Theses and Dissertations (All)

Spring 5-2018

The Posthuman Turn in Composition: Critical Regionalists Inquiry and Its Pedagogical Implications

Brent Lucia

THE POSTHUMAN TURN IN COMPOSITION: CRITICAL REGIONALISTS

INQUIRY AND ITS PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

A Dissertation

Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies and Research

in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

Brent Lucia

Indiana University of Pennsylvania

May 2018

ii

Indiana University of Pennsylvania
School of Graduate Studies and Research
Department of English

We hereby approve the dissertation of

Brent Lucia

Candidate for degree of Doctor of Philosophy

_____ _____
Curtis Porter, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor of English, Advisor

_____ _____
Mary Stewart, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor of English

_____ _____
Matthew Vetter, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor of English

ACCEPTED

_____ _____
Randy L. Martin, Ph.D.
Dean
School of Graduate Studies and Research

Title: The Posthuman Turn in Composition: Critical Regionalists Inquiry and Its
Pedagogical Implications

Author: Brent Lucia

Dissertation Chair: Dr. Curtis Porter

Dissertation Committee Members: Dr. Mary Stewart
Dr. Matthew Vetter

This theoretical study explores the posthuman turn in composition and rhetoric in order to consider its relevance to community-engaged pedagogy in the composition classroom. Through a theoretical discussion regarding both posthuman and critical regionalist theory, this research project looks to develop a new type of posthuman inquiry entitled Posthuman Critical Regionalists Inquiry (PCRI). PCRI hopes to enhance students' rhetorical awareness while allowing them to engage with their community, helping to create critical thinking citizens. This type of inquiry considers current composition scholarship on critical regionalists theory as a vehicle for implementing posthumanism, arguing that students can improve their rhetorical sensibilities in a writing classroom by not only recognizing the global and local narratives that construct a text, but also through acknowledging the ecological landscape they find themselves in. PCRI was built through the understanding that posthumanism can help compositionalists think through better informed community-engaged pedagogical models. The study eventually presents composition practices designed with PCRI in mind and demonstrates the type of thinking this posthuman inquiry could create for both composition practitioners and students.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

In the July 2016 edition of College English, Casey Boyle argues for a posthuman turn within the field of rhetoric and composition, claiming that posthuman practices can influence writing activities within an "expansive media ecology." (Boyle 551). As argued in the *The Framework for Success in Postsecondary Writing,* Boyle advocates for more "materially influencing pedagogy at the local level" within composition, but also pushes for rhetoric to move away from a habit of humanism and acknowledge the human as a subject not simply adapting to external factors, but emerging from his or her environment. (551). Inspired by Boyle's call to action, my dissertation will investigate posthumanism as it pertains to rhetorical theory and composition pedagogy. I will explore the posthuman turn within the field of rhetoric in order to consider its relevance to composition, eventually suggesting pedagogical practices for the composition classroom that are informed by a posthuman framework. I will consider current composition scholarship on critical regionalists theory as a vehicle for implementing posthumanism, arguing that students can improve their rhetorical awareness in a writing classroom by not only recognizing the global and local narratives that construct a text, but also through acknowledging the ecological landscape they find themselves in. This approach to composition practice I've entitled Posthuman Critical Regionalist Inquiry (PCRI) has the potential to help students become more politically active in their schools or communities, improving their rhetorical sensibilities in order to engage with the rhetorical construction of their locations.

However, I believe my project is more of an exploration through these theoretical frameworks rather than a definitive answer for how composition educators should question the humancentric positions in composition pedagogy. I am not trying to suggest that humanism should be ignored, but that or understanding of the human subject be broadened through an exploration of posthuman theory. In thinking through pedagogical practices facilitated by posthumanism and critical regionalism, composition practitioners can hopefully get closer to developing sound, community engagement practices for the critical thinking citizen. For my project, this means generating new questions for composition scholars to consider. Therefore, my dissertation will eventually put these two theories in conversation with each other through planned action whereby I demonstrate PCRI as a way to think through a courses design and its pedagogical activities. The outcome of this process will lead to better-informed questions for the composition scholar to consider in regards to community-engaged pedagogy.

Walking is a Rhetorical Act: My Introduction to Critical Regionalism

Every morning when I walk from the E train to York College in Jamaica Queens I must first shuffle through the crowds that collect near the bus stop on Jamaica Avenue. Those beginning their morning commute walk towards their bus station or train platform while MTA workers help direct the swarms of people, waving their flashlights. Congregations of born-again Christians usually stand near the E train exit, promoting a "prayer station" where they ask commuters to take a minute and pray with them before they start the day. Adjacent to the "prayer-station," van-shuttle operators call out the names of their destinations, waiting for their customers to pack their vans and take them to distant spaces in Queens. This walk brings you through a muddled atmosphere of

praying, walking, yelling human beings who are all helping to construct the environment within the streets right outside York College CUNY.

I only need to walk through this scene for roughly three minutes before I notice the eight-foot tall, wrought iron gates on my right that signifies the entrance to the school. Once I pass through the gate I am transported into another space, a separate domain, where green trees and empty benches run parallel to a brick walkway that leads you towards the main entrance of the school. It's generally quiet on this walk; the praying and the quick movements of crowded Jamaican citizens is nowhere to be found. It is beyond this gate where you find the tranquility of York College's campus and it's a stark difference from the community that rests right outside the gated entrance.

It is certainly nice to feel a sense of calm when you walk onto campus at York College but lately I've been interested in what is lost when we emphasize this sense of separation between a college and its community within our classrooms. What do we lose as educators when not only our spaces but also our pedagogies are separated from the outside community? If we are to believe that higher education has some sort of democratic or civic function, then questioning these boundaries may be useful in connecting students to their immediate environments and getting them engaged as critical thinking citizens.

This is not a new argument to be made in higher education scholarship nor is it new within composition scholarship. Tom Fox, for example argued back in the late 1990's for the civic function of higher education as a defense for composition, noting, "Democracy can't work unless citizens are literate and informed" (6). Service learning composition scholarship has also made similar claims. Linda Flowers argues the

importance of rhetoric of public engagement that offers perspectives on "the often unacknowledged rhetorical agency of the voiceless and powerless," helping to connect critical thinking to the public sphere (5-6). Rosa Eberly positions the public sphere within the classroom and claims students in these classes represent proto-publics and that they have the ability to reclaim some of the public arenas destroyed by capitalism (2). How to relate to the public sphere and connect students to the rhetoric that circulates within this domain is a constant discussion among those who consider community-engaged pedagogy.

Lately I've been interested trying to find new ways for my composition class to become active and engaged citizens within their public sphere rather than passive citizens working behind the wrought iron gates of York College. Certainly this means thinking about the rhetoric of public engagement and connecting to one's public space but I was also curious about the narratives that circulate within a community and help construct the discourse of a particular public sphere. How could students examine their public sphere as a rhetorical construction and could this examination help them become empowered rhetorical agents within their local towns or cities?

This idea attracted me to the book *Dangerous Writing* by Tony Scott. Scott discusses the totalizing myth of the composition class and its curriculum. These totalizing myths secure a particular perception of higher education as an elitist institution. However, Scott wants to shatter these myths and have students become honest with their positionality and the labor markets. In *Dangerous Writing* Scott articulates the economic subject within composition curriculum, noting "teaching and writing as concrete and commodified labor (12). By challenging the construction of professionalism that

distances college students and instructors from working-class Others, and by calling attention to the precarious working conditions of adjunct faculty, Scott works to undermine totalizing myths of college that rely on "ivory tower" narratives (Bollig 165). Critiquing this myth within the composition classroom is a way for students to understand the ambivalence and complications of the professional world and note the political actions behind creating and pushing forth such stories as the "ivory tower" narrative.

Scott's work taught me that having students examine a "totalizing narrative" could be an entry point for a composition pedagogy that seeks to engage students with their local communities. His work got me thinking about the rhetorical scholars who were working with critical regionalism, an area of study that examines the local, national and global narratives that help articulate the rhetorical makeup of a region. Critical regionalist scholars such as Rachel Jackson were tying these ideas to composition pedagogy, claiming that having students think about a region in this way could not only improve their rhetorical awareness, but also help them subvert universal narratives that were flattening local narratives within a community. Jackson's work got me hooked to critical regionalism and I've been obsessed ever since-attempting to conceptualize new ways of using it in the composition classroom.

My newfound interest in critical regionalism was strangely at odds with the recent composition rhetoric scholarship I was reading and the feelings that permeated during my walk through Jamaica Avenue. This walk each morning to York College was a reminder to me of how space is a powerful variable in the construction of rhetoric and the rhetor. Once removed from the bustling streets of Jamaica Avenue, I am arguably a different

type of subject, one that is now drawing from a whole different group of human and non-human elements within the campus walls. Rhetoric is embedded and emerges within one's environment and I wondered how these ideas affect the arguments being made by scholars such as Scott and Jackson?

Before conceptualizing a composition pedagogy in my dissertation that considers both critical regionalism and community-engaged pedagogy, I wanted to first understand the scholarship that is thinking about rhetoric on more ecological terms. My curiosity has lead me towards both rhetoricians and compositionalists who are questioning our traditional view of the rhetorical situation and beginning to think about the human as an ecologically embedded agent rather than an autonomous subject. I felt it necessary to first understand the ontological turn happening within rhetorical theory and how this new wave of thinking might affect critical regionalism and its usage in a composition classroom. My journey first brought me to the writings of posthuman scholars in the fields of rhetoric and composition and there understanding of the human subject. In moving away from a humancentric understanding within our field, posthuman scholars have looked to question how we define our subjectivity, leading to discussions related to a flattened ontology in the field of composition and rhetoric. This new line of questioning has not dismissed the human agent as a relevant actor within the rhetorical context, but has broadened our understanding of how the human subject operates within a deeply embeeded and active landscape.

Posthumanism

In Katherine Hayles seminal work, *How We Became Posthuman,* she argues that the "posthuman subject is an amalgam, a collection of heterogeneous components, a material-informational entity whose boundaries undergo continuous construction and reconstruction" (3). The liberal humanist subject than, one that is considered to hold agency and autonomy, is questioned when we consider its boundaries undergoing "continuous construction and reconstruction." The critical examination of our subjectivity has developed many definitions over time within the various disciplines that have taken up posthumanism. Posthuman scholars such as Katherine Hayles have argued that posthumanism is the extension of human thinking and abilities through technological enhancement. Others, such as Alastair Pennycook have defined it as a term that questions human exceptionalism and the relationship we have with other inhabitants on earth, reevaluating the role of space and objects in relation to the human experience (Pennycook 4). In composition, Casey Boyle uses the term loosely, explaining that his usage simply looks to "organize a disparate conversation underway involving a wide variety of discourse" (539). He acknowledges the fact that many scholars are wary of posthuman arguments and may ignore human problems when we turn our attention to non-human agents, although as Hayles has contended posthumanism does not mean the end of humanity but a particular conception of the human. The posthuman may feel threatening to our definition of human, partly because it "envisions a conscious mind as a small subsystem running its program of self –construction and self-assurance while remaining ignorant of the actual dynamics of a complex system (Hayles 286). More importantly, posthumanism allows us to describe the human within a vast ecological landscape, not

diminishing humanities actions or characteristics but describing them as they operate within a complex material world. Extending this idea, Cary Wolf believes that posthuman scholarship doesn't remove the human from our consideration, but better defines humanities' importance to our ecological networks through acknowledging our relationship with the natural world (xxv). For example, Giles Deleuze and Felix Guattari have drawn connections between the human subject and the ecological networks of our capitalistic system. Deleuze and Guattari have argued that one's subjectivity is dispersed and distributed within a capitalistic system. Deleuze and Guattari's subjective self is ever expanding yet chaotic and temporal, suggesting, "the body is defined only by a longitude and a latitude" (*A Thousand Plateaus* 260). The capitalistic system has broken down the barrier between the masses and the individual, where "Individuals have become *dividuals* and masses…the man of control is undultory, in orbit, in a continuous network" (*Postscript on the Societies* 6). Indeed, for Deleuze and Guattari the posthuman has become a distributed subject of various constructions, influenced by mechanisms of control that are developed within a complex capitalistic system.

While Deleuze and Guattari's claim regarding the individual have helped develop some of the more recent discussions within posthumanism, Boyle has attempted to move these ideas into the field of composition and rhetoric. For Boyle, posthumanism has become a concept that can operate as a lens within our discipline, creating an ecological view that is facilitated by a posthuman framework. I will utilize the term "posthuman" as a lens as well in order to explore humanities' intricate relationship with the material world, arguing that a subject is constructed by material, social and personal experiences. Thus, the invention of a subject, or an "I," is built through "possibilities beyond the

8

experience of the single self" (Hawk, *A Counter-History* 58). In a posthuman approach there are various selves, or subjectivities, operating to build what we perceive as a 'single self,' and therefore when we discuss agency, particular for a writer or a rhetor, we must begin to consider how these various subjectivities take shape while not ignoring the very real feeling that one is autonomous when he or she acts.

<div align="center">**Posthumanism and Composition and Rhetoric**</div>

While posthumanism hasn't had a rich history within composition, similar studies such as ecocomposition have established themselves in the field for decades. Both posthumanism and ecocomposition could be attributed to post-process theory, or the social turn, that established itself in the field of composition and rhetoric in the late 1980's. The post-process movement began to challenge process theory by recognizing the social and cultural dimensions of writing. Postmodern theory and cultural studies in particular helped generate new questions for scholars to think about which essentially challenged many of the process theory positions once held.

Ecocomposition was one such theory that examined literacy by using concepts from ecology. In Marilyn Cooper's article "The Ecology of Writing," she argues that we should not simply consider writing as a cognitive process which individual use to investigate and communication information, but see it as a social activity that relies on social frameworks and processes in both the constructive and interpretive phases (366). Essentially, Cooper drew our attention away from the "solitary author," and argued that the "ecological model…encourages us to direct our attention away from the characteristics of the individual writer and toward imbalances in social systems" (373). These arguments are similar to the ones expressed by Sidney Dobrin and Christian

<div align="center">9</div>

Weisser's more recent article, "Breaking ground in Ecocomposition: Exploring Relationships between Discourse and Environment," where they argue that ecocomposition promotes the relationship between writers and "larger systems" by investigating the role of environment, nature, location and place within those larger systems (575). Within ecocomposition, there is also a particular emphasis on the ecological system in which writers interact with each other and with the reader, noting "all writers are linked in a discourse sphere" (Dobrin and Weisser 576). Thus, ecocomposition asks certain questions such as what affect does place have on the writing process and a writer's identity? What kinds of relationships help us to define our place and how does this effect the rhetorical situation?

Ecocompositionalists arguments share a resemblance to posthumanism regarding composition, articulating the need for a more ecologically-oriented way for understanding the writer. Both ecocomposition and posthumanism are curious about the relationship between a discourse, its environment and its relationship to writing, effectively adding to post-process scholarship. However, ecocomposition seems to put an emphasis on one's environment and the writing process, stressing the idea that the environment is a "critical instrument" for understanding the function of writing (Dobrin and Weisser 578). Ecocomposition stresses the impact one's language and rhetoric can have on an environment, arguing that "writing teachers need to relocate the *where* of composition instruction outside the academic classroom because the classroom does not…offer students real rhetorical situations in which to understand writing as social action"(Heilker 71). Posthumanism, however, arguably takes this a step further by first considering evolution as a technological process which therefore implicates what we

have considered "natural" events as a form of technology, essentially depicting the human subject as a component of this technology. This position is articulated in Sidney Dobrin's recent text, *Writing Posthumanism, Posthuman Writing*:

> …within writing studies the inextricably bound and nebulous relationship between subject and technology a) renders subjectivity inseparable from technology, thus rendering the writing subject indistinguishable from writing and b) exposes writing as saturating not just the intellectual inquiry surrounding posthumanism, but the very phenomenological encounters all subjects, human and non-human, posthuman and transhuman, have with the world, not to mention the very idea that there can even be something called "subjectivity"(6).

Posthumanism looks to situate the subject more seamlessly into its environmental conditions, exploring its 'phenomenological encounters' more intricately to where we may even question "the very idea that there can even be something called subjectivity." For the posthumanist, the environment isn't something out there, separate from the human subject, but creates and is part of our existence. Early posthumanist within composition and rhetoric share similar sentiments where authors like Collin Gifford Brooke argue that we must revisit the relationship between nature, culture and subjectivity, returning to this notion of "embodied information" while increasing our focus on kairos (791).

Posthumanism has helped continue the post process movement in composition by questioning the linear model promoted in process writing and taking a closer look at the writing subject. Ecocompositionalists, on the other hand, began to focus more on the environment and sustainability. Moreover, while ecocomposition has indicated that

writing is an ecological phenomenon, posthuman scholars such as Sidney Dobrin have argued that ecocomposition "has failed to produce any substantial theory regarding the ecological facets of writing"(*Postcomposition* 125). Dobrin asserts that ecocomposition has "rejected the difficult work of devising ecological theories that provide insight into the phenomena (sic) of writing" (*Postcomposition* 126). Dobrin's claims helped separate ecology writing theory and ecocomposition where ecomposition became more concerned with environmental sustainability and its relation to writing studies. Therefore, complex ecological approaches to writing are needed, ones that consider how writing is a human-made and natural system, which involves notions of instability and fluctuation (*Postcompostion* 140).

An attempt to see writing as both a human-made and natural system is brought to the forefront in Byron Hawk's book, *A Counter-History of Composition: Toward Methodologies of Complexity,* where the subject isn't seen as an individual, but a part of a whole ecological system, and where the body itself isn't autonomous, but rather "a constellation of parts that participate in multiple systems" (158). Much of this discussion for Hawk stems from his thoughts on vitalism which he argues is the belief that life processes are not driven solely by natural law, but are moved by energy within the process itself. For example, Hawk would argue that a writer within a rhetorical context is not pulling from some abstract notion of "genius" to construct his or her work but that this act is a vital one, engaging with and creating the energy within their environment that helps produce their work.

Therefore for Hawk, posthumanism severely disrupts composition's notion of the subject itself, arguing that the subject "becomes a side effect of the pedagogical-machine

that cannot be completely determined" (255). The subject is more of a vehicle of information, as Hawk compares the individual to a conductor:

> As conductors we are active initiators of movement and organization, passive conduits that allow discourses and forces to pass through and reconnect to other circuits and function in new machines, and participants in constellations that are co-responsible for our conduct (155).

Essentially constructing a posthumanist theory for composition and rhetoric, Hawk argues that the writer is inseparable from technology, language, and the 'discourses and forces' that pass through us. Thus, the preoccupation composition has with a writer's agency or voice comes into question when we consider one's subjectivity to be constructed by and through various material forces. The system of writing isn't essentially human-made then according to Hawk, since we operate and work as conductors in a larger, natural system.

While Dobrin and Hawk articulate a more nuanced theoretical discussion on the ecology of writing and post-process theory, rhetoricians continue to consider the posthuman turn within rhetorical theory. Thomas Rickert's *Ambient Rhetoric* created a more detailed account for rhetorical theorists to begin dissolving the boundaries between the human subject and object when it comes to understanding the assemblage of rhetoric. Developing many of his arguments from Heidegger's hermeneutical phenomenology, Rickert argues that humans are not the only actors within the rhetorical context and that we must become attune to the human and nonhuman influences that help develop rhetoric.

Inspired by similar views, Scott Barnett and Casey Boyle recently developed a framework for the reconstruction of our rhetorical tradition entitled "rhetorical ontology." In their new book *Rhetoric Through Everyday Things,* Barnett and Boyle argue that this framework works to develop a rhetorical theory and practice that highlights how material elements-human and nonhuman-interact "suasively and agentially in rhetorical situations and ecologies" (2). Barnett and Boyle call for posthuman scholars to reimage our contact with things and the agency of things:

> In disciplines across the humanities and social sciences, the first decade of the twenty-first century has been characterized by a return to things. In fields such as philosophy, archaeology, anthropology, science and technology studies, literary studies, and rhetoric and writing studies, things increasingly attract attention as scholars attempt to understand the roles things play in their discipline…While important differences remain, the interdisciplinary reassessment of things recognizes that we do not simply point at things but act *alongside* and *with* them (1).

Our reliance to create subject/object boundaries within our reality relies on representationalism that reinforces the privileging of our human experience and is continuously being put into question as scholars engage with a more ontological understanding of our existence in the world. Indeed, if we continue to think of things solely on appearance, representation and language then we will continue believing that human beings alone determine and produce rhetoric and that humans are the "only true legislators of nature"(Barnett and Boyle 4). This does not mean that humans are to become irrelevant when considering rhetorical agency, however due to these recent

14

considerations in rhetoric scholarship they should no longer be singularly highlighted on the rhetorical stage (Barnett and Boyle 6).

When we consider the movement of posthumanism into composition and rhetoric then we are raising questions about our "rhetorical stage" and the human and non-human objects that operate on such a stage. As Barnett and Boyle argue, rhetorical ontology offers rhetoricians a broader circle from which to engage with and ask questions regarding rhetorical theory, which in turn influences and helps shape the approaches to composition and how we consider the writers position within a reframed, "rhetorical ontology." In many ways, rhetorical ontology is an extension of posthuman arguments where scholars are considering the agentive forces-both human and nonhuman-within a given space that help construct one's subjectivity and get us to consider the individual self beyond the human body. These should be concerns for writing studies scholars since it not only puts into question our models for rhetorical invention, but also the human qualities of self awareness, reflection and rationality which were traditionally thought of as qualities that separated us from the rest of nature (Coole and Frost 20). It is of no surprise then that as rhetoricians look to reframe rhetorical theory to be more ontologically oriented, posthuman compositionalists call for composition pedagogy to place "more emphasis on the material and affective ecologies that exist in and link to their classrooms and start inventing methods and heuristics out of these complex ecologies"(Hawk, *A Counter-History* 224).

Composition scholars have therefore latched on to this new ecological approach when considering pedagogical models. For example, Nedra Reynolds presented pedagogical practices closely related to social geography in her text *Geographies of*

15

Writing: Inhabiting Places and Encountering Differences and Nathaniel River's recently discussed the importance of Geocomposition in his text "Geocompostion in Public Rhetoric and Writing Pedagogy" where he depicts a pedagogical model revolving around the activity of geocaching within a community. While I believe these composition scholars respond to Dobrin's call to account for the "ecological facets of writing," they do so through drawing on other ecocompositionalists and avoid outside scholarship such as spatial theorists, thereby reiterating Dobrin's argument that composition fails to embrace spatial theory and has entrenched itself in concepts of the temporal. In many ways, composition is a field that is obsessed with its own history, with its own identity, and how that identity is created historically (Dobrin, "The Occupation of Compositon" 28). The obsession for composition to historicize itself may not come as a surprise to many compositionalists, given our rather insecure role within the university hierarchy; however, in aligning myself with Hawk and Dobrin, I believe we must consider writing as a system that operates alongside and within other disciplines, so that we must understand writing as something that "interrelates with other systems in ways not yet accounted for in either complex ecology or systems theory"(Dobrin, *Postcomposition* 150). Indeed, in order to truly consider the complex 'ecological facets of writing' we must think outside our own discipline as well and consider other scientific fields that may not have developed a vision for writing but can inform a discussion on writing as an elaborate, ontological system.

More importantly, compositionalists should continue to look towards rhetoricians like Thomas Rickert who are questioning writing studies' conventional understandings of the rhetorical context. Dobrin, for example, points us towards certain rhetoric as a way to

begin thinking about "even more complex theatrical approaches" to writing such as a "complex systems theory rhetoric in which to theorize the function of writing independent of the hegemonic rhetorics that have shaped composition theory thus far (*Postcomposition* 150).

Therefore, my dissertation will draw largely upon posthuman scholarship that looks to inform these 'complex theoretical approaches' of which Dobrin speaks of to help shape composition pedagogical practices. Moreover, while touching largely upon post process scholarship, my research will look to expand into recent research that operates within the field of rhetoric, anthropology, architecture and other social sciences in order to follow Dobrin's call to move away from the 'hegemonic rhetorics that have influenced composition scholars." While ecocomposition scholarship provides close ties to the project of environmental sustainability and will help construct my arguments regarding how to connect FYW with one's surrounding community, compositionalists working with posthumanism will provide me a necessary foundation to question our outdated notions of the rhetorical situation and the autonomous writer.

In getting us to question our own subjectivity within our environments, I believe posthumanism can operate as a useful theory for generating composition practices that engage students with their surroundings. It can even serve as a way of thinking through our pedagogical designs and help us generate new questions for inquiry. If we are to seriously consider the posthuman subject as a writer in the composition classroom, one that can potentially provide effective community-engaged activities in the university, then stronger pedagogical practices perusing the calls from Dobrin, Hawk and Boyle must take shape within our discipline.

17

The Need to Pursue a Posthuman Turn: An Overview of My Study

Why go through all the trouble of perusing a posthuman turn in composition pedagogy? As mentioned earlier, composition and rhetoric scholars have noted the importance in considering writing as an ecologically-centered practice, however there is still much to consider when thinking about how this ecological network impacts the writer and the rhetorical situation as we have defined it thus far. Larger questions loom for composition practitioners to ponder: what kinds of critical projects emerge when we consider that the structure and process of higher education was built on humanist principles? How do students directly benefit from a more ecological oriented composition pedagogy? Such questions have helped inspire one of the central questions I am considering for this project: how can we develop a critical thinking citizen from composition pedagogy that blends both posthumanism and critical regionalists theory? While I don't believe these questions can be answered in one dissertation, I do think that developing a framework inspired by posthumanism can generate new questions for composition scholars to consider when conceptualizing ecologically oriented pedagogy.

My study will look to respond to this posthuman movement described by scholars such as Boyle and Hawk who locate the shifting nature of our rhetorical traditions, while advocating for heuristics that note the 'material and affective ecologies' operating in and outside the composition classroom. Composition not only needs to continue its pursuit towards understanding the writer as a subject emerged within larger ecological systems, but also take into account the shifting nature of our rhetorical situations, updating its approach to rhetorical inquiry for college students. I argue that the current discussions regarding critical regionalist inquiry within the field of composition and rhetoric can

18

serve as a platform to consider future composition practices which will take into account both the reframing of our rhetorical tradition as well as the material influences on composition students. Doing so can not only elevate students conception of subjectivity within their writing spaces, but also build their rhetorical awareness of place, getting students to see how a rhetorical analysis of a region empowers their ability to navigate their environment and become engaged citizens within their communities.

This ability therefore informs the community-engaged pedagogical models I will outline in chapter four, constructing practices that consider posthumanism and critical regionalists theory to engage students with their immediate community. More importantly, the pedagogical models in chapter four as well as the observations developed in chapter five demonstrate a type of thinking that I believe takes shape through posthuman inquiry. It is this type of meaning-making that I would like students to discover through PCRI activities.

While posthumanism is important for PCRI, critical regionalist inquiry will operate as a vehicle for its implementation. Establishing itself within the field of architecture, critical regionalism invites scholars to visit the meaning-making process within a region, arguing that a region has the power to influence or even subvert national narratives. However, the term has recently made its way into composition and rhetoric where scholars have deployed the term to not only help analyze the rhetorical construction of a region, but to influence the development of composition practices within the classroom. Specifically within the field of rhetoric, scholars have been concerned with the production of a particular place and its connection to other places, emphasizing that the study of these regions should acknowledge the vast network of

19

narratives that run through it. Critical regionalism is about being aware that the writing about a region helps create and sustain that region, developing new perspectives on that place while participating within a broader network of discourse regarding that place (D.Powell 4).

These ideas have been influential in the composition field. For example, Rachel Jackson locates a text entitled *Folk-Say: A Regional Miscellany* as a site for critical regionalist inquiry. The book is a collection of texts from mostly Oklahoma writers who took interest in writing and preserving the state's cultural history. Jackson sees the book as a site of investigation, arguing that a rhetorical legacy exists in Oklahoma, which not only helps define that region, but also pushes against the national narratives that have helped flatten its history. For instance, Jackson argues that the Green Corn Rebellion was a "transrhetorical movement of socialist and unionist ideologies" which made its way through Oklahoma communities of Native American, African American and European American tenant farmers (Jackson 318). According to Jackson, these communities are rarely discussed in the historical narratives of the rebellion, which demonstrates the power of nationalist rhetoric to flatten and suppress the voices of a region (Jackson 319). Through examining the transrhetorical flows within regional texts such as *Folk Say: A Regional Miscellany,* composition instructors cannot only heighten students' sense of rhetorical awareness, but also connect them with history of the region they live in, strengthening their connection to place. Enhancing students' connection to place is vital within the composition classroom since students can learn how their writings attribute to the construction of their regions and how material spaces affect their writing practices.

However, the rhetorics of a region that helps sustain and create these narratives have not been thoroughly analyzed with posthumanism or rhetorical ontology in mind. Now that scholars are considering bodies as unstable, fragmented and spread out across discourses, instructors require a new critical framework to consider a writer's rhetorical force within a given space (Harold 865). A posthuman treatment of critical regionalism could hopefully question the humanistic approach to analyzing regional rhetoric, getting students to consider their impact on the universal narratives that construct one's community.

While scholars have taken up the cause to infuse critical regionalism within composition pedagogy, they have largely ignored Boyle's claims to reframe this new area of composition under a posthuman lens, particularly the materially-influencing pedagogy associated with critical regionalism. Part of this study then is to explore critical regionalism and its connection to posthuman scholarship, establishing a broader notion of this concept for community-engaged pedagogical models in the composition classroom. If, as Rosa Eberly claims, composition has the ability to reclaim certain public arenas ruined by capitalism and connect students more closely to their towns or cities, then having students consider and question universal narratives within their local spaces is a good place to start in a composition class. Critical regionalist inquiry can inspire this type of rhetorical analysis to a point, but I believe a proper reframing of this practice through posthuman theory can enhance its rhetorical inquiry approaches by noting both discursive and non-discursive practices that help construct their rhetorical narratives in our towns and cities. This new reframing of critical regionalists inquiry I call Posthuman Critical Regionalists Inquiry (PCRI). Therefore, the research questions I'll examine are: How can

21

using critical regionalism within the field of composition become more ecologically oriented through a treatment of posthumanism? How does critical regionalist inquiry, inspired by posthumanism, enhance compositionalists' approaches to community-engaged pedagogy?

A Note on Methodology

I will use a theatrical analysis as a methodology for my dissertation, discussing and selecting theoretical claims while comparing arguments to investigate their applicability within the field of composition and rhetoric. A theoretical analysis seeks to explain, understand and predict phenomena, and in many cases challenges existing knowledge within the limitations of critical bounding assumptions (Swanson 210). More specifically, my study will look to critique the "bounding assumptions" surrounding critical regionalism in composition through the examination of theoretical arguments stemming from both posthuman and critical regionalists scholars.

The methodology within my first three chapters is inspired by Swanson's discussion on the six theory-framework components that exist in theoretical frameworks within applied disciplines (Swanson 328). Swanson argues that the relationship between these components creates the theoretical framework, noting that "developing and testing a single component in context of the others will advance a theory as it continues to evolve (Swanson 329). Considering this claim, I look at two of the six-theory framework components: contributing theories for applied disciplines and useful-theory for applied disciplines.

Contributing theories for applied disciplines are selected theories that address the definition, assumptions and goals of an applied discipline (329). Contributed theories

aren't initially perceived as connected or useful to the field, and as Swanson argues, have

little utility in clearly advancing the discipline itself (332). Yet, through careful

intellectual interrogation, some of these theories seek to address assumptions that operate

within a discipline's theoretical foundation and can be developed into what Swanson

calls, useful-theories. For my dissertation, I will present two contributing theories for

consideration in the field of composition pedagogy: posthumanism and critical

regionalism. While these theories have been built outside the field of composition I

believe through careful "intellectual interrogation" they can become helpful in

developing composition pedagogy. These theories will be defined early in my dissertation

and argued as useful-theories for our discipline.

The useful-theory of an applied discipline is outside the core theory of an applied

discipline but has the ability to explain an important area of practice within the field.

(Swanson 329). Identifying useful-theory for a particular discipline is the defining result

of a theoretical framework, and is based on the "intellectual and functional interactions

between the selected contributing theatrical realms" (334). In considering this theoretical

framework then for my dissertation, I will review the interactions between posthumanism

and critical regionalism, interrogating these contributing theories in order to construct a

useful-theory that I will call Posthuman Critical Regionalists Inquiry (PCRI). Useful

theory, as Swanson claims, has the ability to explain important realms of practice within

the discipline and my hope for PCRI is to provide a guiding theory for community-

engaged pedagogy within the field of composition.

