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A Pedagogy of Witnessing: Linguistic and Visual Frames of the Dark Side in the Multimodal Classroom

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A PEDAGOGY OF WITNESSING: LINGUISTIC AND VISUAL
FRAMES OF THE DARK SIDE IN THE MULTIMODAL CLASSROOM

By

Lindsay A. Hingst

A DISSERTATION

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

In Rhetoric, Theory and Culture

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This dissertation has been approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
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DEFINITIONS

Agency- A process whereas rhetorical agency “is the capacity to influence the form and shape of a rhetorical culture” which can be “shaped both in a material sense and a sociological sense” (Greer, *Kairos News*). Human beings exist as both actors and shapers who are acted upon and shaped by their rhetorical cultures (which include written, oral and visual modes of communication). Greer claims that we do not have a choice when it comes to whether we have agency or not, but we do have a choice in terms of what we *do* with our agency.

Altruism- selfless and voluntary behaviors, “motivated by the desire to help another individual” (Marsh).

Anchorage- linguistic element provided to direct the meaning of an image (Barthes, *Image-Music-Text*, 156).

Aperture- absorbs light from the scene through an opening, hole, or gap (Bordwell and Thompson 162).

Atrocity- involves culpable wrongdoing that occurs on a mass scale. Genocides, massacres, mass murder, torturing prisoners, and rape warfare are all examples of what constitutes an atrocity (Card 5).

Bearing witness- the heart of rhetorical witnessing; remains an active process that includes the triad of rhetor, symbols, and audience a rhetorical process of speaker, audience and text (Peters 709)

Camera- derives from the Latin term for “chamber,” or “a vaulted room” (Merriam-Webster). The first camera, invented in 1685 by Johan Zahn, evolved from the *camera obscura* (or “dark room” in Latin), followed by other photographic technologies such as daguerreotypes, calotypes, dry plates, film, and digital cameras (PBS.org). In 1885, George Eastman—inventor of Kodak—invented moving film (PBS.org).

Cinematography- literally means “writing in movement” (Bordwell and Thompson 162).

Connotative meaning- meaning varies depending upon the viewer and context (Barthes, *Image-Music-Text*).

Dehumanizing propaganda- a technique that *portrays a targeted scapegoat by using animalistic caricatures* (Shabo 129). The purpose of using this method is to dehumanize those the state wants to exterminate from society. “The agenda to eliminate an entire population is rarely stated openly,” rather it is more effective to subliminally implement ideas of the dehumanized “Other” that is “framed” a certain way to saturate a racist ideology within the culture (129).

Denotative meaning- literal; dictionary definition (Barthes, *Image-Music-Text*)

Deliberation- “the act of thinking about or discussing something and deciding carefully” (Merriam-Webster).

Ethical spectatorship- a tension between the desire to look and the politics of recognition (Kozol 14-5). The term “ethical spectatorship” considers notions of voyeurism and spectatorship to address problems with gazing upon images of human suffering.

Frame- Is “not a neutral border; it imposes a certain vantage point” by defining the size, shape, height, distance, and angle of the shot (Bordwell and Thompson 182). Significantly, the frame defines onscreen and off-screen space (182).

Framing- From a technical standpoint, relies on the positioning of the lens in terms of angle (i.e. high, low, straight on), level (parallel to the horizon or tipped), height (i.e. high, low, straight on), and distance (extreme long shot, long shot, medium long shot, medium shot, medium close-up, close-up, and extreme close-up) (Bordwell and Thompson 190-1).

The Framing of the Frame- takes into consideration the underlying systems of power (e.g. the political economy, military directives, and dominant bourgeois ideology) responsible for structuring the frame (Butler 74).

The Gaze- refers to the objectifying process whereby the eye fixes upon another person as a thing (or *objet petite a*) in a way that reveals power dynamics between individuals (Lacan). Laura Mulvey’s research expanded upon Lacan’s work by exploring the sexual objectification of the female form by the **male gaze**. Mulvey’s work examines **voyeurism** and **scopophilia**. Although these concepts emerged from film studies, the power of the gaze also applies to art and photography. To Kozol, the gaze is *an apparatus of power* that creates a stereo-typified view of life in the Middle East wherein the ethnic “Other” represents a brute savage in comparison to Americans who are portrayed as the rational, just, and civilized agent (8).

Iconic war photography- “a mode of cultural production. It helps shape history” (Tagg 246). At the same time, these photographs are **myths**.

Image-flow- the political economy not only underlies the “framing” of news stories, it determines whose stories are “worthy” or “unworthy” of being told (Herman and Chomsky xx).

Image-glut- an insatiable desire to expose oneself to violent images (Sontag 20).

Judgment- the way we form an opinion based on evidence and our moral values (Merriam-Webster).

Justification- “...the mental activity of responding to particular situations in a way that draws upon our sensations, beliefs, and emotions without being dictated by them...” (Garsten 7).

Lens- creates a depth of field between itself and an object of focus to compose a foreground and background of the shot (Bordwell and Thompson 162).

Lighting- develops highlights and shadows to create a sense of spatial relations among people and objects. Hard light creates “defined shadows, crisp textures, and sharp edges” whereas soft light refers to “diffused illumination” (Bordwell and Thompson 126).

Linguistics- the scientific study of language and its structures (Barthes, *Image, Music, Text*, 156).

Media witnessing- “live” broadcast news as a testimonial genre which provides viewers with an opportunity to witness events firsthand. To witness in the media is to be “present-at-a-distance” and, therefore, creates the perception that the information presented is more trustworthy. Witnesses can act *in, of, or via* media (Peters 707). With advances in modern technology, access to media outlets provides witnesses with greater agency. Regardless of the media system’s ability to empower witnesses, television and news media obscures the witnessing process.

Myth- Barthes' use of the term "myth" involves "the cultural values and beliefs that are expressed through connotation...the hidden set of rules or conventions" that give meaning to an image; these are particular to a specific group and yet presented as universal truths (Barthes 20-1). “A system of communication,” “a mode of signification,” and a form with “historical limits” and “conditions of use” (217). It is “a type of speech,” but not constrained by oral communication; it can be written, aural, visual, and gestural among various other forms of representation (218). Myth is more about *appropriation* than tangibility (218). “Myth can be defined neither by its object nor by its material, for any material can arbitrarily be endowed with meaning” (218).

Narrative film- *a formal convention* includes various principles: function, similarity and proximity, difference and variation, development, and unity and disunity (Bordwell and Thompson 66). *Each element serves a specific function that contributes to the larger structure or system.* Plot, character, dialogue, lighting, costume, set design, special effects, make up, sound—these stylistic elements work in tandem to shape a cohesive narrative (66-70). In Nazi Germany, narrative film served a dual purpose; it diverted attention from the realities of the war and reinforced the social and economic order.

Norms- govern “which lives count as human and as living, and which do not” (Butler 74).

Paradox of perception- images which are “supposed to deliver reality, withdrawal reality from perception” (Butler 75).

Paradox of suffering- political problems that are intended to give “voice” to injustice, regrettably, sometimes serve to “push” pain “into further invisibility” (Scarry 13).

Paradox of witnessing- viewers of witness photography can never fully understand its meaning; traumatic “frames” are never appropriated in the proper context. Hesford

emphasizes: trauma is “an unstable referent” and history is never “fixed” in time, so to identify with victims of an atrocity is an illusion (Hesford 113). This point emphasizes the paradox of witnessing. Viewers project a narrative onto a photograph which obfuscates the truth because it omits the larger narrative (114).

Paradox of visual witnessing- On one hand, photography and the distribution of violent images “sanctions” violence; on the other hand, social reform depends on the production and distribution of violent images (Hariman 144).

Perspective relations- the scale, depth, and spatial relations conveyed in a setting by the optical system of the camera, which reacts to light rays in various ways depending upon the use of the lens (wide angle, normal, or telephoto) (Bordwell and Thompson 168).

Photography- literally means “writing in light” (Bordwell and Thompson 162)

Polysemy- the multiplicity and ambiguity of an image’s meaning. “Polysemy poses a question of meaning and this question always comes through as dysfunction . . . in cinema itself, traumatic images are bound up with an uncertainty (and anxiety) concerning the meaning of objects or attitudes” (Barthes 156).

Propaganda- “an organized myth that tries to take hold of the entire person. Through the myth it creates, propaganda imposes a complete range of intuitive knowledge, susceptible to only one interpretation, unique and one-sided, and precluding any divergence” (Ellul 11). Propaganda targets a specific audience using fallacies and/or emotional appeals and reflects the interests of a particular group’s political agenda (Shabo 5). While some forms of propaganda take a more positive approach (e.g. encouraging civic duty or helping those in need), negative propaganda encourages violence, destruction of property, and instills racist ideologies in order to justify expansionist policies (5).

Punctum- derives from the Greek word for trauma to describe the ability of an image to “bruise,” “puncture,” or “disturb” the viewer (Barthes 53). Barthes defines **punctum** as “what I add to the photograph and what is nonetheless already there,” something that is “revealed after the fact,” a “blind field,” the “subtle beyond . . . the Kairos of desire” (53-9).

Realism- the standard by which all films are evaluated (Bordwell and Thompson 117)

Recognition- In order for recognition to occur, another must witness another’s suffering. The survivor must release the pain, and recognition asks that others endure the burden of knowing. Pain renders one silent, unable to speak. Being seen gives a voice to the voiceless and renders silencing and erasure obsolete. “Demands for recognition are also demands for visibility. Marginalization and enfranchisement are discussed in terms of visibility and invisibility...certain groups of people and their problems and suffering remain invisible within mainstream culture. In this vein, visibility is a matter of power...What we see when we look around us is politically charged and manipulated by the media...Good visibility is characterized as responsible vision that does not stereotype by group but recognizes individuality yet includes ‘others’ as a group with social presence or importance. Bad visibility has various forms including invisibility, unseeing,

hypervisibility, stereotyping, making a spectacle, and other types of exaggerated seeing” (Kelly Oliver 147-9).

Representation- “the use of language and images to create meaning about the world around us” by referring to “a system of rules and conventions” (Sturken and Cartwright 12).

Response-ability- An aspect of power that is integral aspect of rhetorical witnessing; it involves using one’s agency in an ethical manner, whether it is collective action, raising awareness or providing a testimony.

Rhetoric- the rhetorical function of language as a "symbolic means of inducing cooperation in beings that by nature respond to symbols" (Burke 16). Burke's definition emphasizes the meaning-making that occurs between a speaker/writer/artist and his/her audience/viewer. In line with this definition, Burke defines “man” as a “symbol using, making, misusing animal...inventor of the negative, separated from his natural condition by instruments of his own making, goaded by the spirit of hierarchy, and rotten with perfection” (16).

Rhetoric of prophetic nationalism- propaganda that aligns national leaders with deities to make mere mortals appear holy; this legitimizes their positions of power (Garsten 18).

Scopophilia- visual acts that violate the subject by rendering him/her as an object. Denotes sexual pleasure through voyeuristic acts (Mulvey)

Self-disclosure- “the conscious decision to share personal information about ourselves” (Dunn & Goodnight 110), is a requirement of “working through” trauma. Trauma affects the mind, body, and spirit and creates a shock to the witness that is so deep and “impossible to process” in light of perception and interpretation that it is “in a sense never experienced by the person to whom it happens” (Dawes 29).

Semiotics- the study of signs and symbols and their use or interpretation (Barthes, *Image, Music, Text*, 156)

Shutter speed- refers to the amount of time a shutter is open. A slow shutter speed is usually more appropriate for still shots such as portraits and landscapes whereas a fast shutter speed is more appropriate for action shots. However, a photographer may opt to use a slower shutter speed for an action shot to create a blurred effect, which is sometimes very effective for convey movement in the shot (Bordwell and Thompson 126).

Simulacra- “copies reality” (Baudrillard 10).

Simulation- reflects the “hyperreal,” a false representation of reality in which the “real” is no longer real (Baudrillard 10).

Spectacle- “an event that is visually impactful in some way: “something that attracts attention because it is very unusual or shocking” (Merriam-Webster).

Spectatorship- describes a visual process whereby a viewer acts as a passive observer to an event. Photographers and viewers, as second and third-person witnesses to atrocity, respond similarly to sports fans: they sit in the sidelines and watch the event from a distance without intervening. Can include the voyeuristic act of creating a spectacle out of another's suffering.

Speed of motion- refers to the rate of motion and rate of projection, or "frames per second" (Bordwell and Thompson 165). An action-packed scene moves more quickly, whereas a scene meant to create tension might use slow motion.

Studium- a universal, coded quality that animates and reflects a culture (Barthes 53)

Testimony- an active engagement that involves the triad of rhetor, audience, and text (Peters 709). Through testimony, listeners become part of the process of rhetorical witnessing in an attempt, or struggle, to understand and distinguish the 'truth' about human experience.

Visual rhetoric- reflects the embeddedness of dominant bourgeois ideologies in each culture. There are social, political, economic, and ideological frameworks that influence music, literature, sculpture, paintings, theater, film, photography and other visual forms of expression. An artist or a photographer's work reflects the ideologies related to a specific culture at a point in history, and these "frames" of rhetoric transcend time and space through **reproducibility** (Sturken and Cartwright 9).

Visual testimony- the rhetorical act of bearing witness through visual modes of representation. It demonstrates the distinction between *seeing* and *saying*. (Peters 709). It is "the surrogate of sense-organs of the absent," therefore a "veracity gap" remains inevitable (711).

