect data, I create a sample data collection
tool in class. The tool asks them to collect data whenever they see a car dropping off or picking up students. They mark the location on a map, note how many students are dropped off, and take a photo of the automobile. This sample exercise gives them a good idea of the potential for a data collection tool. Outside of my teaching, I participated in a similar data collection where a large group of students each working in specific grids mapped the various trees on our campus. We were then able to merge our data and in a short amount of time collect a considerable amount of data that we could not have managed individually. I build the data collection tool for our project in class so the students can watch and learn the different Survey 1-2-3 tool options that are available so as to prepare them for the time they will be designing their own data collection or survey tool. Once I finish my tool, I can easily share it with my students through email allowing us to collaborate in the data collection. One of the benefits of this data collection tool is that it can also be used as a survey tool that can easily be disseminated through email or via social media to students on our campus or even to individuals outside it.

I ask my students to start thinking about the kinds of problems and questions that they think they might like to study using this technology. How can we use the survey tool to ask questions about problems on our campus that speak to the spaces and places we inhabit and how might the data we collect help to complicate our thinking about these same spaces?

By the following class my students have collected some 40-50 data points that show where cars are dropping off and picking up students. I share the data we have collected with the class and together we look at how we might analyze the data using the Esri Survey 1-2-3 software. Then, I show the students how we might visualize that tabular data using ARC GIS by creating a data map, and how to export our data map into a web application that will eventually allow my students to communicate and disseminate their findings.

The homework assignment that night is to think about other questions we might pose that address problems on our campus. Using an online discussion thread, I ask that my students write their proposal following stasis theory. At the beginning of the next
class, I let the students read through the proposals and comment on / add to the proposals they would like to study. By examining the reply thread, I am able to gauge the popularity of various proposals and start moving students into groups that interest them. But before I do, I also want my students to think of state and nationally-based problems that emerge from examining data/map sets as a heuristic. Based on the available data/map sets in Esri Arc GIS, what new questions might we ask that will explore how we think about the spaces and places we inhabit? For example, one data/map set details polluted rivers and streams in South Carolina. Upon viewing the map, my class is generally disturbed to see that so many streams in our state are polluted. One student suggested that we might survey our local Clemson student population to see where each lives and whether or not they believe their local streams and rivers to be clean or polluted.

From the twenty-six data map sets that I gave to students, my classes decided to address the following questions:

1. If you live in South Carolina, do you think water pollution is a problem? (USA Polluted Waters)
2. Do you think crime is a problem? (2016 USA PERSONAL CRIME)
3. Where have you seen the best night sky? (EARTH AT NIGHT)
To gather our data about space and place, emotion and affect, each group is asked to build a survey using Esri SURVEY 1-2-3. I require my students to ask an array of questions, qualitative and quantitative, multiple choice and short answer, as well as one question that requires the respondent to drop a pin giving a geographical location. The final step in the process is for each group to distribute the survey. Each group needs a sample size of at least 40 respondents, the minimum needed to activate software that generates graphs and word clouds for analysis. In a subsequent class, I hold an Esri ARC GIS training session where students individually build map applications (story maps). For this part of the assignment, each group member needs to access the group survey data and generate an individual map application. While I encourage my students to continue working in groups, each student has to develop an individual project for an individual grade (Johnson et al., 1998).

In ARC GIS mapping, each student learns to:
1. manage data and assets
2. import and manipulate survey layer data
3. manipulate map appearance and symbology (color, value, size, class)
4. define and design legends using first, second, and third degree labeling
5. add and manipulate various base maps

Fig. 6.2. “Polluted Water of South Carolina” (2016). Student Sample Story Map. Permission for use granted by student.

Once students build a map that best represents their data set, they export their maps to Esri Story Maps. Esri Story Maps offers a variety of turnkey formats that allow the user to customize a story map from a stock template. One advantage to this communication system is that all aspects of the application may be manipulated to best visualize the data. It also allows embedding so that videos and images can be easily incorporated, even allowing story maps to be embedded within story maps. I should say that Esri Story Maps are not great tools for oral presentations; rather, they are tools that
afford usability in our communications, which has a great benefit from a teaching design standpoint. Rather than creating a presentation, I ask my students to think about usability and how their user might come to experience their Story Map in both a meaningful and functional way. Students are given an additional two days to finalize their individual designs, then given a few minute in their respective groups at the beginning of the next class to problem solve any issues. During this revision period, I stress the concept of affinity spaces (Gee, 2013): the idea that students might find peers in class and outside it with whom they might collaborate, each helping the other wrestle through the trials of learning new technologies.

To present their work, the class forms new groups containing one member from each survey question group. In this setting, students use stasis theory to explain their work to their classmates and then show off the features of their communication design. After this shift to another group, many of my students express a desire to further revise their work based on the work that they see emerging out of other groups, so I allow additional revisions. In that I want to see my students do their best work, I see this agreement as a win-win.

Conclusions

Can we argue as Walter (1998) does, that theory is closely related to therapy? (p. 20). Walter points out that that therapia has a meaning of close attendance when applied to places, but that as with many Greek words, therapia’s denotation is informed by the complexity of its usage. Like a parent or lover, it flatters us, courts us, but it also attends to us, watering and weeding the rows of golden wheat. It was also a term used by those caretakers of sacred places to describe being in those places. Perhaps through this close attendance our students and their audiences might also stand to benefit.

Esri Arc GIS allows my students to walk through spaces and practice topography, that is, to ask questions about what we see and think as we move through spaces and places. In this way, my students can look for local data that affects our campus and make connections between design, thinking, and action. These practices of examining the
rhetorics of space and place become a work of cultural geography in that we begin to see how these social spaces are produced. While important to learn to see the design, it is more important to begin thinking about how we might change the design.

Though this is my second time teaching this unit, I continue to learn much about how Esri ARC GIS works. In that most of my students are unfamiliar with Esri ARC GIS, they come to rely heavily on affinity spaces inside and outside of the classroom. My students this second time around have found new ways to do things that I asked of them in this unit, and have had the advantage of building upon the quality of the models produced the previous semester, replicating what works, approaching what doesn't in a different manner.

Looking for problems on our campus or in our state is not a priority for the college students I teach—they have other concerns. I see this project as part of the post-pedagogy I facilitate through my classroom practice. My hope is that these texts become what Nathaniel Rivers and Ryan Weber (2011) describe as “multiple, intertextual documents that could affect specific institutional changes” (p. 190). Reynolds (2004) argues that while it is important to understand how the socio-spatial “becomes imprinted upon readers and writers,” it is also important to note how readers and writers “leave their mark, too, on the socio-spatial world” (p. 44). While I hope this becomes a first step for many of my students on a path towards agency by asking questions and searching for answers, I also hope that their story maps will circulate beyond our campus via social networks, challenging the Aristotelian knowing—doing—making of their families and peers, contributing to real difference-making in our local and state community.
Digital Praxis #2
The Better Clemson App

Introduction

This FYC digital praxis tasks my composition students with building a place-based mobile phone app designed for a user-centered experience. The Better Clemson App, and though it is not really an app in the downloadable sense, is a web-based application that offers user tools for learning and making. Working in groups, my students theorize, invent, and build-out the project in the same way an app might come to fruition. I have assigned this project in eight sections of FYC as a challenge to my rhetoric and composition students to work collaboratively in thinking about problems on our Clemson campus and theorizing how we might solve them. We design the app for mobile devices with the intention of utilizing ubiquitous computing to promote mobility into targeted spaces; that is, we want to use technology to draw the user out into the spaces and places we are theorizing so that the user can see them firsthand. The goal is to turn the app user into a change agent by first persuading the app user to act then giving them the tools to realize the agency to do so. To draw the user into the physical space where the problem occurs, my students employ gamification techniques that incorporate basic password coding skills or QR codes as a way to regulate information and to ensure the user moves through different locations around campus. In more recent versions, students used virtual reality to provide a similarly embodied experience. By the end of the game, the full complexity of the rhetorical situation has been revealed and the user is given a choice to act.

It must be said that my students have difficulty admitting that we have problems on our campus, that we are in fact operating in spaces of inequality and injustice, and that they themselves might possesses the agency to move our campus towards a more equitable solution. These are matters I wish to overcome. Over the course of this project, my students have taken on campus parking, access and mobility issues, dietary concerns, football ticket shortages, a lack of diversity, and transportation design among other problems. Ultimately, it is the goal of this project to offer both makers and users the
opportunity to think about the places on our campus in which we dwell, their designs, and how we might better attend to them.