Once PCRI is theoretically fleshed out at the end of chapter three, I'll look to

outline its functionality in chapter four within a FYW course by providing a series of

pedagogical activities that think through its theoretical objectives. These activities will provide a framework to deploy PCRI in a first year writing course. However, understanding that this pedagogy has yet to be studied within a particular context, chapter five will then look to demonstrate the methodological underpinnings of PCRI within a specific context.

Chapter five will therefore enact the methodology PCRI seeks to engage students with by focusing on a specific place: York College CUNY in Jamaica Queens, New York. Inspired by Latour's Actor Network Theory (ANT), this chapter will demonstrate a type of thinking through that I want students to establish when working with PCRI. Latour's ANT establishes a set of posthuman, fundamental principles for heuristics to follow which include: (1) the acknowledgement that nonhuman and human actors are treated as nodes that mediated agency and are equal (2) mediation means translation, which according to Latour describes the various means in which actors intentions are deflected by the nodes they pass through (3) the key to a network's power dynamics are its network's associations (Walsh 406). As Latour has argued, ANT is not a theory per-say but a set of principles that can inspire a heuristic. These principles, inspired by Latour's posthumanist approach to human and nonhuman relationships, are the philosophical underpinnings to the work I will do within chapter five, so that I can showcase the type of posthuman thinking I want my students doing within the framework of PCRI. By thinking through my own course design with a PCRI lens I establish a new set of questions on the outset of this study, reflecting on how this type of exploration can generate outcomes one did not initially consider.

Chapter Summary

In the recent posthuman scholarship brought forth by scholars such as Casey Boyle, Byron Hawk, and Scott Barnett, the humanistic approach to composition pedagogy is being brought into question. Scholars within the field of rhetoric are proposing new ways of thinking about our rhetorical situations, where both linguistic and material factors are taken into account. Composition scholars are also looking not only at ecocomposition's approach to the "embedded writer," but posthuman arguments related to this position, questioning our commonplace assumptions about the individual writer. Consequently, my own curiosity regarding community engaged pedagogy has lead me to consider how posthumanism can inform new pedagogical models that inspire students to become active citizens in their communities. I propose a study that seeks to address this scholarship by blending both posthumanism and critical regionalists inquiry (PCRI), developing composition pedagogies that acknowledge student's distributed subjectivity and attempt to build their rhetorical awareness. Eventually I demonstrate the type of thinking established through PCRI activities in chapter five and produce a new set of questions for compositionalists to consider.

CHAPTER TWO

MOVING FROM ARISTOTLE TO AMBIENT RHETORIC:

A LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

In order to grasp the importance of posthuman scholar's reframing of the rhetorical situation we must first explore how western philosophy has helped shape our notion of the human subject in relation to the material world, leading to a description of the rhetorical situation that is heavily influenced by Enlightenment thought. Therefore, this section will first explore how Aristotle's views on existence and essences helped pave the way for a type of representationalism that was championed by Immanuel Kant and other Enlightenment thinkers. Postmodern thinkers have since questioned Enlightenment beliefs and have led to new constructs of the human subject, which have recently influenced scholars in the social sciences and rhetoricians such as Thomas Rickert and Jenny Edbauer. The movement from Blitzer's "rhetorical situation" to Rickert's "Ambient rhetoric" will be explained to showcase how rhetorical theory has pivoted away from a Kantian perception of the world and into a move ontologically-oriented notion of becoming.

After this discussion I will provide a literature review of the term "critical regionalism," presenting its interdisciplinary movements over the years in order to clarify its definition within the composition field. Eventually I will discuss the importance of critical regional inquiry, a heuristic within critical regionalism that can help students in composition explore their relationship to a region why building their rhetorical awareness. These two sections of chapter two will eventually come together to inform

chapter three, which will propose a posthuman approach to critical regionalists inquiry (PCRI).

From Aristotle to Deleuze

According to Aristotle, each thing has an essence, and a definition that determines an essence, or what it means, "to be." As Aristotle argues, "a definition is an account (logos) that signifies an essence (102a3). Therefore, as Aristotle continues, "the essence of a thing is what is said to be in respect to itself (1029 b14). Thus, a definition of a human does not tell us the meaning of the word "human," but instead explains what it means "to be" of the human species, stating the characteristics of which it has by necessity and thus forming an identity. Much of Aristotle's discussion on essence has influenced future Western thought and perused philosophies that individualize different forms of existence, while prioritizing the human experience. The Kantian worldview, for example, of which dominates much of contemporary science, establishes that the categories for reality established in the human mind are the "condition of possibility for experience, noting that reality must conform to our mind's construction of concepts in order for us to understand experience" ("Immanuel Kant"). Indeed, as Tim Ingold has argued, the Kantian worldview has helped shape a world of enclosure and surfaces, where the knowing subject is positioned over and against materiality (*Being Alive* 1798). In critiquing Hume's arguments that our judgments depend on experiences and are not a priori, Kant argued that our ability to reason practically made it possible for us to know how things were and established a way to formulate judgments apriori.

Hume's arguments, however, have inspired other materialists philosophers to question the works of Kant and his discussions on human reason. As Hume had once argued:

> All reasoning concerning matter of fact seem to be founded on the relation of cause and effect…The hearing of an articulate voice and rational discourse in the dark assures us of the presence of some person…I shall venture to affirm, as a general proposition, which admits of no exception, that the knowledge of this relation is not, in any instance, attained by reasoning apriori but arises entirely from experience…Let an object be presented to a man of ever strong natural reason and abilities; if that object be entirely new to him, he will not be able, by the most accurate examination of its sensible qualities, to discover any of its causes or effects. (Hume 17)

Hume was a skeptic of positioning reasoning before experience as Kant proposed, and therefore noted the importance of experience as the building block for foundational knowledge such as our ability to examine the "sensible qualities" of an object. Kant's notions of reason, however, helped construct the Enlightenment idea of the individual, where a person had the freedom to make choices and question authority while also formulating a sense of ethics. Western history moved in the direction of Kant and the Enlightenment has been extremely influential, but with the emergence of post-Marxist and post-structuralism there has been, as David Harvey argued, a rage against humanism and the Enlightenment legacy"(41). This has spilled over into vigorous denunciation of abstract reason and a deep aversion to any project that has looked for universal human emancipation through mobilization of the powers of technology, science and reason (41).

Postmodernism's concern with fragmentation and questioning grand narratives such as the Enlightenment has left us in crisis. As Harvey explains, "The moral crisis of our times is a crisis of Enlightenment thought…the postmodern theological project is to reaffirm God's truth without abandoning the powers of reason" (41). Movements starting in the twentieth century have moved us away from "the categorical fixity of Enlightenment thought" (Harvey 29), and began to question the powers of reason outlined by Kant and our reliance on a world of representation. A world that in many ways was inspired by Aristotle whose works continue to inform our rhetorical traditions, particularly within our discussions on the self and its relation to the rhetorical situation. Yet, as Harvey contends, dismissing Enlightenment thought is an issue when we consider its influence on how we conceive our individuality and agency, let alone our spiritual and ethical beliefs. In rethinking the self we should acknowledge the major tenants of postmodernism and its concern with fragmentation but there is need to remove the apocalyptic nihilism surrounding the possibility of an ethical and imaginative subjective experience. While the ideals set by Kant and Enlightenment thinkers still inspire and help define our notions of self, its narrative is by no means edged in stone and has been continuously questioned throughout history.

In many ways, academic disciplines such as composition and rhetoric have built their epistemologies off of the Kantian perception of the world. As noted by Anis Bawarshi, early composition textbooks highlighting process theory are littered with an emphasis on a writer's agency and are particularly frustrating when it comes to explaining how student writers invent (14). As we have moved from process to post process theory, the social turn in composition and rhetoric has allowed scholars to

29

become less concerned with a writers cognitive processes and more concerned with examining the localized conditions in which writers' cognition and social actions are constructed (Bawarshi 14). Therefore, scholars are taking notice that in privileging human reason we are discounting outside sensory experience and latching on to a narrative that has been critiqued since the early works of Hume and Spinoza.

Posthumanism have considered these arguments as well, as Kate Birdsall and Julie Drew claim, "our focus is on the loss of a center locus of control and on the lamentation for the loss of a grand narrative that at one point, suggested the possibility of a static Enlightenment ideal of self" (190). Many posthuman ideas have been inspired by Gillian Deleuze, a French philosopher who built many of his arguments off the workings of David Hume, questioning the Kantian position of human reasoning. In turning to Deleuze and Guattari's understanding of the individual, they articulate that a subject "has neither subject nor object, only determinations, magnitudes, and dimensions that cannot increase in number without the multiplicity changing in nature" (*A Thousand Plateaus* 8). Deleuze and Guattari's notion of the self is ever expanding, arguing that we must reach a point "where it is no longer of any importance whether one says I. We are no longer ourselves. Each will know his own. We have been aided, inspired, multiplied (*A Thousand Plateaus* 3). More specifically, Deleuze believes that through sensations and acts Individuals become part of reality and perceive this reality individually; however, believing that the individual is a self-conscious "I" is an illusion and we are rather a "series of processes that connect actual things, thoughts, and sensations to the pure intensities and ideas implied by them"(Williams 6). Intensities are qualities of a thing that are in the act of becoming (to become hard, to become sweet etc.) when encountered by

30

an individual through his or her senses. According to Deleuze our experience with intensities are unique for each individual and are incomparable qualities between various experiences due to this uniqueness. For Deleuze, "it is intensity which is immediately expressed in the basic spatio-temporal dynamisms and determines an indistinct differential relation in the idea to incarnate itself in a distinct quality and a distinguished extensity" (*Difference and Repetition* 245). Therefore, the individual is a location, or a site of creation that relates ideas and our senses' interpretations of intensities to continuously formulate new identities for the self. As Deleuze suggests, "The aesthetic of intensities thus develops each of its moments in correspondence with the dialectic of Ideas: the power of intensity (depth) is grounded in the potentiality of the Idea (*Difference and Repetition* 245). One is closer to Deleuze's idea of the individual when one sits and daydreams, looking out on a cityscape and allowing thought and sensation to move through you seamlessly without concern, rather than sitting and contemplating a problem, consciously reflecting on its intricacies and toiling with its various solutions (Williams 6). Deleuze's considerations on the individual break down our traditional notions of human agency by getting posthuman scholars to think about the thoughts and sensations that work through our bodies, constructing and reconstructing our subjectivities. These arguments helped influence those considering agency and the dynamics of space within the social sciences, inspiring new qualitative approaches to research.

Postmodern Scholars in the Social Sciences

These arguments concerning the individual become critical for postmodern scholars in the social sciences. Social scientists seeking a movement away from the

31

Kantian worldview that privileges the human experience are beginning to question the boundaries that separate our conscious and our physical selves, noting that sensation and intensities play a role in constructing what we believe is our conscious. In *The Mangle of Practice,* sociologist Andrew Pickering argues that scientific studies have operated on a "representational idiom," taking for granted that science is representing the world and operates as a venture into epistemology (414). Pickering suggests that we need to move towards a "performative idiom," an ontology that decenters human perspective and acknowledges the "emergent interplay of human and material agency"(414). We should therefore begin to acknowledge scientific knowledge as something that is bound up or "mangled" with both human and non-human agency.

Similarly, in *The Science of Qualitative Research,* Martin Packer has argued that qualitative inquiry can counter the attitude that humans have to dominate not only other humans but also the planet as a whole (4). He argues that it "can draw on new conceptions of human rationality, alternatives to Kant's model" (5). Packer moves away from the argument that each individual utilizes an epistemological process to construct knowledge of the world and instead argues that constitution is "an ontological process in which the very constituents of reality-objects and subjects-are constituted" (149). Packer argues that too often we have reduced other things to a status of "objective observation" and have failed to acknowledge that humans are not just beings that live in a cultural or historical form of life, but are complex and sophisticated subjects which are built up and through their everyday intensities (4). Similar to Deleuze, Packer notices that humans are not simply products of their cultural or historical contexts, but are constructed, or as Packer argues, "constituted," through the intensities that circulate within their lives.

32

Packer and Pinkering's call for qualitative inquiry to respond to this ontological shift in research has been taken up by other scholars in the social sciences. Within anthropology, for example, in a recent interview for *Cultural Anthropology,* Tim Ingold argues that every branch of scientific inquiry should begin working against the idea that the world presents itself as a stand in reserve for data collection by the human sciences. Ingold argues that every discipline within the sciences should have the humility to follow a new ontological commitment and recognize "that understanding can only grow from within the world we seek to know, the world of which we are apart" (Ingold, "Enough About"). Thus, Ingold's work pushes away from the Kantian worldview where the human subject is privileged within their material surroundings and suggests that as organisms move, they encounter and interact with circular intensities which engage their identities, thus to be is "not to be *in* place but to be along paths. The path, not the place, is the primary condition of being, or rather becoming"(Ingold, *Being Alive* 1808). Therefore, Ingold suggests that we must not pull ourselves out of the material world when considering our own subjectivies, since our social life is not cut out of a separate plane from nature but is an element of what is happening within our organic world (Ingold, *Being Alive* 11). Human and non-human actors skillfully conduct themselves within their surroundings, utilizing capacities of attention and response that are embodied through practice and experience (Ingold, *Being Alive* 11). Ingold aligns himself with the psychologists James Gibson when he eventually argues that perception is not developed through a mind in a body but through the whole human being as it moves through its context, thus observation describes a particular path in which we are both perceiver and producer (Ingold, *Being Alive* 12). Essentially, to dwell means to be in movement as

changes along our path produce the various shapes of our environmental objects (Ingold, *Being Alive* 11).

Inspired by Ingold, Sarah Pink takes this construction of perception a step further in her notion of sensory ethnography and considers these arguments within qualitative inquiry. Pink follows the Deleuzian concept of intensities, suggesting that our senses receive and respond to our natural environment, helping to construct our notion of subjectivity. For example, Pink's sensory ethnography is an approach that opens up to the various affective and material textures of everyday life (Pink*, Doing Sensory Ethnography* 23). Sensory ethnography acknowledges the human and non-human objects within a given space and examines the sensitivities of these various objects assembled during the course of empirical research. While ethnography can be defined as research that involves direct or sustained contact with human agents in the context of their daily lives in order to construct an account of their human experience, sensory ethnography allows the research to question established ethnographic research techniques by having the researcher "self-consciously and reflexively attend to the senses throughout the research process…to rethink ethnography to explicitly account for the senses"(Pink, *Doing Sensory Ethnography* 10). In many ways, sensory ethnography treats the body as its own research instrument, responding to the context in which it inhabits and retaining certain habits through the process of learning (Duff 134). Pink acknowledges our abilities to retain a certain subjectivity through our use of sensory knowing which she notes as "sensory subjectivity," arguing that our senses help establish habits which lead to a sense of identity. According to Pink, the way individuals use sensory knowledge and practice is a form of subjectivity where the individual learns about the world that is at once

culturally specific and might also be influenced by experiences and ideologies existing

beyond the local (Pink, *Doing Sensory Ethnography* 80). This conclusion, however, does

not assume we establish just one subjectivity, as Pink explains:

> we should recognize that people may shift between different subject
>
> positions…this idea of sensory subjectivity is thus sensitive to the contingency of
>
> identity and its is also inextricable from our relationship with our total
>
> environment ("Doing Sensory Ethnography" 80).

Like Deleuze, Pink establishes a subjectivity that is not only contingent on the shifts

between "different subject positions" but also on our senses understanding of the world,

constructing this relationship with our "total environment." While Pink stresses this form

of thinking within qualitative methods, her understanding of one's subjective experience

seems to follow Deleuze's discussion on intensities and how our senses come in contact

with elements of our environment and their "acts of becoming." Qualitative inquiry

therefore becomes more nuanced when we consider participants working through various

subjectivities as they experience their environment.

Scholars such as Pink, Ingold and Packering point scholars towards a way of

inquiry and research that is inspired by arguments such as posthumanism, questioning our

reliance on early Enlightenment thought. As Sarah Pink has argued, such arguments

shaping the social sciences are creating new debates regarding the theoretical exploration

of sensory experience, perception, knowing and culture which are inspiring "empirical

studies and real-world interventions over a broad range of substantive areas" (*Doing

Sensory Ethnography* 7). What's also worth noting is the attempt by these scholars to

move away from just describing how we should interpret our embedded experiences and

begin to utilize this ontological perspective when one conducts research. While Ingold describes one's existence as not being in a "place" but being along a "path," Pink offers a research method that attempts to acknowledge and locate these "paths" of existence. Scholars have therefore begun to move from the theoretical to the more practical.

This movement has begun to influence rhetoricians such as Jenny Edbauer and Thomas Rickert who have considered the implications of how a rhetor interacts and interprets their environment to construct a rhetorical situation. Pulling from both posthuman and rhetorical theory, these rhetoricians have focused on working towards an ontological turn in the field of composition and rhetoric which runs parallel with the works of Pink and Pickering while also working off of earlier philosophical thinkers such as Deleuze and Guattari. In thinking about composition pedagogy and its usage of rhetorical analysis, we should consider how rhetoricians have been influenced by this type of thinking and are conceptualizing a new way of rhetorical inquiry. Empirical research from scholars such as Sarah Pink are bringing this intricate understanding of the human subject to their qualitative research and rhetoricians are beginning to deploy this approach as well.

The Ontological Turn within Rhetorical Theory

As explained earlier, posthuman arguments have arguably been a topic in rhetoric and composition for quite some time since some of its claims run parallel with ecocomposition. However, as Dobrin has argued, when posthumanism was directly taken up in a dialogue within our field it concentrated on topics such as bodies, subjects and identity (*Postcomposition* 6). One of its earliest contributions was a special issue of *JAC* in 2000 where guest editors John Mucklebauer and Debra Hawhee suggested

36

"posthumanism poses intriguing questions to many longstanding, "self-evident'
assumptions about rhetoric and communication, broadly conceived"(768). The editors
explain that because the "human body is already highly distributed (biologically,
ecologically, and socially)" than certain rhetorical constructs may be in question, such as
how we acknowledge and "distinguish between a speaker, an audience, a message and a
context" (768). In practice, rhetoricians tend to acknowledge the complex rhetorical
situation in much simpler terms the best they can, and the editors consider whether there
might be a way of rethinking rhetoric that would encourage us to engage with this
complexity and respond to it? (769).

The writers in this edition of *JAC* look to take on this call in numerous ways. For
example, Collin Gifford Brooke argues that posthumanism is not simply the "latest in our
academic procession of post-isms" and looks to find a space for posthumanism that
works outside the modern/postmodern complex and provides a new perspective on
rhetoric (776-777). In one of the earliest arguments made regarding posthumanism and
its affect on rhetoric, Brooke begins by setting his sights on ancient rhetoric and how
Plato argued that rhetoric was dangerous manly because it was not a natural endeavor but
something which could be taught and transferred from one person to another; therefore,
rhetoric was not natural but an "artificial construct, one that encourages us to conceive of
our relationship to language as one of production and control" (784). Indeed, Plato notes
how the rhetor chooses now to distance themselves from the given rhetorical situation by
including the text, a written component of one's speech, rather than a reliance on memory
and orality. Memory has since lost its "canonical relevance for rhetoric" and literate
societies of today chose to externalize information, emphasizing that power is not "what

37

you know, but 'where to look" (786). However, Brooke claims that while we have

externalized memory we still look to define ourselves between the artificial and the

natural, noting that we continue to rely on our outside environment rather than our own

capabilities to store information and an implication of this act is that "we do not perceive

it as such" (786). In failing to question this binary between the natural in the artificial,

we are not only building an immense database of memory through externalizing

information but holding on to the "humanist values of mastery and control that derive

from the will to knowledge" as well as the assumption that all our experience must

consistently be measured (791). In a time when we are all facing information overload

because of this ability to externalize memory, Brooke argues that a posthuman rhetoric

would help us shift through what we should remember by focusing on both *kairos*

(opportunities that emerge because of a situation) and *chronos* (artificial patterns of time

like the ones we set our clocks to), tempering our abilities to access absolute knowledge

that can communicate an ignorant position that is incomplete (791). Brooke explains that

a focus on both *kairos and chronos* will position our thinking on the "materially situated

emergence of opportunities," when considering a past experience and thus assist in

helping us shift through the knowledge we need to hold on to (791). For Brooke,

posthuman rhetoric is a way of investigating what should and should not be stored as

memory.

Like Brooke, Christine Harold questions rhetoric's humanist perspective in her

article, "The Rhetorical Function of the Abject Body: Transgressive Corporeality in

Trainspotting." She argues that common rhetorical practices persistently support linear

reason and moral judgment, which usually depicts these "moral norms as natural,

universal phenomena (865). This faith in rationality therefore denies the outside

rhetorical forces that potentially threaten the assumptions made by the critic regarding

our physical body (865). Harold therefore suggests that bodies are unstable entities that

have a rhetorical force onto themselves, articulating that bodies have the power to

transform and are not simply moral entities (867). While Brooke looks into rhetoric's

relationship with memory, rhetorics simplistic notion of morality is thus put into question

by Harold through her ability to question its stable, monolithic depiction within rhetorical

traditions, arguing that the body exceeds rational and moral judgment because it

continuous changes through its relationship with outside objects (884). Therefore

contesting that rhetoric can appeal to a particular discourse that shares moral values is

questionable since the complexity of each individual's body and its ability to shift

between moral entities is unique and in constant flux.

The *JAC* edition in 2000 concerning Posthumanism and its effect on composition

and rhetoric helped give rise to more broad discussions regarding memory and invention

as well has how to revision rhetoric's relationship with the body. Harold's arguments

regarding the body's ability to shift between moral entities speaks to the scholarship that

developed later in the twenty-first century which discusses the rhetorical effects within

our everyday life and their impact on both mind and body. In Martin Nystrand and John

Duffy's 2003 text *New Directions in Research on Writing, Text, and Discourse,* the

editors note that there is an increase interest in composition and rhetoric to focus on

research within writing that locates the intersection between historical, socio-cultural,

political and everyday contexts, arguing that "long gone are any lingering fantasies that

texts can be 'autonomous' or that writers' agency completely shapes their texts" (viii).

The volume focuses on what the authors consider "rhetoric of everyday life," locating rhetoric not only in language but "in mundane contexts especially beyond school" in order to show how discourses in and out of a school setting are influenced by material conditions and various circumstances that develop in the everyday world (viii). For these authors, the term "rhetoric" isn't referring to the conventional notions of persuasion but to how individuals or groups of individuals utilize language to construct their realities, focusing on rhetoric as a "medium for creating, managing or resisting ideological meaning" (ix).

Focusing on rhetoric as a medium that works to shape our social realities requires us to acknowledge not just the written or spoken word that develops discourse, but the material worlds that surround us as well. One such scholar in Nystrand and Duffy's text that looks at this relationship is John Ackerman. In his article, "The Space for Rhetoric in Everyday Life," he draws on Lefebvre's *Production of Space* to argue that "the pressure of everyday life as a spatial concept will necessary transform our imagination and our involvement in rhetorical studies"(86). Noting that rhetoricians in the past have continuously privileged "text over spaces and schools over cities," Ackerman proposes that we must extend our understanding of the rhetorical situations and agency so that we can address the historical and material attributes of social space and everyday life (85). In extending Lefebvre's argument that we must recognize the gap between social and mental spaces where an object, subject, or place can be comprehended through material circumstances (Lefebvre 7), Ackerman looks at public and private sites such as a kitchen floor plan to make the claim that language within a discourse may be directly made by their spaces, but the "textures of such language and activity would not exist apart from a

specific location" (96). In considering this claim Ackerman draws a connection to rhetorical studies:

> Thus sites may be as integral to our understanding of literacy practices as other rhetorical and linguistic properties of the utterance…the places that shapes these literacy plots are key to the rhetorical contexts. Within the spaces of the everyday, as well as the language representing these spaces and emanating from them, sites and site analyses add a physical dimension to Bitzer's concept of 'rhetorical situation.' (96)

Bitzer's 'rhetorical situation' hasn't dramatically changed since its creation in 1963 and Ackerman looks to draw upon Lefebvre's *Production of Space* in order to broaden our notions of the relationship between materiality and our rhetorical traditions.

In pulling from Nystrand and Duffy, as well as Ackerman, Debra Hawhee notes in her article "Rhetoric Bodies, and Everyday Life" that broadening our notions of rhetorical studies to include both the material consequence on our mind and the body can be found in the ancient discussions on rhetoric, however our contemporary focus on the rational and cerebral tuned out these features (161). Hawhee seeks to answer a question raised by rhetoricians such as Nystand, Duffy and Ackerman that asks how one can teach the "non-rational, bodily, nonverbal features of rhetoric to our students?"(160). Hawhee walks us through a lesson plan of her own where she brings her students through the city streets and into Pittsburgh's Carnegie International Museum to showcase how everyday life can become rhetorical, where "*kairos* creates openings for discourse," and how the circulation of ideologies within a common space can create a rhetorical effect (161). Hawhee investigates Aristotle's claim that rhetoric is an art of discovery, arguing that

41

attending to our everyday lives that are lived in cities, towns, streets, museums or parks create available means and resources for rhetorical effect (163). She contends:

> …the discovery, use, and effects of such "available means" of rhetorical action transpires through bodies, spaces, and visual as much as it happens through the presumed twin-media of rhetoric-the written and spoken word…These bodily and extra-rational features of rhetoric, I offer, were just as crucial for the ancients-the challenge is knowing where to look and how to listen for these sorts of already built-in lessons (163).

Like Nystand and Duffy, Hawhee see's rhetoric as a medium which attunes itself to one's social space, noting that other rhetorical actions are transpiring 'through bodies, spaces and visuals' to inform one's own rhetorical features; hence the idea that rhetoric is essentially an art of discovery, or a way we shape our social realties by listening to the rhetorical features that implicate both our mind and our bodies.

Hawhee's reimaging rhetoric as an art of discovery broadens our notions of how both the mind and body operate simultaneously to react and filter through the rhetorical affects that are working within one's material space. This essentially complicates Bitzer's classic notion of the rhetorical situation where he locates exigencies in our material conditions but argues that such exigencies are "located in reality, and are objective and publicly observable historic facts in the world we experience, which are therefore available for scrutiny by an observer or critic who attends to them"(390). Bitzer sees a rhetor as one who goes out and discovers these exigencies on his or her own, and where the relationship between the rhetor and the workings of one material conditions are not

complicated at all since exigencies hold an autonomous existence waiting to be sought out by the rhetor.

Scholarship aligning itself with rhetoricians such as Hawhee, Hawk, and Ackerman were beginning to directly question Bitzer's classic 'rhetorical situation,' such as Jenny Edbauer's article in 2005 entitled "Unframing models of public distribution: From the Rhetorical Situation to rhetorical Ecologies." Edbauer questions Bitzer's rhetorical situation and notes how these models tend to describe rhetoric "as a totality of discrete elements: audience, rhetor, exigence, constraints, and text" (7). She suggests that such description of the rhetorical situation is founded on "elemental conglomerations," whereby rhetoric and discourse simply become a collection of elements (speaker-audience-message, ethos-pathos-logos); therefore, rhetoricians should move towards a framework she calls "affective ecologies," which "recontextualizes rhetorics in their temporal, historical and lived fluxes (9). Like Hawhee, Edbauer moves towards understanding rhetoric's impact on both the mind and the body, noting that the sites we do rhetoric in are not just seen but perhaps felt, and that locations "can be described in ecological terms of varying intensities of encounters and interactions-much like a weather system (12). Thus, Edbauer moves us away from the closed system that the classic rhetorical situation places a writer in, and situates the writing experience in a more ecological, open network. As she argues, "the rhetorical situation is better conceptualized as a mixture of processes and encounters; it should become a verb, rather than a fixed noun or *situs* (13). Working off of Hawhee's notion that the body as well as the mind come into play when developing and acknowledging rhetoric, Edbauer complicates the standard "rhetorical situation" by suggesting that this model fails to locate the fluidity of

43

rhetoric and its combination/mixture of various events that happen in a material space which cannot be categorized into audience, text, and rhetorician (20).

Edbauer's work helps move rhetoric away from a rendering of the rhetorical situation that is static and awaiting the discovery of a rhetor to a perspective of rhetoric that adapts, moves and becomes, where each situation works within a "rhetorical imminence, a horizon of internal and external possibility"(Mcnely 142). Indeed, through situating the rhetor in their material context, scholars such as Edbauer, Hawhee and Ackerman moved rhetoric further towards Rickert's description of rhetoric in his seminal text, *Ambient Rhetoric.* For Rickert, rhetoric "must be grounded in the material relations from which it springs," arguing that rhetoric is ambient, it "impacts the senses, circulates in waves of affect, and communes to join and disjoin people"(x). Like Hawhee, Rickert focuses on how our bodies and our minds come in to play when constructing the rhetorical situation and utilizing rhetoric as a tool for discovery. However, instead of the term discovery, Rickert uses the term "attention" to emphasize the components that make up rhetoric which have been left in the background. These are the things that do not deny rhetor's social elements but run complimentary to it.

> …we expand the concept of attention beyond that which is limited to the
> subjective, intentional, or merely cognitive; attention would thereby come to
> include the materiality of our ambient environs, our affective comportments, the
> impact of that which escapes conscious notice and the stumbling block presented
> by the finitude of knowledge when facing the plenitude of the world and its
> objects (xi).

Unlike Bitzer's notion that our materiality is an exigency to rhetoric, Rickert argues that

the constitutive role of ambience constructs how rhetorical situations emerge (xi). Thus,

rhetoric operates as an "attunement to the world" and the ambient conditions of our

external environment, whereby ambient rhetorics entail "the always ongoing disclosure

of the world shifting our manner of being" (xii). These disclosures often emerge from the

intensities circulating within our environment, affecting us as we shift to attune and

respond to such conditions. Becoming attune to ones rhetorical situation is therefore an

awareness of one's being-in-the-world, whereby we become enlightened on the ambient

conditions which situate us in a particular space. Brian McNely describes this concept as

situatedness:

> Rhetoric is a central mode of attunement to throwness, entanglement, and
>
> worldishness, and the subtle shift from situation to situatedness encompasses the
>
> conditions of attunement for a given rhetor. Sitautedness thus evolves, adapts
>
> moves and changes as new forms of worldish ambience are disclosed, evaded and
>
> embedded in one's being potential. (143)

In considering our materiality as constitutive to our rhetorical situations, Rickert's argues

for a reconceptualization of human agency, noting that the things and affects of our

environment have suasive potential (18). Therefore, as Rickert suggests our rhetorical

situations should more accurately be described as rhetorical lifeworlds (213). These

"rhetorical lifeworlds" have been researched and theorized since Rickert's *Ambient*

Rhetoric, most notably in Scott Barnett and Casey Boyle's recent book, *Rhetoric Through*

Everyday Things. It is in this 2016 text that Barnett and Boyle introduce and define the

term "rhetorical ontology" which is a framework used in rhetorical scholarship that

focuses on both human and non-human material elements in our material world in order to show how objects "interact suasively and agentially in rhetorical situations and ecologies" (2). Working off Rickert's notion of the ambient conditions rhetorical situations exist in, Barnett and Boyle highlight the ways in which objects act as rhetorical forces within our spaces and uses this term to inform and unify the essays in his text. For example, Laurie Gries article "On Rhetorical Becoming" follows the rhetorical transformation of the Obama Hope image, demonstrating how nonmodern views on time and space can help create a visual image's distributed ontology (157). Gries argues that visual thing's "distributed ontology" can be conceived through a rhetorical ecological model that "challenges us to imagine how images emerge and flow within networks, fields, forces, affects, and associations (159). Thus, Gries looks to see how things can become rhetorical in unpredictable ways and considers the Obama Image that, through various networks particularly digital, transformed its rhetorical meaning by unfolding at different speeds and different spatial situations (166). Thus, unlike the rhetorical situation as discussed by Bitzer, Gries' work with the Obama Hope Image highlights how rhetorical objects such as an image can become persuasive in a very unpredictable fashion, taking up a life of its on and as Gries suggests, are always on "the rhetorical run, participating in collective life in important yet unexpected ways (168).