Visual witnessing- *a shared, public trauma* wherein the media "frames" traumatic events in such a way the exposure "crystallizes" and creates "a locus of memory" for that culture (Hagopian 218)

Voyeurism- visual acts that violate the subject by rendering him/her as an object. Indicates the pleasure in looking—which could arguably include pleasure in viewing the body in pain. (Mulvey)

Witness- the "agent who bears witness," (Peters 709) or a witness may refer to *the audience* who bears witness to the first or second witness.

Witnessing- *to watch* (i.e. as a bystander, voyeurism, spectatorship); *to narrate* (i.e. through testimony, "framing"); *to "be present"* (i.e. physically and psychologically) (Peters 709).

Peters refers to the two faces of witnessing: *seeing*—a passive form of witnessing—and *saying*—an active form of witnessing (709). Peters argues the concept of witnessing is complex because there will *always* be a difference between *what someone experiences* and *what they say about that experience* (711).

The term originally derives from the Greek word *martis* (i.e. martyr): According to Giorgio Agamben, “The concepts of ‘witnessing’ and martyrdom can be linked in two ways. The first concerns the Greek words itself, derived as it is from the verb meaning ‘to remember.’ The survivor’s vocation is to remember; he cannot *not* remember...the second point of connection...made it possible to interpret martyrdom as a divine command and, thus, to find a reason for the irrational” (26-7). A common interpretation of the term “witnessing” involves eyewitness testimony. Kelly Oliver's *Witnessing: Beyond Recognition* focuses specifically on eyewitness testimonies of atrocities (e.g. rape, torture, murder, maiming, etc.). **Rhetorical witnessing** implies that triad of speaker, audience, text which not only demands recognition, but a response. From a legal standpoint, Kaethe Weingarten defines a “witness” as more of a bystander who resides “outside” of the victim or perpetrator by “seeing” or “hearing” the harms committed. Other theorists purport that victims bear witness to their own suffering. My research presupposes that there are various “witness positions” or vantage points from which violence is observed. Victims, bystanders, and perpetrators are all witnesses to violence as well as photographers and viewers of photographs. We witness ourselves as witnesses, witness ourselves as victims, and sometimes witness ourselves as perpetrators. Translators and interviewers play an integral role in the witnessing process as they document the testimonies of witnesses for raising awareness.

Witness photography- “can bear witness to history and even serve as a catalyst for change” (Museum of Modern Art). While the history of war and atrocity has long been the subject of artists, witness photography as a testimonial genre did not come to fruition until the mid to late 1800s. Sontag reflects, “Photography has kept company with death ever since cameras were invented, in 1839” (“Looking at War” 8). The Spanish Civil War was the first war to be “witnessed”: pictures taken during combat were immediately published (5). The circulation of war photographs in newspapers and notable magazines allowed civilians access to eyewitness accounts to the true face of war. For the first time, social advocacy campaigns used photographs to mobilize the public sphere on a global level (8).

Abstract

“A Pedagogy of Witnessing: Linguistic and Visual Frames of the Dark Side in the Multimodal Classroom,” focuses on the theoretical and practical benefits of implementing written, oral, and visual testimonies from traumatic history as a tool for teaching the importance of empathetic and ethical composition practices. Specifically, this dissertation provides resource material for a critical pedagogical model that supports “responsible witnessing” through short writing assignments and a final research project that analyze selected narratives, historical accounts, images, and films spanning World War II and the Vietnam War to more recent global events. My hope is that my work will be of interest to teachers of composition and communication and students who wish to bring approaches to understanding and responding to human and nonhuman suffering as well as social injustice into the classroom.

Chapter 1

A Pedagogy of Witnessing as Edu-Activism

Introduction

Edu-activism—the merging of education and activism in the classroom—is hardly a novel concept. In fact, it is hard to come by a professor in the Humanities who is not well versed in the gospel of Paulo Freire. Expanding upon current practices of liberatory pedagogy and Edu-Activism, I argue that confronting representations of suffering—or, **witnessing** frames of the dark side—encourages students to advocate for the oppressed as well as examine their own oppression. In terms of rhetoric, composition, and communication studies **the dark side** can “shed light on deeper structures, and perhaps deeper dreams, that count for the human condition” (Spitzberg and Cupach 19). Although the dark side currently exists as a field of inquiry in interpersonal communication, it functions as a useful conceptual lens through which to better understand the need to witness and bear witness to myriad traumatic events and social injustices. Compounded, these concepts support the emerging need for studies in **multimodal communication** (i.e. linguistic, visual, aural, spatial, and gestural modes of meaning-making using any variety of mediums). This dissertation will demonstrate the theoretical and practical benefits of implementing visual and linguistic frames of the dark side as a tool for engaging in other-centered or community-engaged liberatory teaching practices to emphasize the importance of **responsibility** (i.e. ethical engagement for the common good) and **response-ability** (i.e. agency) beyond the confines of the classroom. It further emphasizes ways to apply these concepts in the multimodal classroom to encourage creative composition projects that enter the public sphere. It is my hope that this dissertation will be of interest to writing program administrators and anyone who teaches communication or composition as well as students interested in humanitarian efforts.

Although many of these concerns and ideas may be considered commonplace among academics, this study intends to focus specifically on educational benefits of exploring the

dark side with an emphasis on rhetorical dimensions of witnessing as it pertains to linguistic and visual representations. The significance of using this approach in a writing-intensive multimodal course is multi-faceted. First and foremost, it engages teachers and students in the theory and praxis of responsible, response-able witnessing. Additionally, it ignites a deliberative process that emphasizes the need to confront the political and challenges students to think critically about the hegemonic forces that inform their thinking. Moreover, a writing-intensive course that emphasizes **multimodality** serves numerous purposes. Digital technologies are used in everyday life—whether school, work, or the social sphere—and require users to decode and encode linguistic and visual (and sometimes aural) messages in clear, contextualized ways that enhance meaning between users and audiences. Frequent exposure to the digital realm requires students to learn how to critically interpret rhetorical devices; it also requires that students learn meaning-making using textual and visual elements. By understanding the principles of rhetorical design, students may be better able to interpret linguistic and visual elements while simultaneously learning ways to maintain ethical composition practices as they move through the processes of composing their own multimodal projects. Sheppard argues, “As multimedia technologies become increasingly sophisticated, the need for communicators who can utilize these capabilities in a knowledgeable and practical manner will also continue to grow” (126.) One of my goals as both a teacher and a researcher entails exploring why it is not only crucial to recognize the suffering of others but—moreover—why it is the ethical obligation for those in privileged positions to speak and act on behalf of the oppressed. Part of this requires convincing students that their “voices” have the power to shape our rhetorical culture by showing them ways to use their agency ethically. One way to approach this challenging task is through a writing-intensive multimodal course. So how did I come up with this project?

About eleven years ago, I read an excerpt from Paulo Freire’s *A Pedagogy of the Oppressed* for my first teaching practicum. Around the same time, I began reading the work of bell hooks. These theorists inspired me during my first year of teaching and have influenced my teaching philosophy ever since. Freire’s rejection of

bank deposit teaching spoke to me, and I felt deeply connected to hooks' insistence that teaching is a calling that demands we care for the hearts, minds, and souls of our students.

Over the years, I have worked closely with students to cultivate a course on the dark side and war rhetoric based their recommendations and insights. The reading material and audio/visual media students shared and projects they chose to pursue became the basis for the first course theme: exploring the dark side. When I came to Michigan Tech, I was excited to teach multimodal composition, which I had never heard of before; after reading Patricia Takayoshi and Cynthia Selfe's "Thinking About Multimodality," the prospect of teaching students ways to use multiple modes of communication in an interactive document, website, or short film excited me because I would finally be able to pull from all my interests—art, literature, composition, oral communication. Even though I had been a student and teacher of multimodality all along, I never realized it. Moreover, I never realized there was an entire field of study devoted to multimodal communication pedagogy. Takayoshi and Selfe unlocked an entirely new way of thinking about teaching.

My first semester at Tech, I quickly learned that some students are less than thrilled to take Humanities courses, particularly composition. Learning this bothered me for days on end. I began worrying—what if what I'm doing in the classroom isn't good enough? How do I engage students and make them feel as if their work matters? Combined with recent conversations I'd had with colleagues regarding the role of the teacher—revolutionary or facilitator? (or both?)—the ideas for combining the dark side with Edu-activism into the multimodal composition course began to unfold. From interactions with students and colleagues, I began thinking about the possibilities for the classroom to become a site of collective action through democratic deliberation.

In this dissertation, I propose a multimodal course that illuminates rhetorical dimensions of witnessing using linguistic and visual frames of the dark side to encourage responsible, and response-able composition practices. A pedagogy of witnessing is a form of "Edu-activism" and has the potential to challenge students to examine complex and controversial subjects across a varying spectrum. Such a course assumes a Freirean viewpoint that prompts students to confront issues they might rather ignore. They must

think critically about the hegemonic forces that influence their thinking to reveal the roots of others' and their own oppression. In doing so, students can engage with the countless social injustices that occur on local, national, and global levels to consider the possibilities for making a benevolent difference in the world.

The purpose of using a pedagogy of witnessing as a theme is to demonstrate to teachers, students, and composers methods for understanding human and non-human suffering and responding to it empathically and ethically. This is by no means intended to be a definitive model for teaching multimodal composition, but rather an exploratory approach to enlivening the classroom experience and creating a dialogue. I argue that in an increasingly globalized society fueled by hegemony, the need for courses that educate students about the importance of bearing witness to the dark side in a responsible, response-able manner seems paramount lest the next generation become apathetic toward the injustices they must one day face outside of the classroom.

Driving research questions include:

- What are the theoretical *and* practical educational benefits of a pedagogy of witnessing? What is the dark side, and how does it relate to a pedagogy of witnessing? How does a pedagogy of witnessing relate to Edu-Activism?
- How does exploring the dark side and using primary concepts associated with rhetorical witnessing, responsibility (i.e. ethics) and response-ability (i.e. agency) encourage empathy in a writing-intensive multimodal communication course?
- Why is witnessing the dark side a requirement for empathic engagement and a liberatory pedagogy?
- Why is it important for teachers to embrace the theory and praxis of liberatory pedagogy?

Although many of these concerns and ideas may be considered commonplace among academics, this study intends to focus specifically on educational benefits of exploring the dark side with an emphasis on rhetorical dimensions of witnessing as it pertains to linguistic and visual representations. The significance of using this approach in a writing-

intensive multimodal course is multi-faceted. First and foremost, it engages teachers and students in the theory and praxis of responsible, response-able witnessing. Secondly, it ignites a deliberative process that emphasizes the need to confront the political. Finally, it challenges students to think critically about the hegemonic forces that inform their thinking. One of my goals as both a teacher and a researcher entails exploring why it is not only crucial to recognize the suffering of others but—moreover—why it is the ethical obligation for those in privileged positions to speak and act on behalf of the oppressed. Part of this requires convincing students that their “voices” have the power to shape our rhetorical culture by showing them ways to use their agency ethically. One way to approach this challenging task is through a writing-intensive multimodal course.

Incorporating multiple modes of communication (i.e. **multimodal communication**) into the writing-intensive course is a matter of increasing importance. Per the National Council of Teachers of English, multimodal communication allows students to express ideas and invent meaning in creative ways (17-19). It also allows teachers the ability to incorporate multiple modes of communication in the classroom that broaden students’ knowledge in the liberal arts. By creating a shift toward teaching practices that encourage multimodality, students are not only enlivened by these invigorating learning experiences, they learn to compose using a variety of technologies that have become more and more relevant in our digitally driven society.

The courses I teach span from composition, literature, communication theory, and public speaking and emphasize terms and concepts associated with rhetorical witnessing, visual communication and culture, and multimodal composition. Students examine various frames of rhetoric throughout the duration of the course to apply these theories and principles in practical ways. As the course progresses, they encounter various witness testimonies that provide an historical contextualization of international conflict and places a “human face” on the suffering of others. To think critically about visual communication as a form of rhetorical witnessing teaches them how to create their own frames of rhetoric with a purpose, context, and audience in mind. Following a research process portfolio, students draft a paper and begin building a story board as they move toward crafting their

final multimodal projects. Students begin thinking visually about their intended messages based on their understanding of history, the powerful influences of language and the media, and the destructive nature of war rhetoric; the goal is not only to enable them to understand the importance of current issues on a deeper level, but ways to enact upon the rhetorical culture by creating their own frames of advocacy. Ultimately, the intention behind a pedagogy of witnessing is to build a foundation for making connections among visual and linguistic representations of suffering, the prevalence of oppression (including their own), and the need to respond to it--even as students (and especially as teachers). I will define these concepts at great length in the chapters that follow.

For now, I will provide a literature of the framework that supports a pedagogy of witnessing. Notable theorists mentioned in this dissertation include: Paulo Freire, bell hooks, and Ann George in terms of Edu-Activism; Cynthia Card, Hannah Arendt, and James Dawes in terms of the dark side; Judith Butler and Kenneth Burke in terms of framing; Kelly Oliver, Dori Laub, Wendy Hesford, and Dominic LaCapra in regard to rhetorical witnessing; Simone de Beauvoir, and Bryan Garsten in regard to responsibility and response-ability. Patricia Takayoshi, Cynthia Selfe, Mary Hocks, Donna Haraway, and Tim Ingold in terms of multimodal composition. Notable testimonies are drawn from fiction writer Cynthia Ozick, Holocaust survivor Filip Müller, poet Jorie Graham, filmmaker Steven Spielberg, historian Stephen Ambrose, army photographer Ron Haeberle, the Vietnam Veterans Against the War, and photographer James Nachtwey. I include this material to support the theory and praxis of rhetorical witnessing using visual and linguistic frames of the dark side in the multimodal classroom.