Theory

Locating and Attending to Crisis

The English term “globalization” inspires no agency in its user. It connotes distant workers in flip-flops, Triple-E super container ships each carrying 20,568 twenty-foot containers, local factory closings, the methridden grin of the kid next-door with whom you used to toss a football. Under the auspices of “globalization,” we surrender our relationality, our history, our identity. If only we could look at the same situation in the other direction, then perhaps we might realize the interdependence of human beings. For Marc Augé (2008), the term “globalization” differs from French “mondialisation” which connotes both this sprawling consumer market and information network as well as a call to locate oneself within a greater relationality in space and time, what Auge calls a “planetary awareness or consciousness” (p. X) Rather than loss of agency, this “mondialisation” inspires the individual to consider the ecological connections and sense of moment inherent in any part as it relates to a whole. It is from this frame of “mondialisation” that Auge makes his arguments about non-places.

In Auge’s schema, the television and computer have replaced the hearth, and as a result, we drift into a placelessness. In this “supermodernity,” as Auge calls it, place becomes non-place. Signage repeats, circulates both digitally and materially as time accelerates. Inside or outside, we breathe the same casino pumping oxygen, we lose time, focus, and our obligations similarly diminish. It is perhaps only in thresholds and liminal spaces that we rediscover time and identity, at the borders between non-places, when we pay by credit card or a cooperate agent or cop asks for identification (pp. 24-5). We love the long shot. The satellite view. We love the idea of space while we reflect on our couch. We consume it rather than gain agency within it. It escapes us in our movement through sprawling reproductions of reproductions. This is what Auge refers to as accelerated
spaces—non places that blend in together. We can go from one Walmart to the next and experience no change. Space becomes a “decoy” (p. 27) in which we establish our relationality to commodities through consumption of them to reproduce the image of something other than what we are. We mimic the ubiquity of material non-places through our hyper reproductive practices on social media.

The actual and virtual make for similar fodder as we relay the iniquity of our posthuman being. We consume Facebook and its tight concentric circle of algorithmic “friends” in algorithmic space time. We post in this algorithmic space time, unsure of our relationality, until it is established through the acknowledgement of a “Facebook like.” Auge argues that supermodernity is an overabundance of these kinds of events in the present virtual and actual that makes it hard to process events in the past or to move beyond our present moment. Am I here? Perhaps. In these homogenous zones, locating crisis can prove difficult. For Auge, the place of learning is the ultimate utopia (p. X), the quintessential non-place. But as educators, we must commit ourselves to work that proves otherwise. We must work space by space to transform our community of learning into an ethical heterotopia. This is achieved by classroom practices that both establish new places and attend to old ones. This is an ecological, cross disciplinary undertaking to seek out and engage our local and global overlapping networks. While this act of locating agency in space and time is an effort to keep our universities from becoming non-places, or to establish place within where currently none reside, it also stands as an effort that, in an ecological sense, will extend to places outside a community of learning, trickling out through virtual and actual channels.

I argue that in the non-places of a university, the spectacle often re/places the site of interpellation, the site of learning, and that a space without interpellation is a stagnant one. It is the role of the thinker to engage this stagnant space even when there is nothing. Jenny Rice (2012) argues, using Gorgias, that we possess the power to invent when there is nothing (159). To make nothing something and something nothing. This engagement with the world occurs in both private and public registers. Rice uses the term “exceptional public subject” to define an individual who occupies a position between the
public and private (p. 5). To explain this individual, Rice compares what the ancient Greeks referred to as the concepts of *idios and koinos*, our private versus public orientation. The term “idiot” emerges from the former, as one who is unable to relate to the world, giving the reader a sense of how the ancient Greeks might have viewed one who stands apart from the tribe. Rather than disparage the solitary or private character, Rice complicates the distances between these subjects by recognizing the affective relationality achieved in a private register and how it contributes to the ways in which an individual grapples with their relationality across registers. She states that both “the participant and non-participant are in a relation to claims about public crisis” (p. 62). The exceptional public subject may appear apathetic, yet this register plays a role in public discourse through an individual’s everydayness.

As an example, she cites the network of everyday discourse that contributes to a moment of crisis. In the case of Austin, Texas, beset by developers in the nineties, she argues that bumper stickers, graffiti, and everyday conversations provoked a large public response that promoted both preservation and thoughtful development. Rice relates that in an ecological sense, this everyday discourse often leads to larger shifts in thinking. Rice argues that while the *idios* deserves more credit than it is afforded, as teachers of composition we want to move our students toward a more public orientation in the classroom and beyond it. She claims that “If we genuinely wish to encourage sustainable thinking and intervention into place crisis […] we must make public discourse as productive as possible” (p. 17). To achieve this goal of creating a public subject, Rice turns towards rhetoric through “questions, wonder, inquiry, investigation, archive” (p. 196).

Rice’s blending of a discourse of inquiry and rhetoric is a good method for what I am trying to achieve in this project. I would like my students to explore how we blend the counterparts of inquiry and rhetoric to position ourselves as interlocutors and rhetors in the geometries of *being*. I am asking my students to locate themselves in these networks through *rhetorical interaction* that is inherently inquisitive and rhetorical. We are, Rice reminds us, called to the scene of rhetoric (p. 46). Such an inquiry, such a rhetoric, is a
call for understanding our complex positionality. It is through rhetoric that we thus engage a public to a moment of crisis, but it is through inquiry that we complicate and connect that positionality, and it is again through rhetoric that we argue the value of that relationality and thus establish our relationality with others. Inquiry and rhetoric go hand-in-hand.

Part of my argument in this dissertation is that we are ever relating to one another in both public and private spaces as both rhetors and interlocutors, and as a result, I have designed my classroom as a public space rather than merely a protopublic one. Not a simulation, but a mutation of the world at large. This mutation is a managed place grounded by ethical inquiry, one that re/places the non-places that have been arranged for me by the policies of the university and that favor white, privileged students rather than a diverse student population representative of multiple knowledges. In the ethical heterotopia, we ever negotiate this continuum between advocacy and inquiry. We realize places through our management of power relations, rather than submitting to non-places that have been readied for us. We are called to this task of inquiring after problems and attending to them, but also thinking creatively about how to persuade others to care.

Kenneth Burke’s (1969) pentad gives us a heuristic for thinking about how we might transfer agency to our users in the most effective manner. As Charles Kneupper (1979) points out, it is beneficial to think about how Burke’s pentad and pentadic ratios might be applied as a heuristic procedure for motivating a particular audience. Kneupper asks us to think about how we can use the pentad to generate motive or to adapt discourse to suit the audience through our manipulation of pentadic ratio to suite our audience. As an example, Kneupper stresses the role of ratio as he relates to his students whom he finds both idealistic and conservative. As a result, he tends towards discourses that emphasize agent and purpose ratios.

To help my students understand how speakers utilize and adjust these ratios to manipulate their audiences, we discuss David Ling’s (1970) “A pentadic analysis of Senator Edward Kennedy’s address to the people of Massachusetts.” In this essay, Ling analyzes Kennedy’s speech to his Massachusetts constituents following an automobile
accident that resulted in the death of his passenger. In the speech, Kennedy, who had been drinking on the night of the accident, minimizes his own personal agency in the episode instead emphasizing the agent-scene ratio which framed him as a victim of circumstances. In a subsequent move in the speech, Kennedy masterfully transfers the agency to his audience offering them little choice, if his audience believes his tale to be true, to support his bid to keep his seat in the U.S. Senate. While my students are focusing on different outcomes in their own projects, Ling’s explanation provides an excellent example of how they might motivate their user to act. Inherent in this shift of agency are tools. Tools make possible the realization of agency and should be a consideration of any persuasive design.

On a final note, the virtual-actual continuum complicates Burke’s pentad providing my students with myriad options for composing their app in both virtual and actual scenes. In what ways is user agency limited in the virtual and in what ways might it enhanced? And where does the agency reside as humans consider their relationship with technology? R.L. Rutsky (1999), for example, argues that in the “high tech” we often are led to believe that the agency resides in the technology rather than the user—that technological functions are somehow separate from human agency (pp. 18-19). Perhaps the agency is shifting to the machine…and that perhaps we like it that way. Whether valid/invalid or true/false, I find this virtual-actual continuum most useful for discussing how tools afford the user agency.