The ontological movement in rhetorical theory has not only noticed the unpredictable rhetorical affects of both human and non-human objects and how they are implicated by their surroundings, but also how rhetoric is assembled within an embedded environment and therefore should implicate how we approach rhetorical analysis. From "rhetorical lifeworlds" to "ambient conditions," rhetoricians have found a vast array of

46

words to describe this new dynamic space that rhetors or writers find themselves. In shaping this langauge to accurate resemble the spaces we rhetorically invent in, I wonder how composition and rhetoric scholars make a move similarily made by Sarah Pink in her book *Sensory Ethnography* where she goes from theory to practice, having her research subjects "self –conciously and reflexively attend to the research process" (10). Pink not only acknowledges the human subject as one embedded in his or her landscape, but attempts to measure and attend to this belief in her qualitative practices. Some rhetoricians such as Debrah Hawhee are beginning to understand their students in this way, but it would be interesting to have students work through their writing projects as embedded subjects; as one who "sef-conciously and reflexively attends" to their research as a college student.

Recognizing rhetoric as an embedded process should generate more conversations regarding the ecological landscape a rhetor find themselves in and how understanding this landscape can be used to his or her benefit. As noted by Nystrand and Duffy, thinking about rhetoric as an assemblage built within our everyday worlds can get us to think about rhetoric as a "medium for creating, managing or resisting ideological meaning" (ix). The ontological turn in rhetorical theory has therefore opened the door for rhetoricians and compositionalists to consider new approaches regarding rhetorical analysis and its ability to challenge dominant ideologies or meaning-making processes. If inspired by scholars such as Sarah Pink, these new ontological approaches could see rhetorical invention in a more ecological and self-reflective process, where the student attends to human and non-human elements in the room while also reflecting on their own dynamic relationship with their outside worlds. This will not look to eliminate one's

47

understanding that he or she is an active and engaged agent within a space, but broaden his or her awareness to other actants within a rhetorical context. This is a call that I will take up in regards Posthuman Critical Regionalists Theory since it looks to create a type of rhetorical inquiry that can subvert dominate rhetorical narratives that circulate within the rhetorical construction of a region while also acknowledging one's ecological context.

The Ontological Turn in Composition

As scholars such has Jenny Edbauer and Thomas Rickert have begun to question the rhetorical situation as its been defined through most of the 20th century, composition scholars have also recognized this shift and found ways to incorporate this new ontological turn in composition. Posthuman scholars have aided in this ontological shift as noted earlier in chapter one. Moreover, many posthumanist in composition have raised questions regarding the writer's subjectivity. Traditional humanist and postmodern notions of subjectivity adopted by composition studies have been rendered obsolete, and a movement into the future for the field includes a refiguring of the subject as a posthuman, non-autonomous agent" (Dobrin, *Postcomposition* 17). In noting that a writer is potentially a "non-autonomous agent," many compositionalists have considered how a non-autonomous agent operates within a very dynamic and fluid rhetorical situation as discussed by Rickert and Edbauer. For example, In Casey Boyle's "Writing and Rhetoric and/as Posthuman Practice" he calls for a "rhetorical response" to the *Framework of Success in Postsecondary Writing,* a joint report issued by three prominent writing studies organizations in an effort to preparing students for college writing. Boyle suggests that such a response should take into consideration the focus rhetoricians have recently

48

made on materiality, suggesting that outdated notions on reflection and metacognition that operate within composition fail to take these material consequences into account:

> If writing and writers are codependent *with* things and all sorts of others, then metacognition and reflective practice (both entrenched in humanist notions of a literature self) have the potential to become bad habits, since each reflective exercise persuades a writer to separate herself from all those things with which she is codependent. (Boyle, "Writing and Rhetoric" 533)

Noting that composition has utilized reflective practice as rhetorics primary pedagogical goal, Boyle questions its usage in the classroom and argues from a posthumanist perspective when noting that reflection has been a large component of how critical practice operates in the composition classroom which "ultimately reinforces a humanist orientation as it focuses on one's ability to articulate decisions through increasing individuals agency" (Boyle, "Writing and Rhetoric" 537). In taking on the reflection process championed by rhetorical traditions, Boyle looks to question the components of rhetoric which continue to divide subjects from objects and continue to claim a distinct self that is continuously demonstrated in our writing process. According to Boyle, when rhetoric promotes the reflective practice, it "renew(s) our dependence on humanist ideals" which privilege the human experience as something distinct and static, yet, as Boyle claims, compositionalists need to develop techniques which are aware our own embeddedness as writers (538).

An important conclusion drawn by Boyle described as *betweeness* can help one consider the need to consider posthumanism within composition. Posthuman scholars seem to be locating a particular moment of inquiry where a human subject overlaps with

non-human objects or systems, noticing what he calls "a kind of *betweeeness*" of what was previously understood as the human or nonhuman (Boyle, "Writing and Rhetoric" 540). Locating this *betweeness* can help researchers focus on the interaction between human and nonhuman actors and avoid overvaluing certain claims as humanists or antihumanist. Boyle claims that posthumanism can aid in this type of thinking and it is especially useful when considering a writers interaction with network media, since through these interactions we are moving our subjective selves closer to this position of *betweeness,* becoming more comfortable within an ecological network of technological systems (540). Thus, when we break down the barriers between human and nonhuman actors and consider this position of *betweeness*, human agency is forced into question where one is not necessarily working to adapt to their external factors when taking part in writing practices, but individuals are essentially emerging *from* their practices. As argued by Isabelle Stengers in "Introductory Notes on an Ecology of Practices," knowledge is established through an ecology of practice, which is an essential tool for thinking about what is currently happening (185). In other words, when we open ourselves up into thinking about a distributed subjectivity, what we consider to be our individual "self," adapting to the natural world, is actually a conceptualized "self" that is consistently emerging from this natural environment. Such a distinction is key for Boyle when he considers the limitations of reflective writing since when we pause to consider a past experience or writing practice our material bodies are embedded within new, unstable and discontinuing relationships between human and nonhuman actors. As Nigel Thrift has described, "these material bodies are continuously being rewritten as unusual circumstances arise, and new bodes are continually making an entrance" (8). Therefore,

50

Boyle argues that by concluding that a writer simply holds agency to negotiate one's
social environment and situate oneself in the present in order to reflect on the past, we are
ignoring the extremely important notion that such a practice is an embodied activity,
emerging *from* its surroundings through the intermingling between humans and objects,
or as Boyle notes, within a space of *betweeness.*

This notion of *betweeness* has been depicted by other composition and rhetoric
scholars that look to investigate writing as an ontological act. In "(Meta) Physical
Graffiti" Jenny Edbauer describes this moment of relations between two humans or
between a human and nonhuman object as affect, defining it as "the experience generated
by relations by your body-in-relation" (142). Like Boyle, Edbauer argues that because
our body-of-sensation are always present in our scenes of writing, we cannot accurately
answer the question, "what writing does?" without taking affect into account (133).
Edbauer calls for compositionalists to take into account the "affective dimensions" when
considering writing in a particular context, noting that "before you can reach for the
narrative to make sense of a textual street scene-before you can respond to it-you sense
it"(140). Edbauer finds this *betweeness* when one's body feels the sensation of another
body, or as she describes it, "the encounter of affect." Thus, when we encounter writing it
is always first a sensory experience which then "marks a relay between the rhetorical
context and the affective body"("(Meta) Physical" 142). "In Material Translingual
Ecologies," Jay Jordan also locates the space between human agents and objects in order
to evoke a status of a rhetor and their ability to manipulate a particular context (370).
Like Boyle and Edbauer, Jordan uses Rickert's notion of ambience to describe rhetoric as
something that emerges from a dynamic environment and takes its material surroundings

51

into account. However, Jordan focuses on rhetorical strategies, noting that it is not simply a deployment of symbolic strategies, but a construct of "affective and material domains that include immanent connections exceeding symbolicity's inventive ability" (370). Therefore, with rhetoric we are not actually improving our persuasive abilities in so much as we are attuning ourselves to our ontological dimensions (370). This depiction of rhetoric is important for Jordan in order to make the claim that translingual scholarship needs to reconceptualize their notions of rhetoric so that it goes beyond symbolic considerations and does not privilege the agentive production of the translingual writer. In recognizing rhetorics expansiveness, Jordan suggest that translingual approaches in writing should acknowledge that there is a space beyond "human activity" and the material ecologies of which translingual students are acquiring meaning-making resources:

> If translingual composers supposedly deliberate a course of rhetorical action on the basis of judgment stemming from their perception of kairotic opportunities in language contact situations, then a view of deliberation and kairos that diffuses both well beyond human activity should reorient translingualism to a more complex, more literal sense of ecology than the approach currently invokes. (371)

Jordan looks to complicate human-centric claims that are prescribed to translingual writers by suggesting that more information is needed regarding how symbolic and ontological diversity blend to provide translingual writers with more mean-making resources (372).

Like Boyle and Edbauer, Jordan seeks to redefine the rhetorical situation in order to provide a more robust, ontological investigation of how human beings interact with

their material environment and emerge as writers. Indeed, like other posthuman scholars, Jordan searches for a new space outside of a writer to describe agency in relation to translingual practices, depicting a writer who is constructed from the material, social, and symbolic resources at his or her disposal. It is within these in between spaces, or as Boyle describes, *betweeness,* where a writer finds contact with his or her material environment and begins to emerge as one who practices and performs a writing act. For Edbauer, this meant noticing how emergence within one's environment can speak too what writing actually does in order to convey meaning. For Jordan, locating translingual writer's agency inside an emerging ecological network helps us understand the vast possibilities for meaning-making resources. Both scholars in particular move outside simply noticing the signification of language and introducing the various material impacts when one considers or produces a written text.

More importantly, these scholars emphasize Boyle's discussion on *betweeness* in order to broaden our notions of the rhetorical situation and human agency, and in doing so, get us to consider what it means to think about writing and being a writer. When we situate ourselves within this space of *betweeness,* we begin to see how human subjectivity can emerge from in and outside our bodies, responding and affecting the material environments around us. Attempting to describe writing or the writing process in humanist terms, arguing that one solely holds the ability to perform rhetorical strategies and extract information from their surroundings, downplays the abilities our bodies have to manipulate our decision-making. If taken seriously, this notion of *betweeness* could help articulate what we want a student to become aware of when working through the writing process. Like rhetoricians, composition scholars have a unique opportunitiy to

implement this theory as a lens for students and educators to consider when rhetorically inventing or writing. This sense of *betweeness* is what I believe Sarah Pink is attempting to measure and locate in her research subjects, and is something students can become acutely aware of within their discussions of the rhetorical context.

This is an important concept for conceptualizing the writing practices situated within Posthuman Critical Regionalists Theory since I am curious to see how a rhetor affects and is affected by the very rhetorical narratives described in critical regionalists scholarship. I will revisit this notion of *betweeness* in order to articulate the type of action and thinking students encounter when working through PCRI activities.

Critical Regionalism: A Literature Review

The ontological turn called on by those in and outside composition and rhetoric has allowed scholars to revisit established epistemological frameworks such as qualitative research design and the rhetorical situation. Scholars in the field of composition and rhetoric, particularly those who draw or write with a posthumanist lens, have acknowledge this ontological turn within the field and are not only questioning the theories we teach in class, but the pedagogical approaches writing instructors deploy. Andrew Mara and Byron Hawk write:

> Attempts to understand human beings as autonomous, isolated or determinative
> do not fully account for the complexities of living, writing and working in a
> variety of biological and mechanical systems. These systems, which operate in
> concert with conscious human actors, exert themselves upon the rhetorical
> situation writers face. Traditional humanistic tools and heuristics for anticipating
> systemic complications-like audience analysis, user testing, and peer review-

quickly become swamped when trying to account for the tangential forces on non

human actors and activities. (2).

For Mara and Hawk, there needs to be an improvement on building writer's awareness to

the intricacy of the systems that he or she are embedded within in order for them to

acknowledge how these systems "exert themselves upon the rhetorical situation writers

face." More importantly, we need writers to revise some of the language we use to

acknowledge the rhetorical situation of our writing since, as argued earlier by Edbauer

and Rickert, the rhetorical situation is much more complicated than a set of already

existing exigencies which the rhetor goes out to discover. As stated by Mara and Hawk,

traditional heuristics, relying on our humanists ideologies are not going to completely

understand the complexities of a rhetorical situation given this new ontological

understanding, and will, as the authors' suggest, "quickly get swamped" when trying to

account for our material world. As mentioned in chapter one, I propose a tool of inquiry,

which utilizes the theory of critical regionalism in order to answer the call of post

humanists who see a gap in compositionalist's education of the rhetorical situation. This

tool of inquiry will eventually help develop the community-engaged pedagogical

activities I have designed in chapter three. Before articulating this approach, however, I

will present a literature review of critical regionalism, discussing its origins and its

relevance in composition today.

The term critical regionalism was first used in the field of Architecture and was

coined by architectural theorist Peter Frampton as well as both Alexander Tzonis and

Liane Lefaivre. Critical regionalism has been described as an approach within

architecture that questions the placelessness emerging from universal modernists designs

by utilizing styles that are tied to a particular geographical context. Therefore, critical regionalism is not regionalism per say, but a blending between global and local styles of architecture, as Frampton explains, "the term critical regionalism is…to identify recent regional "schools" whose aim has been to represent and serve, in a critical sense, the limited constituencies in which they are grounded"("Prospects of Critical" 148). While these considerations have helped affirm regional identity, the dual purpose, as Frampton recalls, is to develop a dialectical expression, one that "seeks to deconstruct universal modernism in terms of values and images which are locally cultivated"("Prospects of Critical" 149).

It's important to note that these arguments made within the field of architecture were reinforcing earlier discussions regarding regionalism and community. Critical regionalists often reference the works of Martin Heidegger, who discussed the importance of a region and peoples connection to the land in which they dwell. Dwelling, according to Heidegger, is the activity that preserves our "primal oneness," with our environment, or as he argues, "the fourfold" (351). For Heidegger, the fourfold is the earth, sky, divinities and mortals, existing together as one. He explains:

> Dwelling preserves the fourfold by bringing the essence of the fourfold into
> things…in this way, that mortals nurse and nurture the things that grow, and
> specially construct things that do not grow. Cultivating and construction are
> building in the narrow sense. Dwelling, in as much as it keeps the fourfold in
> things, is, as this keeping, a *building* (352).

Building than defines our ability to dwell in an area, constructing the resources we have at our disposal and as Heidegger describes it, "bringing the essence of the fourfold into

things." This argument is important when noting how Heidegger continues to describe buildings in relation to how individuals conceive and are shaped by the spaces they dwell in:

> We do not represent things merely in our mind…if all of us now, think, from where we are right here, of the old bridge in Heidelberg, this thinking toward that locale is not a mere experience inside the persons present here; rather, it belongs to the essence of our thinking of that bridge that in itself thinking persists through the distance to that locale. From this spot right here, we are there at the bridge-we are by no means at some representational content in our consciousness. (358)

Heidegger elaborates on the affect spaces have on individuals within the land they dwell, arguing that such spaces "belong to the essence of our thinking," helping to define our worldview even if we are far away from such a locale. This connection between a person and the land help reinforce Heidegger's notion of regionalism, where communities are linked not only through their identities and language, but also the soil of the land from which they came. This notion is not completely dismissed once critical regionalists begin to deconstruct our notion of regionalism, but scholars such as Lewis Mumford look to complicate Heidegger's discussion on dwelling, which in turn opens the door for future critical regionalists scholars

Mumford's notion of regionalism looks to question not only Heidegger's strong ties between human beings and the land, but also aspects of the classical regionalist movement that argues a region must completely oppose the universal. Mumford's work begins as an engagement with the global, and sets the stage for the critical regionalists movement. Mumford criticizes long standing arguments held by regionalists of the early

twentieth century, such as the need for a structure to use local materials in order for it to be defined as "regional." Mumford saw this notion of region as evolving, as he argues:

> people often talk about regional characters as if they were the same thing as the aboriginal characters: the regional is identified with the rough, the primitive the purely local. That is a serious mistake. Since the adaptation of a particular environment is a long complicated process…we are only beginning to know about ourselves and about our environment to create a regional architecture. (30)

Mumford saw the regional as a shifting concept and so he believed regionalism needed to acknowledge the new realities which meant needing to adapt to outside forces and not necessarily relying on one's attachment to the land to help define their regional culture. Regional forms for Mumford were those in which met the realities and conditions of one's life; therefore, they fully succeeded in "making people feel at home in their environment: they do not merely utilize the soil but they reflect the current conditions of culture in the region" (30).

Mumford was not only critical about globalism in his work, but also critical about static depictions of regionalism. He saw regional culture as evolving, and therefore the materials used to construct and define a region were evolving as well, taking both local and global materials into account. This critical take on regionalism naturally questions Heidegger's emphasis on man's attachment to their land in his depiction of regionalism, since Mumford argues strongly for a break of absolute historicism and a rejection of local materials if they could not adapt to construct the building (Lefaivre 36). For Mumford, there is little nostalgia for the physical components of the actual landscape, and more of an emphasis on the democratic multiculturalism that takes shape within a region.

Although Mumford's arguments set the tone for critical regionalism and their balance between the global and the local, critical regionalists such as Kenneth Frampton did not completely abandon Heidegger and his depiction of space. Frampton references Heidegger's "Building Dwelling and Thinking" in his seminal article, "Ten Points on an Architecture of Regionalism: A Provisional Polemic" in order to discuss Heidegger's notion of space and how "for Heidegger, the boundary is not the line at which something stops, but rather the contour within which something begins its 'presencing' (382). Frampton notes this claim from Heidegger in order to argue that modern, universal development has placeless, privatized domains that fail to take into account this 'presencing' affect but rather move towards a universal, non-place (382). Therefore, Frampton allows his reading of Heidegger to reinforce the claim that critical regionalism can serve as a mediating practice "in which a local culture of architecture is consciously evolved to express opposition to the domination of hegemonic power" (Frampton, "Place-Form", 56). The other two scholars who helped birth critical regionalism, Tzonis and Lefaivre, initially distance themselves from Heidegger's arguments, opposing his "idea that 'the earth, 'the land' and 'home' are inseparably linked with the idea of *Volk*, a closed human group linked through common ethnic identity, soil and language"("Architecture of" 35). Essentially Tzonis and Lefaivre looked more towards Mumford's arguments regarding regionalism and its evolving nature towards progress in order to establish their definition of critical regionalism.

As the term began to be constructed in the architectural field, all three of its creators, Frampton, Tzonis and Lefaivre, abandoned Heidegger's emphasis regarding how a physical landscape can not only build deep connections with human beings, but

59

more importantly how it can influence their way of thinking in the world. As noted

before, Heidegger saw the importance of how space stayed with an individual, shaping

their future actions. As he argues, "we always go through spaces in such a way that we

already sustain them by staying constantly with near and remote locales and things"

(359). The affect of "locales and things" on an individual seems to be pushed to the side

by the original critical regionalists who focus on the mediation between global and local

elements, noting that a region isn't a static form but a concept in progress. Thus, the

individual's ability to embody the spaces he or she has traveled through does not play a

role in how early critical regionalists' mediate the global and local elements within a

region.

However, early critical regionalists define the term in a way to not only put both

the global and the local into conversation with each other, but also to question the

prevailing universal narratives taking hold within the field of architecture. In the article

"Towards a Critical Regionalism: Six Points for an Architecture of Resistance,"

Frampton looks to define the term critical regionalism by suggesting that architecture can

improve its condition as a "critical practice if it assumes an *arriere-garde* position, that is

to say, one which distances itself equally from the Enlightenment myth of progress and

from a reactionary, unrealistic impulse to return to the architectonic forms of the

preindustrial past (20). In questioning both progressive forms of architecture as well as

our impulse to look for influence within the past, architecture then "has the capacity to

cultivate a resistant, identity-giving culture while having a discreet recourse to universal

technique (20). For Frampton, critical regionalism was a way to carve out an identity for

regions that were both accepting and questioning global ideologies. It serves as a

"manifest critique of universal civilization" by focusing on the material world within a region, refocusing the architect to the "poetics of construction" and "tectonic value of each component" of the structure so that local concepts are considered when building a region (29).

In addition, Alexander Tzonis and Liane Lefaivre's piece, "The Grid and The Pathway" also helps define critical regionalism, emphasizing that critical regionalism should be used to subvert nationalists narratives within the field of Architecture. Through the influence of both Mumford and Frampton, Tzonis and Lefaivre have recently pointed critical regionalism in a different direction within the field of architecture by first noting that critical regionalism was initially used to combat the emergence of a new era of globalization where urban renewal was growing at a rapid rate and architects were searching for a "national style" ("Architecture of Regionalism" 111). However, Tzonis and Lefaivre go on to argue that such conversations regarding "national style" are of little significance in our current world and we must identify these regional styles in a new way:

> This century is, next to the unprecedented world of economic crises, the flattening
> of the world's natural and cultural diversity. This loss in diversity cannot be
> resolved by taking granted boundaries between regions…regions should be
> embedded in a world system of complex interdependencies that are physical,
> social, cultural, and above all today, ecological. ("Architecture of
> Regionalism"112)

Interestingly enough, Tzonis and Lefaivre's new depiction of critical regionalism looks at one's region as something which is "embedded in a world system of complex interdependencies," questioning the strict boundaries that plague the terms "national,"

"local" or "global" and noting that such areas of the world are dependent on each other. Thus, it is now silly, according to Tzonis and Lefaivre, to label such regional pieces as attempting to move towards a "national style" since what characterizes something as "national" is becoming more difficult to define as we acknowledge our ecological landscape.

Now Tzonis and Lefaivre, like Heidegger, look to question the boundaries that such critical regionalists as Frampton have previously outlined for us when he described what is local verses what is universal. As Heidegger suggests, spaces are carried through people and their actions reflect previous spatial encounters; therefore, in our push to resist the universal and search for a "regional style" we may consciously or unconsciously be pulling ideas from in and outside our immediate spaces, drawing upon global concepts we believe are local and vis versa. The lines then have become blurred in many ways, and as Tzonis and Lefaivre have conceded, the past searches for a national style should be questioned in light of a new search, one that redefines regions in terms of their pressing concerns such as their material resources or political and environment constraints ("Architecture of Regionalism" 112). Like Tzonis and Lefaivre, my claims regarding critical regionalism will reclaim elements of Heidegger's argument regarding space and dwelling while also recognizing the material consequences to how we define a region, questioning the "national" and "local" constructs that define a particular place. Eventually, the practices of PCRI I lay out will attempt to map the varying depictions of space students have of their communities while also allowing them to discover new rhetorical constructions of their spaces through experiencing the embedded processes of rhetoric. Experiencing the embedded processes of rhetoric means becoming aware of

human and non-human elements that help construct a rhetoric, and as Heidegger suggests, acknowledging that people bring assumptions and previous spatial encounters to their depictions of space.

Critical Regionalism in Composition and Rhetoric

The arguments outlined by these architectural theorists have crossed disciplines since their early conception in the 1980's, eventually moving from architecture into cultural studies. In his text, *Critical Regionalism: Connecting Politics and Culture in the American Landscape,* Douglas Powell traces the term "critical regionalism" from architectural theory to literary and cultural studies, describing how critical regionalism can be examined to see how spaces are connected to broader patterns of meaning. Powell argues that critical regionalism locates a region not so much as a collection of a cultural history but as an "ongoing and poetic construction," where one builds awareness to the notion that when one writes about a region, he or she sustains and defines that region in a particular way (6-7). Indeed, he argues that critical regionalism is not interested in seeing which definition of a particular region is valid or invalid, but rather whose interests are served by articulating a particular version of a region and by examining the global and local narratives that construct such regions (7). In focusing on these narratives that construct regions, Powell argues critical regionalism should look to "disentangle the concept of region from the concept of the local," since regions are not so much places themselves but ways of describing the relationships among places and seeing how the deployment of broader historical, political and cultural configurations helped construct such regional definitions (18). In doing so Powell notes that ultimately, critical

regionalism needs to be a pedagogy where students learn to build an awareness to the shaping of their region and see it as an academic project that can promote change (8).

Powell's text not only moves critical regionalism from outside its work within the architecture field, but also emphasizes its ability to become a lens for enhancing ones awareness to their region and noting that regions are always in the process of being built. For Powell, becoming aware of a regions ability to label itself through local, national and global narratives is empowering, and should be taught as political tool in order to bring about social change. Rhetoricians such as Jenny Rice and Rachael Jackson expand on Powell's discussion on critical regionalism and its relation to rhetoric within a region. Both scholars discuss critical regionalism as a way to read the rhetorical shaping of a region for the field of rhetoric and composition. Rice emphasizes that critical regionalism can be a response to the "flat data" of universal narratives, presenting four starting points to consider when deploying critical regionalism ("From Architectonic to Tectonics" 204). Rice notes that regional rhetorics work as "an active interface" in which to engage public discourse regarding global and local flows such as food, labor, politics, consumption or land (204). Rice does not suggest that critical regionalism works as a mediatory between global and local flows as suggested by Mumford, but describes its ability to operate as an interface which allows people to see how narratives cut through their lives in material ways and therefore provides a "critical self-consciousness about the places we study, theorize and inhabit"(210).

Rice extends this argument in her text *Distant Publics: Development Rhetoric and The Subject of Crisis* where she acknowledges the recent trend of rhetorical scholars to want to improve public debates regarding local and global spaces, which are under

constant pressure by excessive development (7). Rice establishes a "publics approach"

for rhetorical studies which:

> …understands publics and their discourse as the best site for making interventions
>
> into material spaces. In other, words, rhetorical theory and rhetorical pedagogy
>
> can make a difference to the current crisis not by interrogating "place" but by
>
> helping to shape different kinds of subjects who can undertake different kinds of
>
> work (8).

Her emphasis on shaping a particular subject extends into her desire to educate students

on the rhetorical shaping of their regions, noting that rhetorical pedagogies have a

commitment to connecting students to public issues. Rather then having the students act

as subjects who relate to an issue through feeling and potentially write themselves out of

intervention, Rice wants to create subjects who relate to the world through wonder,

investigation and inquiry, arguing that inquiry can lead to students' acknowledging that

we are situated within many complex local, national and global networks (195). It is

through this inquiry into the complex rhetorical structure of a region that can help

connect students to their place according to Rice. However, in her description of this type

of inquiry, Rice never visits the reconceptualization of the rhetorical situation as

presented by Rickert, or acknowledges the material affects of a space on a particular

subject and their abilities to engage in such inquiry. The material spaces are important for

Rice, but as I will argue in chapter three, more should be said regarding a spaces ability

to affect one's inquiry capabilities and one's understanding of the rhetorical triangle.

    In Rachel Jackson's, "Locating Oklahoma: Critical Regionalism and

Transrhetorical Analysis in Composition," she extends Jenny Rice's claims regarding

critical regionalism as inquiry, emphasizing its ability to locate transrhetorical flows of both global and local rhetoric particularly for the composition student. Jackson begins to bridge the gap between rhetoric and composition, moving critical regionalism into the writing classroom and depicting pedagogical practices related to the term. In doing so, Jackson points composition scholars in a particular direction on how to consider critical regionalism within the composition classroom, seeing it as a way to counteract students' tendencies to write from the position of a national location, writing far from their frame of reference and risking the alienation of their local audiences (311). In addition, Jackson argues that critical regionalists pedagogy creates an opportunity for students to examine "local, transrhetorical sites" as a way for students to acknowledge the rhetoric's occurring around them, enhancing their rhetorical awareness (305). Lastly, Jackson highlights critical regionalists pedagogy's ability to deprivledge national narratives and issues that students tend to fixate on, enhancing their abilities to see how local narratives provide a conduit for both local and global flows of meaning and how such local rhetoric's can serve to subvert nationalists constructions (309). For Jackson, critical regionalism serves to not only improve students' rhetorical inquiry skills, but also work as a way enhance student rhetorical agency and serve as an agent of change, much like the arguments mentioned by Powell.

In the pedagogies themselves, Jackson asked students to examine local inquiry sites of rhetoric in their state of Oklahoma, allowing students to see for themselves the "systems of writings in which they participate" (313). Evoking Rice and Powell in their usage of critical regionalism to seek out the intersections of both global and national rhetorics, Jackson's composition assignments guided students to consider national and

global issues through local inquiry, examining the various voices that constructed Oklahoma's rhetoric and how they connected to regions outside of their own.

In discussing the connections between space and writing instruction, Jackson mentions Nedra Reynolds call for compositionalists to discuss how spaces create writing and how writing pedagogy should respond to space, but fails to give a detailed description of how this may look. Unlike Reynolds, there is no reference to Heidegger's arguments on dwelling and how individuals embody previous spatial encounters which influence new descriptions of space. She does briefly mention Kristie Fleckenstein's use of "allocentric perception," which is a critical heuristic that can create place-based critique. Fleckenstein suggests that through growing students' awareness regarding their perception of place, allocentric perception subverts established ways of seeing and communicating about place which is fundamental for social action pedagogy (*Vision, Rhetoric* 27). Without going into much detail, Jackson notes that allocentric perception can be used as a pedagogical device to implement critical regionalist inquiry and suggests that critical regionalist scholars should look at locations of writing that can consider Fleckenstein's and Reynold's depictions of space and place in order to disrupt nationalistic narratives that ignore local regions. In other words, space matters for Jackson but the intricacies of a space, such as its materiality and its affect on the rhetorical situation or student agency, is unspoken for in her depiction of critical regionalist inquiry. She has called for it, but the detail remains to be seen.

In following critical regionalism from its construction within the writings of Mumford and Frampton to its arrival into composition with Jackson, one can see how certain elements of its current definition have been built off previous arguments regarding

67

the depictions of space while ignoring others. For example, When aligning himself more so with Mumford rather than Heidegger, Frampton emphasizes critical regionalism's ability to mediate between global and local narratives while only slightly touching upon Heidegger's opinion regarding the powers of space, mentioning how modern development provides a sense of placelessness and deploys Heidegger's theory regarding "precencing" in order to emphasize this point. This however, is only a small depiction of how dynamic Heidegger see's space and its influence on human beings, as he mentions later in "Building, Dwelling Thinking":

> If we pay heed to these relations between locales and spaces, between spaces, and space, we get a clue to help us in thinking of the relation between man and space…Yet space is not something that faces man. It is neither an external object nor an inner experience…when we relate to those things that are not in our immediate reach, we are staying with the things themselves."(358)

For Heidegger, space has a unique relationship to man and the things with a space can stay with a person even if they are not in his or her immediate reach. Things affect, and in doing so, shape a human being, which Heidegger elaborates on later in his philosophy and which Rickert's takes up in order to conceptualize his notion of ambient rhetoric. However, these ideas are not emphasized by early critical regionalists such as Frampton and Tzonis and Lefaivre who eventually influence rhetoricians such as Powell and Rice. These scholars also focus on the power of critical regionalism to examine global and local flows of meaning while ignoring how a dynamic, agentive material world may impact one's ability to investigate these rhetorical situations. Eventually, Jackson brings this notion of critical regionalism to the world of composition but only acknowledges that

future critical regionalists need to see how material and spatial features impact or disrupt local systems of writing. Therefore, while critical regionalism certainly provides an interesting approach to examine the rhetorical structure of a region, its recent scholarship opens the door for a posthuman turn, whereby arguments about materiality and space brought forth by scholars such as Heidegger, Rickert, Boyle and Hawk are not ignored. Thus, chapter three will look to serve as a mediation between the two threads presented in chapter two, one posthuman and the other critical regionalism, in order to develop a posthuman approach for critical regionalists inquiry within the composition classroom. In doing so, I hope to create a type of inquiry that can increase student engagement within the community and empower them with new tools for rhetorical analysis. Tools that generate better-informed and more active student citizens.

Chapter Summary

Chapter two begins by acknowledging early Western arguments related to rhetoric, touching upon claims made by Aristotle, which eventually helped serve as the backbone for Enlightenment thinking promoted by thinkers such as Emmanuel Kant. The Enlightenment provided the narrative of which postmodern thinkers would eventually question, opening the door to early posthuman arguments brought forth by Gilles Deleuze. Questions surrounding the autonomous subject have made their way into composition and rhetoric, leading to the current conversations provided by scholars such as Rice, Hawk, and Rickert who are not only concerned with a rhetor's agency, but how we understand our now complicated, rhetorical situations. Running alongside this narrative in chapter two is the literature review of critical regionalism and its movement from the field of architecture to composition. Critical regionalists inquiry is currently

being deployed to examine rhetorical flows within regions to enhance composition students rhetorical awareness and connections to place, which I argue is effective work but needs to take new claims regarding rhetorical ontology and posthumanism into account. These new claims will hopefully open the door to creating a new type of rhetorical inquiry, one that I call Posthuman Critical Regionalists Inquiry (PCRI), which can show case a new type of community-engaged pedagogy for composition students. Chapter three will therefore seek to blend the concept of critical regionalists inquiry with the posthumanist claims in composition and rhetoric outlined in chapter two, providing a new posthuman version of critical regionalism for composition classrooms.