I

Literature Review

Edu-Activism

The working concept I coined, Edu-activism, incorporates notions associated with liberatory, confrontational, engaged, and critical pedagogies. Essentially, the concept of **Edu-activism** (as I use the term in this study) finds its roots in the conceptual framework

of liberatory pedagogy. This working definition will be applied to an array of composition pedagogies that complement one another including cultural studies, critical pedagogy, process-oriented writing, research writing, rhetoric, and argument. These concepts can overlap with one another to shape writing-intensive courses in multimodal communication, a pedagogical realm that, as previously noted, is in much need of further research and development. Through an iterative research-based process, the goal is to help students compose linguistic and visual frames as third-person witnesses—a progression from the dark side into the light of empathic engagement. The process of bearing witness is designed to lead students to look inward so they may fathom the ways in which oppression operates in their own lives. In these ways, this study intends to contribute to the field of composition pedagogy by moving students toward this notion of ethics and agency as they illustrate the power of “small potent gestures” and reasonable goals in their own work. This section will examine the work of Paulo Freire, bell hooks, and Ann George. Although these concepts are integral to the course design, they are not discussed directly with students.

Liberatory Pedagogy

According to Paulo Freire, the term **pedagogy**—literally “to lead a child”—indicates that teaching is inherently *directive* and *transformative* (24). Freire’s theory, “a secular liberation theology,” explores pedagogy and ethics as the essence of humanity (25). Using this presupposition as a basic theoretical underpinning for designing the classroom requires that teachers view their students not as objects or vessels whereupon knowledge is deposited, but rather subjects who have value and a “voice” worthy of recognition. Linguistic distortion has the power to distort reality, therefore it is through language human beings use their agency to reflect and transform reality. In effect, this challenges ideology (the “culprit” behind all oppression) (25). Freire emphasizes the importance of teaching students the root of their own oppression as well as oppressive forces outside of our culture. He states, “Concern for humanization leads at once to the recognition of dehumanization” (25). With this concept in mind, I attempt to create themes in the composition course that I teach related to some aspect of “the dark side” and “social justice.” This coincides with

Freire's "community-based theory" that education involves enlightenment as a revolutionary tool for raising critical consciousness.

Utilizing a "problem-posing" approach to instruction, Freire proposes a teacher-student partnership that holds both teachers and students accountable for producing knowledge as "co-investigators" or "co-creators" (249). Rather than planning pre-determined solutions to the problems under examination, ideas come to fruition through dialogue that encourages "cooperation, unity for liberation, organization, and cultural synthesis" (45). This approach "de-mythologizes reality" whereas the traditional "bank account" model molds thinking and inhibits creativity (249). Along the lines of radical constructivist pedagogy, Freire's teaching philosophy places responsibility on the student to acquire knowledge through observation, experiential learning, analysis, and synthesis. He believes in the importance of encouraging students to demonstrate innovation in their work rather than memorizing facts in the most mechanized manner. He remarks, "Knowledge emerges only through invention and re-invention, through the restless, impatient, continuing, hopeful inquiry human beings pursue in the world, with the world, and with each other" (1).

In contrast to the "problem-posing" method, the "banking concept" of teaching assumes students are inert "vessels" to be filled. By assuming a "narrative Subject" role, teachers posit students into "listening patient" roles by lecturing instead of engaging in a dialogue. This not only hinders the communication climate between instructors and students, it "obviates thinking" (4). Freire fervently argues that the "banking concept" controls and oppresses, for it gives the false impression that the teacher's position of authority is the equivalent to "authoritative knowledge"; this turns students into objects who must comply with whatever choices the instructor enforces upon them (2). He states. "Based on the mechanistic, static, naturalistic, spatialized view of consciousness, it transforms students into receiving objects. It attempts to control thinking and action...and inhibits their creative power" (5).

To counter Freire's position, one cannot ignore certain benefits of a more traditional model in the composition classroom. For example, the use of informative PowerPoints, "brain friendly" lectures, and instructional videos are not only helpful for providing

students with foundational terms and concepts, these approaches may be more appropriate depending upon the class size and subject matter. In fact, some students may learn more effectively in a passive learning environment than one that forces them to take a central role in discussion which, for some students, may induce anxiety and hinder the learning process. For classes where it is apparent students struggle with basic concepts associated with essay structure, grammar and/or mechanics, a more traditional method may be appropriate. For classes where students demonstrate more advanced writing skills, applying more complex, theoretical methods may be more appropriate. As Richard Leblanc argues in “Good Teaching: The Top Ten Requirements”: “Good teaching is about not always having a fixed agenda and being rigid, but being flexible, fluid, experimenting, and having the confidence to react and adjust to changing circumstances” (1). The nature of the classroom dynamic oftentimes determines the best way to manage the content, so ultimately it is important for teachers to remain flexible, open-minded, and—above all—teach students critical thinking regardless of the course design.

Dr. Ronald Strickland’s “Confrontational Pedagogy and Traditional Literary Studies” critiques traditional educational paradigms that “resist knowledge” and “repress the unconscious” (291). In line with Freire’s notions, Strickland encourages students to pose as mentors and facilitators of knowledge rather than as authoritative figures who hold the secrets to “absolute knowledge” (292). Rather than render students “inert” by reverting to the “bank account” method of instruction, it is crucial for instructors to make “the ‘truths’ of the dominant ideology of our society” a subject of discussion in the course in order to challenge student to question traditional modes of teaching (297). Strickland argues that “positivist” conceptions that assume “absolute knowledge” reinforces the dominant ideology, and students learn nothing.

Differently, a more liberatory approach that forces students to critically confront controversial issues provides a discursive site which produces new knowledge (292). For teachers to take a position as an “authorial genius” is ultimately to the detriment of students, for instead of producing knowledge, knowledge derived from dominant ideologies is reproduced (294). Strickland suggests, “An oppositional strategy is the only way to achieve

an intellectually responsible pedagogy” and lays out three crucial roles for teachers: “convener, archivist, and adversary” (294). As a convener, teachers resort to the more traditional expectations; they must create a theme, syllabus, assignments, reading lists, and set reasonable expectations for the course. As an archivist, they should present students with detailed bibliographies to coincide with the readings so they may engage in further reading and develop a more comprehensive understanding of the subject matter, if they so desire. Finally—and most importantly—teachers must take on the role of “adversary.” This is not an oppositional position in terms of an abuse of power, but rather a crucial role that challenges students to think more critically about their positions on a subject for the purpose of producing knowledge (295). By assigning position papers as the focal point for class discussion, teachers are able to confront students about their arguments and encourage them to develop new perspectives that may challenge their preconceived notions (297). This pedagogical model places teachers and students in dialogue with one another and strips away many of the problematic aspects of power inherent in authoritative model where “the student passively receives his/her/its wisdom” (296).

As teachers, we must realistically acknowledge the challenges of implementing a liberatory method in the classroom. For one, the oppressed tend to fear their own freedom, and it is not uncommon for students to feel comfortable in a learning environment that dictates their thinking and behavior through a “discipline and punish” system of oppression (6). In fact, many teachers and students respond negatively to a liberatory model of teaching because it is, by its very nature, radical. Despite the grandiose ideas prevalent in these critical pedagogies, one must be cautious when implementing this approach due to the resistance that he or she will likely encounter from at least one student. In fact, such an approach—if not utilized appropriately—may cause resentment and produce the opposite desired effect. Reflective of the ideological state apparatus, Freire illuminates, “Education as the exercise of domination stimulates the credulity of students, with the ideological intent...of indoctrinating them to adapt to the world of oppression” (6). Rather than adopt traditional teaching methods, Freire suggests a model for raising critical consciousness.

Engaged Pedagogy

In *Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom*, bell hooks expands upon Freire's notion of praxis by introducing what she refers to as "engaged pedagogy." Similar to Freire, hooks agrees that practice and reflection are at the heart of **praxis** and emphasizes the importance of reciprocity between teachers and students in regard to "sharing knowledge" (14). An **engaged pedagogy** encourages active student participation whereby teachers acknowledge every student brings to the conversation some area of expertise to enhance the classroom experience. It is through these shared experiences and give-and-take roles as teacher-students and student-teachers that an engaged pedagogy becomes actualized. According to hooks, "When our lived experience of theorizing is fundamentally linked to processes of self-recovery, of collective liberation, no gap exists between theory and practice. Indeed, such experience makes more evident the bond between the two—that ultimately reciprocal process wherein one enables the other" (61). Education should not exist as a prison for the mind but rather a place of thinking, rethinking, and creating new visions as part of a communal practice (12). This, however, does not come without obstacles. Hooks states:

Student resistance to forms of learnings that are not based on rote memory or predictable assignments has almost become a norm because of the fixation on degrees rather than education. These students want to know exactly what they must do to acquire the best grade. They are not interested in learning. But the student who longs to know, who has awakened passion for knowledge is eager to experience the mutual communion with teacher and subject that makes for profound engagement (*Teaching Community* 130).

For hooks, it is just as important for teachers to impart knowledge as it is for them to be "healers"; teachers must care for the students' spiritual growth as much as they care for students' intellectual growth (13). Passionate teachers are not only concerned with the "craft" they practice in the classroom; they must be compassionate toward their students' needs and assist them outside of the classroom to help them fulfill their potential. Leblanc

argues, “Good teaching is as much about passion as it is about reason. It’s about not only motivating students to learn, but teaching them how to learn, and doing so in a manner that is relevant, meaningful, and memorable. It’s about caring for your craft, having a passion for it, and conveying that passion to everyone, most importantly to your students” (1). Teaching is a nurturing profession akin to parenting, hence the denotative meaning of pedagogy: to lead a child. Much like being a parent, there is no “off switch” for a teacher when it comes to the love we have for our students or the passion we have for what we do in the classroom. Devoted teachers never clock out at the end of the school day; they continually think about their craft and ways to improve upon current teaching practices. If we are not passionate about what we are doing—if the only glory of teaching comes from having power and authority over our students—then we are not fulfilling our duties as teachers.

To transgress repressive teaching models, teachers must value student expression by encouraging their creativity and supporting their right to have a voice. This begins by initiating a more “open” classroom dialogue. To accomplish this, hooks suggests instructors offer “confessional narratives to academic discussions to show how experience can illuminate and enhance our understanding of academic material” (21). When discussing concepts associated with witnessing trauma, I attempt to make connections to the paradox of memory and consciousness by sharing my first childhood trauma with students. When I was a little girl, my mother became extremely ill almost died. I can still remember sitting in the living watching cartoons when my sister came into the room sobbing because my mother would not wake up to make dinner. I vividly remember entering the bedroom and feeling overwhelmed by the darkness and smell of menthol, something my mother frequently used to alleviate migraines. I remember the cold touch of my mother’s body when tried to wake her, the strange horror of thinking she might never wake up, and the sound of my sister crying into the phone, “Mommy won’t wake up!” I remember a feeling of sinking deep within myself as if in a dream, the sound of sirens approaching and, finally, the ambulance pulling up in front of the house. From there...everything else is a blur. In my accounts, I am certain that I was five years old, but

other people's accounts differ. Who was there, what happened, the aftermath—these details change depending on who tells the story. This confessional is a difficult one for me to discuss, and it is perhaps the first-time students get to see me as a person rather than just a teacher. It humanizes me by situating me in a vulnerable position, which enables students to feel more comfortable sharing their own experiences as it relates to the course material.

Hooks' work remains invaluable to teachers by illustrating the need to love our students and encourage a loving community in the classroom, the importance of teaching students ways to judiciously participate in conversation so as not to alienate any students in the classroom (marginalized individuals), and to do our best to teach "fully and compassionately with engaged learning" (134). It is simply not enough that teachers have knowledge to impart to students; our presence in the classroom is just as important. "Teaching is a performative act" although it is "not meant to be a spectacle (11). Teaching is not about putting on a show or entertaining an audience. By "performative," hooks alludes to teaching as an embodied, enworlded practice; it is not something that we do, it is something that we are—a "union of mind, body, and spirit" (18). We must believe in what we do, and for me, there is nothing more important than having a method behind my teaching. Every decision I make has a purpose. My dissertation is a testimony that bears witness to a pedagogy of witnessing, an ever-changing strategy that can be worked and re-worked in many ways based on the recommendations offered by students. The design of the course, in fact, has been evolving for the last ten years as students have approached me with different material. What initially began as a pedagogy of humor shifted gears once I realized that students were hungry something more challenging. Exploring the dark side opened me up to a far deeper subject matter that initially made me feel uneasy, yet student responses have been largely positive. To create an enriching experience by forming a teaching community: this is an essential goal of a liberatory pedagogy.

Critical Pedagogies and Power Relations

In "Critical Pedagogies: Dreaming of Democracy" Ann George argues, "Traditional critical pedagogies engage students in analyses of the unequal power relations that produce and are produced by cultural practices and institutions (including schools), and they hope

to enable students to challenge this inequality” (77). To illuminate these ideas to students, I refer to Louis Althusser’s description of the Ideological and Repressive State apparatuses. I also provide various PowerPoint slides which discuss concepts related to power, empowerment, and oppression. To supplement this material, I may opt to show a short video of George Carlin’s take on the problem with the American educational system which helps launch a discussion about oppression they have experienced in the classroom and what they hope to gain from their educational experiences. This video may be shown in comparison to Sir Ken Robinson’s “Changing Educational Paradigms.” Robinson’s argument mirrors George’s in the sense they both discuss how public education functions as a “sorting mechanism” whereby students are “inculcated” to passively accept inequality (79). As George gleans, students will naturally be drawn to Freire based on the presuppositions that education is “an instrument of domination” and “knowledge is a socially constructed, linguistic product” (78). Althusser correctly assumes that our educational system reproduces the modes reproduction—essentially turning students into obedient cogs in a capitalist-patriarchal machine.