**Tuning**

We can think of Burke’s pentad algebraically as a system of finite ratios, but we might also listen to what these equations sound like. There is a tuning to any manipulation of the design. When the agent encounters the act-scene ratio, the combination of variables produces a vibration. In *Rhythmanalysis* (2004), Henri LeFebvre explores the rhythms that form when we combine place, time, and activity and develops and tests his method for analyzing spaces in what he refers to as “rhythmanalysis.” His goal is to measure these variables and thus calibrate the rhythms
that form in the production of space. As when one listens to music, he asks us to consider how repetition and difference exhibit themselves across time, only in this case we do so by examining activity in space and through our consideration of other elements such as the mechanical and the organic, the cyclical and linear, the continuous and discontinuous, the quantitative and non-quantitative (p. 19). Examining these elements aids our understanding the interplay of individuals, design, and time in the formation of unique rhythms of a given place, but more importantly, this analysis lays out the groundwork for both inquiry and critique into the design of these spaces, our representations of those spaces, and our habits within them.

Richard Coyne (2010) believes that technological devices can similarly be used to locate these rhythms and that with these devices users can produce added value to their wanderings (p. 185). One example of such a practice is that of Adam Strantz (2015), who details how his students used GPS mapping in Strava and Google Maps to track user movements through space over time. In this way, Strantz’s students were able to calibrate and analyze the rhythms of the user and their habits in moving through spaces.

We have long relied on technology to produce a communal tuning. In Medieval Europe, it was the church tower bell that chimed a community into rhythm. It woke a community to prayer, called it to mass, alerted it of danger, or simply rang out the time. Then came the radio, then the television. A decade ago, Americans once owned as many as three televisions per household, but that number is diminishing as incomes shrink and ubiquitous technology advances. In our present period, cell phones and smart watches do the same thing. My iPhone reminds me that I need to start walking to make a meeting at a building across campus and that walking there will take ten minutes, that I should bring an umbrella because it is raining, that it is hotter outside than I want to know, and that I haven’t walked enough today. Perhaps I should just close the door to my windowless office and just keep typing. For some of us, this tuning is appreciated, it keeps us on track, in the rhythm of what we want our day to be. For others, it is just another distraction from the actual and the problems that continue to separate us from one another and our environment. Our devices don’t always work solely in our interest, and thus they
assume a parasitic quality that both gathers information about us and utilizes that data to alert or possibly modify/manipulate our behavior. We all agree that it’s freaky—but we are willing to be surveilled, to be used, because we can also all agree that these devices afford a great deal of interactivity with the other and non-other, allowing us to slip through the bonds of time and space.

While we possess an abundance of pervasive technologies that monitor us and connect us to others rhythmically, we need to think more often about how we might use these technologies to compose the rhythms of space, time, and activity. Rather than just monitoring our own rhythms and productivity, Coyne (2010) challenges us to think about how this tuning might function to improve being. He wants to understand how tuning “connects to the lived experience of temporal and spatial adjustment” (p. Xvi) and how we might use this tuning to effect microadjustments in our user. In Coyne’s case, he explores how pervasive technologies might be used to tactically recalibrate users and their spaces through a system of tags and taps. Tags alter spaces through their mnemonic quality, inscribing the spaces using signs to represent spaces or redirect the user through their everyday world. When we tag spaces through augmented reality, as one example, we manipulate what it means to be embodied in those spaces. Taps meanwhile, are ways in which a device affects the user physically. When a device rumbles or rings, perhaps when, for example, we have walked our quota of steps, or we receive a text message or online payment, our device generates a response that taps us. Coyne sees a tap as a type of “tag,” or “touch,” that affects the user rather than the space. To demonstrate another form of tapping, Coyne asks his students to think about a game of tag where players take photos of fellow participants and send them to a message thread that includes all of the players in a game (p. 130). Your phone buzzes, on the screen your image appears, awkward, perhaps blurry. You compare the clothing of the person on the screen to the clothing on your person. Could this be me? It is indeed an eerie tap. There is indeed a ludic quality to tapping and being tapped. It is no coincidence that many of the taps we use every day appear as part of a larger gamified framework. In Burkean terms, we might
think of *tags* as the necessary information our interlocutor needs to calibrate a scene while *taps* both recognize and motivate the user.

Coyne’s demonstration of wedging techniques gives us an understanding of how we might use tools for purposes of inquiry, but similarly how these same tools might also serve a persuasive function. In my classroom, I ask my students how we might utilize ubiquitous computing (pervasive technologies) to tune our relationality with others, and at the same time influence, or tune our interlocutor and spaces through changes in our practices. To experiment with tapping, I ask my students to think about how they might bring the user into one of the 26 surveillance zones (Live Cams) on our campus (http://www.clemson.edu/webcams/) in which the user might see themselves as captured through networked surveillance video. In discussions, students talk about the surreal feeling of being caught by the camera, seeing a long shot of oneself on a screen, the delay. Rather than a confirmation of one’s embodiment in material world, or even the violation of being caught on camera, they discuss the ethereality of their capture in a virtual space. It is a realization of their insignificance in the production of spectacle. There are other ways students can play with *tapping* and its effects on their ubiquitous device that involve GPS based reminders. Using *Apple Reminders* allows the user to be *tapped* when they are within a certain distance to a set location. Such reminders, when set up on a phone can serve to remind the user of the significance of a place in a given time or provoke an active response. These set of tags can be sent from user to user, and when installed, form the structure for gamification or augment our material reality.

Coyne gives us a language for thinking about how pervasive technologies might be utilized tactically as *wedges* to spilt one’s thinking, shifting behavior, and thus changing the rhythms of space, time, and activity. Much of my interests in mobile apps relates to Coyne’s theory that devices can be used tactically to attend to locations in need of intervention. While we often use these devices to calibrate data about ourselves and our spaces, we need to do more thinking about how these same technologies can help us recalibrate our design of spaces and our practices in them. That is, we need to think more
deeply about the interrelationships that constitute being. I want my students to investigate how mobile technologies might help us navigate thresholds, liminal spaces, and perhaps encounter difference in the locations that we inhabit. In territorialized or stagnant places we might utilize technology to encourage inquiry and rhetoricity in our community, or we can use these tools to escape them. However, if we bask too long in the counter-spectacle of the latter, we ignore the interpellation inherent at the location of crisis rather than attending to its repair.

**Method**

This praxis emerged from three projects I created while wrestling with my location at and position within Clemson University during my first year in graduate school.

**Bus Stops**

The first project, *The Easley Bus Stop* (2015, http://sjquigl.people.clemson.edu/easley-busstop.html) addresses the problem of a bus stop on the bus line that connects Easley to both Clemson and Greenville. *The Easley Bus Stop* serves riders embarking and disembarking in Easley, South Carolina. Northbound riders must board in the Sears parking lot on one side of the street, and southbound riders board at the Lowes Home Improvement Center on the other side of the road. Any departure or arrival at the Easley bus stop entails boarding on one side of the street and disembarking on the other. As a result, passengers must cross a busy four-lane highway that divides the northbound and southbound stops. There is no crosswalk within a hundred yards of the stop, so passengers opt to jaywalk instead. Using Adobe Muse, I designed *Easley Bus Stop* for mobile devices and published it as an app through Adobe’s Digital Publishing Suite (DPS) (https://www.adobe.com/devnet/digitalpublishing suite. html). The app intends to draw the user into a problem, make them care about the issue, and serve as a tool that allows the user to realize agency. The app combines imagery and poetry to first articulate an attitude of community and solidarity among bus riders before addressing the central
problem of the bus stop design. To generate pathos, I created a fictional situation in which a regular bus rider had died making the busy crossing across this South Carolina State Highway 123. The app then asks readers to contribute a fictional obituary for that student, which is then added to the site.

If art can generate enough solemnity, and if the occasion invites participation, then perhaps the experience enters into the realm of ritual. The next linked page takes the user to a composition form where they can write a letter to the head of the transportation department at Clemson. To distribute the app among bus riders, I placed advertisements with QR codes on buses and left smaller advertisements on seats during peak hours with the intention that perhaps riders would be more likely to access the app while on their commute.

This project was especially important in that it introduced the idea of user-
centered design as a strategy for composing. User-centered design offers excellent terms for understanding the usability of a technology through considerations of discoverability and understanding in the context of the affordances and constraints of a given medium (Norman, 2013, p. 3). Norman thinks a product should communicate to the user as to how a device should be operated. When an operator performs a function, the device should give clear feedback about the outcome of that function. In that I was designing for mobile devices, I needed to think about how user mobility occurs within the app and that I was implementing a system of swipes combined with the affordances of parallax design to create movement within movement inside the composition.