CHAPTER THREE

BUILDING POSTHUMAN CRITICAL REGIONALISTS INQUIRY

Introduction

In Marilyn Coopers 1986 essay, "The Ecology of Writing," she discusses the limitations of approaching the teaching of writing as simply a cognitive process, noting that the cognitive model-one that dictates current writing pedagogy of that time-depicts an ideal writer as one who is not only isolated from the social world but that "writing is solely cognitive" and only driven by thinking (365-366). In contrast to this theory, Cooper argues that writers are situated within a web of ecological systems and that a writer or a piece of writing determines or is determined by these very systems in which they are attached to, thus "an important part of ecological systems is that they are inherently dynamic"(368). In getting us to consider writing as an act that is more then simply a way of thinking, Cooper opened the door for compositionalists to consider the vast systems writers find themselves in, not only social systems as she discussed in this text but natural systems embedded in our environments. As mentioned before, through rhetorical scholars such as Mara and Hawk, current rhetorical research is looking into the very systems writers face within a rhetorical situation and how both human and non-human forces impact the language we consider when describing the rhetorical situation. Before we can consider more heuristics which allow students to become aware of these systems in which they as writers are a part of, we must depict the rhetorical situation in a more accurate fashion, finding new ways for students to describe their more dynamic surroundings and its impact on their own subjectivity. In concentrating on a particular heuristic vehicle such as critical regionalists inquiry, I'll look to revisit critical

71

regionalists usage of certain rhetorical concepts so as to redefine critical regionalists inquiry within a posthuman framework.

So far, rhetoricians have discussed critical regionalism through many of its abstract commonplaces such as rhetorical situation, rhetorical agency, audience, and language as they are commonly understood. However, as Rickert has recently argued, rhetoric can no longer center around these theoretical commonplaces as they are currently deployed, rather it must include the material environment and a "complex understanding of ecological relationality" (3). For Rickert, these theoretical commonplaces harbor fundamental assumptions regarding what a human being is and how we are situated within this world. The arguments springing from posthumanism have now forced us to reconsider these assumptions, as Rickert explains:

> It should be clear that rhetorical theory is no different; our constellation of concepts, our underlying notions of persuasion and its operations, our epistemological stance on truth, our sense of credibility-all this and more indicate a preexisting way of understanding the world and human being. Working through this complex nest of issues leads us to confront the ground of intelligibility from which our rhetorical theory springs and against which our basic concepts obtain there bearing. (20)

Rickert argues that failing to look into this "complex nest of issues" blocks our ability to revise some of rhetorical theorists' key concepts, an argument Jenny Edbauer also proposes. Rather then considering the various rhetorical elements of a rhetorical situation as separate, isolated entities, Edbauer notices how once we consider the "affective ecologies" of which our rhetorical situation exists within, our collection of discrete

72

rhetorical elements begin to bleed into one another and we begin to acknowledge the interactions between these elements which become activated with in a emergent ecological processes of writing ("Unframing Models" 12). Edbauer argues then that writing is thus more than a matter of discrete elements (audience, writer, text, tools, ideas) in static relation to one another but is distributed around a range of processes and encounters ("Unframing Models" 13). Rather than imagining the rhetorical situation in a relatively closed system, an ecological focus might begin to imagine the situation within an open network ("Unframing Models" 13). The rhetorical elements we are familiar with then can be revisited to align with our dynamic material surroundings, whether that is labeled as "ambient" by Rickert or "affective ecologies" as described by Edbauer. If we are to argue that critical regionalism can serve as a heuristic model for a more posthuman outlook on rhetorical theory and as a useful community-engaged pedagogical model in our composition classrooms, than we must revisit how critical regionalists discuss and define the rhetorical situation. While I do believe critical regionalism can help build student's rhetorical awareness and meaning-making skills, I'll offer new ways for critical regionalists to conceptualize rhetoric and its function within a given situation now that posthumanism has shifted our thoughts on concepts such as agency and place.

My arguments will flesh out this complex understanding of ecological relationality as it pertains to critical regionalism's discussions on rhetoric; therefore, revisiting critical regionalists deployment of rhetorical terms with a posthumanists lens. I will be separating rhetorical concepts used by critical regionalists under three sections within this chapter, which I will define as the following: (1) rhetoric as a device to depict place, (2) agency within the rhetorical situation and (3) local texts as a "site" for

rhetorical awareness. I hope to reshape these three areas of focus in order to align critical

regionalism with a broader ontological understanding of rhetoric that no longer situates

itself solely in human subjective performance. In doing so, we can then think about

critical regionalists inquiry as a posthuman analytical tool, one that can generate a set of

community-engaged pedagogical activities developed in chapter four.

Reshaping the Critical Regionalists Approach to Rhetoric

Rhetoric as a Depiction of Place

Introducing critical regionalism to the field of composition, Rachel Jackson

defines this concept by referencing both Douglas Powell and Jenny Rice. Both Rice and

Powell advocate for stronger consideration of place by advocating for critical regionalism

as a study; however, their discussions regarding a place are heavily focused on rhetorics

shaped by linguistic, discursive practices. Douglas Powell see's critical regionalism as a

way to critique people and places within a region in order to develop better alternatives in

describing a particular region which he argues "are not places themselves but ways of

describing relationships among places (10). Powell wants to use critical regionalism as a

way to create a "critical intersection" where various versions of a region overlap and find

common ground; therefore, he focuses on the local patterns of cultural struggle and how

they link with larger patterns of politics history and culture, focusing on the networks of

discourse but also "in space, through relationships of power that can be material and

cultural" (12). While Powell calls for a "vigorous, generative understanding of local

material conditions in the formation of ideas about place and region," he stops short of

describing what this 'formation' may look like in theory, falling back on his claims that

"region is rhetoric" and describing region as a "social formation" that connects local

spaces to larger patterns of history, politics and culture" (26).

Powell even concedes that the current modernization of our local spaces is not

necessarily causing a sense of placelessness or an erase of the local, but it's simply

creating a challenge as to how one discerns the local within these new configurations

(68). Powell see's this failure in our inabilities to recognize what is local since we are

failing to understand how constructed spaces link up to larger issues, struggles and

histories, implicated in both regional and national relationships. Thus, critical regionalism

must search for the kinds of texts that challenge people's ability to make sense of their

places interconnections, especially when those connections run counter to the

assumptions underlying "commonsense" versions of local and regional landscapes

(D.Powell 104). However, how one discerns the local may not just stem from our

inabilities to see the interconnections of a places' regional relationship as Powell

describes, but also the material impact such a place has on our own construction of what

is local and what is not. Examining Powell's arguments with a Posthuman lens, one could

argue that Powell statements position humans as the only agents who solely discern what

is local by viewing a passive world that is waiting for humans to decipher the

interconnectedness of local and national rhetoric's within a given place. Yet, within a

dynamic space that does not privilege the human experience, both human and non-human

agents are influencing what is local and what is not, or even what is considered a "place."

Like earlier arguments made by Tzonis and Lefaivre, Powell is questioning how

regionalists can decipher between local and national rhetorics, yet he leaves out a crucial

call made by Tzonis and Lefaivre: we should begin to consider regions not just as

75

rhetorical sites, but constructs that are embedded in a system of interdependencies that are material, social, cultural, and ecological ("Architecture of Regionalism"112).

Posthuman approaches to heuristics can help examine this conclusion more closely. Jodie Nicotra, for example, argues for "assemblage thinking" which considers the suasive force of the material, arguing "nonhuman and material objects are equally bound up with human actions in events. All actions come about not as products of deliberate human decisions, but from a heterogeneous, distributed agency of many actants, both human and nonhuman" (186). Bennett holds similar arguments regarding "assemblage thinking," drawing heavily on the works of both Spinoza and Deleuze and Guattari. She argues that assemblage thinking can help one recognize that things are connected through numerous relations of use and not all are related to human purposes. In her text *Vibrant Matter,* Bennett draws on Deleuzean concept of "quasi-causal operator," which she describes as a human or non-human actant which by virtue of its location in an assemblage, makes things happen and becomes a decisive force (9). For Bennett, an actant can be human or non-human and there is no special motivation for human actors since "agentic capacity is now seen as differentially distributed across a wider range of ontological types" (9). Therefore, if we are to take these posthuman arguments seriously, when we seek to define what is "local" we should not only look at a local site's relationships to other regional spaces as Powell suggests, but also consider the ability for both human and non-human agents to co-create, or assemble, this particular thing entitled, "local." This type of thinking, can move us towards what Powell initially describes as a vigorous and "generative understanding of the material conditions" within a local space to understand what is local. More importantly, if matter is considered to be

76

lively, then the notion of shared materiality between all things is enhanced, where all things are recognized within a dense network or relationships (Bennett, *Vibrant Matter* 13). Expanding our understanding of the material world to this degree can create stronger connections between humans and their local space where our "shared materiality" helps one recognize that to do harm within a section of a network is to actually harm oneself. A local space is not simply a stage set for human experiences, but constitutes human thought and action. Essentially, expanding Powell's thoughts on what is "local" to include the arguments of posthumanists such as Bennett can potentially increase our sensitivies to our local region.

Jenny Rice notices the material implications of place as well but centers her discussion around human subjectivities, examining "how people imaging themselves in relation to those publics that populate, change, and undergo the effects of material places" (*Distant Publics* 15). She responds to the critical regionalists before her such as Powell in her article, *From Architectonic to Tectonics: Introducing Regional Rhetorics,* noting that the rhetoricity of a region is sometimes absent from their theory and argues that when we consider something as regional rhetoric, as Douglas Powell has described, we need to ask what people are *actually doing* in the region as well has what they are doing through rhetorical appeals to "region"(203). The arguments constructed by Powell and Rice center around not only the discursive construction of a region, but also a person's ability to *do* rhetoric within these discursive spaces, positioning the human subject above the material conditions surrounding them. As noted earlier through the arguments of both Bennett and Nicotra, human and non-human actants help assemble our material spaces and neither humans nor non-human forces are privileged within a given

space. While Powell and Rice discuss the importance of material implications within a place, they avoid describing how this material world impacts the human subject that constructs the regional rhetoric itself. If we are to deploy a heuristic that is inspired by critical regionalists claims, thinking about the non-human forces that assist in assembling the rhetorical construction of a place need to be included, not simply the discursive practices articulated by regionalists scholars.

The limiting relationship between place and rhetoric depicted by Powell and Rice can also be seen within composition scholarship that utilizes critical regionalism. Its use within composition studies can be located within the works of Rachel Jackson. In using both Powell and Rice as her platform for critical regionalism within composition, she explains its role along similar lines, noting that critical regionalism is a way to locate transrhetorical sites in a region which she defines as "the movement of rhetorics across multiple location categories-historical, spatial, temporal, cultural, local, regional, national and global, as well as across disciplines" (305). Therefore, critical regionalism used in the composition classroom can create an opportunity whereby students examine the transrhetorical sites in their local region, building student's rhetorical awareness while creating student writing alongside the rhetorics that are currently shaping their community. For Jackson, "critical regionalism informs the relationship between habitat and habit," and that human expression results from and lends to a region, but through the "social construction of places and identities"(309). A more complex understanding of place is needed if we are to critically examine the relationship between habitat and habit as suggested by Jackson, one that points to works of both spatial theorists and posthumanists.

The importance of place seems evident within the arguments of this scholarship but serves as a backdrop to more important discussions on discourse, rhetoric and human subjectivities. Is place not just as important as these consistent terms? As Edward Casey has recently argued, is it not time to face place? To lift its veil and see its potential? (286). His arguments for a revisiting of place is not self evident, but grounded in the works of scholars such as Foucault, Deleuze, Derrida, Lefebvre and Soja. Casey notes that what is common to all of these rediscovers of the importance of place is a conviction that place itself is not a fixed thing: it has no steadfast essence (286). Each scholar tries to find place *at work* and part of something ongoing and dynamic (286). When we think about places and identities as a social construct, as Rachel Jackson has advocated when deploying critical regionalism, we must also consider the spatial implications to the social construction of a "region," since places themselves are never fixed and have no static essence. Lefebvre takes this a step further, noting the dynamic potential of the social life of a place, particularly in his critique of everyday life. Lefebvre saw the critique of everyday life as a way for infusing philosophy with an appreciation for the concrete, seemingly trivial events of everyday living. For Lefebvre, space does not remove the other resources and materials that play a part in the socio-political arena, but pulls them together into one active location:

> …it brings them all together and then in a sense substitutes itself for each factor separately by enveloping it. The result is a vast movement in terms of which space can no longer be looked upon as an "essence," as an object distinct from the point of view of "subjects" as answering to a logic of its own (410-411).

79

A space then inhabits the social production of time as its history; it performs and is a goal in itself; it is simultaneously subjective and objective, or even a "medium and an outcome of social life"(62). Social relations only become real and part of our social existence when they become spatiality inscribed and therefore, social reality does not simply exist in space, but it is ontologically spatial (Soja 23). Moreover, grasping a sense of the everyday cannot be understood by theory or cognition alone since this "everydayness" is its own impending force. As Siegworth has stated, this force operates through the "banal movements of pure process," an ontological "process of excess" that can only be grasped by going beyond appearances and grasping life in all its human/nonhuman, inorganic/incorporeal and banal/intense everydayness (246). Amin and Thrift argue that such a process should require the tracking of the poetic and sensory indications of a place, where places like a city can be described through its "spatial and temporal openness," rhythmic encounters within time and space, and the markings left from the past (8). Thrift has noticed these indications in our relationships with automobiles, discussing a cars impact on a human subject to argue how "technological and human embodied practices circle around and interact with each other," producing new information that are applied and become the subject (83). Therefore, when we consider a place or even a region, we must remember that the very social conditions we examine are spatially implicated, and thus requires a deeper investigation into our "everydayness," well beyond its rhetorical construction.

Posthuman claims are not so distant from those articulating a new perception of space. Rhetoric itself can be seen as something that is not simply a human, individualistic pursuit that operates outside this new ontological understanding of space. The discussions

80

presented earlier regarding assemblage thinking touch upon this idea, as well as the

works of Thomas Rickert who develops a detailed argument regarding spatial

implications on the human being. According to Rickert, there is no "subjective or

individualists pursuit" but an attunement that the entire world takes part in, where all

species are "fitting themselves into the world just as the world fits them into itself"(xviii).

This attunement, which is a reflection of ambience, plays out in one's rhetorical

performance, something all creatures of Earth take part in (xviii). As Hawk has argued,

Rickert's notion of ambience essentially claims that cognition, thinking and invention are

not simply found in the autonomous human subject (*A Counter-History* 178). An action

or text is not simply the product of human thought but of "complex developments in the

ambient background" (*A Counter-History* 178). Therefore, a human is not just in a

situation but is part of the situation and composed of the situation itself. Indeed, when we

examine the rhetorical structure of a particular place, we are essentially entering into this

vast network of "pure process;" an ambient understanding of place that takes into account

the activity of our material environment and its ability to constitute human and non-

human actants. Therefore, when we are critically examining the rhetoric of a region, we

are also locating a practice that is deeply embedded within a larger ecological

relationship to that particular place.

Ecological relationships within a region is a focal point for Jenny Rice in her

depiction of place, where she argues that our sense of place is centered around the

description of community as a collection of discrete elements like family's yards, houses

etc., but what is more important is the interaction between these elements, noting that

places become spaces of contact which are, networked, connected and always changing

(*Distant Publics* 10). Indeed, our rhetorical situations follow the same format, where the rhetorical triangle focuses on compartmentalized elements such as "the writer," "the text" or "the audience" but there should be a focus on how these elements interact, where the rhetorical situation is "a mixture of processes and encounters"(*Distant Publics* 13). When we simply unveil the transrhetorical movements of a place, as Jackson describes, in order to showcase the connection between peoples "habitat and habit," we may be ignoring the very "processes and encounters," or the ecological networks that produce these rhetorics, and therefore fail to unveil the true rhetorical construction of these local regions.

This type of examination championed by scholars such as Rickert can lead us towards a posthuman turn, where human subjectivity becomes distributed amongst an ecological landscape. As Hayles has claimed, the posthuman is a collection of heterogeneous components whose boundaries are constantly being reconstructed and whose distributed cognition in various parts may or may not be in communication with each other (4). Hayles comments suggest an ecological understanding of the human experience, which has been echoed by other posthumanists such as Bartlett and Byers who note that human dominance is "not an inherent or essential attribute, but a negotiated position within a system, a position that can be overturned" (29). Rickert's ambient understanding of place is another way of adopting the ecological orientation that is found in posthumanism, where the materiality of a given space influences and is influenced by a subject, continuously reconstructing the boundaries of the human body. Establishing rhetoric within this ontological understanding of place leads one to a reexamination of terms such as "subject," or "agency," questioning the vey patterns that establish a region and our capabilities to think critically about regions. While critical regionalists such as

82

Rachel Jackson want to point us towards the more dynamic construction of our regions

by thinking about local and global flows of rhetoric, their scholarship has yet to consider,

in all of its complexity, how these rhetorics are developed within an ecological landscape

that is affecting and affected by the rhetor.

Agency within the Rhetorical Situation

In considering how agency has been depicted within posthuman scholarship, a

good place to start is with Gilles Deleuze and revisit his discussion on how one's self

relates to its material environment. According to Deleuze, the representation of the self is

built through the process in which one changes by holding a very singular and complex

relationship with the intensities of our material environment. Therefore, the development

of our ideas differentiates from one person to another (Williams 6). According to

Deleuze, things acquire an identity through repetition, and that there is no such thing as a

well defined life, but representations, concepts and senses generate our sense of self

(Williams 6). The concept of self is developed through a relationship with the intensities

of our environment, questioning the separation between our mind's concept of self and

the material world. Deleuze attempts to argue how subjects or individuals occur within

their "non-essential ontological multiplicities," in a way that allows the world to be

received and for our senses to be developed without relying solely on visual perception

(Halewood 52). The ideas brought forth by Deleuze have motivated new materialists

scholars to question the notion that individuals exist as beings with central characteristics

that attribute to their representation, or that what is being represented is actually

independent of the practices of representing (Barad 809). Concerns regarding

representationalism can question our notions of agency and power, complicating the

many arguments made by social constructivists within the disciplines such as Foucault. As Barad has contented, while Foucault placed emphasis on the political anatomy of disciplinary power, he too fails to offer an account of the body's historicity and how its materiality plays a role in the workings of power (810). This deficiency is significant to Foucault's failure to theorize the relationship between discursive and non-discursive practices, thus marking elements of representationalism that haunt his largely post representationalist account (810). We cannot stop and assume that the body is always discursively constructed and identity is built solely through language since non-discursive practices are operating within the material environment and influencing our agency. These arguments regarding one's discursive practices carry into the discipline of rhetoric as Jay Jordan has argued, posthuman scholarship within rhetoric challenges the stability of intention, context, rhetor and deliberation, particularly the assumption that rhetoric functions discursively (371). Rickert expands on this argument within his discussions on Heidegger, noting that interpretation is not a "subjective activity humans perpetrate on an object but rather an implicit affordance already knit into the nature of things...threaded into the fabric of the world (16). Therefore, we cannot be content with rhetoricians who simply refer to rhetoric as a material event while continuing a human-centered focus within this discursive practice, or the very fact that it is solely a discursive activity, ignoring the non-discursive actors that implicate the rhetor. Therefore, Our discursive practices should be situated within a dynamic material environment. As Rickert has argued, "when rhetoricians attempt to deal with material or nonhuman agency more concretely, they frequently attempt to shore up the rhetorical end, which invariable trumps the nonhuman elements (21).

The 'rhetorical end' is something to contend with in regards to its usage by those who deploy critical regionalism within composition and rhetoric. Reverting back to Douglas Powell's definition of critical regionalism, he first defines the word "region" not as a place itself but as a way of describing the relationships among certain places (10). He argues that these descriptions of a region serve a particular purpose for the people who create these depictions, and knowing this might not only help us create strategies for defining regions, but also respond to political and cultural conflicts we see in our society today (10). For Powell, a region is not a static thing, but an ongoing rhetorical construction that creates a cultural history (6). Therefore, as Powell argues, "this deliberate use of region as a way to envision and critique relationships among people and places and envision better alternatives is what I term a "critical regionalism" (10). Thinking about this definition with a posthuman lens, I wonder how these descriptions of a region brought forth by people to define the relationship among places are actually being influenced by the materiality existing within these places? How has the "rhetorical construction" of a particular region been influenced by both human and non-human actors, leading to what Powell defines as a region? Such questions look to examine the humanists orientation depicted in Powell's definition and move rhetorical action towards a posthuman, ecological orientation. As Rivers and Weber have articulated, rhetoric could potentially benefit from "an expanded scope that views rhetorical action as emergent and enacted through a complex ecology of texts, writers, readers, institutions, objects and history" (188). Reframed as a posthuman practice, critical regionalism would not simply look to "critique relationships among people and places" to determine how to define a region, but take into consideration the embedded ecological landscapes these

85

people find themselves in and how such a network influences their rhetoric of a particular place.

More importantly, a posthuman turn within critical regionalism would not assume the rhetorical construction of a place is simply built through the language and discourse of the people who share a connection to a particular region. In fact, if we are to question the rhetorical agency of a rhetor and note that his or her subjectivity is embedded within their environment, one could argue that the material elements of a particular region are taking part in the rhetorical construction of a place. Looking back on the works of Sarah Pink, her digital video and sensory ethnography research engages in video tours and video reenactments to witness her participants' movements through the world (*Digital Visual Sensory* 421). Pink is interested and seeing how her participants imagine and act with the material and sensory elements within their environment (what she claims as embodied sensory knowing) and how these movements help people construct narratives of the past present and future. Pink suggests that these methods allow us to catch something of the flow of everyday life-charting meeting points where our humans come together with sensory and other elements of their environments (*Digital Visual Sensory* 421). The methods can also be viewed as part of a "past/present/future configuration," engaging with human movement and the ongoingness of everyday life as it moves between these tenses, offering the researcher insight into how innovation actually happens (*Digital Visual Sensory* 421). What's important in Pink's work is her argument that an individual's engagement with the material world drives his or her innovation, charting a participant's "meeting points" with their environment helps provide the basis

for innovation. These claims are important to think about when constructing rhetorical inquiry for students and will become essential in PCRI.

Such an argument is echoed by posthumanists such as Byron Hawk when he considers how method and rhetoric is constructed. He notes that a method could operate from a posthuman framework; however, it would have to situate bodies within their particular context rather then directly creating texts or knowledge's (*A Counter History* 180). Therefore, if we recognize that rhetoric and method are built within complex ecological systems, then any such heuristic would have to acknowledge these unforeseen elements-or as Pink describes "the flow of everyday life" that help establish these rhetorics and create room for innovation. Our innovation is spontaneous, but it comes after an understanding that human action is both a product of our individual bodies as well as a fundamental property of life as a whole, establishing the claim that human's have agency but no longer have a sovereign inside (*A Counter History* 178). A posthuman turn in critical regionalism then would take into account our ability to innovate and construct agency within an embedded environment where rhetorical action is a byproduct of our individual selves and the material world. Thus, exploring human descriptions of regions and dubbing this process "critical regionalism," as Powell has suggested, would need to take into consideration how these descriptions were shaped by discursive and non-discursive processes.

Like Powell, Jenny Rice see's critical regionalism as an investigation into people's depiction of a region but also focuses on the global and local implications, noting that critical regionalism "marks a kind of negotiation between overlapping spheres of the global and the local ("From Architectonic to" 204). While Rice investigates critical

regionalism as described by architectural theorists such as Frampton and Tzonis and Lefaivre, she argues that "the rhetoricity of a region is sometimes absent from this theory" and she looks to reposition her critical lens on regionalism by asking the question: what do people actually do in a region and through what rhetorical appeals in order to mark them as members of that place? ("From Architectonic to" 203). Rice answers this question by arguing that regional rhetorics work as an interface in which to understand the global and local flows that move through a region, helping people "reaffirm and reclaim place" through local conversation (204). Thus, regional rhetorics work as an interface to "help those same people to assess, critique and respond to the global that cut through those specific local spaces…address[ing] the sweeping and sometimes abstract flows of labor, food politics, migration patterns and consumption" ("From Architectonic to" 204). Rice emphasizes regional rhetorics as a rhetorical act that helps people connect to a place through conversation and suggests that attributing to the public discourse can affirm our sense of place.

Jenny Rice's emphasizes that critical regionalism needs to provide a closer examination in "the doing" of the *people* constructing its regional rhetorics and investigate what motivates folks to discuss the global and local flows of their place. Such arguments are shared by other critical regionalists scholars such as Christopher Ali, who deploys critical regionalism in order to think through questions regarding the discourse of local media regulation. He defines critical regionalism with the same emphasize on place as Rice, arguing that critical regionalism forces an interrogation of localism that goes beyond place to include elements of language, identity and culture (108). Rather then seeing these elements as add-ons to the physical dimensions of the local, critical

88

regionalism insists on their inclusion in order understand the local not as a static site but rather as a process built through negotiation (108). The positions taken by both Rice and Ali seem to articulate the need to investigate the unseen or unspoken constructs of place that work to build a region's rhetoric and which can be investigated through a critical regionalists framework. Rice argues that critical regionalists should take into consideration the motivations that bring people to create rhetorics "as interface" such as their desire to connect to a place while Ali notes that critical regionalism provides a lens to investigates elements of a region that go beyond place such as culture, identity and language, noting that the local is constructed through a negotiation of these elements.

While both scholars push for a deeper discussion into the construct of a region, a posthuman version of critical regionalism would examine how these descriptions of place fail to include the material consequences on those who create regionalism. For example, Rice's argues that people's desire to connect to place leads them to take action and create regional rhetoric yet how has the material components of such a place, the human and non-human actors in this environment, shaped their subjectivity and worked to create this rhetorical act? If we are to understand the writer as embedded in their ecological landscape then their writing identity is implicated by this understanding. Rhetoric and writing studies can still do more to understand the materials that support one's writing practice and what these materials tell us about how we come to our writing identities and produce a rhetorical act (Alexis 84). Therefore, we must understand our places as dynamic, material environments that act on us as much as we act on them, establishing human bodies that have multiple subjects where there is no harmonious whole but parts connecting, reconnecting and producing, where any notion of a "whole" is simply a

product constructed along side these parts (Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus* 42). As Ali mentions, the local is a site "constructed through negotiation" but this negotiation happens beyond the elements of "culture, identity and language," but also between human bodies and their material surroundings that works alongside culture, identity and language to help create the local. Critical regionalism should critically examine how these rhetorical acts are shaped through the negotiation between bodies and the material world, leading rhetors to places of innovation that utilize one's ecological landscape.

The depiction of human agency as described by critical regionalists such as Powell and Rice has influenced Rachel Jackson, the lone compositionalists scholar who has argued for the use of critical regionalism in the composition classroom. Rachel Jackson has stated that language and text are part of our social realities and interaction between writers help develop an agency for reform. Indeed, collaboration helps "join locations across regional networks through which writers accumulate agency to change social reality through the exchange of ideas, texts and rhetorics" (302). Jackson characterizes this collaboration as transrhetorical, and utilizes critical theory to investigate local sites of rhetoric in Oklahoma. However, this accumulation of agency seems to center around the human subjects who are operating within a discursive space, or "regional network," that equips writers with "agency to change social reality." Larger questions regarding the agentive, non-discursive elements existing within the material world of these writers are left unanswered. How are the intensities of the material environment, the thoughts and sensations operating through the subject, complicating these "regional networks" and influencing the agency of these local writers? The priority

to attend to human concerns still holds, and attempts at considering the material world or objects as obtaining agency in their own right seems marginal (Rickert 29).

While Jackson notes the agentive components of one's material surroundings, her language suggests an environment that still privileges the human experience. For example, in her description of critical regionalism, she indicates the suasive powers of one's landscape in relation to the people living in the region:

> Contrary to nationalist rhetorics that neutralize and erase location, current critical regionalist inquiry assumes to varying degrees that landscape and place are agentive, active in the rhetorical construction of regions, lived identities and texts. In navigating material and cultural realities that exist regionally, people adapt behaviors that respond to the natural and human environments while participating in complex networks of associations between people, histories, geographies, and economies. (308)

She indicate here that people "adapt behaviors that respond to the natural and human environments" which suggests that "people" are somehow in control of these adaptations, and that "people" are doing the responding to our "natural and human environments." Moreover, the complex networks described by Jackson in the quote above seems to leave material consequences out of the picture, focusing more on "the associations between people, histories, geographies and economies." The material influences of a place seems to be forgotten throughout her piece where most of her attention is placed on investigating the rhetorical construction of a location without any focus on how one's material surroundings may influence this construction. Jackson states that critical regionalism asks composition scholars to account for a "location's multiple cultures,

histories, and identities," noting that such examinations may offer insight "regarding the construct movement and impact of rhetoric" (310). While Jackson articulates the importance of critical regionalists inquiry to examine the transrhetorical movements of a location and how such an examination can improvement student rhetorical awareness, her attention seems to be on a human's ability to locate rhetorical transformation with little discussion on how one's surrounding landscape helps construct a human's capabilities.

If we are to take the posthuman argument seriously then we must not ignore the scholarship arguing that human agency is not simply responding to its natural environment but emerging from this environment. It is this notion of "emergence" that has been articulated in earlier portions of this chapter in regards to Pink, Rickert and Hawk's arguments on agency. However, this is not completely new to composition, as Marilyn Cooper has argued in her CCC's article, "Rhetorical Agency as Emergent and Enacted," that agency emerges out of "embodied processes that take place largely without the agent's awareness" and that agency is much more about process than about "causing what happened" (439). Hence, we experience ourselves as casual agents even though responsibility may stem from outside, agentive forces (Cooper, "Rhetorical Agency" 439). As mentioned before, those who align themselves with a posthuman thought have latched on to this concept of emergence, where rhetoric is not an intentional act, or as Rickert's argues, "from the near dogmatic assertion of intent as the expression of the subjective will (36). For posthumanists such as Byron Hawk, emergence is a "moment of complexity when the interaction of parts or system components generates unexpected local properties not present in any of the local parts;" therefore, Hawk emphasizes the importance of generative complexity while problematizing productive

92

rhetoric, indicating that we need to investigate such complexities as processes that produce rhetoric ("Toward a Rhetoric" 837). Looking back at Jackson's depiction of human agency, people are not simply "responding to their environment" but subjectivities are emerging from the complex systems that are built within one's environment at a moments notice. These systems are not limited to human agents and as Cooper suggests, we may "experience ourselves as casual agents" yet an embodied process takes place without a person's awareness. Critical regionalists inquiry could help explore these moments of invention, where our bodies meet the outside world and evoke a rhetorical act.

Arguments on emergence are sensitive to how ecological environments help construct human agency and are crucial to how posthmanists can reconceptualize critical regionalists inquiry. While Jackson's definition of critical regionalism notes the importance of locating the transrhetorical flows of a particular region to build one's rhetorical analysis skills, students can also benefit from examining how these rhetorics that operate within a local region emerge not simply from their human speakers or writers, but also from their material environments. Moreover, students can examine how their own material worlds may be influencing their interpretation of such rhetorics while performing critical regionalists inquiry, investigating the human and non-human causes that implicate their rhetorical inquiry. Looking outside the humanistic worldview that permeates critical regionalists inquiry may help expose students to the idea that a message is not solely built by the messenger, nor is it interpreted simply by what we conceive to be human agency. Introducing these ideas will allow students to acknowledge

the emergent process that helps create a region's rhetoric, where humans are a component of a larger complex system that attributes to its construction.

Local Texts as Agents

If we are to agree with Hayles description of the posthuman subject as a "collection of heterogeneous components" and a "material informational entity" (3) then we must acknowledge that such materials have the agentive powers to affect and construct our own subjectivity. It is of no surprise that scholars who align themselves with new materialism have also championed posthumanism, noting that the qualities that we believe to separate humans from the rest of the organic world such as reflection, self-awareness, and rationality are considered processes within broader evolutionary productivity (Coole and Frost 20). More importantly, these qualities are essentially material in origin, since human intelligence is itself comes from "a spectrum of vital materializations," and therefore the difference between organic and non-organic matter is a matter of degree, not kind (Coole and Frost 20). The material world is helping to produce these human capacities, and this idea implicates our thoughts on rhetoric. Our current fixation of rhetoric as a "way of knowing" for people creates a lack of attention to those non-discursive things that attribute to rhetorics emergence (Barnett and Boyle 3). In my quest to align critical regionalism with posthumanism, I believe the objects that operate alongside our readers and writers can be part of these "non-discursive things" that can become part of these "vital materializations" which produce human subjectivity and rhetoric.