While some students will argue for change in the current paradigms, others point out the practicality of a “bank deposit” approach depending upon the subject. Although most agree that a more student-centered approach is appropriate for a Humanities class, this would be a difficult approach to use in a math class held in a lecture hall. Moreover, some students prefer a more authoritative course design that mimics what they expect to experience when they leave the university. Business students, engineers, computer scientists—these students are far more likely to resist critical pedagogy because it is not relevant to what they intend to do with their careers, and they can become frustrated by an approach that contradicts hierarchal structures that “work” for them. I believe it is possible to incorporate a liberatory pedagogy via witnessing while simultaneously providing students with an opportunity to develop technical skills they desire for professional development. A writing-intensive course that highlights multimodal communication allows students to learn new technologies (e.g. Prezi, website design, etc.) while at the

same time emphasizing the importance of credible research and the craft of logical argument.

Despite the liberatory aim of critical pedagogy in the composition classroom, there are many limitations which contradict these aims. For instance, the notion that teachers can “empower” students is problematic in respect to the fact that this notion presupposes teachers have power to “give” in the first place. “Empowerment suggests an agent who does the empowering and an object whom receives power from another. Here, power travels in one direction only, from the ‘powerful’ teacher to the ‘powerless’ student, replicating the very hierarchies that critical pedagogies hope to dismantle” (87). George adeptly reflects upon the relational aspects of power by emphasizing that although power is treated as a noun, it is actually a verb (87). **Power** is not a *thing*, it is an underlying force that is exercised and situational (87) and can be distributive, designated, or integrated (Wilmot and Hocker 415). French philosopher Michel Foucault focused his research on the infusion of power within society based on the advent of the prison. He also illustrates how other societal institutions that replicate this model by turning the body into a machine in order to reproduce the modes of reproduction in a capitalist system. According to Foucault, systems of power shape our knowledge and permeate our educational system, the media, and political and economic ideologies. He presupposes that we cannot escape power; it is discursive, embodied, and enacted rather than possessed. Power—whether positive or negative—is constantly in flux (what he refers to as “metapower”). Foucault asserts that absolute knowledge does not exist but is derived from regimes; these regimes of knowledge are negotiated and change over time. Each culture has a different “regime of truth,” and these regimes are accepted forms of knowledge and scientific understanding.

Foucault argues the ultimate goal of discourse should be to allow for scrutiny and creating alternative framing. With this in mind, discourse may generate positive results within the multimodal composition classroom by encouraging critical thinking (theory) and producing new knowledge through the writing process (praxis). To democratize the classroom is to create a space of shared power, differently from an authoritative approach. However, that authority—realistically speaking—is already there. My name is at the top of

the syllabus, the learning goals are created based on the curriculum of the department, and all of the course expectations are outlined on the syllabus as well as the university learning goals. So no matter how much we try to “democratize” the classroom, at the end of the day I am still the one who has the position of authority to administer grades. However, I make it a point to open the possibilities for choosing reading and supplemental material from a list of sources and working with students to create engaging assignments. The learning goals remain the same, but students and I work together to create an empowering communal classroom.

George points out that critical pedagogy is “outcome based” with a definitive, revolutionary purpose. Perhaps it is better to create a more open, critical process? As teachers, it is crucial to ask ourselves: who is to be liberated from what? How do I, as a white privileged teacher, speak about oppression in the classroom? What do I have in common with students of different genders, races, religious backgrounds, etc.? And what are the struggles I have faced teaching at institutions that reflect a predominantly white, male population versus non-traditional, working-class students of diverse backgrounds? If my teaching experience has taught me anything about classroom resistance, it is that white male students are the most reluctant to confront the problems posed by what hooks refers to as a “white supremacist capitalist-patriarchy.” When I taught night classes in Chicago Heights, many students were over the age of 30 and African Americans; their lived experience made for richer class discussions regarding racial and class oppression because their experiences had already taught them the reality of hegemony in our culture. How do I teach students who are born into privileged positions to resist oppression, particularly if they feel their potential power is threatened by such discussions? Or, if they do not reside in privileged positions based on class status? These are delicate subject matters that run the risk of alienating certain students rather than opening them up to new ideas and perspectives.

Significantly, teachers must also ask themselves whether it is our responsibility to politicize the classroom. Some might argue that teachers should be politically neutral, that it is a moral affront to embed a political ideology with the framework of a course. I concur

that teachers who push their radical agendas on students run the risk of oppressing students' voices in an attempt to liberate them. And yet if Foucault's position rings true, the classroom is already politicized by the nature of its design, therefore the only way to de-politicize it is by re-politicizing it from a different vantage point. In this respect, a pedagogy of witnessing becomes the rhetoric of anti-rhetoric. So what should we do? The key concept to remember in terms of empowerment is *choice*: allow students to read and reflect upon the material, to raise their own questions, and come to their own conclusions. Talking at students—which I have seen happen and have, at times, been guilty of—is just another form of bank deposit instruction and contradicts what Freire and hooks believe we should be doing in the classroom. Instead of a lecture style, teaching “in the round” engages everyone in the class in discussion. This entails “democratic dialogue about lived experience, including the content and conduct of their own education” (82).

Do critical pedagogies necessarily require imposing a radical agenda on students? While it is our job to raise critical consciousness, teach students how to find credible scholarly research, and the art of crafting a logical argument, teachers must be mindful of the ways in which they approach sensitive, controversial issues such as these in order to avoid creating a defensive communication climate. Students will resist an overtly left-wing political agenda, as I have experienced as both a student and a teacher. Choosing material with students and asking them to come up with their own responses and arguments encourages the kind of democratic dialogue George recommends. Many students feel the need to agree with various authors and mimic their teachers' biases to earn a good grade. I do not believe students should be punished for questioning or resisting the reading material; they should be encouraged to think freely and independently and come to their own conclusions. Telling students, “No, you're wrong” in a way that communicates they do not have a right to their opinions inhibits the dialogic interactions Freire supports. Raising questions in response to a remark that reinforces the dominant ideology may be a more effective approach to engaging with students rather than a dogmatic one. Students naturally resent dogmatism, as they should. As George argues, “Because language and thought are inextricably linked, language instruction becomes a key site where dominant ideology is

reproduced—or disrupted” (78). In this regard, it *is* my responsibility as a teacher to challenge students to think critically about the ways in which oppressive forces have shaped their ways of seeing and moving through the world.

The Dark Side

The dark side remains a fascinating subject of study that attempts to reveal the mysteries that underlie human behavior and complex systems of power. In terms of rhetoric, composition, and communication studies the dark side proves itself to be an important subject of inquiry for it can “shed light on deeper structures, and perhaps deeper dreams, that count for the human condition” (Spitzberg and Cupach 19). For this study, **the dark side** functions as a theoretical lens for examining the inherent darkness of human behavior, processes, and systems to expand upon our knowledge of witnessing in conjunction with linguistic and visual representations of suffering (7). It is further intended to provide a contrast to the lighter, more optimistic side of witnessing: human capacity for empathy, the aim of Edu-Activism.

According to Spitzberg and Cupach, the dark side is an elusive and ambiguous term “sufficiently turbulent with suggestiveness” that refers to any variety of destructive, immoral actions that reflect violent, disturbing aspects of the human condition and society (18). It includes extreme forms of social violence such as massacres and genocide as well as “the everyday” (5). Rape, human trafficking, domestic abuse, torture, maiming, mass murder, genocide, and various other evil acts fall onto the darkest end of the spectrum. Less egregious aspects of the dark side include bullying, deception, betrayal, jealousy, envy, criticisms, and co-dependency. There are also non-human aspects of the dark side including but not limited to animal testing, poaching, destruction of the environment, and the privatization of natural resources. These are only a few of countless topics that would fall under the parameters of the dark side. The breadth of subject matter associated with the dark side can appeal to teachers and students from a wide-range of backgrounds, allowing them to select various topics of discussion and apply these accordingly.

My take on the dark side hones in specifically on witnessing traumatic history, specifically via war rhetoric and witness photography. Since definitions of the dark side are multiple and varied, I research concepts of evil through the lens of three notable scholars: Cynthia Card, Hannah Arendt, James Dawes, and Robert J. Lifton. In class, I refer to Card's atrocity paradigm and Lifton's definition of atrocity-producing situations to cover ethical considerations of committing evil acts (which I will discuss more in-depth later in chapters 2 and 3). Theories related to violence, power, and the concept of evil create a working definition of the dark side that I explored with students. Here, I will synthesize concepts from Card, Arendt, and Dawes to create a working concept on evil.

In *The Atrocity Paradigm* Cynthia Card aims "to articulate what makes deeds, people relationships, practices, intentions, and motives regarding what to do about evils and how best to live with them" (viii). The central idea of her subsequent book, *Confronting Evils*, centers on modern day paradigms of evil—namely, terrorism, genocide and torture—and focuses on evil deeds as a response to other evils. Card provides a comparison between culpable ignorance and weakness in contrast to evil and critiques previous philosophies of evil presented by Nietzsche and Kant. She problematizes the application of philosophical evils to current events by those in power for rallying the masses, for this exact abuse of power leads to further atrocities. She further critiques theological conceptions of evil and strives for a more secular approach. Card 1) attempts to distinguish evils such as genocide and premeditated murder from lesser wrongs; 2) tries to identify the evils that exist and the ways in which these are related to each other; 3) examines the ways in which evils are perpetrated on a large scale; 4) explores who the victims and witnesses are and how limited resources contribute to their suffering; and, 5) aims to figure out what responses to evils are the most honorable.

The Atrocity Paradigm assumes that there are norms in terms of morals but does not expand upon these. By reflecting upon the discrepancies in her original model, Card modifies the atrocity paradigm to include three key components. She argues that evils are inexcusable, evils need not be extraordinary, and not all institutional evil implies individual culpability. She describes the concept of evil as having two distinct components: one of

harm, and one of agency. Card argues that if events are not produced or aggravated by culpable wrongs, then they are not atrocities and that not all evils qualify as atrocities. Furthermore, she claims that lesser wrongs may be justified based on limited resources and access to forms of defense. So what can one do in response to intolerable harms in order to avoid culpability?

Card addresses the concern that defenses against evil deeds should be humane because violent responses by government result in a lack of trust among citizens and government officials. She argues that the electorate becomes resentful when the government responds aggressively without informing the public, which weakens the government's ethos. Card suggests a peaceful approach to resolving issues related to acts of evil. Her theory ignites innumerable questions. Is a peaceful approach too idealistic? When is it acceptable to engage in aggressive action as a response to evil deeds? When are violent retaliations justifiable? Is violence ever justifiable? Is it ever "humane" to engage in a counterattack that results in the deaths of non-combatants? What is the problem with fighting evil deeds with evil deeds? Is this ever avoidable? Card argues that the solution pertains to agency and responsibility in the form of "apologies, truth commissions, reparations, memorials, education..." (11). By responding in a humanitarian fashion, Card suggests that further evil deeds are preventable. What are the dangers, though, of responding in a peaceful manner if these approaches prove ineffective? Card points out that the dangers of reacting violently always outweigh the dangers of responding ethically and peacefully, and this is significant to acknowledge when determining a course of action.

So why does evil happen? Are human beings inherently evil? Or are only "monsters" evil? Let us consider the evil deeds committing by one Adolf Eichmann, the man responsible for setting into motion the bureaucratic system that led to the deaths of over 6 million Jews and over 5 million other "undesirables." When Hannah Arendt published her article "Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil," her presupposition that Eichmann was "simply unable to think" caused heated debates, outrage, and even death threats. Many members and supporters of the Jewish community as well as Arendt's friends and colleagues ostracized her for betraying her own people. By deeming "evil" as "banal,"

does that mean men who commit heinous acts should not be held accountable? Who is this arrogant philosopher to publish “rhetoric of the unfathomable”? Arendt’s ideas, albeit controversial, certainly have merit.

A crucial point that serves as a warning to all of us: ordinary people are capable of committing any variety of unimaginable crimes against humanity given the right set of circumstances. Arendt states, “The trouble with Eichmann was precisely that so many were like him, and that many were neither perverted nor sadistic, that they are, and still are, terribly and terrifyingly normal. From the viewpoint of our legal institutions and of our moral standards of judgment, this normality was much more terrifying than all the atrocities put together.”

Part of the reason Arendt’s report received such negative attention pertains to the time fame during which it was published. Even fifteen years after the war ended, survivors of the Holocaust did not want to hear about the banality of evil; they wanted the world to see these men as the monsters they truly are. Today, the intrinsic value of Arendt’s work vastly differs from its initial reception, appreciated and understood with historical hindsight. By stating Eichmann “couldn’t think,” hostile audiences perceived—incorrectly so—that Arendt was not holding Eichmann accountable or that he was not culpable for mass murder, especially because she deigns to place some of the responsibility on Jewish leaders for complying with S.S. orders to assist them in relocating the Jews. To the contrary, Arendt supported the death penalty for his crimes. What she examines are the legal complications of his case compounded by the power of Nazi ideology and its ability to brainwash the masses. Her central argument is far more convincing today than ever before: any ordinary man could have easily been a part of one of the worst war crimes in the history of mankind. Moreover, Eichmann’s refusal to abandon his beliefs or take accountability for his morally reprehensible action emphasizes the dangers of ideology.