Other Locations

Another app project, Fort Hill Mobile Memorial (2015, http://forthillmobilememorial.businesscatalyst.com), was designed as a tool to encourage the user to question the legacy of the Fort Hill Plantation House at Clemson University, John C. Calhoun’s Home. The app emerged as a side project to serve as a vehicle for showcasing a group film project on which I participated, entitled, Legacies of Fort Hill (Gaines et al., 2016). However, I also wanted the app to serve as an intervention into place in that I designed it so passersby could easily access the app and the video by utilizing QR codes as they walked by Fort Hill. In this way, the app utilizes the university’s high speed internet to subvert its own university message about how it memorializes Fort Hill. The theory behind the app as a vehicle for intervention into crisis, as well as the reference in the title itself, emerges from Gregory Ulmer’s Electronic Monuments (2005). In this text, Ulmer explores chorography as an inventive digital method for the exploration and representation of place. Ulmer sees the potential for technology to offer a subjective relationship with place, what he calls the “MEMemorial,” lending itself to a rhizomatic representation of experience and a more democratic enactment of educational praxis for the polity. Much of this work was inspired by Clemson English Professor, Dr. Rhondda Thomas, whose collaborative work with students at the university lends itself to critical
inquiry into the Clemson archives. In the app, the user could access the film *Legacies of Fort Hill*, find background information on the home and the university founder, Thomas Clemson, as well as a list of the names and ages of the 178 enslaved people who were assessed on 26 April 1865 as Andrew P. Calhoun’s property upon his death shortly before the start of the Civil War. The app invites the user to locate themselves on the lawn and participate in a ritual of saying aloud the names and ages of plantation slaves, some only newly born (Emilia, 3 months) and some as old as one hundred (Phebe).

Fig. 6.4 [Photo] Andrew Calhoun’s Reckoning. Slave entries. (26 April 1865) Series 37. Fort Hill Files. Clemson Special Collections, Strom Thurmond Institute, Clemson, South Carolina. 7 May 2018.
I transcribed each slave's names from a handwritten ledger I found while researching in the Strom Thurmond Archives. The ritual of saying each slave’s name and age aloud is intended not just as an acknowledgment of Clemson’s slave legacy, but of the slaves themselves, whom we seldom acknowledge at our university. Cliffford Geertz (1973) argues that “ritual […] deepens the concern with fact and seeks to create an aura of utter actuality.” Geertz goes on, “In a ritual, the world as lived and the world as imagined, fused under the agency of a single set of symbolic forms, turn out to be the same world.” In both the Easley Bus Stop and the Fort Hill Mobile Memorial apps, I wanted to force the user to take a side. Sometimes the user was angered by this composition, but on other occasions the app offered the user agency. We like to think of sacrifice as going without, but its root implies making something sacred. Through ritual we can participate in this sacrifice and at the same time realize our agency in a location that represents space, time, and activity. The intended result of these rituals is that this participation would transform how the user acts and what it is he thinks he knows through the enaction of knowing—doing—making. That is, my apps require the user to engage in doing and making in hopes that the audience will reconstruct what it is they think they know.

The final project that foregrounds The Better Clemson App is a project I composed entitled Clemson Giftschrank (2016, http://sjquigl.people.clemson.edu/clemson-giftschrank.html). In German, the compound giftschrank translates into gift (poison) schrank (closet). Originally a giftschrank was the place for storing pharmaceuticals, but the term was also synonymous with a room where books deemed unfit for public reading were housed (Greenspan, 2016). For example, it was in the giftschrank that copies of Luther and later de Sade were kept. During Communist East Germany, some of these same rooms were used to house western periodicals and books. The idea of suppressing information is in keeping with propaganda and spectacle. Playing on this idea of suppressing information, I imagined that Clemson also possessed books and information that it kept locked away. Mixing history and fiction, I set out to create a game that blended the choose-your-own adventure genre of Twine (https://twinery.org) and the actual mobility of Pokémon Go (https://www.pokemongo.com). The goal was to
think about how we might mix the virtual and actual in a kind of scavenger hunt (Dennen et al., 2015) with Twine styled plot mapping, user choice, and clear feedback regarding success and failure, the game promoted a ludic quality within the narrative. In that I wanted to create a game that persuaded the user to both explore Clemson University and question its history, I turned to Ian Bogost (2007) and his theory of procedural rhetoric, a rhetoric embedded in a game’s affordances and constraints. Procedural rhetoric is the “practice of using process persuasively” (p. 28). When a player fails, they must learn from those failings and make other choices the next time the user encounters similar situations. For Bogost, the procedural is a move away from the verbal and into the realm of symbolic action. Though my game runs on a much smaller scale with fewer affordances than one in which a player might make infinite choices within a schema of constraints within a system of algorithmic variables, the intended outcome of my composition is the same: I want my user to not just play along with what the game asks of them, but to also wrestle with the message, as ridiculous as my message might be. On some level, I want my game to incite a conversation about things we don’t talk about much at Clemson—slavery and Clemson’s misery. In a similar way, Bogost believes that the power of persuasive games is the discourse that emerges from the user, as a game’s interlocutors “engage, consider, and respond in turn, either via the same medium or a different one” (p. 37). The idea of procedural rhetoric is also important in the sense that games create a virtual environment where users can begin to “practice” the sort of enactive change that may be necessary in the actual. As Bogost explains, “If policy issues are complex systems that recombine and interrelate with one another according to smaller rules of interaction, then video games afford a new perspective on political issues, since they are especially effective at representing complex systems” (p. 143).

The intention of this project is to manufacture something at a scale that might work as a counter-spectacle, a manifestation equally as absurd as the narrative spun by the university that frames our university and identity in a noble, egalitarian light. Drawing on archival records and Abel Bartley’s (2009) “Race, Reconstruction, and Postbellum Education in Thomas Green Clemson’s Life and World,” the work plays on
Clemson’s revolutionary early days in France, his participation in slavery, and also
details his miserly nature, especially in his later life. While there is much propaganda
surrounding the character of Thomas Clemson, including one historian’s view that
Clemson’s “transition from citizen soldier of the lost cause to an advocate for his adopted
state makes one think of Cincinnatus, the ancient Roman farmer-dictator” (Hiott, 2009),
in reviewing the other biographies (Russel, 2007) and primary source documents
(Sublette, 1993) concerning Clemson, the opposite is actually true. Clemson worried
incessantly about money and had difficulty managing interpersonal relationships, and as a
result drew all of those around him into his own misanthropic depression. At the end of
his life, visitors to Ft. Hill remember “a lonely occupant” who maintained a hermit-like
state living in poor condition amongst his former slaves (Herbert, 1880). The house and
property were in disrepair, yet the bronze plaque mounted to the pedestal beneath his
prominent statute at Clemson, tells nothing of this complexity.

The Adobe Fix

It is these increasingly complex machines of the industrial revolution powered by steam
or electricity that perform calculations and other precise, highly specialized kinds of
intellectual activity that place the role of human agency in doubt.
–Betancourt, Critique of Digital Capitalism

Daedalus was the first toolmaker and tool user and thus the first craftsman. With
his plane and square, he designed order into things. While Daedalus used tools to make,
in our present period we expect our tools to make for us, and in the process we forget
what it really means to make, that craft requires knowledge and skill. As our
 technological affordances increase, so does our reliance on technology, and instead of
using tools to design order into things as was the intention of Daedalus, our planes and
squares are designing evermore order into us. Perhaps it is we, Bruno Latour, who ratchet
backwards as technology ratchets forwards. This process of forgetting is achieved by way
of the black boxing of our tools’ processes. While we understand what our tools do, we
know not how they function. As Alexander Galloway (2011) explains it, the black box is
“an opaque technological device for which only the inputs and outputs are known” (p. 3).
We are left to “operate” rather than “do.” In turn, the box becomes a symbol for those functions. A fetishization of function to be consumed. The black box solves the problem of the paradox of technology, which states that while technology is designed to increase affordances of a tool as a way to simplify functions in everyday life, it conversely makes our lives more difficult in that we must learn to operate increasingly complicated technology (Norman, p. 34). Blackboxing these functions hides this fundamental paradox and replaces it with usability. However, when we smash the black box open with a hammer, we will find that like a Russian matryoshka doll, it opens to yet other black boxes containing still more black boxes inside.