As mentioned earlier, Jenny Rice argues that we should see critical regionalism not just as a term that mediates the global and local flows of rhetoric within a region, but

that operates as an interface that notices various flows of "food labor, migration patterns, consumption or land;" flows that "cut through our lives in material ways, yet they risk at becoming an abstraction unless we find an interface through which to engage them" (204). Jackson acknowledges this complex systems of material "flows," claiming that critical regionalist inquiry recognizes that a place is "agentive, active in the rhetorical construction of regions, lived identities and texts" (308). Moreover, when navigating the material and cultural realities, she notes that people adapt their behaviors in order to respond to this natural and human environment, participating in its complex network (308). Therefore, critical regionalism is a way to trace these complex networks and acknowledge the connection between the people of a region and their place.

As noted in the earlier, Rice and Jackson both acknowledge the connection between people and their region but fall short of depicting a posthuman notion of emergence when it comes to human agency and its relation to its ecological landscape. Moreover, while I believe these arguments from both Rice and Jackson are an honest attempt to ecologically orienting critical regionalism, the proof essentially lies when one operationalizes such an "interface," or "inquiry." We must look at Jackson's usage of critical regionalism on an actual text, only then can we get a sense of how these local texts are treated in relation to their material environment. She explains her understanding of critical regionalism when examining a regional text entitle *Folk-Say*:

> When reading as a critical regionalists text, Botkin's *Folk-Say* series certainly resists rhetorical flattening. The text creates a space for the study and creation of local rhetorics insofar as they act transrhetorically to foster and enhance

relationships across difference. The text also moves across time to write against

stabilized local and national discourses that flatten Oklahoma. (312)

The text itself is discussed as an agentive object, something that "creates a space," and "moves across time," but is not read as an object that holds influence upon other agents within its space, or as an object that is impacted by other objects as well. As Bennett has argued there needs to be a greater "…recognition of the agential powers of natural and artificial things, greater awareness of their connection with each other and their human bodies" ("The Force of Things" 349). I wonder how this text created its space to showcase these local rhetorics and what other agentive elements are influencing its agency? Moreover, how is this physical text acting on its reader while he or she attempts to locate the transrhetorical relationships within the text? Rhetoric then is implicated and collected across actual things, which create its own political ecology, and these things cannot be separated from the scientific process that helped create them (Rickert x).

In describing the affects a text has on its reader, critical regionalists have deferred to describing texts as conduits that operate as a vehicle for local and global rhetorics within a region. In depicting her definition of critical regionalism as a response to the flattening affects of global studies on regionalism, Jackson states that critical regionalists "emphasize the locally established relationships that provide the transrhetorical conduit for these movements to subvert national boundaries"(309). This definition is mimicked in David Tell's article, "The Meaning of Kansas: Rhetoric, Regions, and Counter Regions" which was published in a Rhetoric Society Quarterly issue that focused on critical regionalism. Here, Tell examines Kansas's reception of Truman Capote's novel *In Cold Blood* to reflect on the construction of regionalism by deploying what he calls a

"regional hermeneutic: a reading practice that is attuned to articulation and spatial differentiation, and the ways a text can be made to function as a conduit, connecting a particular locality with distant institutions and abstract ideologies"(216). For Tell, regional hermeneutics concerns itself more so with how a text is articulated by its readers then the meaning of a text itself. In this regard, Tell sets out to examine the discourse surrounding Capote's *In Cold Blood* by investigating book reviews, social critiques and interviews produced in the local press that responded to reading Capote's book. His conclusions surprised him:

> I take the reading practices of ordinary Kansans as a challenge and corrective to my own critical practice. I thought they would do what I have always done: read the text and interpret it, quote it, and contest it. They did all these things, but they also did something else: they used the text and its author as vehicles to connect their own patch of land to a wide range of institutions and ideologies. For them, the text was less a repository of meanings to be explained and more a conduit or a pathway by which Kansans could bind themselves to Lansing or modernity.(231)

For Kansas readers, Capote's ground breaking novel didn't simply enlighten its readers through its meaning but also connected them to a vision of "modernity," or as Tell would later describe, "connected the state to New York City, the Kennedy's, cocktail parties and the east-coast jet set"(228). The book seemed to take on an agentive quality and Tell describes this as the text workings as a conduit between the local and the global, noting that in order for us to recognize regions "our reading practices must be attuned to the ways texts/authors functions as vehicles" (231).

Tell's examination of a text within the context of regionalism is insightful and I would argue ecologically oriented since it pushes to see how these material elements function within the larger process of text interpretation and rhetorical transformation. Tell's description of the "regional process" shows us how rhetorical transformation within a region is not based solely on the rhetorical message intended by a writer or a speaker, but through the articulation of these texts by readers, noting how the text itself holds the power to function as a vehicle of unintended affect. As Latour has argued, it is not an easy task to investigate how a site is linked to place construction, and it is important for the critic who is attempting to do so to describe the vehicles through which the "world is being brought inside" local interactions (*Reassembling the Social* 179). As Tell has argued, these texts hold a power that must be recognized by those examining regional rhetorics.

In Tell's description, however, the text does not hold agency based on its material construction, but through its ability to work as a conduit for the reader. Tell does not describe how the material components of a text itself create this affect on the reader, but instead argues that we must focus on how texts are articulated *by* readers, and how readers *used* the text to connect their region to outside institutions and ideologies. While noting that a text can operate as a conduit for the readers, Tell leaves out any discussion on how the material, tangible components of a text itself is performing rhetorical work on its readers and how that may be influencing their articulation of the its meaning. If we are to follow Latour's advice and investigate the vehicles that help influence "local interactions" then a discussion on a text's materiality may be equally useful in thinking

about its impact on human subjectivity and its ability to make connections between regions and outside institutions or ideologies.

A framework for this type of thinking can be seen in Kristie S. Fleckenstein's article, "Materiality's Rhetorical Work: The Nineteenth-Century Parlor Stereoscope and the Second-Naturing of Vision." Fleckenstein argues that the materiality of the handheld stereoscope in the early twentieth century functioned as a "rhetorical agent," influencing a new way of seeing for its viewers "characterized by disembodiment and hyper attention" (125). In her historical overview of the stereoscope, Fleckenstein questions how concrete artifacts aren't just instruments of or for rhetoric but are agents of rhetoric, possessing agency through its own immanent vitality (126). She first concludes that the material design of the stereoscope helps promote visual disembodiment, whereby "viewers would be introduced to a new field of vision and become a participant in a vast new world, a world no longer bound by actual face-to-face contact"(130). This type of perception was a completely new to the 20th century user of the stereoscope, where its wood or tin hood combined with "ambient cultural and marketing discourses" privileged vision by isolating sight from the body, reshaping what it was to know and perceive reality (130). In addition, the stereographs themselves, particularly their design for standardize use, inspired what Fleckenstein describes as "visual hyper attention" which can be defined as rapid movements in focus in response to multiple information streams (134). For example, Fleckenstein describes a model of the stereoscope that held twenty five slides at once, each slide depicting a landscape from a corner of the world which the viewer could move through at a rapid pace, becoming equally enthralled by the "quick movement of the cards"(134). Therefore not only did the shape, size, and light-weight

design of the stereograph introduce the power for its users to escape actual reality and enter into a virtual reality at any given time, it also inspired its users to consume quickly, since the content within the stereographs were standardized (135).

As Fleckenstein contends, one cannot underestimate materiality's rhetorical force when considering an objects ability to shape the rhetorical situation. Looking back at David Tell's work, the materiality of Capote's book itself or the newspaper articles describing Capote's work is left out completely, and we are left to believe that the medium's greatest ability was to serve as a conduit for local and global rhetorics. However, we should not assume even the simplest technologies such as a book do not hold agency, since every day objects have the ability to carry embedded moralities or signs of past interactions, where such memories become dislodged once the object is interacted with (Pink, *Situating Everyday* 53). When considering critical regionalist inquiry, we should not only notice a text's ability to operate as a conduit for transrhetorical flows but also be sensitive to its material rhetorical impact, raising questions in regards to its design and how that creates rhetorical force.

Digital Literacies. In defining PCRI and its approach to composition pedagogy, I want to briefly discuss its relevance to the digital spaces students find themselves working in. The rhetorical impact of our material environments noted by scholars like Fleckenstein should not exclude the digital worlds in which we read and write in. While much attention in the field of composition has been paid to providing access and experience to digital literacies in the classroom, we are now faced with a new "digital divide," where the problem is not access to technologies but effectively integrating technological literacy instruction in the composition classroom (Vie 10). Students know how to utilize technology in the

100

classroom but lack critical technological literacy skills and compositionalists should develop pedagogies which deploy technologies students use on a daily basis but do not think critically about (Vie 10).

Recently, composition scholars such as Kate Bradbury have argued for a more positive discussion in relation to technology and literacy, arguing that compositionalists can counteract public rhetoric that often highlights the negative consequences technology has on students (57). Answering the calls for more critical engagement with technology and literacy from composition scholars such as Stuart A. Selber and Deborah Brandt, Bradbury discusses her National Digital Literacy Narrative Project (NDLN) in her article, "Teaching Writing in the Context of a National Digital Literacy Narrative." NDLN is a pedagogical practice that sets out to analyze public rhetorics regarding technology and its impact on literacy practices, getting students to create four writing assignments related to technology and literacy (57). The first assignment is a reflective essay in which the students discuss how technology relates to their writing; the second essay responds to an article on technology and literacy that students find on their own and the third assignment is where students collaboratively composed a digital media text that reflected on their NDLN so far (57). The final assignment asks students to revise their original reflective essay to respond to the new ideas they learned over the course of the semester. Bradbury details the overarching questions that the students reflect on during NDLN process throughout the semester:

> What is the story we are being told by journalists, academics cultural critics, and American popular culture about the role of technology in literacy education and practices? What are the consequences for writing teachers? How does this story

101

complicate composition studies scholarship? And what can teachers learn from

examining their own digital literacy narratives in relation to this national

narrative? (58)

Through examining Bradbury's overarching questions, one can see how the NDLN

extends the type of critical thinking in relation to technology and literacy called for by

composition scholars. However, such questions seem to focus on the discursive practices

of our public discourse, zeroing in on the story told by "journalists, academic culture

critics and American pop culture." While I believe the assignments presented by

Bradbury serve as useful models to develop critical thinking in regards to digital

literacies, the questions could focus more on the material impact these digital literacies

have on the student and their abilities to construct meaning from a text.

Thinking critically about digital literacy should not simply mean developing

pedagogical models that get students to analyze its discussions in public discourse, but

also getting them to think about the design of the digital platforms themselves and how

that may be influencing the readers' interpretation of a text and his or her agency. In

Marek Wojtaskzek's article, "In Quest of (Posthuman) Togetherness: Digital

Communication and Affective Disconnection," he examines whether the enormous

influence ICT's have over human beings has successfully eliminated our fears of

loneliness thanks to our adaptation to these interfaces (56). He argues that ICT's "lure

and seduce us by singing the lullaby of virtuality," putting our sensibilities to sleep in

order to connect to our virtual lives, essentially leaving solitude behind (59). The affects

of this seduction is substantial, as Wojtaskzek argues

Little by little, we are becoming emptied of our unique and autonomous faculties

of sensibility and conceptual thinking…Connected with communication

technologies, we are gradually becoming disabused of exercising our capacity to

think for ourselves…we stop thinking our own objects of thought thanks to our

own mental representations, and in consequence, we begin unlearning to

communicate them to others in our own representations, as an effect of our

psycho-somatic labor. (61)

Wojtaskzek's response demonstrates how technical devises may be shaping our way of

thinking, depleting our abilities to think critically for ourselves and communicate ideas

"in our own representations." The constant abuse of ICT's and our inability to exist in

solitude reinforces the notion that it is not simply a humanistic consciousness which

directs the technological progress of humanity since its genetic substance is infiltrated by

technical apparatuses and essentially becoming incorporated into its organic scaffold

(64). The interface itself is therefore crucial when considering how humans interpret and

analyze digital literacies, noting that the human subject's ability to communicate and

build meaning is influenced by ICT's.

Not only should students be thinking about the suasive capabilities of rhetorical

objects such as ICT's, but also considering digital interfaces that operate on their phones

and computers. This idea has been discussed in relation to digital archives where scholars

have argued that digital technology has allowed students to discover new meanings in old

texts, offering a new model of scholarly intervention in ongoing critical discussions

(Norcia 93). The medium can get students to experience a more effective and closer

reading to digital texts, potentially "eliminat[ing] many temporal and spatial obstacles to archival research" (Purdy 40).

More specifically, in Rebecca Tarsa's article, "Upvoting the Exordium: Literacy Practices of the Digital Interface," she notes how interface's influence on students entry and engagement with a digital text has become a modern counterpart to the classic concept of exordium, which Cicero defines as the ability to make a listener well-disposed, receptive and attentive to a particular speech act (25). For example, digital interfaces operate with "qualitative affordances," which Tarsa defines as a system through which readers' opinions of a text are tracked and displayed back to the community (such as one's ability to "like" or "share" a particular text) (22). These interfaces ask users to connect their interactivity within a digital space with their real life identity, making a statement about how the user values a particular relationship to a text and also its ability to shape user's identities seen within a digital community (26). Thus, Tarsa's research has shown that while we know an audience member will not be reached by a speech if he or she is not initially drawn in by the exordium, the stakes are even higher in a digital landscape because of the vast number of sites available to the audience (26). Therefore, digital interfaces play a key role in drawing users into a particular digital space, motivating them to engage with the text or even participate within a digital community.

The rhetorical function of these digital interfaces should be addressed when conceptualizing composition pedagogy that utilizes them, particularly in relation to students' ability to shape their community through digital activities. As noted by Tarsa, the qualitative affordances working within digital interfaces can play a role in how

students represent themselves within a digital community. This action could also allow students to become more communal in the composition classroom, or even build their connection to place. In Agnieszka Stasiewics-Bienowska's "Meaningful Connections: Digital Media, Social Networks, and the Experience of Space and Place," he investigates the ability for students to negotiate unfamiliar spaces through digital social media and asks whether or not social media can transform space into place, creating a sense of belonging (76). Stasiewics-Bienowska defines space as a location of openness, mobility and freedom while place suggests comfort, tranquility and order (75). Based on the analysis of data gathered from qualitative interviews of fourteen teenagers living outside their country of origin, Stasiewics-Bienowska argues that utilizing digital social media accelerates the transformation of space into place and can engage with this process before the person experiences the space bodily (80). New media has the ability to empower users to appropriate unknown spaces and provide them with digital spaces of sharing and reflecting upon their spatial experience (86).

The PCRI activities I deploy in chapter four will attempt to acknowledge the material impact of digital platforms, inspired by these calls for a closer investigation into the rhetorical agency of digital interfaces. I believe PCRI activities could use common digital literacy practices such as social media in the classroom to not only raise important questions regarding their rhetorical force, but also to engage students with the cultural, material and social worlds that surrounds them, helping them establish a sense of place. These digital spaces could become a location where students interrogate and create local rhetorics, writing their way into their regions. Critical regionalists could therefore develop pedagogical practices in the composition classroom that deploy digital literacies

as a way to interrogate regional rhetorics, questioning the rhetorical powers of digital interfaces while engaging students in the act of composing their own regional rhetorics. Components of Posthuman Critical Regionalists Inquiry will hope to inspire this type of engagement, allowing students to not only use these tools in order to generate their own regional narratives but also get them to question the affect of such tools on the narrative itself. In chapter four I deploy Google Templates as a digital component to one of the PCRI activities but this is just one of many approaches that could work.

These concerns regarding digital spaces and their affect on rhetorical transformation should be of utmost importance to our college students who are thrust into the research process in composition courses. Considering this new ontological understanding of a space redefines how we see a text and its relationship with its reader, developing a whole new connection between an object, place and its contained region. While critical regionalism inquiry is useful in locating transrhetorical flows within a text in order to subvert nationalistic narratives and build connections between a student and their region, it should also take into account the very objects within that region and how they work as agents themselves, constructing the region along side discursive practices.

Chapter Summary

Student writers are not autonomous subjects but whose discursive practices participate in larger, ecological systems. Indeed, our corrective energies as composition scholars should therefore be focused away from a cognitive model of writing for our students and center on imbalances in our social systems that prevent quality writing (Cooper, "Ecology of Writing" 373). If we believe that connecting students to place is important for composition students to become active and engaged citizens in their

communities, then critical regionalists inquiry is a useful heuristic particularly when it comes to deploying rhetorical inquiry in the composition classroom. Critical regionalism examines the on going rhetorical construction of a particular region, where rhetor's negotiate between local and global rhetorical movements in order to build public discourse and a connection to place. As argued by Rachel Jackson, critical regionalism can serve as a useful rhetorical tool in the composition classroom, providing critical regionalists inquiry that enhances students' rhetorical awareness and educates them on the larger systems, institutions and ideologies that help construct one's regional rhetoric.

While critical regionalism has begun the movement towards ecologically orienting our writing classrooms, more can be done through investigating this approach through a posthuman lens. Crucial to the posthuman movement is the questioning of student subjectivity within the classroom. Posthuman scholars argue that we should not remove it entirely but move away from grounding our writing practices in student subjectivity, presenting as Dobrin has described a "postcomposition" approach to composition pedagogy where "the work of theorizing writing is not the work of a teaching subject dependent on the role students play in making writing an object of study" and that theorizing writing "must be bigger than the idea of students" (*Postcomposition* 15). Keeping this central idea in mind, I have laid out three main areas of focus for a posthuman turn in critical regionalists inquiry that I will summarize briefly:

Rhetoric As a Device to Depict Place

Critical regionalists currently emphasize that a local place is rhetorically constructed and therefore we can understand what is local through interpreting these rhetorical threads. However, critical regionalists could investigate the material impact on

these local regions with a more sensitive eye, considering current critical regionalists scholarship privileges human language and discourse rather then materiality as a rhetorical force in these local places. Establishing a place's rhetorical construction within a new ontological understanding of place would require a deeper reflection on our descriptions of environment, the material impact on rhetorical constructions and how we position the human rhetor within a more ecologically oriented rhetorical situation. Therefore, before we move into discussions regarding human agency and the material impact of a text in regards to local regions, we must first consider that examining rhetorics is only scratching the surface, since rhetoric is emerging from environments and are built from networks of various human and non-human objects.

Agency within the Rhetorical Situation

Critical regionalists' discussion on rhetoric often focuses on human agency and our human capabilities to produce regional rhetoric through human discursive practices. However, looking at critical regionalists through a posthuman lens, one could argue that human and non-human actors are taking part in the rhetorical construction of a place. Defining human agency solely within the confines of the human body seems limiting, as Posthuman scholars have noted the importance of focusing on the space between humans and the outside world as a location where human subjectivity continuously takes shape. Therefore, critical regionalists could examine the embedded ecological landscapes these rhetors find themselves in and how these networks influence their rhetoric regarding a particular region. Critical regionalists should be examining the contact between human beings and their environment, or as Boyle has argued the *betweenness* that our invention emerges from, as a way to investigate the rhetorical construction of local regions.

Local Texts as Agents

   Critical regionalists discuss a text as having the ability to create a space for the creation of local rhetorics or working as a conduit to blend local and global rhetorics. These depictions suggest that texts hold some sort of agentive power, yet this description can be better defined through a posthuman lens. Noting that human qualities are essentially material in origin and that humans are "material information" entities, critical regionalists can take a closer investigation into how the material design of a text affects a rhetor. More importantly, critical regionalism can examine the processes and encounters that helped construct a given text, whether it be in a book or a digital platform.

   I've located these three spaces within critical regionalism as locations that can be further developed for a posthuman approach to critical regionalists inquiry in the composition classroom. By blending posthumanism with certain aspects of critical regionalism, we can understand critical regionalist inquiry in composition beyond its current humanists, cognitive-centered model and into a more ecological understanding of the rhetor and the rhetorical situation. Therefore, in the coming chapters I will apply this posthuman version of critical regionalists inquiry (PCRI) for the composition classroom and showcase some pedagogical models I have used which follow this format. These pedagogical models should be read as only examples of this type of inquiry since PCRI can be shaped into many composition practices in the classroom.

CHAPTER FOUR

POSTHUMAN CRITICAL REGIONALISTS INQUIRY AS PEDAGOGY

Introduction

The criteria noted above looks to transform critical regionalist inquiry into something more posthuman; however, I am aware that much of the discussion does not involve the composition classroom. More specifically, the arguments above have yet to discuss in detail PCRI's relation to community engagement and its ability to act as a political tool for composition students. Before I move into defining the pedagogical models themselves, I'd like to create more purposeful connections between Posthuman Critical Regionalists Inquiry and composition, bringing it closer to the context of the composition classroom and how it can help students become more engaged student citizens within their communities. In doing so, I don't want to suggest that posthumanism seeks to deny humans as active and effective elements within their rhetorical worlds, but rather utilize posthuman inquiry as a way to broaden students' ontological awareness *as* they act and engage within their rhetorical worlds.

I believe the student writer is a citizen in training, learning writing and reading comprehension skills that can not only improve their writing for their professional careers, but also get them to engage with the complexity of their surroundings and become aware of their own subjectivity within their own ecological environments. Thus, students in a composition courses learn writing as inquiry and begin to see how writing creates awareness and produces change but also how a writer's surroundings, both human and non-human, can impact them as writers. A citizen can therefore empower themselves as a writer through acknowledging that their writing functions as but one "stream within

the broader flows of meaning-making and person-making activity" (Prior 11). Or as Jody Shipka has argued, new maps of composing must acknowledge the various ways semiotic performances are re-mediated through a combination of available resources, both human and non-human, attending to writing as a crucial component-but not the entirety of-the composing process (131). In doing so, student writers can improve their rhetorical awareness within a given situation and empower themselves as citizens if need be, writing themselves into a community by first mapping out the various historical, cultural or material realities that impact their writing.

Writing then can be a tool for rhetorical inquiry and enhance composition practices that look to improve rhetorical analysis. Strategies for improving rhetorical awareness like mapping is a central focus for PCRI and one that is deeply informed by Heidegger's arguments on dwelling. Dwelling, as Heidegger has argued, is a deep relationship with one's existence, where one's Being is developed through their appropriation of place. As Heidegger claims, "dwelling itself is always a staying with things. Dwelling as preserving, keeps the four fold in that with which mortals stay: in things" (150-151). For Heidegger, our sense of Being is an event that appropriates *place*-place being where one is at home and activates one's sense-making practices and structures (Polt 148). Mapping then could be observed as a strategy that attempts to survey this process of appropriating place to create our sense of being. Mapping has a history of not only tracing physical landscapes but also the physiological, social and personal relationships we make with place. Educators have used concept maps, a linguistic form of mapping to connect and think through concepts in order to stimulate critical thinking. On the other hand, non-linguistic forms of mapping such as social

111

mapping has been used by researchers to trace and analyze social networks as well as

cognitive mapping to investigate the connection between our sense of place and our

social relationships (K.Powell 540). These non-linguistic approaches to mapping look to

survey one's sense of place, or their spatial literacy, by observing the individual's

movement through an environment.

Mapping as a way to explore ones sense of place and its relation to our being in

the world is different from the kind of mapping we think of when we attempt to trace or

map out a physical landscape. Drawing up a map to simply survey a location or to

brainstorm an issue doesn't take into account the impact of one's actions onto the

process, whereas mapping to explore our embedded nature within a place could possible

do just that. Kimberley Powell has argued for mapping as a qualitative method to evoke

the lived experiences of our social, cultural and political connections to place (539).

Examples of this qualitative approach would be in Sarah Pink's studies (mentioned

earlier in this dissertation) where the visual becomes a multisensory experience, calling

fourth other senses and reinforcing the idea that our cognitive abilities are closely tied to

our action and sensory experiences in an embedded environment. Such non-linguistic,

methodological approaches account for the complexity of our lived-in experience and our

dwelling within a given place, providing an "opportunity for depicting multisensory,

lived experiences of space, time, and place in nonlinear ways" (K. Powell 540).

As the spatial turn in composition continues to build, mapping has begun to

surface within the field of composition and compositionalists have attached themselves to

these qualitative methods in various ways. Shipka takes a broader stance on the activity

of mapping and has aligned herself with arguments similar to those of Kimberly Powell,

arguing that mapping should trace a richer, more comprehensive theory of composing, one that is not limited to writing or the production of written texts but considers both linguistic and nonlinguistic sign systems-a composition "made whole"(Shipka 132).

Compositionalists such as Shipka call for a kind of mapping that gets students to see the various forces outside of simply writing that can help one compose while also claiming that such investigations should be student-centered (as noted by Hawk); However, Nedra Reynolds stresses the importance of space in her arguments and wants mapping to act as a practice that can build students awareness of space and its impact on their writing. Reynolds specifically contends that more mapping needs to occur in composition classrooms in regards *to the sense* of place and space that readers and writers bring with them to their composition activities (176).

In thinking about PCRI, I believe the type of mapping I would like students to use would somehow engage with both Shipka and Reynolds. In Jeff Rice's *Digital Detroit,* he looks to thread between the arguments made by Shipka and Reynolds to create a useful approach to mapping. Jeff Rice's work deploys mapping as a strategy that increases a rhetors understanding of space while also subverting "totalizing," grand narratives that falsely depict a region. Here, Rice wants to consider this spatial awareness as a way to empower the rhetor and question prevailing storylines within one's region. Rice's project entitled "Digital Detroit" is a rhetorical act that he performs by arranging people, places, ideas and things in order to conceptualize a regional rhetoric of Detroit, one that is personal and developed from his own perceptions:

> I am thinking about how ideas are spatialized, how they are put into proximity
> with one another that a topics-driven rhetorical production does not entirely

account for (like limiting physical space to just a street intersection or to just one

discussion on said street or intersection)…In other words when writing of the city,

for instance, there has to be more spatial arrangements than just seeing city

markers as next to one another. Other forces, emotions, responses have to be

included. (36)

The notion of arrangement then for Rice is one's ability to put together these forces,

emotions and responses in order to invent a new way of articulating a given space, thus

making the approach a rhetorical act. Rice wants to emphasize that a place is not

unchangeable and must allow for movement-place moves. Therefore, he notes that for

"place to not be unchangeable….arrangements cannot be spatialized in the Ramist sense-

as fixed orderings-but they must, instead be "interactions." Invention then serves to

generate interactions among a given arrangement (36). For Rice, when one arranges these

forces and performs a rhetorical act that "generates interactions" rather then "fixed

orderings", he or she is inventing a new way to understand a place, one that is in constant

movement. Rice seems to be orienting mapping not only closer to the discipline of

rhetoric but also to this notion that one can take advantage of the dynamics of space for

their own argumentative means, something I will touch upon later in my pedagogical

discussions.

     While I appreciate Rice's work on mapping I do not want to suggest these type of

mapping-activities have been ignored when it comes to composition practices.

Compositionalists have also utilized mapping within their pedagogy to get students to

investigate the ever-changing spaces they travel through while improving their rhetorical

skills. In Nathanial Rivers recent article, "Geocomposition in Public Rhetoric and

Writing Pedagogy" he notes that the "primary goal of geocomposition (or geocomp) is to have students write on the move in order to compose the multiple layers of a public place (579). For Rivers, having the students compose within the boundaries of geochacing helps develop their situational awareness of public space while cultivating their rhetorical skills that would help them operate within their communities (579). Similar to Rice's "Digital Detroit" project, Rivers declares geocatching, which is an outdoor activity that uses GPS to hide and find containers called "geocaches," as a rhetorical act that involves both human and non-human engagement in order to compose. River's argues that by moving students around their public places through geocaching they will see place as a function of rhetorical activity and will perform these rhetorical acts in return. This potentially shows how rhetorical acts transform and help move people into action, all while involving new compositions that include human and non-human activity.

While geocomposition pedagogy may help students notice rhetorical transformation, it seems fairly restricted within the confines of the rules of geocaching, and does not engage the students with rhetorical narratives that are shaping the community nor does it seem to use mapping to enhance substantive engagement with community issues or members. River's and Weber's piece "Ecological, Pedagogical and Public Rhetoric" seems to outline a pedagogical practice that is more politically motivated. The authors stress that significant change within a community does not happen solely through a single speech, text or rhetor but through multiple texts and individuals and their rhetorical exchanges over time. Change can even happen through the multiple movements of potentially mundane objects, such as the one's the authors' highlight in their ecological reading of the Montgomery bus boycott. Rivers and Weber

115

show how unnoticed, non-human agents such as meeting minutes, post-event flyers, and organizational texts helped propel the movement (200). As Bacha has suggested, Rivers and Weber's ecological reading of this movement shows how "overlooked and often mundane artifacts often connect to and support much larger issues" (282).

Seeking out the mundane can not only broaden students' rhetorical awareness of place, but also provide them with more opportunities to be persuasive and act within their regions. Bacha's own work with mundane artifacts in particular presents a composition practice that not only showcases the fluidity of a rhetorical situation within an ecological environment as River's attempts to do, but does so in order to empower the student as a rhetor within his or her own context. In "The Physical Mundane as Topos: Walking/Dwelling/Using as Rhetorical Invention," Bacha asks the students to explore their physical spaces and to "uncover problematic features of their shared university-sponsored product" by considering the physical structures of the university and asking whether there is something specifically unusable that exists on their campus or something that could be improved as a way to make it more usable (274). Bacha asks students to walk around the university and identity two possible use-base problems associated with the physical space (276). When they return, students must present what they found and argue why the problems they found should be a concern for the other members of their class (277). For Bacha, this type of mapping activity connects students to the mundane as a focus of discovery and students begin to understand how the changes made to their physical campus impact the lives of other university stakeholders (278). Student notice the interconnectivity of their shared space with other "shareholders," or people who have investment in the university like deans, professors etc. Thus, these shared spaces become

116

a rhetorical tool in their arguments, whereby students include something familiar in their presentations to attempt to build a connection between themselves and the audience. Therefore, their discussions of the mundane eventually become a persuasive tactic within their presentations. More importantly, Bacha notes how the activity helps students convert their arguments from personal problems to towards an argument intended to critique "the dominant public perception of their surroundings with the power to persuade (281).

These mapping practices are useful in getting students to consider how rhetorical situations are fluid, how rhetoric helps construct place and how students' rhetorical actions can contribute to its construction. Bacha's composition practice in particular considers how heightened rhetorical awareness of the mundane assists in creating more persuasive actions within students arguments, challenging dominate perceptions of place. Indeed, these activities enact many of the characteristics of PCRI; however, PCRI looks to deploy similar pedagogical practices in order to focus on a different objective: interrogate the construction of local rhetorical narratives in order to subvert and question totalizing narratives of a place. The stories of these regions are built by rhetorical invention, as Jeff Rice showcases in his quest to question the prevailing assumptions about Detroit by focusing on his own process of rhetorical invention. How we invent matters in regards to these stories and PCRI will look to highlight this process to present a more political pedagogical model of mapping for composition students.

Critical regionalism is also a crucial component to this pedagogical activity. As Ali has noted, Critical regionalism forces an interrogation of localism that moves beyond our simplistic notions of place; it is not a static, homogenous site but one in constant

117

negotiation between local, national and global rhetorical flows (107-108). Moreover, utilizing critical regionalism as a lens emphasizes local relationships that operate as a transrhetorical conduit for movements to subvert totalizing constructions of a place (Jackson 309). PCRI will therefore follow the lead from many of these compositionalists in order to engage with conversations regarding rhetorical agency and rhetorical transformation, but do so in order to question prevailing narratives of a place that look to flatten the complex, transrhetorical construction of a region.