Another important question to consider: are evil deeds ever excusable? S.S. officers who slaughtered innocent Jews, soldiers from the Japanese Imperial Army, and soldiers from Charlie Company have something in common regarding their testimonies: they do not believe that soldiers are held accountable for their actions if they are following direct

orders from superior officers. In different contexts, soldiers guilty of committing war crimes have argued that refusing to follow orders would have resulted in severe consequences. This premise encapsulates the essence of Arendt's "banality of evil": ordinary men are extremely capable of committing evil deeds based on an incapacity to engage in independent thinking. How does this "inability to think" happen? Does this viewpoint excuse perpetrators from taking accountability for the harm they incur?

In *Evil Men*, James Dawes challenges this "moral myopia" by daring to interview perpetrators who inflicted war crimes against humanity during the Second Sino-Japanese War under the pretenses that confessions are a form of testimony that can assist with cultural healing. Upon interviewing several Japanese men who experienced "rehabilitation" following their capture at Chinese POW camps, Dawes highlights the psychology of groupthink mentality during wartime, the suffering of perpetrators who experience legitimate remorse for committing war crimes, and the importance of their apologies in order to provide closure for those who continue to grieve. Dawes writes about this subject matter with as much personal distance as possible while acknowledging the rhetorical and ethical challenges relative to such a project.

Not only does Dawes acknowledge the "rhetoric of mystery" that surrounds trauma, he brings into question underlying forces responsible for causing massacres to humanize perpetrators. Simultaneously, he addresses the "paradox of evil": "Conceptualizing perpetrators as people we can understand is a moral affront, and refusing to conceptualize perpetrators as people we can understand is a moral affront" (34). The notion of evil as "banal" caused extraordinary controversy when Arendt suggested Eichmann was not a monster but rather ordinary. In agreement with Arendt, Dawes argues that bureaucratic methods and ideologies are the true evils and ordinary men are quite capable of committing and justifying evil deeds (36). In fact, to ignore that ordinary men are quite capable of committing atrocities is rather dangerous.

Like Arendt, Dawes attributes the root cause of atrocity to a variety of factors to explore the ways in which ordinary men justify mass murder. "Today, most scholars trace genocidal behavior to organizational identity, social context, and national ideologies, rather

than individual personalities” (46). Dawes argues that due to the social nature of humans, people instinctively conform to different groups as a process of identify formation. Thus, xenophobia and racism form tensions that lead to violence as one group attempts to assert its superiority over another (45). Robert J. Lifton supports this notion by describing the reasoning behind the Nazi medical doctors who violated their Hippocratic oaths by referring to Jews as a disease, “...a gangrenous appendix in the body of mankind” (16). Following World War I, the Germans believed their culture suffered from an illness—“racial tuberculosis” that could only be cured by exterminating the Jews (16). The ideology of racism injected itself into German culture and spread like a fungus as the Nazi state used the propaganda machine to argue for the “purification” of the Aryan race (17). “Indeed, fanaticism is a necessary aspect of human identity, and a prerequisite for social order—although when people are fanatical about things that fit in with social norms or our own values, we don’t call it fanaticism. We call it ‘belief’” (Dawes 62).

Part of indoctrinating ordinary men to become killers involves a process of conditioning. Shaved heads, uniforms, repetitive language (chants, slogans, catch-phrases), conformity of schedules, isolation, lack of access to outside information, and sleep deprivation compounded with a system of rewards and punishments (including beatings) for following or not following orders allows those in power to break men down by stripping them of their individuality and training them to develop groupthink. Through bullying and peer pressure, soldiers are exposed to stressful conditions that transform them into killing machines. To create a killer, “you must build toward cruelty patiently” (66). The military trains soldiers to rid themselves of guilt by learning ways to strip victims of their identities. As interviewee Kaneko-San explained, “You must erode the identity of those you need to do the killing, whether soldiers or torturers, by systematically humiliating them and stripping them of their normal domestic identity” (54).

While it is not uncommon for the confusion of war to cause a shift in moral realities, some soldiers express remorse for their actions whereas others remain unrepentant (55-6). The men Dawes befriended participated in his study for cathartic reasons: they felt great shame for the terrible crimes they committed and hoped their confessions may provide

resolve for survivors and their families. In Lifton's interviews, many men "had the greatest psychological difficulty concerning shooting women and children, especially children. Many experienced a sense of guilt in their dreams, which could include various forms of punishment or retribution" (15). Other Nazi doctors "perceived their terrible but necessary work of killing" as a sacrifice, a burden; they turned themselves into pitiful martyrs in order to justify the abuses they committed (Dawes 55). Whether examining the Holocaust or the Second Sino-Japanese War, it is clear that the brutalities of soldiers originated from racist ideology, fanaticism, fear, obedience, and surrendered agency (61). This is also apparent in the training of Vietnam vets as well. Barbara Ehrenreich states:

For violence to be extensive over space and durable over time, it needs many concentric rings of support. Massacres would not be possible without a massive population of collaborators who are not directly involved. You need the workers and bureaucrats who maintain institutions that produce violence. And you need the bystanders...who do nothing more than wave national flags or antiwar banners, like supporters of competing football teams (As cited in Dawes 71).

The bureaucratic and ideological forces behind the Holocaust are central to Hannah Arendt's assessment of Adolf Eichmann's trial in Israel. Arendt argues that Eichmann's integral role in the murderous machine of the Holocaust had more to do with his "inability to think" beyond the bureaucracy of following orders and his desire for climbing the ranks as opposed to the fact he was inherently evil. In fact, Arendt observed that Eichmann was rather mundane and incapable of realizing the horror of what his "work" was actually doing. Therefore, following orders had nothing to do with his ability to act as a moral, thinking human being. Secondary to his utter stupidity, Nazi ideology programmed his way of thinking to the point he felt justified for his actions because he was only following orders. He could not be held accountable in terms of the law because he the law told him what to do.

The problem with this viewpoint is that it holds institutional structures of power responsible for evil deeds that occur during war time conditions rather than focusing on

individual accountability. By blaming the hierarchal structures that influence foreign policy and military strategies, any soldier who commits a crime against humanity under direct orders is absolved of their crimes: such is the nature of war time conditions. It is far easier to hold a person accountable for a crime, but how to you hold an ideology, a country, or a regime accountable? The paradoxes of evil most certainly complicate the witnessing process in terms of ensuring that victims of atrocity receive the reparations they deserve for their suffering.

While my research tends to fall on the darkest end of the spectrum, the dark side encompasses varying degrees of harmful occurrences. The theme of the courses I teach reflects my personal research interests, therefore the evil deeds and the ethical conundrums associated with war become my “take” on the dark side. I use examples from my own knowledge-base to illustrate ways student may approach their research paper and subsequent multimodal project. Students are encouraged to create their own working definition of the dark side based on their research interests and experience. An engineering student might be interested in the need for renewable energy, so he or she might want to research “The Dark Side of Fossil Dependency.” A nursing student might be concerned with recent vaccination debates, so he or she could examine “The Dark Side of Anti-Vaxxer Campaigns” to raise awareness. From “The Dark Side of Beauty” to “The Dark Side of Hate Speech,” students have produced creative and inspiring topics across the spectrum. Exploring the dark side ultimately supports the underlying goals of liberatory pedagogy, for it challenges students to confront issues that might make them uncomfortable in order to enhance their capacity for empathic engagement. The dark side and Edu-activism are inextricably linked; it is through the darkness that we come to see the light and challenge ourselves to participate in positive transformation.

Rhetorical Witnessing

While students examine primary concepts associated with rhetorical witnessing, the underlying goals of the course extend beyond what I cover in the class. Within the context of the course, students focus mainly upon rhetorical witnessing as it relates to bearing witness, testimony, recognition, responsibility, and response-ability. I use these concepts

like the lens of a camera to examine visual and linguistic frames of the dark side. In class, students read articles by Dori Laub, Nancy Goodman, Marilyn Meyers, and John Durham Peters. Other concepts that I discuss in lecture and present on the course website draws from such notable theorists as Judith Butler, Kelly Oliver, and Wendy Hesford. These authors, among many others, support my research on rhetorical witnessing.

One of the most frequent questions I receive when I tell people the topic of my dissertation is: What is rhetorical witnessing? Why is it rhetorical? This is, perhaps, one of the most important concepts to address at the onset of the course. Whereas witnessing merely implies “seeing,” rhetorical witnessing is the act of “saying”; rhetorical witnessing is literally the act of bearing witness to traumatic event using the triad of speaker, audience, and text. As a field of study, rhetorical witnessing emerged from Holocaust studies, which is an important historical reference point. The exigency for bearing witness to the atrocities in concentration camps meant life or death for numerous inmates. A Viktor Frankl recalls in his compelling memoir *Man’s Search for Meaning*, people survived just by holding on to the hope that they could one day tell the world about the travesties they experienced so that it never happens again. Goodman argues, “The Holocaust can never be transformed—but through the power of witnessing, the mind gains expressiveness and greater capacity to see contemporary mass and individual trauma and the desire to intervene” (7).

The concept of **rhetorical witnessing** involves two key components: *seeing* and *responding*. When a viewer gazes upon an image of the body in pain, a perceptual process occurs in response to the stimuli. To view the body in pain is to recognize—to “re-cognize,” if you will—what it means for another human being to endure pain. The viewer will naturally refer to his or her own experiences of pain to interpret the meaning of the image and may or may not feel empathy as a result. A response to the image *always* occurs, regardless of whether viewers experience a desire to do something. Recognition *demand*s response-ability—the power to act *always* exists, but it remains the responsibility of the viewer to turn a blind eye or respond (Oliver).

Witnessing implies certain existential principles: “being” there, recording the event, confronting an atrocity, and spiritual transcendence are a few key factors (Lifton 20). A

first-person witness is anyone who is present during an event. In Holocaust studies, the survivor who lives to provide his or her testimony following the atrocity is a first-person witness (Hesford 106; Flynn 1). However, anyone else who was present during a traumatic event (i.e. a bystander, a perpetrator, photographer) also qualifies as a first-person witness. **A second-person witness** is an individual who witnesses the first witness bear witness to an event. A police officer, family member or friend, priest, psychologist, doctor, interviewer, etc. who listens to the first witness and shares in his or her suffering qualifies as a second-person witness. **A third-person witness** experiences the atrocity via first or second-person testimony (i.e. interviews, narrative devices, photographs, etc.) (Flynn 1). Anyone who is spatially and temporally removed from an event is considered a third-person witness.

Testimony is integral to the process of **bearing witness** to atrocity and may take on countless forms. Poetry, short stories, ethnography, and narrative film are not traditionally considered legitimate forms of testimony, yet the telling and re-telling of these stories is essential if we are ever to work toward understanding the “truths” of human suffering. “The truth is always something that is told, not something that is known. If there were no speaking or writing, there would be no truth about anything. There would only be what is” (*Regarding Susan Sontag*, Dir. Nancy D. Kates). Through testimony, listeners become part of the process of rhetorical witnessing in an attempt, or struggle, to better understand human experience in all its complexity, variety, and multiplicity. The victims of trauma become obscured; those who survive can provide testimony regarding the traumas they witness, but what of the victims who cannot speak for themselves? What of the deceased? In this regard, frames of war as depicted in photography keep the story going, re-telling the trauma over and over again so the world will *never* forget what happened to them.

The terms “responsibility” and “response-ability” as these are referred to in this dissertation are distinct from one another. These working definitions derive from Simone de Beauvoir’s *The Ethics of Ambiguity* and Kelly Oliver’s *Witnessing: Beyond Recognition*. **Responsibility** is used interchangeably with “ethics,” a requirement for living authentically (Beauvoir) and sympathizing with the pain of others (Oliver). **Response-**

ability refers specifically to *agency* and *power*, for it denotes our ability to recognize trauma and respond to it as empowered individuals. As noted by Greer, agency is not something that we acquire but rather something we already have. Human beings exist as both actors and shapers who are acted upon and shaped by their rhetorical cultures. As Greer describes, students are already acted upon and shaped by their rhetorical cultures, but they must choose the ways in which to act upon and shape the world in which they are immersed. One way to accomplish this is through multimodal composition, which I will discuss more in-depth near the end of the literature review.

Examining various frames of rhetoric is one way for students to witness traumatic history. Moreover, understanding how rhetors frame events and experiences helps students learn ways to construct linguistic and visual frames responsibly and response-ably. I will discuss these concepts next.

Frames/framing

In a broad sense, **framing** is inextricable from perceptual processes as well as processes of representation; through a method of selection, framing, and subjective interpretation composers have the power to orchestrate an image to their preference (Sturken and Cartwright 12). Each image becomes trapped within the confines of the frame; therefore, viewers must maintain an awareness of the “selection” process to think critically about what it actually *is* as opposed to what it *represents*. In this project, the concept of framing as it is rooted in Burke’s *Rhetoric of Motives* can be applied to myriad forms of testimony including (but not limited to) photographs, reproductions of photographs, art, creative nonfiction, oral histories, poetry, and fiction. Theories related to framing can also be applied to multimodal composition pedagogy, for the various projects students might engage in during such a course (e.g. research-based project or an audio/visual projects) reflect third-person witnessing, a powerful form of testimony that has the power to shape rhetorical culture by entering the digital realm. This is an objective of the major projects for this course.