The black box concept is integral to usability design approaches across the technology industries. Take for example Adobe’s content aware tools in Photoshop. If a user wishes to remove an object from an image, they need only click on the designated tool icon to wash it from the scene. This requires no skill nor knowledge of how the tool and its algorithms work, only an understanding of an iconographic button and its purpose, that is, the correlation between application, rude though it may be, and effect. Magic. The iconography of the button and the speed and effectiveness of the process contribute to the usability of the tool but also the spectacle of the function. Theoretically, an increase in usability correlates with a positive effect in the user. But, as tools become more usable, the agency shifts from the user to the tool. And as we lose agency in the making, we become ever more dependent on our tools. In this dependent relationality with the tool, mastery shifts to the tool and the corporations that manage its function. In fact, in this age of usability and tool dependence, our tools become masters of us. This industry drive for usability and black box spectacle are quickly becoming the two requirements in any tool design, further separating us from the agency in our makings. This is not to say that there is not great skill involved in Adobe design, but that we are reaching an aesthetic on a scale that can’t be achieved without powerful tools that make for us. This “new aesthetic” requires blackboxed functionality, and as a result, we require the tool. As the distance between the user, skill, and knowledge widen, we lose the art in making.
I want my students to explore what it means to make within a critical framework as they design and labor their creations into fruition. In this unit we use Adobe products throughout the semester. In doing so, my students have the opportunity to think critically about the Adobe corporation, the powerful tools they package for the consumer, and how using their software creates shifts in the user’s aesthetic. Clemson University’s adoption of Adobe tools began as a “gift” from the Adobe corporation (Rollison, 2015), a gift which Clemson now pays millions to maintain.

While Adobe sells its most powerful tools under contract, it also gives their entry-level tools away for free. The combination of black boxing and usability has reached its zenith in the Adobe Spark “free” cloud based software. This powerful software functions as gateway drug into the Adobe brand in that it possesses enough affordances that anyone can design like a pro, but also enough constraints that the user can’t pass a certain design threshold without paying extra. Most importantly, through the process of designing using Adobe Spark software, the user recalibrates their design aesthetics in a shift away from the analog, and away from the constraints of Microsoft and Google, towards Adobe’s sleek black box affordances and usability magic. Adobe benefits from the “free” status of its Spark software in other ways. This model of immaterial labor as used by companies such as Adobe and Google in their line of “free software” adds value in multifarious ways through the time and cognitive capital of its users. In the case of Adobe, the software generates exchange value in that each Spark design comes branded with Adobe logos and links to its software. And once a user signs up with Adobe, they become prey to Adobe’s marketing department. Users can pay extra to upgrade their designs, remove Adobe branding, gain access to Adobe stock photos, or further customize URLs. Additionally, Adobe Spark offers the power of rhetoric to augment its other creative design tools. Through the use of rhetorical prompting, the user crafts an individualized message that reproduces the Adobe aesthetic, a spectacle reproduced within spectacle, a circular system of reproduction and reification.

I am using the discussion of Adobe Spark to explain how Adobe shapes and controls the market for design tools by focusing on blackboxing, usability, and aesthetics,
but we can argue that aspects of Adobe’s user labor model of production and reproduction extend in some degree to all of its design platforms. Adobe gets free labor and added value through forums like YouTube where individuals create tutorials to share with others to learn Adobe software. On Adobe Forums (https://forums.adobe.com), the company facilitates customer chats, blogs, galleries, and networking sites generating cognitive capital that similarly translates to value for Adobe. At all levels of Adobe products, the company controls its tools and increasingly the agency in the production. Users can no longer buy a program version outright but must maintain monthly or annual contracts, which creates added costs for freelancers who might be infrequent users but dependent on a certain standard of quality. Creativity is packaged, and available on a contractual basis. We must also take into consideration how corporations like Adobe control cultural aesthetic and exploit their user’s cognitive capital. As we have witnessed, Adobe Photoshop has had a profound impact on how individuals in society view themselves in the actual as compared to “photoshopped” images of models, landscapes, and even food in the virtual, and as a result the “photo shopped” image has become de rigueur. Our judgment of what is real and what is fake is beyond repair, and the virtual and actual are fused together and offered to us as fetish.

Still, Adobe products are valuable to my students from a career standpoint in that they have become the standard across industries. “Knowing” the software has consequently become a form of “cultural capital” necessary to attain internships and jobs. Jim Holscher, Adobe’s vice president of education field operation claims, “Through our work with Clemson University, we are providing faculty, staff and students with the right tools to successfully create and communicate their ideas while mastering essential communication skills that will increase their marketability to potential employers” (qtd. in Landerman, 2014). We who teach Adobe add exponential value to this cycle of reproduction and consumption, and in the process we also support the iniquity that plagues those left behind. As I have said, I do use Adobe in the classroom. However, before I relate more about that methodology in this paper, I would like to discuss another strategy for using technology in the classroom, that of the LoFi approach.
Going LoFi

I am arguing and demonstrating that in composition studies, we need to think carefully about the tools we use and why we are using them, if at all. At a certain point, Ivan Illich (1973) reminds us, our tools begin to control us implementing “regimentation, dependence, exploitation, and impotence” (p. 177). In “LoFi Manifesto” (2008), it is precisely this gap between skill and knowledge that Karl Stolley argues for the use of a limited set of standardized technologies to direct digital classroom praxis. Teachers have a “more pressing responsibility to learn and then engage students with digital approaches and technologies that students themselves would not likely discover independently.” These limited technologies include learning standard computing languages such as HTML, CSS, JavaScript, using standardized protocols that allow for cross platform functionality, open formats, and even a push for running open source operating systems such as UNIX. Of course for Stolley, there is a ethical/political argument here as to why our students should learn how to make using open software and learning programing languages instead of succumbing to corporate systems. In the LoFi, creativity emerges through application and skill, not through the procurement of augmentative tools. “The richest learning experiences reveal how failure and crude initial work transform to something better only through ongoing research and revision.” Stolley also identifies four principles that he thinks should be stressed in digital production as highlighted in the acronym “LOFI,” that of learning, openness, flexibility, and iteration, all of which directly apply to the un-blackboxing of technology. In our discussion thus far, this un-blackboxing allows for learning through success and failure the appropriate inputs and outputs. Openness, seeing the guts of the process, becomes a means of scaling “across time and space, including especially customization and repurposing by readers and users.” Flexibility applies to the constraints of working in LoFi, in that when one is limited by their toolbox, one must be creative in their application. In fact, it is through flexibility in solving problems that we exercise our creativity. Finally, through iteration,
students return to their projects, tweaking its parts, often relearning or refining their tool use.

It would be correct to argue that Stolley’s method reinserts the craft into the making process, but one of its failings is that it doesn’t recognize how corporate design platforms contribute to cultural capital. Yes, understanding computing languages is important, but gaining expertise in Adobe and AutoCAD are also important in that in many fields these software companies are, as argued above, industry standard. I would argue that an approach such as Stolley’s along with training in industry software is perhaps the most useful technological approach that we might take for preparing the type of student we are increasingly readying for the world: the freelancer. Such students will need to know which tool to use for the right job so they can get it done quickly and move on to the next job. Unfortunately, iteration only pays when it pays. In that Adobe has become an industry standard in most creative fields, and a CV line displaying such skills on a *curriculum vita* grants a degree of cultural capital, it is in our interest to at least teach our students the basics of Adobe so that they might add it to their CV.

On the other hand, as educators in a democratic nation, we have a responsibility to discuss equity and technology, who benefits, and who doesn’t. We should also discuss the merits and shortcomings of software that is open source. I will discuss this in more depth at the closing of my methodology section.

If I could add to Stolley, I would say that we also need to be talking about the aesthetics of code and how the functions of technology might also be valued for their aesthetic quality and not just for their outcome. Writing code is difficult. We make errors. Our code can be ugly, or, it can be clean and efficient. There is, David Pye (1968) might argue, an aesthetic quality rendered by the risk inherent in its construction, and this is the nature of craft. There is also an aesthetic quality to what written code makes, but this aesthetic is not in favor in an age of computer generated imagery. However, it is through a discussion of aesthetics that we discover the humanity inherent in its composition. Analog advocates might argue that for both aesthetic and ideological reasons, the analog is prime, but I have a more cynical view when it comes to the analog. For corporations,
the analog fad is just another opportunity for business to fetishize analog tools and aesthetic. Instead of embracing analog solid state technologies, the functionality of analog is blackboxed while preserving its affordances and constraints and replicating its analog interface. In that a shift towards analog is interesting in reliving primitive technologies, the digital can also make it more affordable to replicate functionality. Next to my computer is an AKAI MPK mini synthesizer that acts as an interface for playing a variety of classic analog synthesizers. It has keys, knobs, pads, and other design features pioneered by early synthesizer companies such as Moog. I can also make many of the same sound functions as a Moog Mini, but my interface cost me twenty-five dollars on EBay. Trendy smartphone apps also mimic these analog interfaces by reproducing them on touch screens while providing functions that produce the same analog quality as the original technology. We can buy apps that, like your grandpa’s Pentax, allow you to “control” shutter speed and aperture of your device so you can learn to tinker in the analog aesthetic. In this “New Aesthetic” that blends the virtual with the actual, the analog is appropriated and commodified. And as with any fetish, it will only be a matter of time before its user discards it for some other replication or difference, or new combination in another area of the same technology.