As mentioned in chapter three, PCRI is also attempting to consider the rhetorical transformation of non-human elements and will utilize mapping in order to do so. While mapping has been discussed as an activity that surveys humans' relationship with the outside world, it can also be thought of as a way to trace the movement of physical objects and their rhetorical affect. It is not simply humans that work to help construct the stories of our places but objects as well. Composition and rhetoric scholars such as David Tell and Laura Gries have researched the impact non-human elements such as images or texts have traveled within various contexts. Thinking back to David Tell's article, "The Meaning of Kansas: Rhetoric, Regions and Counter Regions," he maps out the influence of a specific text and invents a reading practice called *regional hermeneutic,* which he argues is a practice that attunes itself to how a text can be made to function as a conduit between localities, distant institutions and abstract ideologies (216). In his investigation into affect of Truman Capote's Cold Blood within various Kansas communities, Tell describes how the book challenged the mores of southwest Kansas and to many locals this act was intolerable. In an act of resistance, locals developed a counter network in which certain ties between rural communities were strengthened while ties to

118

cities like Topeka were severed (222). Thus both Capote and the book itself worked as

Conduits, providing southwest Kansans a path to define their own region. For Tell this is

the definition of region making: "a spot of land being given meaning by its placement in

a broader network of institutions and ideologies" (222). Capote's novel became much

larger then a murder mystery, but an agentive force all on its own, helping to create

regional boundaries the author had no intention of creating.

In the field of composition, Gries' article, "Iconographic Tracking: A Digital

Research Method For Visual Rhetoric and Circulation Studies" takes a more

methodological approach to mapping out the movement of things then David Tell. She

argues that the composition needs methods to explain how things experience

reproduction and redistribution and how various actor networks contribute to this

distribution (335). Gries takes a new materialist approach to her methodology that she

calls "Iconographic track." Following the theory of new materialism, things have the

power to influence and shape reality once they become assembled within various

complex systems in their environment and this in itself is a rhetorical act. According to

Gries, in mapping this act as a researcher should first collect data related to the image

through scrolling through its representations on the internet, eventually organizing the

data in relation to patterns, trends or relationships that the research sees developing.

Then, in order for the research to pay specific attention to an image's collective

experience once it is produced and begins to circulate, he or she must deploy qualitative

research strategies such as questionnaires or interviews in order to identify "emotions,

thoughts and actions to help explain why an image was re-composed in particular ways"

(343). Gries labels this "micro level investigation," where one searches through the

complex and diverse "eventfulness" that is produced by the image in order to discover the unintended consequences established within various collectives surrounding the particular image. Both Gries and Tell provide a way for us to understand how mapping can locate the influence and movement of a particular non-human element. Indeed, their claims regarding the rhetorical journeys of non-human elements provide the theoretical structure for the third assignment associated with PCRI.

However, focusing on mapping and its ability to trace our *sense* of place begins to raise larger questions in regards to the construction of one's sense of being and our own subjectivity when we map. Questions regarding our subjectivity are also relevant when attempting to articulate rhetorical trajectories of non-human elements as described by Tell and Gries. Indeed, PCRI activities will look to not only enhance students' rhetorical awareness for political means, but do so in away that recognizes their own subjective transformations during this process.

Thinking about our relationships with place and subjectivity leads me back to Heidegger and how he conceptualizes his notion of Being that is unique to the human experience and that is distinguished from everyday consciousness, or as he calls: *Dasein*. For Heidegger, *Dasein* is the way to be engaged with the everyday world while also remaining aware of the peculiar and contingent element of that involvement, the evolving nature of our self and the priority of our world to the self (The Columbia Dictionary of Modern Literary 70). An area of focus within Heidegger's *Dasein* highlights the fact that being in this world does not simply equate to our Cartesian notion of autonomous "agent"; it is neither a subject or the objective world alone but is part of a never-ending engagement in its environment and is mediated through the projects and actions of the

120

self (The Columbia Dictionary of Modern Literary 70). Taking *Dasein* into consideration then, when we map our sense of place that we discover within our environment (Reynolds) or trace our visual representations to multisensory experiences (Pink) we are also witnessing the self engage and react to the outside world, transforming and retransforming its notion of self. Therefore, as rhetoricians we should not ignore the limitations, affects or changes we as agents experience during the mapping process. When we map we may want to ask questions that not only think about our relation with the environment we are mapping but also how this process is potentially renegotiating our subjectivity. When we articulate the mapping of a non-human element and its rhetorical movements we should consider how our own subjectivity changes during the process and also influences how we articulate these non-human journeys.

This idea has not gone completely unnoticed within the world of composition and rhetoric. Scholars like Reynolds and Pink who look to survey our surroundings within their research not only get us thinking about our engagement within our environments but also how it potentially transforms our subjective selves. I see Hawk as acknowledging this capability of mapping and the important work of composition teachers to allow for "emergent and inventive moments" that are built through various linguistic and non-linguistic means. He notes that when compositionalists develop heuristics in complex contexts they no longer operate on a linear model but are "open to multiple lines of flight" (*A Counter-History* 254-255). Thus, practitioners must acknowledge that providing an openness to context, assemblage and emergence means that teachers cannot have a precondition for student subjectivity; the heuristic may create unknown maps of "constellations" within a student's ecology yet it should be evaluated based upon the

"relationships it fosters and the relationships it severs-on its ability to increase rather than decrease a student's agency, power or capacity to produce productive relations"(*A Counter-History* 256). Hawk does not quote Heidegger here, but I believe his arguments attempt to align with his claims regarding the vulnerability of our subjective selves when exposed to the objective world. We don't know what's in store for the student subject, but we should be open to its exploration.

Hawk's notion of mapping within composition sets the tone for how I want my Posthuman Critical Regionalists Inquiry to play out within the classroom. Hawk sees the importance of mapping within the field of composition but acknowledges the ethical concerns teachers should think about before imposing a method on a group of students and attempting to get them to think or be a specific way. Our heuristics should provide room for invention by the students within the classroom and the mapping that students create should trace the varying discursive and non-discursive activities that they believe might be attributed to their composition practices. In essence, mapping should emerge from the complex environments that neither the student nor the teacher can fully control. Why this way? Hawk explains:

> These examinations… would also leave the field open to the multitude of other
> possibilities by addressing the students' specific local situations more directly.
> For me, this is a preferable methodology that encourages students to begin
> thinking about their relationship to lived experience in both an ethical and
> political way without imposing a reductive or deductive heuristics on
> them,…[while] being attentive to the ways we design our constellations and to the

122

ethical effects they produce becomes the central pedagogical concern. (*A Counter History* 257).

One primary concern of Posthuman Critical Regionalists Inquiry is to connect the student with his or her local situation more intricately, addressing the human and non-human elements that impact the rhetorical construction of their local region. Hawk's argument is the foundation for how I want to approach this heuristic: allowing the students to engage with their local situations and "lived experience" but without "imposing a reductive or deductive heuristic on them." Thus, the pedagogical model should allow students to map the people, places and things that create the rhetorical constellations constructing their region while also providing the freedom to roam into various "lines of flight." This approach cannot only uphold the characteristics of Posthuman Critical Regionalist Inquiry but produce a sense of engagement and empowerment we want our future citizens to feel comfortable with.

Posthuman Critical Regionalists Inquiry requires the spontaneity described by Hawk while promoting the theoretical arguments described by Reynolds, Rice and Heidegger. In other words, students should feel in control when they investigate the rhetorical makeup of their environment, considering the many stories that are built through these human and non-human elements while also reflecting on the impact one's place has on his or her subjectivity. Students should be considering how their rhetorical acts can essentially affect and are affected by a given place. Circling back to Heidegger for a moment, this is why reinstating his arguments within critical regionalism is crucial for my project (as mentioned earlier) since he connects the human body to a place, defining what it means to dwell. Heidegger argues that "Man's relation to locations, and

through locations to spaces, inheres in his dwelling, strictly thought and spoken" (157). Places stay with us and are expressed in our dwelling practices; these practices linger into new spaces and influence our actions. Reynolds connects these ideas to writing as an act of dwelling, stating that we must examine how place affects our social, cultural and economic differences (142). She claims "bodies and places impact upon each other; a body becomes marked with a residue of place, but places are also changed by the presence of bodies" (143). Therefore, when we write we are dwelling; we are constructing a rhetorical act that is affected by but also helping to change place.

Essentially I want the arguments outlined above working within the confines of critical regionalist theory, allowing my proposed pedagogy to serve as a way of thinking through these complex arguments made by composition and rhetoric scholars. Therefore, Posthuman Critical Regionalist Inquiry allows students to investigate the complex local and national rhetorical constructions of a place but also acknowledges the student's *own* impact on the place while working through his or her investigation. PCRI subverts the universal narratives that look to flatten local rhetoric's of a place, but it also attempts to provide a sense of agency to the investigator as he or she maps the various "lines of flight" that they perceive during the inquiry process. Yet, students should understand this sense of agency as something that is not humancentric, but as an awareness of the varying human and non-human materials within our given spaces that help them learn and invent. The spaces we occupy while writing and learning are incredibly important since they determine to some extent the kind of work we can do and the type of things we can create (Reynolds 157). This "spatial logic" as Reynolds describes it, is an empowering tool for

students who are learning about why they make choices as writers, and how these choices can impact a place and define them as a citizen within a particular place.

With these ideas in mind I constructed three pedagogical models for the first-year composition classroom. A posthuman orientation to critical regionalism will look to build on some of the spatial work that compositionalists have already begun. These models will be inspired by the arguments brought fourth in this introduction as well as the criteria outlined at the end of chapter three. Lastly, these models work in tandem with each other, building on each others objectives in order to encompass the characteristics of PCRI outlined at the end of chapter three.

Pedagogical Model #1: Low-Stakes Narrative Development

Jeff Rice's project entitled "Digital Detroit" can serve as a foundational approach for PCRI's first low-stakes pedagogical model. This model, like Rice's project, looks to take composionalists claims regarding mapping into account while also operating as a political act within the writing classroom. This activity is meant to introduce students to the process of PCRI where they begin understanding their own rhetorical agency within the rhetorical construction of their communities. More importantly however, this first activity emphasizes how both human and non-human elements come into contact with the rhetor to help create a rhetorical act, thus acknowledging the arguments seen by many Posthuman scholars such as Casey Boyle and Scott Barnett.

How then does Jeff Rice's approach to mapping connect to Posthuman Critical Regionalists Inquiry? For starters, it builds a rhetor's rhetorical awareness of a given place outside its linguistic representation, allowing the rhetor to acknowledge various forces (sights, sounds, feelings etc.) that help construct the rhetoric of a region. It also

125

begins to question the rhetors relation to a given space and how one influences the other, as Rice argues "I wonder how a changing self might not be limited to just the rhetor (speaker or writer) but may include the space itself as well as a number of interactions between the space and the individual" (37). Rice is focused on the interactive relation between space and the individual and how rethinking a given space may create various networked, rhetorical possibilities. His project aligns itself with certain characteristics of Posthuman Critical Regionalist Theory such as its ability to investigate the outside forces within one's environment that helps construct a rhetorical act, depicting the importance of rhetorical invention to shape the rhetor as well as his or her rhetorical situation.

Equally important is Rice's push to utilize Digital Detroit as a political act that subverts grand narratives of his native Detroit. Rice argues that his mapping project can be a model for replacing narrative constructions of a given region through its ability to arrange and invent on the rhetor's terms. In particular he see's this project as a way to subvert grand narratives which are universal stories of a given place, one that "evokes a totalizing space that does not allow for rhetorical turns, memory associations, spatial searches, or travel metaphors (Jeff Rice 39). The grand narrative Rice notes in particular is Detroit's depiction as a city of ruins; one that is constantly in the throngs of struggle and depravity. While some of these rhetorical claims may be true, repeating this universal narrative has done little to improve Detroit's condition and the typical response to this grand narrative to date has been to repeat the same narratives.

What Rice is suggesting and what I propose to create within a composition pedagogical practice is an approach to arrangement that allows the rhetor to create new representations and identities for a given region. One does not have to reject the grand

126

narrative outright, but acknowledge that networks are shifting identities that can be affected by the rhetor's arrangement and invention. In essence, I want this pedagogical practice to invite the student to locate the material, political and economic realities that construct one's local community and engage in its rhetorical construction, empowering the student to become an agent within his or her region by questioning the totalizing myths that prevail within their locations.

The practice would operate as a low-stakes activity within a first year composition course. The activity would work as a mode of inquiry at the beginning of the semester, setting the tone for the entire syllabus which will attempt to improve students academic writing while also expanding their rhetorical awareness in order to empower them as citizens and future professionals. The instructor should begin by asking students to write down three assumptions they've learned about the community they live in. The instructor should emphasize the definition of assumption and how it connects to the common beliefs of a given community. From here, students should write these assumptions on the board with their name next to it so that the instructor can go over the various statements each student thinks about when describing their community.

Students will then read an excerpt from Rice's *Digital Detroit* in which he describes in detail how he looks to define and describe Detroit based on his own rhetorical construction of the location, focusing on Detroit as "networked." A network is not a generalized concept that one points to but is defined by its process of connecting as Rice describes:

> …the power of networks comes not from the identification of certain "things" and how they connect, but from the process of connection themselves… "It's the

network," a Verizon advertisement or cellular phone service declares. Indeed, "it"

is the network. The generic "it," which is ubiquitous and unnamed in the Verizon

spot, encompasses friends making connections, people writing to online spaces

dealing with music, food, or academic life, or people designing and implementing

a variety of online applications meant to interact with one another. The "it" is any

given space put into relationship with other spaces. (44)

The students will read this definition of network in full, noting its emphasis on process

and ones ability to make connections through discursive and non-discursive activities-

anything that helps put one given space in relationship with another. Along side this they

will read an example of Rice describing his "network" of Detroit following the definition

outlined above. Here the instructor should make clear that Rice is not only looking to

describe the physical spaces he see's but also the "sights, sounds people, places and

features" that he is moving through (47).

Essentially, Rice follows the lead of Shipka, looking to complicate and broaden

key concepts such as writing, reading, text and composing while increasing the visibility

of activities that explore the potentials of both linguistic and as well as non-linguistic sign

systems (*Toward a Composition* 135-136). While doing this, Rice seeks to question the

grand narratives that circulate within Detroit by following his definition of network,

arguing that one must engage with "multiple paths, complexity, and relationships" when

grand narratives only remind people of one particular story and keep possibilities hidden

(43). With this new definition of network fresh in their minds, students will seek to

discover their own network hidden within their local spaces. The prompt will be as

follows:

Now that you've gotten an understanding of how a network can be defined and articulated through walking and experience a location, I want you to go out to your communities and do the same. Walk through your neighborhood (this can be a street near your house, a local market, etc.) and describe what you see. Walk us through moment to moment in your description but don't simply focus on the physical spaces you walk around, let your mind travel and locate the sights, sounds, places and even memories that pop up as you move through the space. Where does this space take you? What connections are being made as you walk through this location?

The next day in class, students will come in with their written description that followed the prompt and see their assumptions regarding their community still on the board. The instructor should get them discussing their writing in comparison to their assumptions aloud in class initially through classroom discussion or group work where students pair and share their comparisons amongst themselves. After this brief think-aloud exercise, students should begin writing a page reflection that looks to compare and contrast their descriptions of their communities to their initial assumptions. What elements of the descriptions help uphold this assumption? What elements look to subvert or counter this assumption? Essentially, this first assignment is a reflection piece that operates within a compare and contrast essay format. Instructors should also make sure students learn and feel comfortable with the rhetorical modes of a compare and contrast essay. After working on this writing in class, students are then asked to edit and finalized their three to four page compare and contrast essay for homework and bring in into the next class.

When completed, students should be directed to a final reflection question that asks students to consider their own subjectivity during this process: how did this activity change their perception of their town or city? Did working through this process change who *they are* in any way? This type of more personal reflective question will follow each PCRI activity, pursing its potential goal of getting students to not only enhance their rhetorical awareness but to see how their own subjectivity is implicated in the process.

In performing this act, students are beginning to question the identities formulated through the totalizing narratives or empty topoi that help define their local communities. Students are performing this act through an activity that seeks to engage their mind and their bodies, both discursive and non-discursive realities, in order to conceptualize a network of their community that is personal to them. Ultimately, the practice looks to increase student awareness of their human and non-human surroundings while getting them to perform a rhetorical act, one that can ultimately help subvert the grand narratives of their local region. This is the first step in what I have called Posthuman Critical Regionalists Inquiry.

Of course this is simply the objective of the practice and students may not find this analysis within these reflection pieces nor do I think they should be pressured by the instructor to do so. However, I believe this low-stakes activity looks to set the tone of a course motivated by Posthuman Critical Regionalists Inquiry; where students are building their rhetorical awareness within their embedded, networked environments in order to become more engaged and better informed citizens of their communities.

130

Pedagogical Model #2: Middle Stakes Group Work Activity

As mentioned at the end of chapter three, one of the main areas that PCRI looks to focus on is its ability to show how both human and non-human elements come together to create a rhetorical construction of place. Once students have performed pedagogical activity #1 they are then set to begin working in groups to conceptualize a group presentation that utilizes PCRI. The group activity is inspired by pedagogical practices published by compositionalists such as Nathanial Rivers, Ryan Weber, and Jeffrey Bacha. While these scholars influence PCRI, it seeks to think through their work in a new way. PCRI will not only get students to learn about rhetorical transformation and their ability to take part in the rhetorical construction of a place, but does so while highlighting the current assumptions of their region, showcasing how students can operate within or against these universal narratives.

For this second pedagogical activity, students will work within groups of three to four assigned by the instructor. Like the first pedagogical activity, students will initially be asked to come up with some prevailing assumptions associated with their community; however, rather then write them on the board each group must produce a collage of texts and images that convey "totalizing narratives" of their community, particularly from sources outside their region. Instructors should allow students to research this material and provide suggestions of newspapers, magazines, websites and other sources that may provide evidence of national or even global voices attempting to construct the students local region. Of course certain areas may be easier to investigate then others; for example I taught at The City College of New York in Harlem for eight years, an area of our country that has been rhetorically constructed by outsiders for decades. However,

totalizing narratives exist within all regions since the rhetorical construction of a place tends to be politically motivated. In certain regions, instructors may have to be more hands-on during this part of the practice, potentially providing a list of sources for students to shift through.

Students should look to develop a multimodal presentation of their findings, showcasing the various images and texts that help propel the universal narrative (or narratives) of their community. Presenting this material within a digital platform such as a WordPress website could be applicable for this part of the project but is not necessary. Like the first pedagogical activity, what should be stressed here is the ability for students to see the act of composing that involves but is not limited to the act of writing, and they should learn that something multimodal can be digital but is not limited to the digital world. As Jody Shipka has argued, as we expand our definition of writing we should not limit our attention to new media texts or what our computers have to offer, but attend to the "highly distributed, complexly mediated, multimodal dimensions of all communication practice"(*Toward A Composition* 29). Students are therefore beginning to build their awareness to the varying complex systems that assemble a given narrative, noting how these systems are built through varying human and non-human elements.

Once students have completed their multimodal project regarding the universal narratives within their community, they will move onto the second part of the project involving Google newspaper templates. Before describing the activity, instructors should make sure students know how to obtain and use Google's newspaper templates online. These are free templates on Google Docs and can be accessed by anyone with a gmail account. It is recommended in this component of the project to utilize a digital platform

(i.e Google templates) and not a text because students will eventually need to distribute their projects to an audience in a timely manner via email. Moreover, instructors should share and discuss examples of local newspapers in their community so students can see the layout of an actual newspaper and how they should approach creating their own newspaper layout.

Once each group has picked out their newspaper template and have it accessible within the classroom, instructors should explain how their research would be applied to this digital platform. Students will be asked to go out and investigate their local communities, taking on the role of a local reporter. For example, this can be done by interviewing citizens within their region, investigating local institutions or public spaces, or observing and critiquing local happenings within their area. Students should have free range to go out and explore, describe and discuss the various people, places, cultures, objects etc. within their dwelling space. It's equally important for instructors to emphasize what students have completed already in their first PCRI activity and how it relates to their group work. In other words, students should have already canvassed their community individually when they completed their low-stakes activity, paying closer attention to certain mundane features within their environment and how they helped to compile a counter narrative to the assumptions they put on the board. Instructors should remind the students that they can use this narrative from activity #1 as a starting point for their group investigation. Indeed, students should not just be looking to interview predominant members of their community, but also consider writing about the non-human objects that surround them within their regions. What can you say about the structure of the local library or the maple trees that line the side walks on your way to

campus? Students' should be encourage to take note of these "mundane artifacts" that may provide substance for an article in their paper.

Instructors should allow students to canvas their area on their own terms and should not limit the range of materials and technologies students might take up in order to produce their newspaper text. Thus, students should have flexibility to reflect and arrange their own perspective on the rhetorical situation and this should not be outlined specifically by the instructor. Harking back to both Hawk and Shipka, instructors should resist the urge to push a specific method onto the students, but should allow space for their own rhetorical invention to take shape, improving their nuanced awareness of their available choices while instructors simply provide assistance. Thus a prompt could look as follows:

> Now that you have established some typical assumptions associated with your community, I want you to go out and canvas this region of the world on your own. Your goal is to construct a front page of a newspaper using Google templates, presenting both visual, textual and (if necessary) audio and video components to your final draft. Think about all the strategies (interviews, observations, op-eds etc.) we've seen reporters use in the examples handed out to you. You are the reporters now who help create the stories you want to be heard in the community: what do you want to tell? What type of people, objects, memories, institutions etc. will inform your paper? Will it be from strictly primary or secondary sources? Will your paper be informed by voices within the town or voices outside the community or both? Before you go off and investigate, write a one page mission

statement for your paper, describing what you hope to achieve through this

newspaper and how it applies to the current rhetorical situation.

Essentially, students are doing the type of exploring and rhetorical construction

mentioned by Rivers, Weber and Bacha where they use both their bodies and minds to

become rhetorical agents within their local spaces, investigating human and non-human

elements that help frame a rhetorical narrative of their given community. As a key

characteristic of PCRI, students become aware that rhetoric is not just assembled through

linguistic representation systems, but is being built within the world around them at all

times through all types of complex systems, and as rhetorical agents they can act within

this world, seeking to discover and shape their own rhetorical messages.

However, in this pedagogical practice, students are also seeking to attribute to the

rhetorical construction of their community by engaging with a common communicative

vehicle in their towns: the newspaper. Moreover, students have the freedom to construct

this message through local, global or national narratives, whether it be interviews that

they create within their community or analysis of other voices that come from outside

their community. The practice is meant to not only build their rhetorical awareness as the

paragraph before this one suggests, but also get students in touch with their abilities to

perform a rhetorical act that attributes and works within their region of the world.

Therefore, once students participate in this activity and assemble their newspapers

it is imperative for the instructor to get them to reflect on how the first part of the group

project compares to the second. In other words, now that each group has created their

own stories in parallel to the totalizing narratives they see within their community, what

type of connections can they make? How does their regional rhetoric compare or contrast

to the "totalizing narratives" that circulate within their communities? What did you learn about the common narratives of your community in relation to what is happening on the ground? Groups should construct this reflection piece together, compiling a one to two page reflection regarding these questions. All this work essentially leads to the final piece of the project when students come up in front of the class and present both parts one and two of their group activity as well as the reflection piece.

Essentially, the reflection piece of the group project should help students contest common misconceptions of place and empower them to locate their own agency within their community. The practice as a whole seeks to contest conservative approaches to education and find new and radical ways to change students' approaches to citizenship. As Giroux has argued, educators do this by "naming and transforming those ideological and social conditions that undermine the possibility for forms of community and public life organized around the imperatives of critical democracy" (5). Here, Students are identifying the "the ideological and social conditions" that potentially undermine or misperceive their communities by first constructing those assumptions in the first part of the project. They then look to question these overpowering narratives, essentially questioning dominant ideologies that operate within their place while finding a space for resistance and agency.

In the final installment of this activity, teachers should once again present the students with a final reflection question that they can perform in class or for homework: How do you think the assumptions, interests opinions etc. that you brought *to* the project impacted the content and design of your newspaper? Do you believe you have changed in anyway after this process? How so? This line of questioning should once again reinforce

136

the idea that students' subjectivity is never innocent during rhetorical inquiry and that our sense of selves are both influential and impacted during the process.

Pedagogical Model #3: Final Individual Project

So far these pedagogical activities have looked to touch on certain characteristics of PCRI that were outlined at the end of chapter two. Activity #1 emphasizes students' rhetorical awareness of place by getting them to construct a map of their environment that emerges from both human and non-human elements. The activity asks students to develop their own rhetorical narrative for their community, one that is more sensitive to the ecological construction of place then the assumptions they are asked to produce at the beginning of the activity. The second activity, the group project, asks students to consider how this sense of rhetorical awareness can act as a rhetorical tool within their communities. Here, students apply what they learned in activity number one to question and potentially subvert the totalizing narratives that they notice within their environment. Students work within the platform of a newspaper, a common rhetorical agent within many communities, in order to seek participation in the rhetorical construction of their town or city. It is in this activity where students consider how both local and national narratives of a place interact, assemble and subvert each other, and how they are one of many active forces within those relationships.

Lastly, the third and final component of this series of pedagogical activities is the final individual project, inspired by the third and final characteristic of PCRI. In this characteristic I mention the importance for students to "take a closer investigation into how the material design of a text affects a rhetor." PCRI should not only get students engaged into the rhetorical construction of their region, but also allow them to see how

137

their agency can only go so far-their messages can fall victim to rhetorical transformation once it enters into new environments or once it becomes attached to new material agents. For example, a text can have an agentive force and one's intentions can be transformed in ways unbeknown to the rhetor.

What's important here is to understand not simply the meaning of a text but the way a text is understood by its' audience. Assignment #3 harkens back to the work of both David Tell and Laura Gries. Readers are neither completely imposed upon by forces beyond their control but they are also not autonomous site of resistance, rhetorical acting against the dominate culture (Tell 229). Students should be aware that their words are powerful, and that their words can affect the rhetorical construction of a region, but that this affect may not always follow one's intentions. This understanding of rhetorical transformation is especially important as students learn to dwell in environments built through new media and technologies. Learning to dwell with new media and technologies involves a "harkening to their ontological weight and rhetorical agency" (Bay and Rickert 213). There is rhetoric produced by the media itself, whether this is a digital platform such as Facebook or a student newspaper.

So how should we go about tracing this circulation? Tell's work on Capote' *In Cold Blood* shows the connection between the agential force of a text and the construction of regional boundaries, something I think PCRI should do; however, he doesn't fully describe his methodology in detail, but only provides us with a "reading practice" in which he spends little time describing it. In thinking about a more precise methodology to help influence my third pedagogical activity, I believe Laura Gries work with the Obama Hope image (as explained earlier) works as a useful platform for a

138

methodology-one that highlights the complex and dynamic "eventfulness" of a thing as it makes its way through its rhetorical journey. Gries methodology is rather extensive for a first-year composition course but I believe a similar model can be developed by thinking about the two-step process she outlines in her Iconographic tracking. Returning to my third pedagogical activity, students now obtain a digital newspaper with various texts, images, videos etc. related to their community that they can distribute among a particular audience. Students should return to their groups and consider various communities they would like to distribute this paper too; for example another class, an administrative office at their school or an entire academic department. Each student within the group takes on a particular audience to distribute the newspaper too (so figure four different types of audiences). Each student should also have the freedom to tailor the newspaper to his or her respected audience, adding or removing content to a certain degree. Essentially this is an individual project, informed by the content built within one's group and inspired by Gries' methodology.

While Gries asks researchers to perform data collection online in order to identify various collectives that an image has been circulated to, students will essentially already have this in mind by sending it out to a particular group of people. This modification to Gries' methodology needs to happen for a FYW composition practice since the newspaper itself isn't something that has the power to go viral nor do students have the time to wait and see how far this paper circulates and produces unexpected consequences within a given community.

Before sending out the newspaper, students must articulate in a one to two page essay what their intended purpose is for their particular audience. They must also mention

what modifications they made to their groups newspaper in this essay and explain how it relates to their intended purpose. Therefore, before sending this text off into the world, students should identify what they believe the text ought to accomplish and how it may affect its readers. Moreover, students should acknowledge the medium they are using to present and distribute the information and discuss how this potentially affects its message. In other words, how does this digital platform present the arguments one is making about the community? How does attaching this document to an email affect its reader's response to the information?

Once students have finished their essays they're ready to send the newspaper out via email to their audience. Instructors should make sure students have the necessary contact information and should help them through this process. Instructors should also provide a prepared message for students to send its audience members, letting them know that this is part of a class project and that they want to investigate rhetorical circulation by having audience members read the newspaper and report back via a questionnaire or one-on-one interviews.

Once the newspaper is distributed the student should provide his or her readers with either a deadline for a questionnaire to be filled out or a date for them to participate in a short interview. This component of the project essentially looks to follow Gries' micro-scale investigative approach, using qualitative research strategies to discover the "eventfulness" of a given image or in this case, a newspaper. Instructors should help guide students towards certain questions that pertain to the human and non-human elements that attributed to the particular reading of the text. The questions should attempt to get the audience member to consider not just what he or she felt about the newspaper's

140

overall message, but also how its multimodal presentation related to their reading of the material, or how the newspaper's organization affected their interpretation of the text. Questions should also revolve around the specific person reading the newspaper; for example it would be important to know when and where the person was reading the text and potentially what type of mood they believed they were in when reading the text. These questions should lead the audience member towards inferences regarding the purpose of the newspaper; for example: now that you've read through our newspaper, what conclusions can you draw about our town? Has this newspaper helped change your mind or simply reinforce certain depictions you have of our town? Questions like this should get the reader to consider what type of purpose the text had for them while engaging with it. Like earlier pedagogical activities mentioned, instructors should guide students towards creating these questions but not enforce a set of questions on them. Based on discussions in class on rhetorical transformation and the fluidity of a rhetorical situation, students should at this point understand the objectives of the task: to trace the influence of their newspaper as it reaches different audience groups and eventually compare it to their initial intentions.

Once students have heard back from their audience, they are ready to construct the final argumentative essay. Students should review the materials they have now produced thanks to all three activities (i.e the personal depiction of their community, the newspaper produced by their group and their reflective essays, the essay describing the newspaper's intended purpose and the questionnaire or interview questions they produced for their audience members) and conceptualize an argumentative research essay regarding

their community and its representations by various groups and/or individuals. The prompt for this project could be worded as follows:

> Now that you have researched both the depictions of your community on a national, local, and even an individual scale, I wonder what you've learned about (town, city or school name). What argument can you make about (town, city or school name) that may spark your readers attention? In other words, how can you enlighten your reader on this community or University? How are you questioning or reinforcing commonplace depictions of (town or city name)? Also, don't forget to consider how our intentions as writers can potentially transform as our messages circulate through various audiences. Think about how this awareness can boost your own argument in this essay. In other words, utilize the data you collected from your audience members in activity #3 as evidence to support your thesis statement. Other evidence should include the creditable sources you included in your group projects or the empirical research you executed for your newspaper.

The major challenge students should attempt to take on is constructing a thesis statement in regards to their community while also utilizing the evidence from their previous activities, particularly the third activity involving their chosen audience members. Before writing this final writing project, students should be encourage to go back in their groups and share their findings in regards to the audience they distributed the newspaper too, collecting content that could potentially operate as evidence in their papers. It would be interesting to see the conclusions students generate once they've compared and contrasted the various audience members' responses they sent their newspapers out too.

How did each group respond to their digital newspaper and what does this tell us about the intentions as a writer? What does it tell us about the rhetorical construction of their community? Students could potentially use this evidence to solidify their argument regarding their community by drawing from a quote of one of their audience members, or this evidence could be articulated into an opposing argument, where students must find a way to work around what their particular audience members said about their community in their interviews or questionnaires. In either case, students are finding ways to be more rhetorically flexible with their collected evidence, attempting to produce a coherent argument regarding the rhetorical depictions of their town or city.

The final argumentative research essay is a way for students to assemble all of their researched materials and put together an argument regarding their town, city or school. Following the guidelines of PCRI, the research the students have gathered should provide them with enough content to enlighten their readers on their local community, allowing students to potentially question the prevailing narratives that operate within these locations. More importantly, students will be able to construct a thesis statement that is built from their own personal engagement within the community, one that develops through their interactions with both human and non-human elements within their environment. Being honest about their own impact on the process and how the process impacted them as researchers can be taught as a useful rhetorical tool within an argumentative piece.

This can be perfect for FYW students since these courses not only look to improve their writing skills, but also tend to provide students with the freedom to build new relationships at their new school and feel comfortable within their surroundings. The

sequence of the PCRI activities speaks to these objectives, attempting to promote students' rhetorical awareness, writing skills and their sense of connection to ones space, where rhetorical agency develops as students recognize their embeddedness within their locations.