All rhetoric involves persuasion through the process of “framing.” As Burke puts it, “the insemination of a doctrine” from messenger to receiver that intends to inform but,

more importantly, to “move a man from here to there by pushing” (177). Whether linguistic or visual, rhetoric is a means of communication between different “classes of entities” (i.e. sexes, classes, groups), a “spiritual” engagement that involves a “courtship” of sorts (Burke, *Rhetoric of Motives*, 176-7). The composer extends a hand to beckon those who oppose him or her through a process of identification, a requirement for successfully engaging the others in the rhetorical process (27-29). As Burke describes, the rhetor must construct symbols in such a way that identification becomes possible with those who are least like him/her.

Although it seems simple enough to conceive of a photograph as “framed,” readers often neglect to consider the rhetorical dimensions of history across literary genres (i.e. poetry, history, fiction, and drama), but these, too, reflect frames of certain experiences. In terms of writing, composers frame their work through similar—albeit very distinct—processes. Just as a photographer uses a viewfinder, aperture, lens, shutter speed, film, and lighting to create a picture, a writer wields his or her pen by implementing various literary forms and devices. The fiction writer uses character, plot, theme, setting, and point of view to tell a story, whereas the poet relies on meter, rhythm, and rhyme, and both genres depend upon symbolism, imagery, and figurative language to imitate reality. The writer refers to his or her subjectivity to select particular writing devices in order to frame some aspect of reality. As Sontag remarks, “What I love—what draws me very much to writing is it’s a way of paying attention to the world. You’re just an instrument for tuning in to as much reality as you can” (*Regarding Susan Sontag*, Dir. Nancy D. Kates). Neither writing nor photography are mimetic but rather interpretive and subjective, for both forms of material culture are *representations* of reality. These may not reflect absolutes of truth but fragments of knowledge that are embedded in all of material culture like shards in a mosaic.

In terms of the visual, I expand upon this working definition of framing by referring to Judith Butler’s *Frames of War: When is Life Grievable?* In “The Ethics of Torture in Photography,” Butler considers the effects of atrocity photographs entering the public sphere and criticizes the process of “selection” that determines whose lives are considered grievable and whose are not. When those who suffer are captured in a photograph, their

plights may or may not receive recognition; those whose stories are told might be lucky enough to receive assistance or reparations for their suffering. More often than not, their stories remain untold or ignored. Social existence manifests from material culture. Without frames of atrocity—visual or written—witnesses continue to endure silencing and erasure, so survivors must continue to rely on various forms of testimony to become part of material culture. Humanitarian efforts depend upon it, and one of the goals of teaching and composing should be working toward the common good.

Linguistic Frames

According to Dr. Kenneth Burke, the human perception of reality is constructed through a system of symbols that becomes compacted over time, therefore reality is “built up through nothing but our symbol system” (*Language as Symbolic Action* 19). Recording history through linguistic or visual frames remains problematic, for it is subjective and interpretive. A moment in time cannot truly be captured by pen nor camera lens. Despite this notion, linguistic frames of the dark side function as a kind of testimony that teaches students to think critically about the depiction of historical events, testimony as a frame of human experience, and the ways in which these frames impact our rhetorical culture.

A solitary linguistic frame represents a small piece of a much larger puzzle (as indicated by I.A. Richard’s metaphor criticism). Each genre—whether it is historical nonfiction, ethnography, poetry, fiction, or drama—represents a subjective, interpretative aspect of reality. Many works of literature reflect 1st, 2nd, or 3rd person witnessing by providing a unique perspective on experience from victims, survivors, bystanders, perpetrators, historians, journalists, and writers. Arguably, all linguistic framing of events function as a form of rhetoric based on the invention, disposition, and style used to convey experiences as well as the ability to shape beliefs, actions, attitudes, or values (Abrams 268).

Including linguistic frames of the dark side in such a course serves numerous purposes. First, it provides historical, political, and social contextualization to culture and complements visual representations. Secondly, it provides a contrast to visual frames to demonstrate the unique yet overlapping orchestration of symbols through various modes of communication. Furthermore, it acknowledges the craft of rhetoric as *both* a science and

an art: history fictionalizes just as literature historicizes (LaCapra 7). Finally, it reinforces the paradox that our capacity to understand the meaning of human experience is both limited and endless: “Every new bit of knowledge is merely indicative of a wider ignorance” (Hejinian). Just as the photographer uses his or her view finder to select and compose an image, the forms and conventions used by skilled writers to compose linguistic representations of reality are worthy of examination and provide an interesting complement to visual testimony.

Visual Frames

Ballengee in *The Wound and the Witness* proposes that images of torture are useful rhetorical devices “by combining bodily empathy with ethical and aesthetic judgment” (1). Witnessing requires the recognition of human suffering, inspiring sympathy, and raising questions of the ethics behind “regarding” the pain of others. Emphasizing visual representations of the body in pain can trigger a response in viewers based on their experiences of physical pain. When a witness observes pain inflicted upon the body, the viewer (i.e. 2nd or 3rd person witness) assigns meaning to the event through a decoding process, but the image in and of itself is ambiguous (1-3). frames of the body in pain can be powerful motivators when it comes to encouraging humanitarian values.

Significantly, material and verbal expressibility are both necessary parts of “working through” trauma, whether collective or individual. Suffering demands attention and a response. To view the body in pain and write about trauma is to expand upon our humanness by becoming more knowledgeable, compassionate beings. Without visibility, we can neither witness nor recognize, but if we can recognize the suffering of those whose frames permeate the rhetorical culture, we can use our agency in an ethical manner. Part of this challenge comes from the impossibility of language or the linguistic struggle that occurs when trying to convey the experience of pain (Scarry 4). Language and the visual are inextricable, coded systems, and yet—as Elaine Scarry points out in *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World*—there are no words for actualizing physical pain. If pain has “no voice,” then what is the function of visual representations as a means of articulating pain? Oliver in her chapters on “Vision” and “Seeing Race” makes the theoretical argument that the perceptual processes involved in regarding the body in pain

enables viewers to share their suffering and, in effect, empathize. Visual representations of the dark side take viewers to worlds that exist far beyond the here and now and may help students understand the vastness and complexity of issues related to rhetorical witnessing. As students examine various traumas, they are compelled to think critically about the state of the world today in a way that connects them with people from whom they are far removed. Oliver reminds us, “Far from being alienated from the world of others, we are intimately and continually connected, and responding, to them” (198).

Including visual representations of trauma as part of the course content serves many purposes. According to the Visual Teaching Alliance, sixty-five percent of people are visual learners; therefore, many students intuitively understand the impact images have when they permeate a media system (Gangwar & Rzakko-Henry). What they may not have considered, though, are the ways in which these frames represent a type of witnessing and, ultimately, shape cultural memory. Show any American a photograph of the Twin Towers falling, and they will each have a unique interpretation of bearing witness to the event. They can describe where they were, what they were doing, and what the impact was of viewing frames of 9/11 repeatedly in the media. Significantly, images that resonate have the power to instill empathy, altruism, and ethics—three values that are crucial to fighting against social injustices. By writing rhetorical analyses and engaging in deliberative discourse, students can put relevant concepts into praxis as they grapple with the ethics and agency required of witnessing. It is through a type of scaffolding process that students craft their audio/visual projects as responsible, response-able witnesses.

Multimodal Composition: From Darkness into the Light

A writing-intensive course that emphasizes multimodality serves numerous purposes. Sheppard argues, “As multimedia technologies become increasingly sophisticated, the need for communicators who can utilize these capabilities in a knowledgeable and practical manner will also continue to grow” (126). Furthermore, digital technologies are used in everyday life—whether school, work, or the social sphere—and require users to decode and encode linguistic and visual (and sometimes aural) messages in clear, contextualized ways that enhance meaning between users and audiences. Frequent exposure to the digital

realm requires students to learn how to critically interpret rhetorical devices; it also requires that students learn meaning-making using textual and visual elements. By understanding the principles of rhetorical design, students may be better able to interpret linguistic and visual elements while simultaneously learning ways to maintain ethical composition practices as they move through the processes of composing their own multimodal projects.

Taggart et al. state, “Recent scholarship is working to clarify multimodal composition as a matter of process (and cognition) as well as product, of pedagogical perspective as well as praxis, and of media that are physical as well as digital” (16). By assigning multimodal projects that require multiple layers of communication, teachers and students can collaborate and create meaningful projects they can use as part of their professional development. As Hocks illustrates, by teaching students to critique and create “professional hypertexts,” they can “design their own technological artifacts that use these strategies but are more speculative or activist in nature” (645). Hocks’ description reflects the essence of an enlightened, transformative pedagogy.

Teaching students about bearing witness to dark frames means encouraging them to create research-based multimodal projects that are meaningful and thought-provoking. Witnessing the dark side remains a subject that warrants greater application across the Humanities: it not only provides educators with the necessary tools for raising awareness, it sheds light on that which exists on the opposite end of the spectrum: empathy. Smith defines **empathy** as “sensitivity to, and understanding of, the mental states of others” (3). The courses I teach stress the importance of expanding upon the capacity for empathy when encountering the body in pain—a phenomena understood by all living creatures—and the “linguistic struggle” of expressing that pain to others. Students examine visual representations of trauma supplemented with literary frames of history to learn theoretical concepts associated with rhetoric, ethics, and agency that they can practically apply to their own work. This requires that students craft their final project with the goal of instilling responsibility and response-ability in their audience. After publishing their final multimodal projects on the internet, students can engage a larger audience in the discussion, therefore transforming the rhetorical culture by leaving a “trail” (Ingold).

Responsibility: Is Composition an Ethical Obligation?

French existential philosopher Simone de Beauvoir engages in dialogue with and expands upon Jean Paul Sartre's *Being and Nothingness* with the 1945 piece *The Ethics of Ambiguity*. This work provides a useful framework in responsibility from which to draw examples of being in the world "authentically." She examines the angst that results from the human condition: the state our world, a general feeling of helplessness to make change, and the choices with which we are all faced. What intrigues me the most about Beauvoir's work is her emphasis on choices to encourage people to take responsibility and engage with these ethical conundrums response-ably. For this reason, her spin on existential philosophy exemplifies the theoretical underpinnings that inspire my own writing and research as well as the design of my courses. Although I have yet to directly incorporate her work into the course content itself, these concepts guide my teaching philosophy: as teachers, we have a responsibility to teach students how to think critically about the current state of affairs to show them positive ways of being-in-the-world, helping them find their writing voices and, more importantly, realize that their voices matter. Students remain very much unaware that they have the power to influence the world in which we live through creative expression.

Many people associate existentialism with atheism. The "God is dead" notion that many associate with existential philosophy seems to suggest there are no consequences to human actions. This is a common misconception. According to Sartre, the "negation of the self" in the absence of God gives us no cause for being, but Beauvoir fervently rejects this perspective. Whether we are rewarded or punished after this life does not absolve us of our ethical responsibility to live an authentic life. If anything, the absence of God places more responsibility on human actions because our life is not pre-determined. Free will is the source of our angst because it demands that we bear the responsibility of our actions; we cannot assign causation outside of ourselves. Furthermore, we adopt this notion of ourselves and our agency in the world as a grain of sand in a desert—individually too insignificant to invoke any type of positive change in terms of the bigger picture; this leads to bad faith (7). Our subjectivity denotes both our presence in the world and being-for-

oneself while simultaneously the human condition plagues us with the notion of an empty subjectivity. We stare into the abyss of death and experience sterile anguish in the face of our mundane existence. Being-toward-death robs us of our choices and any attempts to enact our will is merely a vain attempt *to be God*. The excuses man will make to avoid taking responsibility for his actions are unfathomable.

It seems reasonable enough to assume that “Godless men” are more likely to commit evil deeds. And yet, how many Muslims were slaughtered by Christians during the Crusades? How many millions of Jews were slaughtered by Christians during the Holocaust? How many early Christians were murdered by Jews? How many millions of Christians have been persecuted in the 20th alone by those of Muslim faith? How many Jews have been killed by Muslims and vice versa? These supposedly “God-fearing” people became murderers in the name of religion. The notion that our lives on Earth are without consequence if we reject religion is absurd. “One cannot start by saying our earthly existence has or has not importance, for it depends on us to give it importance” (15). In other words, we lock in the value of our own lives based on the actions we take. Regardless of whether we transcend (or descend) to another realm after this life is inconsequential to the world we leave behind. *This life matters*, the choices we make matter, and there are very real consequences to our actions regardless of the crosses we bear.

Simone de Beauvoir’s theory on ethics struggles to reconcile the notions of freedom and determination (21). If there is no predestined path for us, then there is only free will—i.e. choices regarding our being-in-the-world. Living an authentic life demands that we take responsibility for our actions. *The Ethics of Ambiguity* carries with it the same moral premise of any religious doctrine: be a good person, treat others like you would like to be treated, and work toward the common good. Make choices that will make this world a better place. Beauvoir emphasizes that we do not need religion to teach us to understand the consequences of our actions in order to live responsibly. “Separate existents can . . . be bound to each other, that their individual freedoms can forge laws valid for all” (17).

The consequences of being-in-the-world are real. Beauvoir argues that we do not need an imaginary, all-seeing eye in the sky lording over us to keep us in line. The panoptic

design of religion is a source of control that provides the idea that the quality of our existence after this life are contingent upon the choices we make in this world. But the choices we make matter regardless of whether the wrath of God punishes us in the afterlife. All the power of being-in-the-world responsibly exists inside every one of us, regardless of our personal religious beliefs (or lack thereof). By assigning causation externally, it relieves us of taking accountability for our own actions. “The world is not a given world, foreign to man, one to which he has to force himself to yield from without. It is the world willed by man, insofar as his will expresses his genuine reality” (16). Man makes the world what it is and gives his life meaning based on how he chooses to move through the world. If man is racist and violent, he will leave behind traces of racism and violence.