Bittersweet Musings

Perhaps, as Gee (2013) relates, we rely too much on technology without really understanding how it works (p. 126). On the other hand, we have a great bounty of tools at our disposal, so many in fact, that attaining an understanding, let alone mastery of how all of the given tools we utilize on a daily basis would be impossible for even the greatest of polymaths. I would argue that instead we must submit, and trust to the tools and systems we utilize and to the specialists who repair them. I say this as a someone who has, in another life, studied a good deal of woodworking and a little bit of blacksmithing. You see, the blacksmith learns not only to use the tools in his workshop, but to manufacture the ones he inevitably will need, or that someone else will need. The
blacksmith makes the tools for all other crafts and this is why he is known as the king of
crafts. In a given community, it would be counterproductive for the woodworker to make
their own hardened chisel, for the potter to make their wooden wheel, or for the
blacksmith to find clay, then form and fire it into a mug to hold his morning coffee. Yes,
even the blacksmith relies on this network, for he also knows to let the woodworker hew
and join his workshop timbers square and flush. For each craftsperson relies on the
specialization and knowledge of the other in the community. It would be a great shame if
some of our greatest thinkers spent all of their time trying to be a jack-of-all-trades rather
than attending to the problems that matter for the survival of life on this planet. To solve
these problems, Gee recognizes that we need powerful tools and that we can’t hope to
solve these problems alone. Instead, we will need to rely on the power of groups. As
educators, Gee believes we must design learning situations that take on real world
problems and promote collaborative learning in that a group of individuals is more
intelligent than any one student (p. 202). When we work on complex problems using
complex tools, students learn the value of collaborative learning both in actual and virtual
spaces.

I teach technology using Adobe programs for a number of reasons, but the most
important one relates to teaching students how they learn technology. I run my Adobe
workshops with students sitting in groups encouraging them to work together, learn
together, in what Gee refers to as affinity spaces (p. 67). However, these affinity spaces
extend beyond the classroom, extending into online forums on YouTube, in online chat
rooms, among other places.

Going along with the idea of addressing the problems that need attention now,
Gee argues that our students need to become producers, rather than consumers of content
(p. 201), which I view as one of the many tasks of the writing classroom. In my
classroom, I want my students to produce a variety of materials across platforms, and it is
partly for this reason that I have found teaching through the Adobe Suite to be beneficial.
Teaching across design programs in the Adobe Suite also allows for a degree of
scaffolding. My students begin the semester in Adobe Illustrator making cartoons using
the pen tool to trace over photographs. Once students have built and exported their frames, they use Adobe InDesign to import their frames, layout their cartoon, and add text to their design. As the semester progresses, students graduate on to Adobe Muse where they build webpages and web documents, before finally graduating on to Adobe Premiere Pro, where they make short films. When I explain this process to my colleagues in the graphic arts, I can see their eyes spinning in their head. For these educators, teaching Adobe Illustrator over the course of a semester is insufficient time to work with the program. Indeed, many instructors claim that they know many professionals who still haven’t mastered the program though they utilize it nearly every day. I have to explain to these colleagues, that my intention in teaching Adobe products is not mastery of any given program, it is rather a lesson in how we learn technology. What I find is that from program to program there is enough scaffolding embedded to allow the learning of additional programs to be manageable. While the tasks and tools are often called different things or look different from one program to the next, there is enough that is universal across Adobe programs, or perhaps intuitive about how to use various tools when one already knows how another Adobe program works. It is the same when one learns a family of languages. When one knows French, learning Italian or Spanish is easier than learning Japanese or Slavic. However, as with “false friends” in language, not everything in Adobe transfers—this is also useful. Overcoming failure affords the opportunity for discussion about the ludic quality of successful learners. A playful learner does not shun failure, but learns from it (Juul, 2013, p. 110). Because I am teaching across Adobe programs, there is enough continuity to allow for transfer, a methodology that would be impossible if I were using multiple design programs.

In that we learn a number of different programs, I am able to engage in important metacognitive conversations about how we learn technology, even if that technology is not Adobe. For example, language learners will also tell you that it is often easier to learn a third language when we know a second, even when none of those languages are related. To expand this latter point, I find the same scaffolding to be inherent when one moves from one brand of software to the next while working with the same kind of tool, such as
when one learns one brand of video editing software and then transfers that knowledge to another. As I am writing these lines, my son sits beside me working to edit a skateboarding video, periodically interrupting me to ask questions about how to do this or that in his timeline. He is using Adobe Premiere Pro, his third video design program, already having made films in grade school with iMovie on his iPad, and then graduating on to Video Editor MovieMator Pro this past summer. My son has developed his own aesthetics by making and consuming video, and as a result he understands the affordances and constraints of each of the video editing programs with which he has worked. He has gained the knowledge and skill in other programs that will benefit him in learning this new one. In this same way, I will argue that when we start with a web design program like Adobe Muse, an image based design program that requires no coding, the learning of the program will provide the scaffolding and transfer that promotes both greater computer literacy and eventually the need to learn basic coding, areas about which my students have little to no experience when they enter my classroom.

This is an important point that connects what I am doing in Adobe Muse and how my students can come full circle back to Stolley’s “LoFi Manifesto.” While Adobe Muse is a visual design program that allows my students to work with visual objects that the program generates into coded HTML and CSS files, by working with the exported files, my students learn the basics of internet computer science—how the files work together to generate a webpage, how the files must be managed on the server, and how browsers read the files to produce a webpage. Adobe Muse is not designed to allow the user to move from code to visual as can be done in Adobe Dreamweaver. However, Muse does allow the user the ability to work with code and insert it into the design using code boxes. Though I do not teach coding, I do ask my students to work with code and manipulate it to do what they want. It is often the case that the code we need to do what we want in our designs has already been written and is available on the internet, and that through iteration, a designer will figure out the code to serve their purposes. But, it is also true that at a certain point, to do what a designer wants to do given their aesthetics and the design at hand, a designer will need to learn a little code. In my case, I needed to learn
JavaScript to add user tools to my designs. Without the scaffolding that I gained by using Adobe Muse and without having learned the affordances and constraints of the program, I wouldn’t have had the knowledge, the reason, or even the opportunity to learn JavaScript.

Adobe Muse allows numerous web design features such as fluid design and parallax scrolling effects, a host of powerful blackboxed functions that could not be managed by first year students learning code, nor, perhaps by someone who spends a great deal of time writing code. These functions are highly valuable for teaching design. When my students utilize a fluid design approach, they think about how their design looks across different screens, from smart phones to tablets to desktops, and must make different design choices to create affordances and constraints for a particular technology. For example, while desktop design can sprawl across a page, designing for a cellphone requires both economy in writing and creative tools like dropdown menus to preserve real estate. On cell phones, users point and swipe, on desktops they manipulate the mouse and cursor, these actions change how a designer approaches their design. The design, content, and the functionality must be adapted for the user’s device. When my students start playing with different effects such as parallax scrolling, which provides animation effects while scrolling through a website, they think about how users can be persuaded by the creative affordances and constraints of a given design but also how these effects will be perceived in different formats. Perhaps the greatest lesson is that of revision that occurs as students test their designs across devices. What works on an iPhone 5 won’t work on an oversized Android or an iPad. This is an example of what happens when students work through the Iterative Cycle of Human-Centered Design (Norman, p. 222) that emphasizes observation, idea generation (ideation), prototyping, and testing. This is a process that sets off a chain reaction of enaction in the learner/designer that will alter their theory, knowledge, skill, aesthetics, and design. When students hone their skill in relation to theory, making becomes craft.

With Muse, Adobe has manufactured a platform that invites third parties to design and sell powerful tools called widgets within the Adobe program. Similar to Android or Apple Store, these third party designers have the opportunity to create specific programs
to suit specific needs of a user, which has the added effect of increasing the value and flexibility of the Adobe Muse program. On the other hand, Nick Dyer-Whittheford (2014) wants us to consider how these third party platforms produce an economy of app laborers by which both Android and Apple profit through both diversification of their products and a dispersion of liability as an app goes public. Throughout the course of this project, my students, themselves, become App laborers. In what ways are they outsourced to Adobe who will profit from their labor and cognitive capital as their products circulate onto the web? This latter point was especially relevant when I utilized Adobe’s Business Catalyst site to host our web designs and thus *de facto* branded by Adobe. Now that I am using Clemson servers to host the Apps, I have been able to further distance my students’ products from Adobe. Still, I want my students to consider what we are producing and for whose benefit? I myself stand to benefit from this work as it is central to the writing of my dissertation, from the PhD it will garner, from the cultural capital the degree affords and its potential for increasing my own financial wealth. Do my students possess agency in this project or are they subject to it? Does the agency lie elsewhere, in these powerful blackbox tools, in the rigid structures of higher education, or in corporate systems and its cycles of reproduction and consumption?