Chapter Summary

In order to consider the various characteristics PCRI has to offer a composition classroom, I believe it should be deployed through a sequence of activities with each one building on the next. While these activities don't provide a solution to the limitations of critical regionalism, they offer a way to think through some of the scholarship that has surfaced since the ontological turn in composition and rhetoric and create a new opportunity for community engaged pedagogy. As I've outlined in the three activities above, PCRI can be implemented in three practices that lead up to a final research paper, incorporating the researched materials collected throughout the semester. Its deployment in the FYW composition classroom is a way to build students rhetorical flexibility, awareness and agency as writers within a specific location in the world. In doing so, students learn that that their agency as writers helps inform and is informed by the community in which they live in, where they can become empowered through both human and non-human elements that surround them and are sometimes overlooked as we past through these places. However, these objectives of PCRI are done in response to the totalizing narratives that permeate ones community and students are therefore asked to describe these universal narratives, as they create their own in response. In moving away from other compositionalists such as Bacha and Rivers, PCRI looks to improve students

understanding of their rhetorical situations but also let them know that their rhetorical

awareness can be a tool for subversion and resistance within the spaces they dwell in.

CHAPTER FIVE

POSTHUMAN CRITICAL REGIONALIST INQUIRY: FYW AT YORK COLLEGE

CUNY

Introduction

In chapter four I attempted to outline three pedagogical activities for PCRI that

could work in sequence for a FYW course. Chapter five will first demonstrate the type of

thinking a posthuman inquiry such as PCRI can potentially enact within college students

and instructors, specifically at York College CUNY in Jamaica Queens NY where I

teach. I will be presenting this in five parts. Following the PCRI guidelines outlined in

chapter three, part one and two will first attempt to identify the universal, or "cultural

narratives" that I came across regarding York University and its surrounding community,

Jamaica Queens. I'll do this with PCRI in mind, discussing these spaces as an instructor

who is interested in implementing posthuman inquiry. In part three I'll journey through

my workspace with a PCRI lens (as I would have my students do), allowing myself to ask

questions pertaining to the local and national narratives of both Queens New York and

York College. However, you'll see through this demonstration that my thinking is guided

through my actions where both action and thinking collide to determine the conclusions

drawn, opening myself up to the idea that the rhetor is constantly emerged and influenced

by his or her surroundings. My journey through my work space therefore leads me to a

spontaneous encounter with a flight simulator in my old English office, raising new

questions regarding the educational and political objectives of York College CUNY.

In theory, I am attempting to showcase that moment where the human comes in

contact with non-human objects or systems and where human agency is both constructing

and being constructed by his or her environment-what Casey Boyle has called: "betweeness." The demonstration is not meant to prove that PCRI is the perfect ecologically oriented pedagogy, but by using it as a lens instructors *and* students can potentially create a new set of questions to consider as writers in their communities-one's that are guided by posthuman inquiry. In part four and five I will present a revised syllabus of my first year writing course at York College CUNY and a set of questions I considered after thinking and acting with a PCRI lens.

As noted in my methodology section, the philosophical underpinnings of how students will think through PCRI activities, particularly the mapping portion, will be inspired by Latour's ANT, a set of principles for posthuman inquiry that helps one see new agents and considers the notion of inheritance-how we inherit trajectories "which allows for institution, or trees, or ourselves or your computer, to last"(Walsh 421). I see this notion of "inheritance" described by Latour being very similar to Heidegger's conception of "dwelling" and how individuals take (or inherit) components of a space, which in turn influences the future spaces they interpret and step into. ANT, however, is thinking through the varying human and nonhuman trajectories that influence our subjectivity within a given space, emphasizing an ontological pluralism. ANT can be a helpful set of principles that guide the type of thinking I want students to have when using PCRI activities, where assemblage thinking and ontological pluralism is emphasized.

A productive way to move from Latour's ANT to composition may be found in Steven Holmes, "Multiple Bodies, Actants, and a Composition Classroom: Actor Network Theory in Practice," Holmes turns Latour's actor-network theory (ANT) into a

composition pedagogy in order to show students the difference between explanation and description with "regards to their political agencies as writers" (421). Holmes argues that unlike composition theorist such as James Berlin, ANT can act as a "descriptive antimodology" that teaches students not to simply represent rhetorical situations through explanation and heuristic-driven critique (423). Latour has noted this as well, stating that Berlin offers a pedagogy of explanation for his students that exists within a prior epistemology, such as social-epistemic explanations of rhetoric, creating a static habit of references that fixes on generalizations of a set of objects, causal explanations and agentive relationships (*An Inquiry* 142). Berlins work essentially prioritizes the Human agent and Holmes wants to change that by having networks be composed and developed through student writers where students learn new configurations, agency, affect and connectivity.

Holmes' work showcases the importance of non-human objects by emphasizing description in his pedagogy. In following both Hawk and Shipka, Holmes sees the composition process as much more then just writing and wants to develop his "actant-pedagogy" in the absence of methods for explanation of a given political situation in order to develop description void of explanation (429). In one such example, Holmes divides students into groups and gets them to research basic facts on the Internet in regards to soda taxes and its connection to obesity, creating a typical debate in the class that revolves around individual freedom and state management. However, as Holmes notes, most of these discussions on soda tax fail to represent nonhuman relations that could potentially reshape how students respond to the soda tax debate (431). Students then seek out to discover the material role of our human bodies and soda itself in order to

find more material heuristics that reframe the debate entirely (431-432). Essentially, Holmes gets his students to research beyond the "preformed cultural narratives" and into American national health organizations in order to learn about the ontology of moderation, and how our "eating bodies" develop complex "mind-body-environment interactions" that create certain dietary practices (434). Holmes argues that this act calls students to "bare moral witness to the empirical presence of excluded actors" that may potentially help others create a more informed political consciousness (435-436). Thus, students learn to create more in depth descriptions of these debates, one's that don't ignore the explanations stemming from social-epistemic notions of rhetoric but look to go beyond by examining the material heuristics that operate within a network as well.

Holmes's work reinforces the importance of students engaging with non-human elements, and provides a useful model for pedagogies that look to utilize this engagement to counteract universal narratives like PCRI. However, my composition practice would not begin with a nationally debated topic that students may or may not negotiate with in their local communities such as soda sales tax since this is not emphasizing student discovery within their local communities nor their own potential to become politically active. I want PCRI to find a space somewhere between Holmes' project and River's project on Geocomposition, where the activity not only expresses the importance of material heuristics in order to promote a students political consciousness, but does it by connecting students to their own community and allowing them to acknowledge their own rhetorical agency within these communities. I think PCRI should teach rhetorical awareness and political engagement, activating students' interests within their surrounding environments rather then providing them with ready-made debates.

Rather then beginning with a debate on sales tax handed out by the instructor, the investigation within PCRI should begin with a local discovery for the student. While on their own private journeys within their communities, students should consider the network that helps construct the community (as you'll see through my demonstration). This of course can be built through people, sounds, histories, objects etc. Lastly, I'd ask students to reflect on this network that they created, considering the human and non-human objects that it's composed of and compare them to the universal narratives mentioned earlier. In doing so, I hope to create a community-engaged pedagogy that is inspired by posthumanists and critical regionalists theory, creating curriculum that relocates students within their embedded environments.

In moving towards this demonstration outlined earlier, I'll now discuss the context of both Jamaica Queens and York College with a PCRI lens, giving the reader some background on the region and how I believe its been rhetorically constructed. My discussion on these locations will be deployed through a first person narrative in order to provide a general description of these spaces while also finding opportunities where certain local and national narratives engage and interact with each other. I want to showcase Jamaica and York College as a compositionalists with interest in posthuman inquiry, describing them as places that are ripe for discovery for students thinking. From there I'll work through my own demonstration of a PCRI lens for students who will engage with its activities, eventually discussing new outcomes that this type of thinking helped me work towards as a scholar investigating posthuman inquiry.

Lastly, I'll provide some information regarding the goals of the English Department at York College, specifically related to its first-year writing course, English

125. I'll present a syllabus and supportive documents that are inspired through PCRI, highlighting the activities and the use of language that is tailored to the given location. The syllabus hopes to show how the deployment of PCRI can be informed by the specific location in which it is being used.

Part One: Exploring Jamaica Queens Narratives with a PCRI Lens

As you walk through the streets of Jamaica, every house seems either a store or a tavern. There are two newspapers, one by Mr. Brenton, otherwise "Dr. Franklin", a good soul; and the Long Island Farmer. Jamaica has a large, old established Academy for Boys, "Union Hall," and also an Academy for Girls … The infinitude of Jamaica stores and public houses allows an inference which is the truth, viz.: that farmers, travelers, marketmen, and other passengers on the turnpike through the village give it all its trade and retail business. It has no manufactories, and has not been what is called a "growing place" for many years, and probably will not be.

–-Walt Whitman's New York, New Amsterdam 1963

I find Whitman's take on Jamaica Queens slightly accurate but it needs some updating. Whitman's account of Jamaica as a transportation hub for "farmers, travelers and marketmen" isn't to far off even today. The town of Jamaica was settled in the late 17th century and was incorporated by New York City in 1898, dissolving its township but keeping the name. It resides just north of the New York Cities largest airport, John F Kennedy International Airport, and is a central transfer point for the Long Island Railroad, which is the busiest commuter railroad in North America (Dickens). One of its most bustling transportation hubs is Jamaica Center where two subway lines, both the E and the F train meet as well as three major avenues: Jamaica Avenue, Archer Avenue and Sutphin Boulevard. It is here where various government agencies and businesses congregate; one building in particular, One Jamaica Center, houses a federal office

building, a theatre complex and a shopping mall. The junction sits right outside the walls

of York College where I work each day.

Whitman however underestimated this location with his suggestion that it is not a

"growing place." Many of the regional as well as national narratives regarding Jamaica

Queens that I have come across touch upon its potential for economic and residential

growth. While economic development was stymied through most of the early 20th

century, developers and businesses have recently grown interested in this area of New

York, particularly as crime rates continue to dwindle. The mixed-used commercial center

of One Jamaica Center as well as the creation of Jamaica Station, a transportation hub

that connects the New York Subway the Long Island Railroad and the AirtTraim to JFK,

highlighted new development projects in the early 2000's. With impressive transportation

in and out of the city, Jamaica has recently caught the attention of hotel and condo

developers. One such project entitled The Crossing at Jamaica Station, will be a 26-story

tower built at a busy intersection near JFK airport that will have 539-mixed income

apartments, incorporating retail and community spaces within the building's design

(Walker). As recently as July 2017, the Governor of New York City earmarked ten

million dollars to improve Jamaica's downtown, focusing on business, education,

technology and job training. Cuomo stated that "the critical investment in Jamaica's

downtown will help it grow into a major economic hub that boosts small businesses,

expands, economic opportunity for residents and draws new residents and visitors into

the community" (Gannon). With its proximity to downtown Manhattan, its access to

transportation and its decreasing crime rate, Jamaica is now becoming the next space

developers are pointing to for a word many locals in New York hate: gentrification. As I

read through these local depictions I wonder what other stories are not being told from the various enclaves that operate within Jamaica-is there a narrative that speaks to something outside of "growth," "expansion," and "potential?"

Along with Jamaica's recent surge in development and its reputation as a transportation hub, the area has become one of New York Cities' most diverse communities. As recently as 2014, Queens county itself was noted as the third most diverse county in the country, housing a variation of African American, Latino, Caucasian, Native American and Asian American ethnicities (Narula). You could say Jamaica is a large reason why. Various Hispanic and West Indian ethnic groups have flocked to this location since the 1990's. Jamaica has also seen a large growth in its Bangladeshi-American population thanks in part to the large Jamaica Muslim Center, an establishment that houses a Mosque, a school and a function area for religious gatherings. Many Bangladeshi stores and restaurants line 167th and 168th streets, not to far from a thriving Sri Lankan community that centers alongside Hillside Avenue, one of many growing African-American populations in Jamaica. A quick walk down Jamaica Avenue and I immediately notice this unique mixture of Latino, African-American and Muslim populations, all doing their part in expanding the cultural fabric of Jamaica Queens. One can immediately witness the impact of these various cultures through the variety of restaurants on Jamaica Avenue alone. A short walk between 150th street and 172nd on Jamaica Avenue and you'll find Puerto Rican, Dominican, Sri Lankan, Chinese, and Jamaican restaurants, along side a pizza shop. Jamaica then is not simply a story now about transportation or economic expansion, but a story about cultural and theological complexities all finding a home within a small northern area of Queens. How does this

story come in contact with the narratives regarding gentrification? Where could one start to find this out?

The history of Jamaica Queens is not completely buried under the waves of new construction and shifting communities and can still be spotted in various landmarks around the region. One location being King Manor which resides on Jamaica Avenue. Once the home to Rufus King, an original signer of the U.S Constitution, King Manor is now a historically landmarked estate where people can come and enjoy its park and see the Mr. King's home. While also being the U.S ambassador to Great Britain in the late 18th century as well as a senate member and a presidential nominee in the early 19th century, Rufus King became a spoken critic of slavery 43 years before the Emancipation proclamation ("The King Family"). He even created provisions to the 1785 Northwest Ordinance that stopped the growth of slavery into the Northwest Territory (Purvis). I've walked by his mansion a few times on the way to work and assumed King held the typical values of your standard American colonialist of the time. It's interesting to think about his legacy as an early anti-slave political figure and the community that surrounds his estate-a majority of which come from Africa. Jamaica's history may be unique in this way and yet this story seems lost in the shadows of more recent discussions regarding real estate expansion and decreased murder rates.

Along with Kings Manor there is the Jamaica Chamber of Commerce Building, Jamaica Savings Bank, and J Kurtz and Sons Store listed as three notable historically landmarked commercial buildings in Jamaica, further justifying the notion that Jamaica has been a center of commerce for decades. These historical locations are clustered among Sri Lankan shops, African-American hairdressers and Spanish-American

154

restaurants, seamlessly integrating the old with the new and making for a very vibrant and unique space. The culture you will find then in Jamaica is one that changes from block to block, where I can travel from the West Indies to Bangladesh in under a mile, or be transported to the eighteenth century among its historical parks and city landmarks. Jamaica's history is not only represented in texts accessible through local libraries or on the Internet, but also on the very streets one walks to work, seen on the buildings and objects that help construct what we now know as Jamaica. These things can potentially help rhetorically reconstruct a different depiction of Jamaica if only their agency was noticed and discussed by those who witness it on a daily basis.

I mention all this because Jamaica to me seems like a place ripe for discovery for students at York College CUNY who are deploying PCRI. Its history, culture, demographics and design all help to develop a very unique and often misunderstood place in New York City. After performing some basic research into Jamaica Queens I was quickly bombarded with news articles describing its potential for economic opportunity and the most recent acquisitions in the area by real estate developers, as well as the various assaults and murders that have happened recently in the area. These articles help paint the story that you read about not just in Jamaica but in many "expanding" neighborhoods in around New York City like Harlem or Brooklyn. In these spaces much of the discussion centers on a rejuvenated community, once riddle by crime and drugs but is slowly building its way back thanks to the help of outsiders seeking real estate opportunity within the area.

This is very similar to how Jeff Rice's describes Detroit's "totalizing narrative," where all he read about in regards to Detroit were stories that "often fluctuate between

155

demolishments of some sort and rejuvenation as a response" (21). Rice believed that these consistent narratives act as controlling mechanisms for how we understand the Detroit's positioning within American culture, working as "circulated, yet fixed topoi" that create a very static version of the city spaces (21). Like Rice, I want to have students understand and locate these "fixed topoi" in order to work in and around them when describing Jamaica Queens. Rice argues that to work within the networked systems that create a place it is important to understand the topoi, but it is also important to produce new threads of information that people do not necessarily find in the papers (24). Jamaica is certainly a region that suffers and continues to suffer from crime while also becoming a recent talking point for real estate developers, but these are certainly not the only characteristics we can find about this area of the world. If students were to spend some time walking down Jamaica Avenue, listening to lectures given at the Muslim Center or visiting Kings Manor, I wonder what other narratives about their community they could find?

In looking at my description of Jamaica Queens more closely, I can already see spaces where students could investigate and locate different yet important local narratives. In a culturally diverse space such as Jamaica, I wonder how these various enclaves of ethnicities are responding to its ever-changing landscape? I wonder what it must be like to have a growing Bangladeshian-muslim community within a place that has historically been known to house many Christian communities? I also wonder about Kings Manor, a house once owned by the anti-slave politician, Rufus King, now residing in a predominately African-American Community. How has this historical narrative come into contact with recent national and local discussions on immigration reform?

156

Lastly, every day I walk by the famous Sidewalk Clock in Jamaica Center built in the late 19th century and I wonder what it now means to this ever-expanding community, one that has left its previous demographic landscape behind yet has kept some of its artifacts? These objects, communities and places are all living and acting in Jamaica and yet most of what my students hear about is related to real estate expansion and the murder rate. As you'll note later in the chapter, I will hope to deploy PCRI as a way to get students thinking not only about their own environment, but how to emerge themselves within its landscape to become more rhetorically aware and improve their abilities to change or at least subvert its totalizing narratives.

Part Two: Exploring York College CUNY Narratives with a PCRI Lens

Before discussing some of the policies and objectives of the FYW program at York College, I'd like to begin by talking about the school in general and its relation to the community. As described in the section above, outside the walls of the school students are exposed to an environment that can both counteract or reinforce the typical topoi of Jamaica Queens. Part of PCRI is to get students to recognize these universal characteristics of Jamaica but also find the opportunity to write their own stories on their community. However, students should also recognize that their university is an institution within the community that rhetorically acts and can be shaped by those who, as Bacha has argued, are "stake holders" within that institution. In "The Physical Mundane as Topos: Walking/Dwelling Using as Rhetorical Invention," Bacha's mission was to get students to locate themselves as stake holders in the university by "immersing themselves in the process of discovery," getting them out of the classroom and locating the mundane, physical features that they and all other stakeholders share and experience (278).

Students could learn how mundane artifacts support and relate to much larger issues, engaging them in a process that could increase their rhetorical agency and provide them with material for a persuasive essay (286).

Bacha's approach to the physical spaces of our universities got me thinking about my own university and seeing how it can not only service to improve students rhetorical agency, but do so in a way that gets them engaging with the narratives, issues and topics in and around their communal spaces. In other words, how could students connect to the "mundane artifacts" of their university to help reshape the universal narratives of York College? Can students engage with their universities rhetorical situation through PCRI in order to shape its rhetorical message out into the community? My pedagogical activities for PCRI could have two options: students could either go out into the streets of Jamaica to conduct their research or they could stay within the university and see how York College operates as a rhetorical object.

First, I wanted to know if there were any wide ranging, "totalizing narratives" that are circulating about York College that students would perhaps stumble upon during their investigation. In other words, if I had to research the narratives circulating within York College in order to participate in my PCRI activities, where would I begin looking and what sort of spaces would I find to enter into York College's rhetorical construction? I started looking into the history of York College by first visiting its home page and discovered that the school was commissioned by The City University of New York in 1966 to serve the cities growing student population (History). The university opened its doors in Bayside Queens in 1967 but eventually moved to Jamaica in 1968 where it nearly closed its doors later that year due to the fiscal crisis of the nineteen seventies;

however, local business and residents of Jamaica pressured CUNY to keep the universities' doors open, and their efforts succeed in getting the CUNY board to reaffirm its presence in Jamaica and authorize addition construction in 1978 (History). The University website provides little on this local effort to keep the school functioning in Jamaica back in the 1980's, but I wonder how this small movement took shape, what were some of the arguments being developed by community organizations and are they still relevant today when discussing the relationship between York College and the community its situated in?

After their success, York College began building its unique version of what they describe as a Liberal Arts College. According to the website, since York College CUNY was built in Jamaica in 1980 it began expansive curriculum development. While "York maintained an emphasis on the liberal arts," it began to offer majors in health professions, eventually building a Health and Physical Education facility in the 1990's. As an instructor at York College I have found many of the students are studying something related to healthcare, where the schools most notable majors are Nursing, Occupational Therapy, Physical Assistant or Public Health. On the home page of The School of Health Sciences and Professional Programs, it lists a number of "Distinct Academic Programs" that York College have developed for New York City students seeking a unique degree in health professional services. For example, its four-year generic nursing program is the only one of its kind in the entire Borough of Queens, New York.

The unique School of Health Sciences and Professional Programs has generated a lot of attraction for the school, creating the second largest undergraduate awards in the 2014-2015 semester ("Degrees and Majors Offered"). Close behind its health services

159

program is York College's business, management and marketing majors who received 180 undergraduate awards in 2014-2015 ("Degrees and Majors Offered"). The only school to out perform these two disciplines was York's Psychology Department who had 247 graduates in 2014-2015 ("Degrees and Majors Offered").

All these programs rely on York to provide high quality science and math classes which many of the students take consistently throughout the semester. It is of no surprise then that when you visit its "news" section on its website, one will find various acclimations revolving around its Math and Science Departments. For example, York College is especially known for its flagship MUREP project (Minority University Research and Education Project), which has been providing outreach to the local high school community, servicing students from grades 1st-10th grade to participate in science, engineering, mathematics and aerospace projects. It recently celebrated having 20,000 participants thus far and was featured on a local New York City newscaster, New York One ("York College CUNY"). Another program that is directly attached to York College's focus on math and science is The CUNY Aviation Institute that is housed at York College. Established in 2003, this institute is the only one of its kind in the CUNY system and one of the most notable programs at York, preparing students within a rapidly changing aviation industry where they learn the business, policies and operations within the aviation discipline. In 2013, Governor Cuomo made headlines by naming York College as one of the havens within the state where new and high tech business could work tax-free for the next ten years (Bockmann). The college envisions an incubator on campus where companies could set up shop and "feed off the school's intellectual capital" (Bockmann). The CUNY Aviation Institute and York's partnership with the U.S

Food and Drug Administration were referenced as key reasons behind this particular partnership.

I have experienced the growth of York College's CUNY Aviation Institute first hand. At the beginning of my fall 2017 semester at York College I was surprised to learn that our adjunct office was transformed into a space to house the new flight simulator for students at The CUNY Aviation Institute. The door's locks were changed without notice and adjuncts were relocated to an office downstairs on the basement level.

While this discovery was pretty depressing to see as an adjunct, it offered an unique opportunity for my dissertation. Below are my observations after meeting the flight simulator for the first time at York College, demonstrating the type of posthuman inquiry I would like my students to consider when physically patrolling their campuses and communities during their PCRI activities. A PCRI lens should therefore not only help instructors question and think through their communities local and national narratives (as noted earlier in this chapter), but be deployed by students working through these activities, examining human and non-human elements as co-creators in their rhetorical construction of the community.

Part Three: Navigating York College with a PCRI Lens

The first time I peeked into my old office window, all I could see was a white steal structure taking up one third of an empty room; the rest of the space was completely disserted of any objects. I've seen simulators shaped like the nose of a plane before but this one had no real shape to describe-if I wasn't told that it was a simulator I wouldn't have guest it by its presence. There was no wording, no numbers on the object, just a coat of pure white paint covering the simulator. The object seemed abstract and cold but

above all: distant. The door to this space was usually open and adjuncts walked in and out of it freely, using its computers and printing services so seamlessly that I doubt anyone ever thought about how comfortable one was in this space and around its non-human elements. From the outside looking in, I couldn't recognize this space and its new occupant. I couldn't help but think that this is what one must feel like peeking into an unknown future, one that potentially locks you out. The object not only made me feel like I was far away from it but that this feeling was intentional, as if only a certain type of human could feel connected to this object and this space and I certainly was not one of them.

For me, the object seemed to be a direct link to one of the more totalizing narratives that is currently shaping York College and one that I perpetually noticed in my research as described above: The college was seeking and promoting its growth in more professionally successful fields such as science, math, healthcare, technology. The growth of STEM programs is not simply a York College story but a story spanning nationwide, where STEM degrees have increased at the bachelors, masters and doctoral levels between 2004 and 2014 (Bidwell). As Higher Education in our country has shifted its focus into more practical disciplines, many of citizens should not be surprised to notice that science and engineering bachelor degrees have grown twice as fast as non-science and engineering disciplines between 2009 and 2013 (Bidwell). It is obvious that York College wants to perpetually align itself with this national narrative by deploying its topoi within its local and national news stories; for me, the simulator in the office was an object that on the surface, simply reinforced this national narrative to me.

But does this have to be the case? I am reminded of Jeff Rice's arguments that note how one should work through and within the totalizing narratives that construct a place in order to subvert them. When we recognize these narratives, only then can we look to create something different. Yes, one of York College's most popular rhetorical representations is its promotion of STEM programs in its university and this isn't a bad thing, but it's also not the only story about the university to be told. Indeed, the simulator doesn't have to only be presenting this story to me-the object could work to not only reinforce this narrative but to get me to think about other narratives within York College. I began to wonder: how are my immediate feelings toward this object helping me reconsider the common narrative this object tends to represent? What sort of new discoveries could the affect of this object lead me towards? Lingering in that shared moment between me and this giant, strange, white object, I began to listen to new possibilities that were emerging from this space and attempted to attune myself to its ecological landscape.

The Flight Simulator: An Object for Further Discovery

It is here where I think a PCRI lens can work to challenge universal narratives (such as the one mentioned in regards to York College) by thinking about human as well as non-human elements in our rhetorical situations, thereby building students political consciousness. But how? Thinking back to Steven Holmes arguments regarding Actor Network Theory in rhetorical analysis, it is important to bear witness to more excluded actors in order to develop a better-informed political consciousness. For me, this rhetorical analysis began when I bore witness to the flight simulator that I stumbled into when revisiting my old office.

For this particular example, I would then want to think about this simulator in a different way, knowing that I don't have to latch onto the typical "cultural narratives" in order to describe and explain this actor now present in my former office-the conversation can take another direction. The feelings of distance and exclusion I get in the presence of the simulator are certainly helping to motivate me away from the universal narratives associated with this technology, and by paying closer attention to this visceral reaction I can get myself to ask new questions regarding the simulator-one's that recreate its story.

For example, I wonder how our bodies biologically respond to a flight simulator? How are humans currently reflecting and responding to simulation technology in order to improve it or make it more realistic? Through a quick Google search, I stumble across the book *Human Factors in Simulation and Training* by Peter A. Hancock and Dennis A. Vincenzi that addresses how human factors can improve, generate or facilitate simulation that improves training or evaluation (ix). I wonder how our current flight simulator stacks up to the theoretical discussions of Hancock and Vincenzi and weather this particular model is equip to simulate the necessary demands of flying a commercial jet according to these experts? How is the human body responding to the simulator verses flying an actual plane and can we get these experiences to resemble each other more closer? More importantly, if I was going to write about this topic, I wonder how thinking about the simulator in a more material way can address my political concerns regarding the English adjunct community at York College?

What I don't want to do is move from one typical story on higher education to another. Initially, the flight simulator now sitting in the former English adjunct office seems to be a perfect example to discuss a typical "cultural narrative" circulating around

164

York College and arguably the entire country: adjunct communities in the United States are being exploited while universities seek to promote and bulk up the budgets of their more prominent and demanding disciplines such as math, science, and technology. I could deploy the typical language surrounding the "exploited adjunct" to connect to this topoi or I could go a different route. By first identifying these universal narratives and then looking to build a description that attempts to navigate around them, I can arguably enter into the conversation through a different opening, adding a new wrinkle to the rhetorical construction of York College. The story I want to tell about the simulator can be based on a materialistic investigation; one that initially avoids politics all together. I could begin with thinking about both machines-the human and the simulator-and consider their affect on one another, creating something similar to what Holmes described in his depiction of the "eating body." Maybe there is a story regarding the limitations of flight simulators for aviation students that needs to be discussed, assisted by the scholarship of writers such as Hancock and Vincenzi? Such a description could be used to make a new argument about the English department or York College, or it could be developed as a persuasive tool that helps me reenter this political conversation in a new way. In listening to our more visceral responses as we enter a space, or paying attention the material components within a space, students can potentially find avenues towards new research questions, ones that reinforce, question or work through the universal narratives within their communities.

In digressing into my flight simulator example, my goal is to emphasize the thinking-process that PCRI activities can lead students into as they navigate the activities in the composition curriculum. Like all universities, York College has rhetorically

constructed a set of universal narratives that run through many of its promotional

material, taking up all the air in the room. Like Holmes, I want to show the students that

through their writing and interaction within their locations they can become more capable

rhetorical agents, ones that not only contribute to the rhetorical construction of their

schools or communities, but do so in a way that pushes up against the all-encompassing

universal narratives within these spaces.

Part Four: The English Department at York College: My Syllabus

If PCRI activities look to deploy this type of thinking then how can it materialize

itself within a syllabus? What would this look like? Like many English Departments,

York College has a composition sequence of two FYW courses, ENG 125 and ENG 126.

English 125 is designed to introduce students to academic reading and writing practices

such as close reading, textual analysis, writing and revision. Students are taught the

rhetorical modes of expository, analytical and academic texts while also being introduced

to college level research. It is in ENG 125 when students begin to formulating

argumentative essays, beginning with an assignment that only requires their opinion on a

text and eventually moving towards a five-page, argumentative essay that requires three

secondary sources. These sources are provided to the student and while students are

introduced to research language such as primary and secondary sources, APA and MLA

format, and synthesizing, they are not required to construct a final research paper. Certain

instructors require them to build an annotated bibliography in this course, but this is

optional. Eventually students graduate to ENG 126, Composition II: Writing about

Literature, where they practice close reading and analysis as it relates to poetry and short

166

fiction. It is in this course where student not only review their research skills, but create a final research paper revolving around some of the literature they read in class.

My vision for PCRI would focus on ENG 125 since I believe it could operate as a way to not only reach its course objectives but do so in a more compelling way, one that creates more rhetorical awareness for the students and engages them within their Jamaica Queens Community. The Objectives outlined on a standard ENG 125 syllabus are as follows:

- Read and listen critically and analytically, including identifying an argument's major assumptions and assertions and evaluating its supporting evidence.
- Write clearly and coherently in varied, academic formats (such as formal essays, research papers, and reports) using Standard English and appropriate technology to critique and improve one's own and others' texts.
- Demonstrate research skills using appropriate technology, including gathering, evaluating, and synthesizing primary and secondary sources.
- Support a thesis with well-reasoned arguments, and communicate persuasively across a variety of contexts, purposes, audiences, and media.
- Formulate original ideas and relate them to the ideas of others by employing the conventions of ethical attribution and citation.

I will look to deploy the same objectives in my revised, PCRI syllabus for this course, describing how each activity connects to these objectives within the syllabus itself. In our current ENG 125 syllabus', instructors are required to assign three high-stakes writing assignments that break down as follows:

167

1. Paper #1 (3-4 pages) 15%

2. Paper #2 (3-4 pages) 20%

3. Paper #3 (4-6 pages) 30%

As students move from paper one to paper three they are required to learn new additional rhetorical modes for academic writing so that by the time they reach paper #3 they are constructing topic sentences and thesis statements, synthesizing, and drafting. Students are brought right up to the point of college-level research that they will eventually complete in ENG 126.

In considering both the objectives of the course and its required writing assignments, I'll present a revised, PCRI version of this syllabus below. In it I will look to provide detail on how PCRI activities can align themselves with a First Year Writing Course like the one depicted at York College. Many FYW courses want to get students feet wet in academic discourse while also making sure they pick up particular rhetoric codes that they'll need to utilize in their future writing courses. More importantly however, first-year writing has operated as a resource for retention efforts within a University that is focused on the academic success of its students (P.R Powell 43). FYW is not only universally experienced by college students in this country, but it's also a place where students can establish connections and partnerships that most other entry-level courses are not (Redding Lehaie and Bush 18). I find this to be true for most FYW courses I walk into, yet I am reminded of Laura Julier's description in the article "Community-Engaged Pedagogies" of the struggles she finds when teaching a first-year writing course:

In the first-year writing curricula in which I'd previously taught, motivating

students to see the course and assignments as anything other than a pesky

requirement was a persistent challenge…My experience, however, raised more

questions than I had anticipated and forced me back upon the same questions

which any writing program must answer: What educational goals are served when

we choose to teach writing by creating opportunities to engage and partner with

various communities in different ways." (Julier, Livingston and Goldblatt 59)

I think FYW can provide a fantastic space for students to build relationships and get

students use to academia, but getting them attracted to the "pesky requirements," such as

a series of detached essay assignments, can be challenging. Extending student

partnerships into community-based connections, ones that work in and outside the

classroom, and aligning those with each writing activity could serve as a solution to

getting students attracted to the curriculum. However, as Julier notes, instructors should

know how these partnerships and writing activities are related to educational goals.