Opressors who have all the money, power, territory, and material possessions they would ever need always want more for themselves and less for others because they somehow feel entitled to it. “The oppressor is a human freedom”; he chooses to oppress others, but the oppressed do not necessarily choose their oppression. Slaves, for example, lack the consciousness necessary for questioning their servitude and as such, they accept the notion that their voices do not matter. The less one has, socially and economically, the more likely he or she will accept the state of the world as a “given”—e.g. women internalizing their subordination to men (51). Beauvoir describes the sub-man, the serious man, the nihilist, the adventurer, and the tyrant as unethical positions that are self-serving and oppressive. The *sub-man* is blind and deaf; he feels no love or desire. “He will proclaim certain opinions; he will take shelter behind a label; and to hide his indifference he will readily abandon himself to verbal outbursts or even physical violence” (Beauvoir 47). The *serious man* is a fanatic who “imposes the State not for the individuals, but against them” (51). The *nihilist* believes in nothingness, the inevitability of death and the emptiness that follows, staring into the abyss and embracing the falsity that there are no consequences. He is the epitome of bad faith. Like Columbus, the *adventurer* travels the world to reap, pillage, and take what he can; everything in his path is his for the taking. Like the serious man, the *tyrant* is a maniacally passionate man (e.g. Hitler) who sees the other as an object, less than human and therefore undeserving of recognition. These unethical positions stand

in contrast to the *artist-writer* whose generosity of spirit lives within the words, images, and tones of their work. The role of the artist-writer is to protect the disenfranchised “from becoming the object of another’s will” (74). To the artist-writer, giving in to the urgency to create and express the darkness of the world to harvest light is the ultimate responsibility.

Man “spontaneously casts himself into the world”; he can certainly choose laziness, cowardice, apathy or turning a blind eye to social injustice, or he can choose freedom (25). Choosing to do nothing is complicit-ous. “Vitality, sensitivity, intelligence”—these are productive ways of casting ourselves into the world (44). “To will oneself moral and to will oneself free are one and the same decision” (24). Leaving “traces” of ourselves through composition practices is an act of “becoming” in this world. For many students, composing may seem like a fruitless effort. “Ignorance and error are facts as inescapable as prison walls” (41), but as teachers, we have the response-ability to show students how to responsibly use their own agency. Analyzing and writing about visual and linguistic frames of the dark side guides students through their own composition process by combing theory and praxis. (I discuss student projects more in-depth in chapter 5.)

Response-ability: Deliberation, Justification, and Judgment

Classroom discussion is another crucial part of shedding light on these important matters and getting students engaged with course material. It is through deliberation, justification, and judgment as these occur in classroom debate that students can begin to understand why delving into the dark side, why examining dark frame, and why creating dark frames are crucial for shedding light on the important matters.

In Bryan Garsten’s *Saving Persuasion*, he addresses such topics as deliberation, justification, judgment and responsibility. Each of these concepts can and should be practically applied within the composition classroom. **Deliberation** is “the act of thinking about or discussing something and deciding carefully” (Merriam-Webster). Garsten claims, “People do not deliberate over things they cannot control . . . We deliberate about what we can do ourselves” (8). Deliberation should become an integral function of the composition course, although one aspect of this quotation is somewhat problematic.

Undergraduate students in a composition classroom oftentimes fail to understand that they have agency, that their voices matter, and that the work they produce can have powerful, meaningful effects. They may believe that they have no control over anything that occurs outside the realm of the university much less occurrences beyond our national borders. Therefore, the process of deliberation can seem futile and the writing process an arduous task that produces little satisfaction.

Given the manipulative and pandering power of the media and propaganda, it seems reasonable that student writers are apathetic to national and global affairs. We tend to assign a negative connotation to the art of rhetoric, for "...today we confront not only religious fanaticism but also a distinctively modern form of zealotry born as a response to liberalism." (17) U.S. politics represents two polarized groups with "like minded individuals talking to one another, leaving other citizens increasingly alienated" (4). Another problem pertains to the use of images in the mass media to sway public opinion and control perceptions. Since much of the media is owned by corporations that provide financial backing to the parties in power, the scope of the information shared with the public is egregiously distorted. These frames include selected images that fulfill an agenda while other relevant frames are excluded or difficult to access. Viewers are "caught between two forms of dogmatic rhetoric that seem to require opposite solutions" (18) leaving the public feeling apathetic toward nameless victims who reside beyond our reach. Moreover, the saturation of violent images by the media machine desensitizes viewers and convinces them that they lack the power to help solve these problems, so why bother?

This "so what?" attitude is common among undergraduate students who assume it is best to leave it up to the activists and the politicians to solve issues of transnational concern. It is time to change the educational paradigm, and it is the responsibility of instructors to help students not only become response-able writers through embodiment, but to create an open forum for discussion where students can address controversial issues and use their agency more effectively by composing meaningful work. By researching a pedagogy of witnessing and assessing the outcomes, I hope to learn different ways of applying this

knowledge in the classroom. Garsten's notions of justification, judgment, deliberation and responsibility are useful in light of these interests.

Creating an open forum for discussion where deliberation can occur is a significant starting point for taking action. One of the most important places for deliberation to take place is in the classroom, but the challenge is motivating an apathetic audience to act responsibly. Instructors need to select concepts that are engaging and significant in order to inspire students to write responsibly, but how can this be accomplished? According to Garsten, the discussion must be justified. "When we justify a course of action, we argue that it is just, legitimate, or reasonable" (5). Instructors must ask students to come together and raise important questions "whatever their social position, or more particular aims and interests, or their religious, philosophical, or moral views" (6). Garsten illustrates that practical judgment and response are linked to the activity of deliberation, and "we only deliberate about how to respond in situations where there is no clear or definite answer, where we can control our response to some extent, and where certain responses seem better than others" (8). Affective responses are a skill that must be developed, but Garsten cautions against a focus on pathos, for it has the ability to skew one's judgment. An effective response emerges from a balanced perspective that includes a mixture of educated accuracy and natural empathy as it occurs through the process of deliberation (9).

When teaching a subject related to war rhetoric as I do, it is difficult not to experience feelings of guilt and empathy when confronted with images of suffering, whether these images depict maimed bodies from the Rwanda genocide or innocent civilians in Sudan who have been subjected to famine. Visually confronting the body as a site of pain causes our bodies and minds respond judgmentally. Garsten defines **justification** as "...the mental activity of responding to particular situations in a way that draws upon our sensations, beliefs, and emotions without being dictated by them..." (7). He argues that a mixture of detachment and sympathy leads to a more effective response, and it is important for instructors to teach students this skill (9). The question then becomes: how can this be done?

With the proper reading materials to accompany visual rhetoric as well as open, candid discussions, students will be able to contextualize the meaning of select images and texts as it relates to specific events. Testimonies in and of themselves remain ambiguous and are certainly subject to interpretation. Furthermore, “certain forms of ‘framing’ influence individuals’ perceptions of their interests and their calculations about how to pursue them” (20). Oral and written testimonies fail to tell the full story (Butler 66), and images are “selective” and only serve to provide “a partial ‘imprint’ of reality” (Sontag 4). Audience perceptions may also become skewed by the bias or agenda of the rhetors who frame their testimonies. What resides beyond the frame remains unknown, and the issue of ‘truth’ and realism of testimonies become further problematized using aesthetic devices.

Judgment can be defined in many ways. In the classroom, I refer to **judgment** as the way we form an opinion based on evidence and our moral values (Merriam-Webster). In terms of practical judgment and ethical responsibilities, “...capacity for judgment is best utilized when [one] is engaged in the activity of deliberation” (124). From Aristotle’s point of view, people make judgments more effectively when they consider their own needs and rights, which is part of the deliberative process (125). From there, they can develop “a prudent sensitivity to the passions and interests of different audiences, and a decent respect for the knowledge of probabilities enshrined in common sense and ordinary experience” (22). In the final chapter of Garsten’s *Saving Persuasion*, he launches the chapter with a brief explanation of why he defends the importance of rhetoric. He claims to defend rhetoric because of its motivational power and ability to spur listeners into action who remain apathetic to the political issues that affect society. The exigency for teaching students about the significance of rhetoric in contemporary society can be best summarized by the following presumption: “In a time when we find our lives increasingly governed by the standardized rules of large bureaucracies and corporations and by the technocratic decisions of policy-making experts, it is important not to lose track of our natural human capacity to make sense of complex situations for ourselves” (175). This passage demonstrates why, more than ever, it is critical to encourage and enable students to use their agency to compose ethically and response-ably.

McLaren and Jaramillo argue that being an educator is political *by definition*; therefore, activism in the classroom should be a priority. Teachers must strive to examine the highest level of knowledge, and they have an enormous responsibility to actively protest social injustices. Any course in the fields of rhetoric, communication and creative arts, or composition provides the perfect setting for a subject as important as rhetorical witnessing. Whether from a first, second, or third-person standpoint, composing becomes part of the process of “working through” trauma, a testimony that begs for recognition and response. Exploring and engaging in the process of witnessing remains a sobering endeavor, one that creates discomfort and general upset. However, one always has the choice to face the darkness and resist oppression or take the path of least resistance. Now that I have provided a literature review, I will describe the method/methodology of this dissertation as it relates to the concept of frames/framing.

II

Method/Methodology

The nature of this dissertation is hermeneutic and involves an interdisciplinary approach to examine intersections across studies in rhetorical criticism, critical theory, communication and culture, critical pedagogy, visual studies, and multimodal composition. The overarching organizational method mirrors that of a camera lens that begins with the larger framework in chapter one; zooms further into the subject matter with each subsequent chapter, and zooms out again in the final chapter. First, I begin with broader concepts associated with a pedagogy of witnessing—what I refer to as the framework of the framework. Then, I examine linguistic frames of the dark side. Next, I delve deeper into the dark side by exploring visual frames. Afterward, I hone in even further by focusing on multimodal composition as a move toward ethics and agency. In the final chapter, I zoom out to amplify my position as well as discuss the results, benefits, and limitations of implementing a pedagogy of witnessing in the multimodal classroom. Chapters one and five represent the outermost frame of this research—what I refer to as the framework of the framework. Freire, hooks, George, Garsten, Beauvoir—concepts associated with these

theorists are not discussed in class but underlie the entire design of the course. Consider the diagram I created in figure 1:

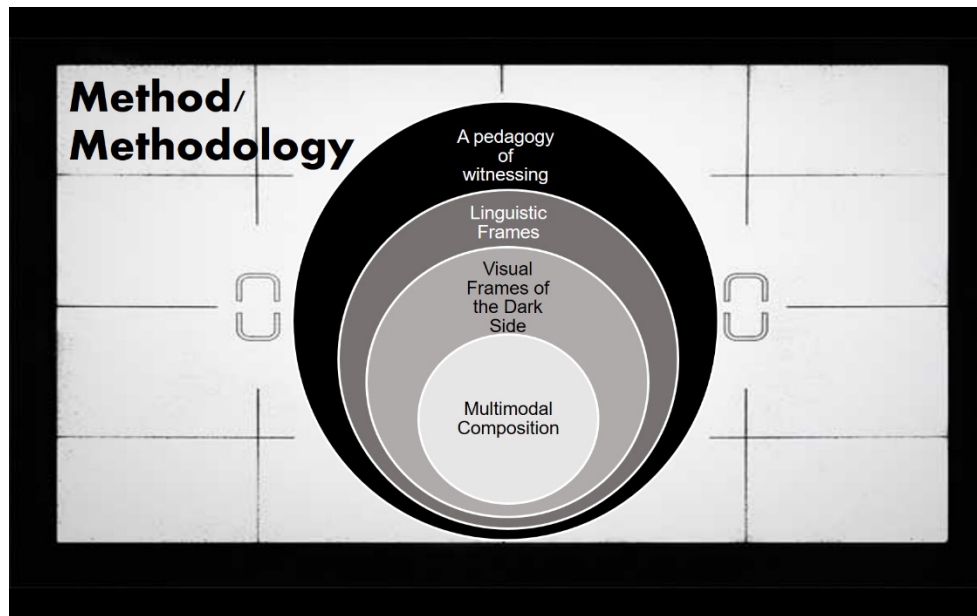


Fig. 1. Visual representation of this dissertation’s research design. Created by Lindsay Hingst. (Jan. 2017)

The method/methodology refers to a working definition of **frames/framing** supported by concepts associated with Kenneth Burke, Roland Barthes, Judith Butler, and Wendy Kozol. Each layer—from the course design, to the material we examine, to the projects I assign—represents its own frame.

In terms of framing of the course, I lay everything out chronologically, beginning with World War II. First, students familiarize themselves with Nazi propaganda to shed light on the media’s framing of events and dehumanization of the Jewish population. We analyze posters, clips from *The Triumph of the Will*, and *The Eternal Jew* to illustrate the power of Goebbels’ propaganda machine and the prevalence of these tactics in contemporary society. From there, students examine first and second-person Holocaust testimonies in response to such egregious claims as “The Holocaust never happened.” Students examine the rhetorical dimensions of various linguistic frames to raise questions regarding the veracity of these testimonies/texts. From there, we analyze Vietnam testimonies to help students understand the framing of more recent events.