To be successful in the sharing economy, my students’ lives will be spent in continual cycle of learning and invention. Learning new tools that have yet to be invented. Inventing new jobs the knowledge of which we do not yet know. As I have tried to relate in this methodology, I have found that teaching across Adobe products offers my students a chance to examine how they learn new technologies within and across platforms while simultaneously allowing us the opportunity to critique the tools themselves. For digital scholars like myself, the Adobe Suite offers a tool chest of products that my students can unpack within this framework, but also, test as they learn the best practices of digital document design.

Access to a Creative Cloud license, which is included in student tuition at Clemson, means that all students with the available means can download any Adobe program to their computer. Would the university and our state be better served by an
open access design suite run on Linux operating systems? Of course. But for this to happen, we would need to promote open access software with standardized symbology, tool behavior, and menu bar that transfer across programs. Without consistency in aesthetics, affordances, and constraints, learning multiple programs becomes that much more difficult. My hope is that my analysis as to how my students learn technology across the Adobe platform is evidence enough as to why this standardization would be beneficial to learners and users of open source software.

**Practice**

*Brouillon*

I begin *The Better Clemson App* unit by teaching about Burke’s (1969) Pentad, Ling’s (1970) explanation of the Pentad in Speech, and then to Bogost’s (2007) “procedural rhetoric.” Before we get into the makings of the actual project, I do a short assignment with Twine (www.twinery.org) to offer my students a chance to both test the theory of procedural rhetoric and learn the tools in Twine. I like Twine because it incorporates both basic coding and allows the Twine creator to lay out their non-sequential plot on a storyboard. Learning Twine ensures that my students possess the theoretical foundation needed to proceed in making their app. Next, I ask my students to locate a problem on our campus that needs our attention. We often refer to significant problems, especially personal ones, as crises. As rhetors, it is more helpful to remember that the term “crisis” comes from the Greek *krisis*, a judgment. That is, when we locate a problem for our audience, we call on them to do more than contemplate the gravity of a situation, rather, it is our job as rhetors to approach a problem in such a way that it persuades our audience to inquire, judge, and attend. We force a decision. Effective rhetors are not only adroit at locating a crisis, they are also able to communicate this crisis at the right time and place. At this moment I am looking for a problem, not necessarily the specifics of how to address it. Using Canvas (Clemson’s Classroom Digital Interface) Discussions, I ask my FYC students to locate a problem on campus and
then use stasis theory to generate conjecture, definition, quality, and policy.

Sample A:
A major problem at Clemson is keeping the pedestrians safe from the cars. At intersections it is very hard to tell who has the right of way, and especially when class just gets out, there are so many pedestrians it is almost impossible for the cars to ever drive. Although it is normally a rule to let pedestrians walk, the cars would never be able to drive if they let everyone go. This leads to many close encounters. This is very dangerous for everyone involved, but especially the pedestrians. There needs to be a clear system of how to let the cars drive so they can reach their locations, but also keep the pedestrians safe and allow everyone to make it to class on time.

Sample B:
I would like to see more languages spoken here at Clemson. As a French minor, one problem I've seen is a lack of language diversity. With language diversity comes new opportunities to understand different cultures and beliefs from your own. A plan of action for this issue would be to encourage not only more international students to study here but having stronger initiatives for American students to learn a foreign language and integrate with foreign students.

When students arrive to class for our next meeting, I ask them to read through the app proposals on Canvas posts and reply to the three other students’ posts they find most interesting. In monitoring the thread activity on the Canvas Discussions page, I can begin to judge which proposals are trending. With this data, I select the projects with the most interest and let the students begin to form groups based on the proposals they wish to pursue. Rather than systematically or randomly selecting group members, each cadre is self-selected though limited to four to five individuals. In that each project differs from the other, it would be especially difficult for me to select groups myself. Instead, I frontload group activity by reemphasizing Rogerian listening skills (Rogers, 1961) and ask students to choose roles such as producer, director, copy writer, Musemaster. The producer is essentially the coordinator and driver of the group. The director/writers do the filming and writing of the story, and the Musemaster is in charge of all design implementation and website management. This last role is often tasked to the student with the most experience in computer science or to the student with graphic design experience. At this point in the semester, all of my students have built various projects.
and presentations using Adobe Muse, so I find that each is usually able to make a contribution to the design or help solve problems that the group will encounter designing their app. Throughout this unit, I use collaborative learning strategies, that is, students work together on a single project and receive a single grade. In my GIS unit students work cooperatively, and while students share ideas and data, each has to turn in individual projects. In discussion, my students differentiate between these two group techniques and how they corresponded to our GIS mapping work versus The Better Clemson App project. Generally, I find that student frustrations center more on problems they encounter with GIS or Muse/Web design tools rather than concerns they have about the merits of working in groups or which type of group work was most beneficial. Rather, I find that there is a palpable excitement as students work creatively in communion with other thinkers in an attempt to solve problems and achieve shared goals. However, the difference between cooperative and collaborative learning raises important ethical implications as to how we live and work together beyond the classroom. Which of these two systems best serves the interests of humans in these dire times of economic disparity and potential ecological collapse?

Once students have assembled into groups, I pose the following questions to ensure that all group members understand the rhetorical situation with which they are wrestling in this project:

1. What is the crisis and why is it important?
2. What is the *krisis*? What do you want your user to decide?
3. How will this technology serve as a link between the user and their environment?
4. Why does our ecology need this app?

This is also a good time to review Norman’s (2013) “cycle of human-centered design” emphasizing observation, idea generation (ideation), prototyping, and testing (p. 222). It is also a good time to think about his design elements of discoverability, affordances, constraints, and feedback. Following Norman, we’ve observed a design problem and have begun working through its solution, and next we will come to prototyping and testing. But first I also want students to consider question #3 in the context of Papanek
(1972), another designer who asks us to push further than Norman’s *human-center*, that is, to also consider the impact our design might have on our environment and others. Papanek asks us to think about how our technology might be used as a link between these factors. For homework, I ask that students individually take some time to think through how this app might work. I don’t want this task to be too concrete, or for my students to invest too much individual time on a plan moving forward. Rather, I want to put this project into play at a low-stakes level. When students invest too much time thinking up a plan on their own, and their idea gets rejected by a group, it can arrest their creative momentum as the project moves forward. Here are questions useful for this purpose of designing the functionality of the app.

1. How might you use *tags* in this environment to help your user calibrate the rhythms of space, time, and activity and to better understand the scene?
2. How might you tap your user to promote user mobility through space?
3. In what ways could the user interact with the app through the register of the *idios*, and in what ways through that of the *koinos*?
4. What tool might you give your user to help them realize their agency?