In this light, PCRI should reshape York College's ENG 125 syllabus in order to

attract students to their writing assignments while also fostering deeper connections in

and outside of the classroom. These connections are driven by a deeper sense of

rhetorical awareness, where students go out into their community in order to discover

more tools for the rhetorical reconstruction of their given location. As we will see, PCRI

activities can not only follow the given objectives of a FYW course but also establish a

curriculum that gets students engaged in their place of education and enhance their

rhetorical agency. Below you will find a revised ENG 125 syllabus that I created that

deploys the PCRI activities that I described in chapter four while also connecting back to

the objectives mentions in the above paragraph. This is the standard syllabus I have been

using in the past with additions added in bold to reshape the course around my PCRI

activities.

The ENG 125 Syllabus

Department of English   Brent Lucia
ENG 125: MN3 Regular   Email: blucia18@gmail.com
York College/CUNY
Office Hrs: Rm-2B09, T,12-1pm
FALL 2016

<div align="center">

Course Outline

English 125

Composition I: Introduction to College Writing: **Writing into your Community**

ROOM:Acad Core 2A08: 10am-11:50am

</div>

Course Description:

ENG125 Composition I: Introduction to College Writing. This course introduces students to academic reading and writing practices and strategies through close reading, textual analysis, writing, and revision. Focusing primarily on expository, analytical, and academic texts, students develop their critical thinking skills and are introduced to the fundamentals of college-level research. **Students will achieve these goals while engaging with their communities and becoming rhetorical agents within the places they live, work and study.**

What does it mean to write into my community?

While providing essential reading and writing skills for incoming freshman, this course will also give you the opportunity to learn about and question the many stories that help assemble our representations of Jamaica Queens. You'll learn that writing is not simply a skill, but a mode of inquiry that can help you design, learn about and subvert the many prevailing narratives that help create our depiction of Jamaica. You'll also learn that in utilizing writing as inquiry, writers can compose their arguments by considering all the people, places, and objects that surround them during this inquiry process. As members of this diverse and unique location on Earth, we have the power to write or rewrite its story for a wide range of audiences

and do so through the <u>mediated performance</u> of writing.

Learning Objectives

- Read and listen critically and analytically, including identifying an argument's major assumptions and assertions and evaluating its supporting evidence.
- Write clearly and coherently in varied, academic formats (such as formal essays, research papers, and reports) using Standard English and appropriate technology to critique and improve one's own and others' texts.
- Demonstrate research skills using appropriate technology, including gathering, evaluating, and synthesizing primary and secondary sources.
- Support a thesis with well-reasoned arguments, and communicate persuasively across a variety of contexts, purposes, audiences, and media.
- Formulate original ideas and relate them to the ideas of others by employing the conventions of ethical attribution and citation.
- **Learn about Jamaica Queens and become an informed, rhetorical agent within your community.**

Required Texts

Comley, Nancy R., David Hamilton, Carl H. Klaus, Robert Scholes, Nancy Sommers and Jason Tougaw. *Fields of Reading.* 10th edition. (Boston: Bedford St. Martins, 2012

Grading:

Final grades ranging from A to F will be based upon completion of all course requirements (writing and reading assignments, class participation and attendance) and the Final Examination. The three formal papers will make up the bulk of your grade, as outlined below:

Assignment   Percentage of final grade

1. Assignment #1 (3-4 pages)   15%
2. Assignment #2 (3-4 pages)   25%
3. Assignment #3 (5-7 pages)   30%
4. Audience Survey/Response   10%
5. Department Final Exam   10%
6. Homework, Quizzes, Attendance and Participation, and In-class writing 10%

Assignment #1-Compare/Contrast Essay: After practicing both descriptive and reflective essay writing, you will be asked to go out into your community and observe the sights, sounds, feelings, memories, people and things that create your immediate surroundings. This description will be compared to some common assumptions regarding Jamaica Queens that we have discussed in class, leading to

compare and contrast paper that details what you have observed in relation to our commonplace depictions of Jamaica.

Assignment #2- Group Project (Presentation-Newspaper-Reflection piece) Your second assignment will be a compilation of writings that you co-construct with your group along with a group presentation. Here you will act as a local reporter, investigating the elements that make up your local community and/or school and developing a newspaper via Google Docs. Eventually you will present this material and write a reflection piece on your project. More details will be outlined for you in the assignment sheet.

Assignment #3-The Argumentative Essay: The two earlier assignments along with your Audience Survey/Response (more on this during the semester) will serve as evidence for an argumentative paper you will construct regarding Jamaica Queens. Here you will learn and practice the rhetorical modes of an argumentative essay while engaging with the rhetorical constructions of your immediate environment.

Note: Formal assignments that do not meet the assignment requirements will receive a zero (0) grade.

Attendance Policy:

Your success in this class depends on regular and punctual attendance. The English Department's policy for multiple section courses such as this one is:

- Students in classes that meet twice a week may miss no more than five (5) sessions. Six (6) absences are grounds for failure.
- Missing 15 minutes of class—arriving late, departing early, or leaving during class– counts as half an absence.

Classroom Courtesy

Please arrive on time and stay in the room throughout the entire class period. If you must receive a phone call, please quietly take the call outside. Do not text in class.

Communication

The best way to reach me is via email. I will try to respond in 24 hours; occasionally it may take a little longer. I highly recommend using your York email address since Blackboard sends emails to York College email addresses, so you will miss out on a lot if you don't check this email address.

Information about Assignments

All assignments are due at the beginning of class. They should be appropriately printed and stapled. Anyone who is missing from the beginning of class, or leaves class to go and print an assignment, will be marked late. **Do your printing before class starts.**

No Late Assignments

I will not accept late assignments, except due to *extenuating circumstances*. You must tell me about any problems that you are having ***before*** the assignment is due. I do give extensions under some circumstances; I do **not** give extensions when they are requested after the assignment is due. If you know that you will miss a class, please email me your work, at blucia@york.cuny.edu, before the beginning of class. Work that is submitted via email after class starts will not be considered submitted.

Format

All formal assignments must be submitted in a typed-document. I will accept documents in a .doc or docx. Many PCs come with Microsoft Works or Word installed. **I cannot read .wps files.**

Academic Integrity Statement

A violation of academic integrity is any instance when a student attempts to pass off someone else's words or ideas as their own, *no matter where s/he obtained those words or ideas*, and no matter where these ideas are presented. We practice using quotation and citation in this course so you can benefit from others' ideas, while attributing them appropriately. There is nothing wrong with representing someone else's ideas in your work; you just have to give them credit. Additionally, there is nothing wrong with getting help on an assignment, but the final product must be predominantly the result of your own work. All academic integrity violations in English 125 will result in an F (zero) on the assignment, and/or a failing grade in the course, and/or referral to York College's Academic Integrity officer.

York College gives four definitions of types of academic integrity violation (these definitions can be found in the York College policy on academic integrity, which I have linked to below):

- Cheating: Cheating is the unauthorized use or attempted use of material, information, notes, study aids, devices or communication during an academic exercise.
- Plagiarism**:** Plagiarism is the act of presenting another person's ideas, research or writings as your own.
- Obtaining Unfair Advantage**:** Obtaining Unfair Advantage is any activity that intentionally or unintentionally gives a student an unfair advantage in his/her academic work over another student.
- Falsification of Records and Official Documents

York College's policies and procedures concerning academic integrity can be found here:

For more information about plagiarism, see the description in the York College Bulletin. http://york.cuny.edu/produce-and-print/contents/bulletin and Purdue University's Online Writing Lab resource, "Avoiding Plagiarism," http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/research/r_plagiar.html

York College Resources

Computers with word processing software and Internet access are available in the library and in computer labs.

York College Library**:** http://york.cuny.edu/library

York College Computer Labs: http://york.cuny.edu/it/acet/computer-labs

York College Writing Center: http://york.cuny.edu/student/writing-center

Located in the Academic Core 1C18, The Writing Center assists students with writing skills. The Center offers scheduled tutoring, drop-in tutoring and workshops. For more information, stop by, call (718) 262-2494, or check the Writing Center Website.

English as Second Language (ESL) Tutoring Center

Tutoring is available for ESL students in Academic Core 3C08. Call (718) 262-2831 for schedule.

Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities may contact the STAR Program to learn about and gain access to resources available to them at the college. See their website at http://www.york.cuny.edu/student-development/star for more details.

Review of Syllabus. In the above example I choose to keep the changes to my original

ENG 125 syllabus as minimal and as straight forward as possible in order to align any

changes with the original objectives of the English Department. Keeping in mind that my

audiences are my students and my colleagues at York College, I purposively avoid

deploying words like "Posthuman Critical Regionalist Inquiry" "critical regionalism" and

"rhetorical ontology" and instead opt for the phrases like "writing into the community" and "writing as inquiry." I do so in order to avoid having students become lost in the language of the syllabus and to avoid having my colleagues question its terminology and purpose. I also simply focus on the community as Jamaica Queens but this doesn't have to be the case-one could argue that the community is York College or New York City. I believe choosing one of the students would work best in order to avoid confusion. The language presents a community-engaged pedagogical model for the composition course, which I believe is more audience friendly. However, the PCRI activates that I outlined within the dissertation are operating as the three main assignments in the course.

While PCRI can certainly be considered a community-engaged pedagogy it attempts to place emphasis on *how* human subjects consider both human and non-human elements to compose and become rhetorical agents within their communities. Thus, in my early description of "what does it mean to write into my community" you'll notice my attempt to define writing as a skill and also a mode of inquiry, one that emerges from "people places and objects." I want to stress the act of writing as a "mediated performance;" something that one doesn't construct simply through one's own mind and a pen, but with the help of one's embedded environment-one's surrounding network of "people, places and objects." The term "writing into my community" also suggests agency on the part of the student writer, one who uses this new understanding of writing to impact and potentially change the rhetorical construction of their region.

The three assignments described in bold lettering follow the three PCRI assignments outlined in chapter four. I attempt here to describe them in brief, knowing I will be going over all this information in more detail within the classroom. My

175

descriptions attempt to showcase the sequence that these three activities follow and my goal here is to remind students that from the beginning of the class, their writings will help produce or even provide evidence for future writings within the class. Instructors could consider a portfolio for this type of class and grade its compilation separately in order to keep students from throwing away their collection of writings. In any case, students need to be made aware that each piece of work they create-from the reflection papers to their presentation work-can become useful for their final argumentative paper.

My sample syllabus is meant to show how a typical FYW course can be transformed by PCRI activities and still follow its original objectives. FYW should introduce students to academic writing and teach them the rhetorical codes that help compile the type of college writing they'll see throughout their lives as students. However, FYW has also become a universal course in most universities that helps students build relationships and become comfortable in their Universities while also providing writing instructor that reaches outside the college walls to promote writing in ones professional or social life. In thinking about these characteristics of FYW, PCRI can provide activities in a composition class that not only get students practicing academic writing, but also connecting them with their communities and getting them to learn how improved rhetorical awareness helps a writer become a better equip rhetorical agent, one that can "write themselves into a community."

Part Five: Questions after Thinking Through PCRI

The first three parts of my chapter five attempt to operate as an demonstration of the type of thinking PCRI can hopefully inspire for both instructors and students participating in its activities. Parts four and five of chapter five showcase the type of

responses that can come from enacting PCRI: a revised syllabus or a set of questions for further research. As noted earlier in this dissertation, I did not attend to provide answers for compositionalists who are thinking about larger theoretical questions concerning posthumanism and composition theory, but rather use these questions to guide my thinking towards PCRI and hopefully generate new questions for compositionalists to consider. After working through PCRI as a lens for both the instructor looking to deploy it in their course and as a student who will engage with PCRI activities, I have more concerns regarding this project:

- For instructors who are committed to deploying PCRI should they investigate their schools universal narratives first (like I did here) or should this be a shared-discovery that both student/teacher go through together?

- If the instructor examines these universal narratives first, how should they share their research to the class, before or after the students do their search? Should it be presented to the entire class at some point or only shared for students who are struggling to find a universal narrative in their community?

- In thinking about my university and its surrounding community, how will students mostly investigate the universal narratives in their community? Through a library database? Interviews? Google searches? How does this affect the results?

- What type of questions within a PCRI prompt will get students to think about their environment in the way outlined in chapter five? Does this change depending on the context or the type of student, how so?

- How "posthuman" is this type of inquiry? In getting students to acknowledge and reflect on their emergent situatedness within a specific rhetorical context, can students' *actually* acquire this type of thinking for future occasions?

- Should deploying posthumanism in the composition classroom remove all humancentric pedagogy or simply push back on certain humancentric positions in the course's curriculum?

- How should instructors measure the benefits of posthuman inquiry in the composition classroom? Can this be researched?

These questions developed as I was writing through and editing chapter five. Many questions revolve around specifically deploying PCRI while others consider the limitations of posthumanism in the composition classroom. I hope that instructors consider these concerns when either working with PCRI or developing their own posthuman composition pedagogy.

Conclusion

Compositionalists are finding new ways to engage students with their local regions and get them excited about rhetorical invention through understanding composition as a mediated practice. Within this scholarship, I believe there is space to create a composition practice informed by posthumanism and critical regionalists theory that's designed to get students interested in the rhetorical construction of these regions. Students can take part in this construction, subverting universal narratives of their environments and questioning the prevailing topoi that outsiders look towards when they think of places like Jamaica Queens or York College. Compositionalists have argued for

178

the importance of getting students more aware of their embedded environments, yet I believe this awareness can empower students to take political action within their communities by becoming better informed and more sensitive rhetorical agents. PCRI can hopefully work as a vehicle for these objectives and get students to see how their voices are impactful and necessary within their towns, cities or schools.

Works Cited

Ackerman, John. "The Space for Rhetoric in Everyday Life." *Towards a Rhetoric of Everyday Life: New Directions in Research and Writing, Text and Discourse,* edited by Martin Nystrand and John Duffy, University of Wisconsin, 2003, pp. 84-115.

Alexis, Cydney. "The Material Culture of Writing: Objects, Habitats and Identities in Practice." *Rhetoric Through Everyday Things,* edited by Scot Barnett and Casey Boyle, University of Alabama Press, 2016, pp. 83-96.

Ali, Christopher. "Critical Regionalism and the Policies of Place: Revisiting Localism for the Digital Age." *Communication Theory*, vol. 26, 2016, pp.106-127.

Amin, Ash, and Nigel Thrift. *Cities: Reimagining The Urban.* Wiley, 2002.

Aristotle. *Topics.* Kessinger Publishing LLC, 2010.

Barnett, Scot and Casey Boyle. "Rhetorical Ontology, or , How to Do Things with Things." *Rhetoric Through Everyday Things,* edited by Scot Barnett and Casey Boyle, University of Alabama Press, 2016, pp. 83-96.

Bartlett L., and Thomas B. Byers. "Back to the future: The Humanist 'Matrix." *Cultural Critique,* no. 53, 2003, pp. 28-46.

Bawarshi, Anis. *Genre and The Invention Of The Writer: Reconsidering the Place of Invention in Composition.* Utah State University Press, 2003.

Bay, Jennifer, and Thomas Rickert. "New Media and the Fourfold." *JAC*. Vol. 28, no. 3, 2008, pp. 209-244.

Bennett, Jane. "The Force of Things: Steps toward an ecology of Matter." *Political Theory,* vol. 32, no.3, 2004, pp.532-554.

Bennett, Jane. *Vibrant Matter.* Duke University Press, 2010.

Bidwell, Allie. "More Students Earning STEM Degrees, Report Shows." *U.S News.* 27
Jan. 2015. *usnews.com.* 2 Dec. 2017.

Birdsall, Kate and Julie Drew. "Wanting Ourselves: Writing (And) The Postsexual
Subject." *Writing Posthumanism, Posthuman Writing,* edited by Sidney Dobrin,
Parlor Press, 2015.

Bitzer, Lloyd F. "The Rhetorical Situation." *Philosophy and Rhetoric,* vol. 1, 1968, pp. 1-
14.

Bockmann, Rich. "York College to be Queen's New Tax-free Biz Incubator." *Times
Ledger.* 1 Nov. 2013. *Timesledger.com.* Web. 2 Dec. 2017.

Bollig, Chase. "Is College Worth It?" Arguing for Composition's Value with the Citizen-
Worker." *College Composition and Communication*, vol. 67, no. 6, 2015, pp. 150-
172.

Boyle, Casey. "Writing and Rhetoric and/as Posthuman Practice." *College English,* vol.
78, no. 6, 2016, pp. 532-554

Brooke, Collin Gifford. "Forgetting to be (post)human: Media and memory in the kairotic
age. *JAC,* vol. 20, no. 4, 2000, pp. 775-795.

The Columbia Dictionary of Modern Literary Cultural Criticism. J. Childers and G.
Hentzi eds, 1995.

Casey, Edward. *The Fate of Place: A Philosophical History*. University of California
Press, 2013.

Coole, Diane and Samantha Frost. "Introducing the New Materialism." *New Materialism: Ontology, Agency, and Politics*, edited by Diane Coole and Samantha Frost, Duke University Press, 2010.

Cooper, Marilyn. "Rhetorical Agency as Emergent and Enacted." *College Composition and Communication*, vol, 62, no. 3, 2011, pp. 420-49.

Cooper, Marilyn. "The Ecology of Writing." *College English*, vol. 48, no. 4, 1986, pp. 364-375

"Degrees and Majors Offered By CUNY York College Plus Academic Programs and Fields of Study." *Collegefactual*. Media Factual. Web. 2 Dec. 2017.

Deleuze, Gilles. *Difference and Repetition.* Columbia University Press, 1994.

Deleuze, Gilles. "Postscript on the Societies of Control." *L'Autre Journal,* vol. 1, 1990.

Deleuze, Gilles and Felix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia.* University of Minnesota Press, 1983.

Deleuze, Gilles, and Felix Guattari. *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism & Schizophrenia*. Minnesota P, 1987.

Dickens, Matthew. *Public Transportation Ridership Report*. Washington, DC: American Public Transportation Association, 2014. Print.

Dobrin, Sidney. *Postcomposition.* Southern Illinois University, 2011.

Dobrin, Sidney. *Writing Posthumanism, Posthuman Writing.* Parlor Press, 2015.

Dobrin, Sidney. "The Occupation of Composition." *The Locations of Composition,* edited by Christopher J. Keller and Christian R. Weisser, State University of New York Press, 2007, pp. 15-37.

Dobrin, Sidney and Christian R. Weissler. "Breaking Ground In Ecocomposition."

 College English, vol. 64, no. 5, 2002, pp. 566-589.

Duff, Cameron. *Assemblages of Health: Deleuze's Empiricism and the Ethology of Life*.

 Springer Dordrecht Heidelber, 2014.

Edbauer, Jennifer. "(Meta)Physical Graffiti: "Getting Up" as Affective Writing Model."

 JAC, vol. 25, no. 1, 2005, pp. 131-159.

Edbauer, Jennifer. "Unframing Models of Public Distribution: From Rhetorical Situation

 to Rhetorical Ecologies." *Rhetoric Society Quarterly*, vol. 35, no. 4, pp. 5-24.

Eberly, Rosa A. "From Writers Audiences and Communities to Publics: Writing

 Classrooms as Protopublic Spaces." *Rhetoric Review,* vol. 18, no. 1, 1999, pp.

 165-178.

Fleckenstein, Kristie. "Materiality's Rhetorical Work: The Nineteenth-Century Parlor

 Stereoscope and the Second-Naturing of Vision." *Rhetoric, Through Everyday*

 Things, edited by Scot Barnett and Casey Boyle, University of Alabama Press,

 2016, pp. 125-139.

Fleckenstein, Kristie. *Vision, Rhetoric, and Social Action in the Composition Classroom.*

 Southern Illinois UP, 2009.

Flowers, Linda. *Community Literacy and the Rhetoric of Public Engagement*. Southern

 Illinois UP, 2008.

Foucault, Michel "Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias." *Diacrititcs*, vol. 16,

 1986, pp. 22-7.

Fox, Tom. *Defending Access: A Critique of Standards in Higher Education.* Southern

 Ilinois UP, 1999.

Kenneth, Frampton. "Place-Form and Cultural Identity." *Design After Modernism:*
    Beyond the Object, edited by John Thakara, Thames and Hudson, 1988, pp. 50-
    59.

Frampton, Kenneth. "Prospects for a Critical Regionalism." *The MIT Press*, vol. 20,
    1983, pp. 147-162.

Frampton, Kenneth. "Ten Points on an Architecture of Regionalism: A Provisional
    Polemic." *Center 3: New Regionalism*, 1987, pp. 20-27.

Frampton, Kenneth. "Towards Critical regionalism: Six Points for Architecture of
    Resistance." *Anti-Aesthetic. Essays on Postmodern Culture,* edited by Hal Foster,
    Bay Press, 1983.

Gannon, Michael. "Cuomo Earmarks $10M for Jamaica." *Queens Chronicle*, 20 July,
    2017.

Giroux, Henry. "Literacy and the Pedagogy of Political Empowerment." Introduction.
    Literacy: Reading the Word and the World. Paulo Freire and Donaldo Macedo.
    Bergin & Garvey, 1987.

Gries, Laura. "Iconographic Tracking: A Digital Research Method for Visual Rhetoric
    and Circulation Studies." *Computers and Composition,* vol. 30, 2013, pp. 332-
    348.

Hayles, Katherine N. *How We Become Posthuman: Virtual Bodies in Cybernetics,*
    Literature and Informatics. The University of Chicago Press, 1999.

Harold, Christine L. "The Rhetorical Function of the Abject Body: Transgressive
    Corporeality in Trainspotting." *JAC,* vol 20, no. 4, 2000, pp. 865-887.

Harvey, David. *The Condition of Postmodernity*. Basil Blackwell Ltd, 1990.

Hawhee, Debra. "Rhetoric, Bodies and Everyday Life." *RSQ:Rhetoric Society Quarterly*,
vol. 36, no. 2, 2006, pp. 155-164.

Hawk, Byron. *A Counter-History of Composition: Toward Methodologies of
Complexity.* University of Pittsburgh Press, 2007.

Hawk, Byron. "Toward a Rhetoric of (Network) Media Culture: Notes on Polarities and
Potentiality." JAC, vol. 24, no. 4, 2004, pp. 831-850.

Hawk, Byron and Andrew Mara. "Posthuman Rhetorics and Technical Communication."
Technical Communication Quarterly, vol. 19, no. 1, pp. 1-10.

Heidegger, Martin, "Building Dwelling Thinking." *Poetry of Language Thought.* Harper
Colophon Books, 1971.

Halewood, Mick. "Language, Subjectivity and Individuality." *Deleuze, Whitehead,
Bergson: Rhizomatic Connections,* edited by Keith Robinson, Palgrave
Macmillan, 2009, pp. 45-61.

Heilker, Paul "Rhetoric made Real: Civil Discourse and Writing Beyond the
Curriculum." *Writing the Community: Concepts and Models for Service-learning
in Composition,* edited by Linda Adler-Kassner, Robert Crooks, and Anne
Watters, Stylus Publishing, 1997.

"History."*york.cuny.edu,* The City University of New York. 2017.

Holmes, Steven. "Multiple Bodies, Actants, and a Composition Classroom: Actor-
Network Theory in Practice." *Rhetoric Review*, vol. 33, no. 4, 2014, pp. 421-438.

Hume, David. *An Inquiry Concerning Human Understanding.* Booksellers Row, 1861.

"Immanuel Kant." *Stand Encyclopedia of Philosophy,* 25, Jan. 2016,
https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/kant/

Ingold, Tim. *Being Alive: Essays on Movement, Knowledge and description.* Routlege, 2011.

Ingold, Tim. *Enough about Ethnography: An Interview With Tim Ingold*, 5, Apr. 2009, https://culanth.org/fieldsights/841-enough-about-ethnography-an-   interview-with-tim-ingold. Accessed 12 Dec. 2016.

Jackson, Rachel. "Locating Oklahoma: Critical Regionalism and Transrhetorical Analysis in the Composition Classroom." *College, Composition and Communication,* vol. 66, no. 2, 2014, pp. 301-326.

Julier, Laura, Kathleen Livingston and Eli Goldblatt. "Community-Engaged Pedagogies." *A Guide to Composition Pedagogies*, edited by Gary Tate, Amy Taggart, Kurt Schick, and H. Brooke Hessler, Oxford University Press, 2014.

Latour, Bruno. *An Inquiry into the Modes of Existence: An Anthropology of the Moderns*. Harvard UP, 2013.

Latour, Bruno. *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network Theory*. Oxford University Press, 2007.

Lefaivre, Liane. "Critical Regionalism: A Facet of Modern Architecture since 1945." *Critical Regionalism: Architecture and Identity in a Globalised World,* edited by Alexander Tzonis and Liane Lefaivre, Presetal Publishing, 2003.

Lefebvre, Henri. *The Production of Space.* Blackwell Publishers, 1991.

McNely Brian. J., "Circulatory Intensities: Take a Book, Return a Book." *Rhetoric, Through Everyday Things,* edited by Scot Barnett and Casey Boyle, The University of Alabama Press, 2016, pp. 139-155.

Miller, Susan. *Textual Carnivals: The Politics of Composition.* Southern Illinois UP,

    1991.

Muckelbauer, John and Debra Hawhee. "Posthuman Rhetorics: 'It's the Future,   Pikul."

    JAC, vol. 20, no. 4, pp. 767-774.

Mumford, Lewis. *The South In Architecture: The Dancy Lectures Alabama College*

    1941. Budge Press, 2007.

Nicotra, Jodie. "Assemblage Rhetorics: Creating New Frameworks for Rhetorical

    Action." *Rhetoric, Through Everyday Things,* edited by Scot Barnett and Casey

    Boyle, The University of Alabama Press, 2016, pp. 139-155.

Norcia, Megan A. "Out of the Ivory Tower Endlessly Rocking: Collaboration across

    Disciplines and Professions to Promote Student Learning in the Digital

    Archive." *Pedagogy*, vol. 8, no. 1, 2008, pp. 91-114.

Narula, Svati Kirsten. "The 5 U.S Counties Where Racial Diversity Is Highest-and

    Lowest." *The Atlantic,* 29 Apr. 2014.

Nystrand, Martin and John Duffy. "Rhetoric, Writing and the Everyday: Some

    Preliminary Remarks" *Towards A Rhetoric of Everyday Life: New Directions in*

    Research and Writing, edited by Martin Nystrand and John Duffy, University

    of Wisconsin Press, 2003.

Packer, Martin. *The Science of Qualitative Research,* Cambridge University Press, 2011.

Pennycook, Alastair. "Posthumanist Applied Linguistics." *Applied Linguistics,* vol. 37,

    no. 3, 2016, pp. 1-18

Pickering, Andrew. "The Mangle of Practice: Agency and Emergence in the Sociology of

    Science." *American Journal of Sociology,* vol. 99, no. 3, 1993, pp. 559-589.

Pink, Sarah. "Digital-Visual-sensory design anthropology: Ethnography, imagination
and intervention." *Arts & Humanities in Higher Education,* vol. 13, no. 4, pp.
412-427.

Pink, Sarah. *Doing Sensory Ethnography.* SAGE Publications Ltd, 2009.

Pink, Sarah. *Situating Everyday Life: Practices and Places.* SAGE Publications Ltd,
2012.

Polt, R., 1999, *Heidegger: an Introduction*, London: Routledge

Powell, Douglas. *Critical Regionalism: Connecting Politics and Culture in the American
Landscape.* The University of North Carolina Press, 2007.

Powell, Kimberly. "Making Sense of Place: Mapping as a Multisensory Research
Method." *Qualitative Inquiry*, vol. 16, no. 7, 2010, pp. 539-555.

Powell, P.R. *Retention and resistance: Writing Instruction and The Students Who Leave.*
Utah State University Press, 2013.

Purdy, James P. "Anxiety and the Archive: Understanding Plagiarism Detection
Services as Digital Archives." *Computers and Composition*, vol. 26, no. 2, 2009,
pp. 65-77.

Purvis, Thomas. *A Dictionary of American History*. Wiley-Blackwell, 1987.

Prior, Paul. *Writing/Disciplinarily: A Sociohistoric Account of Literate Activity in the
Academy.* Lawrence Erlbaum, 1998.

Redding, A., Lahaie, J., & Bush, J. "One-on-One 'Intensive' Instruction: Faculty   and
Students Partnering for Success in First-Year Writing." *Language Arts Journal
of Michigan*, vol. 32, no. 1, pp. 18-24.

Reynolds, Nedra. *Geographies of Writing: Inhabiting Places and Encountering Difference.* Southern Illinois University Press, 2004.

Rice, Jenny. *Distant Publics: Development Rhetoric and the Subject of Crisis*. University of Pittsburgh Press, 2012.

Rice, Jenny. "From Architectonic to Tectonics: Introducing Regional Rhetorics." *Rhetoric Society Quarterly*, vol. 42, no. 3, pp. 200-213.

Rice, Jeff. *Digital Detroit*. Southern Illinois University Press, 2014.

Rickert, Thomas. *Ambient Rhetoric: The Attunements of Rhetorical Being*. University of Pittsburgh Press, 2013.

Rivers, Nathanial A., and Ryan P. Weber. "Ecological, Pedagogical, Public Rhetoric." *College, Composition and Communication,* vol. 63, no. 2, 2011, pp. 187-218.

Scott, Tony. *Dangerous Writing: Understanding the Political Economy of Composition.* Utah State UP,2009.

Shipka, Jody. *Toward a Composition Made Whole.* University of Pittsburgh Press, 2011.

Soja, Edward W. *Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real-And-Imagined Places.* Blackwell Publishing, 1996.

Seigworth, Gregory, J. "Banality For Cultural Studies." *Cultural Studies,* vol. 14, no. 2, 2000, pp. 227-258.

Stasiewicz-Bienkowska, Agnieszka. "Meaningful Connections: Digital Media, Social Networks and the Experience of Space and Place." *Digital Diversities: Social Media and Intercultural Experience,* edited by Garry Robson, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2014.

Stengers, Isabelle. "Introductory Notes on an Ecology of Practices." *Cultrual Studies Review,* vol.11, no. 1, 2013, pp. 183-196.

Swanson, Richard A. Theory Building in Applied Disciplines: Boundaries, Contributing, Core, Useful, Novel, and Irrelevant Components. *Human Resources Development Review.* Vol. 6, no. 3, pp. 321-339.

Tell, David. "The Meanings of Kansas: Rhetoric, Regions, and Counter Regions." *Rhetoric Society Quarterly*, vol. 42, no. 3, 2012, pp. 214-232.

"The King Family." Kingmanor.org. 2016. 10 August 2017.

Thrift, Nigel. *Non-Representational Theory: Space, Politics, Affect*, Routledge, 2007.

Tzonis, Alexander and Liane Lefaivre. "Architecture of Regionalism in the Age of Globalization." *Critical Regionalism: Architecture and Identity in a Globalised World,* edited by Alexander Tzonis and Liane Lefaivre, Presetal Publishing, 2003.

Tzonis, Alexander and Liliane Lefaivre. "The Grid and The Pathway: An Introduction to the work of Dimitris and Suzana Antonakakis." *Architecture in Greece,* vol. 15, 1981.

Vincenzi, D, John A. Wise, Mustapha Mouloua and Peter A. Hancock. "Preface." *Human Factors in Simulation and Training.* edited by Dennis A. Vincenzi, John A. Wise, Mustapha Mouloua and Peter A. Hancock, CRC Press, 2009.

Walsh, Lynda. "Forum: Bruno Latour on Rhetoric: Introduction and Interview with Bruno Latour." *Rhetoric Society Quarterly*, vol. 47, no. 5, 2017, pp. 403-424.

Walker, Ameena. "Jamaica's AirTrain-hugging Towker gets Huge Boost for the City." *Curberd New York,* 1 Feb 2017.

Williams, James. *Gilles Deleuze's Difference and Repetition: A Critical Introduction and Guide.* Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, 2003

Wojtaszek, Marek. "In Quest of (Posthuman) Togetherness: Digital Communication and Affective Disconnection." *Digital Diversities: Social Media and Intercultural Experience,* edited by Garry Robson, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2014.

Wolf, Cary. *What Is Posthumanism?* U of Minnesota P, 2010.

"York College CUNY's MUREP Program Featured on NY1 News." *York College.* 2017. Web. 2 Dec. 2017.