Instead, I allot the students time to share ideas with one another and work them out on paper before sharing their ideas with the class at large. Usually, when groups listen to other groups, they gain additional knowledge and develop new ideas that can add to the potential of their own group project. Once we have shared our plans with one another, I invite students to work together in their groups to storyboard their ideas about how the plot of the app will unfold—nothing fancy, just stick figures and simple directions. In that students have already designed a Twine individually, this step usually goes fairly quickly. Again, I want groups to share their work with other groups so that we can all learn from the work of others. Whenever possible I want students to come together in the workshop space, to let their problems and solutions overlap, as they negotiate challenges and learn new tools.
Rather than using a rubric, I ask students to meet the expectations of the assignment and refuse grades to those groups that do not meet those expectations. These expectations also require design constraints to ensure that all of the projects have similar design features when a user moves from one app to the next from our project home page. For our project we build for 320 screen size (standard for mobile phone design) and utilize a standardized font, Gil Sans 36-point headings and Gil Sans 24-point text. Again, I want my class to
build for mobile devices as the app is intended to take advantage of ubiquitous computing technology to draw the user into spaces and places. I require that each group design and utilize a master design layout so their user can easily navigate functions from one page to the next in a unified motif. Additionally, I require external video, audio, and other widget features offered through Adobe Muse to create tools for users. I do not limit the number of pages that students can create, but I would like to see more than eight pages built-out for each group project. When I first began this project, students created QR codes to motivate their user to enter the scene. This began with the use of QR codes that were placed around campus. In some cases, students hid the QR codes in books in the library, under benches, on stop signs. Later, we began using basic passcoding to move the user into space. I would give my students basic JavaScript passcodes that they would manipulate to enable functionality within their design. While the passcode is inserted into the code, very few users actually do so, or even know how. If the passcode question asked the user to identify what the sign says at the corner of X and Y streets, the code would read:

```<SCRIPT>
function passWord() {
  var testV = 1;
  var pass1 = prompt('Please Enter Your Password','
');
  while (testV < 3) {
    if (!pass1)
      history.go(-1);
    if (pass1.toLowerCase() == "stop") {
      alert('You Got it Right!');
      window.open('google.com');
      break;
    }
    testV+=1;
    var pass1 =
      prompt('Access Denied - Password Incorrect, Please Try Again.','Password');
  }
  if (pass1.toLowerCase()!="password" & testV ==3)
    history.go(-1);
  return " ";
</SCRIPT>
```
Students also learned to use code to solve other problems. In one application that focused on campus public transportation, students problem solved how to use `<iframe>` to import a live bus map that showed where the different buses were operating around campus. Students were also able to use an `<iframe>` to incorporate other interesting features into their applications. One group who was concerned with the lack of food options on campus was able to problem solve how an `<iframe>` could be used to incorporate other applications that would provide real time information about what was on the menu at different residence halls with comments about the quality. This problem was solved by using an `<iframe>` to embed a Google Form that queried residence hall eaters on their eating experience and then embedding the corresponding data on a Google Sheet. As a result of using this basic code, I would argue that students who had no prior experience with code became less afraid of it, and were more likely to engage with it. To add to this point, I have had several students from my class enroll in code academy to learn more about code as a result of this and other Muse units.

Though *The Better Clemson App*’s original purpose was to promote actual mobility into spaces and places, I additionally wanted to test embodiment in virtual spaces. In my final semester teaching this unit I worked with Clemson’s Academic Technology Council to pilot VR in the classroom by building VR images and interactivity into the application. In that my own individual research incorporates VR, I was hoping that my students could also learn how to utilize the technology; we experienced some successes and failures. Success was achieved through the utilization of a program called ThingLink (https://www.thinglink.com). ThingLink allows the maker to tag photos in standard or spherical images. Users can click the tag buttons which open
dropdown text, connect to hyperlinks, open ancillary audio and video, as well as many other utilities. ThingLink also has the ability to tag standard video as spherical video is not yet available at the time of this writing. One group of students focused on Campus safety using ThingLink to create scenes in which the user could learn more about different choices the user could make in a given situation.


Another app that used VR concerned itself with the transportation infrastructure at Clemson. In addition to public vehicles, Clemson also allows private vehicles to cut
through the campus creating an extremely dangerous situation for pedestrians. While public buses play an important role on our campus, they are often blamed for dangerous driving. Citing the danger of the Clemson Buses, or Catbuses, this group used satire to compose a situation that both drew attention to the danger of our infrastructure and the high cost of Clemson tuition. Playing off of the myth that students struck by Catbuses on the crosswalk receive free tuition (this is not factual), this app detailed how a given student might proceed to get hit by a bus and thus take advantage of the dangerous transportation infrastructure to receive free tuition. The app used VR images that provided instructions on how to get run over by a Catbus and a real-time map embedded in the app to show where the Catbuses were circulating on campus.
Students problem solved a variety of ways that their user could realize tools to act and thus seize agency in the rhetorical situation. The most popular technique was setting up a form that would email a person of importance in a matter. This is easily done through an Adobe Muse widget, but such forms are also available on the web as HTML code. Additionally, students created links to petitions that were already being promoted by third parties. For example, a group that was studying football ticket distribution created a final link to a petition to revise the system. Early in the process, students gathered feedback that they intended to be reposted in their app and thus create a response community. However, as this unit developed I encouraged app development that did not require constant rebuilding of the webpage. The easiest solution in this case is to gather responses using a Google Form that we embed in the app and then publish the response data by embedding the corresponding Google Sheet on a subsequent page.

The final phase of the app development asks students to test the prototype and make changes based on user-experience. This resets Norman’s (2013) Cycle of Human-Centered Design to the observation of our user working through the app and gathering feedback data. Of course, for Norman the cycle resets; we need new ideas, better prototype, more testing…but for Papanek’s (1972) ecological model of Integrative Design, this is the time to consider the ethical implications of our design and its production outside of our user-center. Who will have access, who won’t? Who will labor it into fruition, and what of our worker’s safety and welfare? What is this product’s environmental impact and how might it be lessened? How adaptable is the product to future circumstances? And, most importantly is this product inherently good?

Conclusions

In the eight classes in which I have taught this unit, I have seen both the product and the quality of our discourse improve. I like this unit because it presupposes that we
have problems on our campus and that through our communion as makers and users we might better attend to these problems. This involves persuading others to also care about the topic by creating an opportunity for the user to make a decision to act. We must attend to spaces through both inquiry and rhetoric—I am not sure how to separate one from the other. Through this unit, my students both learn and critique powerful tools as they play at app making. My students develop what Gee (2013) refers to as an “affective affiliation Digital media --a feel for Digital media” (201) both as makers and producers as they problem solve how tools get things done. They use this technology to tag their environment and tap their user, helping that user calibrate the tuning of their environment, and giving that user powerful tools to change the tuning of their environment.

There are plenty of ethical discussions to be had. My students labor not just for the work at hand, not just the grade, but for my benefit as a researcher. We also discuss for-profit software companies and the millions of dollars Clemson University spends on a very small number of people when it possesses the organization and researchers that could be working in collaboration with other universities and independent entities to develop free software to benefit not only the large number of people in this state, but perhaps individuals throughout the world.

There is, I think, an important lesson here from mythology, about Daedalus and his nephew, Talos. Daedalus, the great maker of tools, that great craftsman, murdered his nephew out of jealousy. You see, Talos, like Daedalus, was also an inventor. In fact, he was the inventor of the compass—that ancient technology we use to draw lines in relation to other lines in space and place. We, Daedalus’ and Talos’ progeny, are the great losers. For what could have been invented had Daedalus simply not killed Talos. And thinking even more deeply, what more might they have invented had the two worked in collaboration?

During this unit we get to discuss who gets to make in our classroom and who doesn’t, and as a result we are left to wonder what is missing on our campus at Clemson? What might The Better Clemson App have become had my classroom looked a little
different. This is a state, after all, whose population according to US Census was once
majority African American until, as a result of Jim Crow and the Great Migration, it
plunged to some 30%. Currently, African Americans make up only a mere 9% of
Clemson’s student population. No, I did not have all of the conversations that I would
have liked to have had with my students in proceeding through this unit. Sadly, those
conversations could not have been had without a classroom that was more representative
of the communities that make up our state Clemson serves. This fact of our inequality,
this ordering of power, begins to design us. It dictates with whom we get to discuss what
happened. With whom we get to judge problems as right or wrong, good or bad. With
whom we get to deliberate as we look to the future. It embeds its order, and its hierarchy,
in us. While it is craft that builds the topoi, it is also this topoi that crafts us. In that many
of my students are not from this state, I want them to understand the complexity of this
one, how they, like I, wake up every day on land where people were once enslaved, and
how this fact continues to haunt all of us who live in this nation no matter where they
live.

Throughout this unit, I was able to help my students explore what was missing on
this campus. Together and alone, students locate problems, navigate power structures and
position themselves in complex networks within their groups, within the classroom space,
and in relation to even greater network geometries that run through our spaces and places.
Collaborative groups are not always fair, but they offer important lessons about working
in groups and working with others. At the end of the day, our biggest world problems
exceed the abilities of any one of us and everybody will get the same grade even if not
everyone is pulling the same weight. The truth is that if a student really wants to see their
project idea through in a collaborative setting, they’ll have to negotiate with others,
forgive, put in extra thankless hours, perhaps resent their teacher, but hopefully, if we can
take the time to discuss this process, discuss the difference, between cooperative and
collaborative learning, when and where each happens, how we might be tasked with
similar challenges in the future, we learn a great deal about what it means to work with
others—about what it means to be connected locally and globally through the robust and
fragile nature of *mondialisation*—that by virtue of our networked connections, *We are called.*

These are the wicked problems of our classroom and our world. My hope is that through this unit my students will be more apt to recognize and attend to problems together, and that through this classroom praxis, we might have given a little nudge to effect policy change in our university ecology. A little disruption that might trigger further disruptions.
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