Specifically, students examine various frames of rhetoric and apply these theories and principles in their own writing. Discussion board assignments provide students with an opportunity to reflect upon these important issues as they engage in deliberation with one another. It places responsibility upon them to read/analyze various testimonies and demonstrate what they have learned by challenging one another through spirited debate. They encounter various witness testimonies that provide an historical contextualization of international conflict and places a “human face” on the suffering of others. Doing so illustrates the importance of empathy and compassion, concepts that reside on the lighter end of the spectrum.

In class, students focus mainly on the perceptual, systemic, and technical aspects of framing. We review **perceptual** processes of representation as it relates to selection, framing, subjectivity, and interpretation (Barthes). We also examine **systemic** aspects of the way images of violence are framed as it relates to media bias, embedded reporting, and those in power who determine which events garner attention. Kozol considers the problem of residing in a privileged position and this relates to the apparatuses of control and institutions that release images into the public sphere. In terms of the **technical**, students analyze linguistic frames by referring to self-sufficient and radical constructivist models (LaCapra) and visual frames by referring to such concepts as lighting, angles, contrast, foreground/background, etc.) (Bordwell and Thompson). I support these concepts using reading material, audio/visual media, the course website, handouts, and class discussion.

All rhetoric involves persuasion through a process of framing. As Burke puts it, the inseminal of a doctrine” from messenger to receiver that intends to inform but, more importantly, to “move a man from here to there.” Just as the courses I teach discuss ways to analyze and construct frames of rhetoric as responsible witnesses, this dissertation and the course itself function as frames of rhetoric that bear witness. Every rhetorical move I make has intent and purpose. As I tell students, “There’s a method to this madness.”

The remainder of this dissertation will be broken down into four additional chapters, all of which will address some aspect of framing the dark side.

Chapter Two: “Rhetorical Dimensions of Witnessing: Linguistic ‘Frames’ of the Dark Side” will address linguistic frames of rhetoric in light of first, second, and third-person witnessing. It will illuminate the “impossibility and necessity” of bearing witness to trauma as described by Kelly Oliver in *Witnessing: Beyond Recognition*. It will also consider the various rhetorical dimensions of witnessing based on Kenneth Burke’s *A Rhetoric of Motives* and Dominic LaCapra’s *Writing History, Writing Trauma* to examine historical and contemporary examples of first and second-person witness testimony. It will highlight the educational benefits of examining the rhetorical dimensions of various linguistic frames of history and trauma by providing a broad overview of works in different genres. From there, it will hone in specifically on the oral histories, courtroom testimonies, and biographical accounts of the My Lai massacre to support the focus on Ron Haeberle in chapter three. In summation, this chapter will consider the pedagogy of witnessing using linguistic frames to raise critical questions regarding the diverse functions of written and oral testimony as well as to ponder the veracity of subjective, interpretive “frames.” By examining the rhetorical dimensions of literary and historical testimonies, these linguistic frames provide historical, political, and social contextualization to supplement and contrast visual frames of the dark side.

Chapter Three: “Rhetorical Dimensions of Witnessing: Visual ‘Frames’ of the Dark Side” will illuminate second and third-person witnessing with a focus on visual rhetoric. It will explore the problems, effects, and ethical considerations of framing and re-producing trauma with a special emphasis on war photography using concepts from Sontag’s *Regarding the Pain of Others* and Judith Butler’s *Frames of War: When is Life Grievable?* It will also examine ethical considerations of framing atrocity-producing situations based on the research of Robert J. Lifton as well as the “working through” of trauma described by Elaine Scarry. I will hone in on witness photographer Ron Haeberle to show the ways in which his controversial images of the My Lai massacre have impacted our rhetorical culture to such an extent that it reflects the struggles of modern day journalists to gain access to regions most in need of recognition. As a metaphor for the countless war crimes that occurred during Vietnam and continue to occur abroad, Haeberle’s work allows

students to look deep into the abyss of our military's past to more clearly see our current state of affairs and consider what this means for the future. These frames of the dark side will reinforce the importance of media access and the power of visual rhetoric to engage viewers in the processes of witnessing via perceptual identification. I will demonstrate that as a pedagogical tool, visual representations function as a means of "inducing cooperation" through an ability to "move" viewers (Burke) to such an extent that it can alter the political landscape of a rhetorical culture.

Chapter Four: "Rhetorical Witnessing in the Multimodal Classroom: A 'Move' Toward Responsibility and Response-Ability" will focus on witnessing as it relates to rhetoric and composition pedagogy. Considering the problems, effects, and ethical considerations of bearing witness to trauma within the classroom, the attempt here is to demonstrate what it means to move "beyond recognition" and the ways this can be accomplished. It will examine the potential for the witnessing process to help students not only understand the significance of human suffering but try to engage responsibly and response-ably. It will make a case for the theoretical and practical application of relevant concepts in the classroom and dissect the rhetorical dimensions of responding to trauma by focusing on the work of witness photographer James Nachtwey. Nachtwey's contributions to shedding light on issues related to war, famine, genocide, disabled veterans, racial injustice, and poverty reflect the theory and practice of rhetorical witnessing and illustrate the process of confronting the dark side as a responsible, response-able witness. Looking toward Nachtwey as a leader in responsible, response-able witnessing, I will argue that students can benefit from his work by analyzing the theoretical and practical significance of the witnessing process.

Chapter Five: "Why a Pedagogy of Witnessing? Why Frames of the Dark Side?" will discuss the limitations and problematic aspects of this research as well as reflect upon the relevance of incorporating these teaching methods into the classroom. It will describe the intersections in these fields and provide teacher-research to analyze data and raise critical questions about frames of witnessing as methodology. Using various supporting examples, this study will make a case for shifting educational paradigms to improve upon teaching

and composition practices. It will discuss best practices for implementing Edu-activism in the classroom and reflect upon the benefits of using witnessing as a pedagogical tool for teaching ethical teaching and writing practices. The overall goal is to encourage more purposeful approaches to teaching by encouraging a dialogue among writing program administrators, teachers, and students about the need to be responsible witnesses.

Conclusion

As a writer, scholar, and educator I have chosen to pursue what I hope is a thought-provoking project to lead by example in the classroom and demonstrate to students, writing instructors, and writing program administrators the usefulness of incorporating a similar model in any variety of courses. The overarching goal is to show: 1) change needs to happen inside and outside of the classroom 2) the possibilities for contributing to the rhetorical culture are countless 3) student contributions yield positive results.

It is not enough that scholars, teachers, students, and members of the human race to recognize the suffering of others; there needs to be an increased conscientious effort to act out of a moral obligation. Concepts associated with Edu-activism and the dark side are ingrained within the design of the courses I teach. While for many the notion of Edu-activism may be seem morally presumptuous, this project makes a case in support of finding new ways to enliven students by encouraging empathy through engaging teaching practices. Perhaps by challenging ourselves to become more conscious of human suffering through the study of rhetorical witnessing, teachers and students can work together to transform the rhetorical culture in meaningful ways. It is important that teachers and students engage in a deliberative discourse that reveals the underlying causes of oppression in order to transform the world for the common good. This begins in the classroom, but it should never stop there. As Freire asserts:

Education either functions as an instrument which is used to facilitate integration of the younger generation into the logic of the present system and bring about conformity or it becomes the ‘practice of freedom,’ the

means by which men and women deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world. (39)

Most classroom practices merely involve good intentions. In reality, change only occurs based on what people *do*, not what they *intend* to do. What good are intentions if these do not transcend into the real world?

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Chapter 2

Rhetorical Dimensions of Witnessing: Linguistic Frames of the Dark Side

Introduction

What is rhetorical witnessing, and why use this concept as an instructional tool in the multimodal communication classroom? Rhetorical witnessing is an extremely complex, multifaceted process. The rhetorical “dimensions” of witness testimony involves an ongoing process in which events are “framed,” recognized, and responded to. The framing and reception of traumatic events reveals both the need for and complications of witnessing human suffering throughout history. Through the practice of “framing,” rhetors may choose any variety of creative tools in order to represent experiences; the psychological, social, and political effects of bearing witness to a traumatic event ultimately shapes cultural memory as the world comes to know history through secondary and tertiary filters, and these effects have ethical consequences. Indeed, the term “rhetorical witnessing” implies that some sort of an ethical response occurs on the part of the audience because of empathic engagement. Witnessing occurs when one or more individuals experience a traumatic event firsthand or through a secondary or tertiary source. Most of the literature reviewed associates witnessing with some type of human rights violation such as rape, genocide, torture, maiming, among countless other forms of physical or psychological harm. It seems that any act or event that shocks the psyche or has the potential to break the human spirit falls within the parameters of witnessing. Another principle of witnessing is that the event is *so* traumatic that it warrants a response not just from a solitary witness but the entire world. It *demand*s recognition. It demands that something must be done to stop the suffering.

In this chapter and throughout this dissertation I argue that although the term “rhetorical witnessing” is not part of the common vernacular, it needs to be. This process is crucial in order to bring light to injustices from which we are socially, politically, and culturally

removed and if the world ever hopes to strive toward human progress. There are seemingly endless barbaric actions that occur daily at home and abroad, and first world countries can gain access to linguistic frames of witness testimony at the touch of a button. Susan Sontag's simple plea, "Do something!" perfectly encapsulates the ultimate purpose of rhetorical witnessing (*Regarding Susan Sontag*, Dir. Nancy D. Kates). I argue, along with many philosophers and ethicists, that it is our moral obligation to witness, recognize, and respond to trauma—to stand up for what is right and refuse to tolerate injustice when we are confronted with it. This chapter will define witnessing and the rhetorical dimensions of witnessing as well as demonstrate ways in which these concepts can be implemented in the multimodal classroom. The aim of this research is to illuminate the theoretical and practical applications of witnessing in the classroom to support the underlying goals of liberatory pedagogy which seeks truth, accountability, and justice above all else.

The focus of this chapter is linguistic frameworks. A witness may choose any variety of forms to convey a series of events, thereby acting as a rhetor. Testimonies may be composed through fiction, poetry, drama, or nonfiction. Witnesses engage in rhetorical decision-making when they craft their testimonies using *any* of these forms, including practices in composing nonfiction. The goal of the rhetor as a witness to traumatic history is to demonstrate that we must make choices: 1) whether or not to learn from the past; 2) whether or not to engage in critical consciousness when we encounter contemporary frames of trauma; 3) whether or not to use our agency ethically in order to stop cruel and brutal acts as a means of preventing further harm.

This chapter will be broken down into three distinct sections. The first section will define witnessing, provide an overview of its origins and evolution, describe the various "layers" of witnessing, and draw some connections between witnessing and testimony. Section two will explain the various dimensions of witnessing as it relates to rhetoric, communication and cultural theory, psychoanalysis, and ethics. This will be followed by a third section that provides further elaboration on testimony in light of linguistic frameworks, including an application of the aforementioned concepts to Holocaust testimonies to exemplify practical applications in the classroom. The contents of this

chapter are presented to students in multimodal composition classes in the form of lectures, a website, handouts, and reading material. Students can apply these terms and concepts to a wide variety of testimonies using an array of critical thinking assignments such as in-class writing activities, online discussions, short papers, and group projects. Given the breadth of testimony, teachers may choose from a wide range of genres, eras, and subjects. As such, witnessing can appeal to students from all walks of life.

The Exigency for Bearing Witness

To help students learn about witnessing, students benefit from a unit on the Holocaust not only because it helps us to understand the exigency for bearing witness as a means of survival, but also because studies in psychology, trauma, and witnessing emerged as a result of this historical atrocity. From a series of articles written by Holocaust survivor and psychoanalyst Dori Laub, psychoanalyst Nancy Goodman, and psychologist Marilyn Meyers, students learn basic concepts associated with trauma theory. Goodman states, “Knowing how witnessing of the Holocaust takes places helps to fortify a desire to witness other genocides and mass traumas” (3). Prisoners in concentration camps oftentimes died because they had simply lost hope for a better future, as Viktor Frankl accounts in *Man’s Search for Meaning*. Frankl raises the oft asked question: How did these men and women endure the hellish circumstances of life in a concentration camp, having lost everyone and everything that they had ever held dear in their lives? As countless survivors attest, it was the urgency to share their testimonies that gave many Holocaust victims the will to survive under the most heinous living conditions. They believed that the world needed to hear their testimonies to make them recognize the true horror of the Nazi regime; lest the testimonies would die with them. They survived by holding on to the hope that one day, their stories could be told. “Amid the horrors, there were people determined to speak the truth. They were able to hold in their minds the existence of a willing witness who would believe them and be receptive to knowing the atrocities” (Meyers 29). Some victims recorded their experiences despite their awareness that death was inevitable. Journalists, artists, and writers who were imprisoned in the Warsaw Ghetto recorded over 27,000 pages of their

experiences and buried the documents with the hope that someone might find them after their deaths and reveal their suffering to the world (31).

Trauma theory as a field of study emerged from studies in Holocaust literature, history, and testimony (Craps 9). Stef Craps, author of *Post-Colonial Witnessing: Trauma out of Bounds*, describes trauma theory as an “essential apparatus for understanding the ‘real world’ and even as a potential means for changing it for the better” (1). In “Testimony as Life Experience and Legacy, Laub describes how trauma results in “psychic helplessness”—a shock that breaks through an ego barrier and alters perceptions. Additionally, there is a psychic need for witnesses to separate past trauma from the present (Laub 65). Memories become layered, and the mind sometimes alters a person’s perception of reality as a protective function (66-8). In “The Power of Witnessing,” Goodman illumines how victims become trapped within their “intrapsychic world” as a defensive measure that helps them to endure an “external horror” (8). She argues that without witnessing, “A place of negation, ‘nothing’ in the mind and in the historic record” remains (3). Victims must diminish blind spots by working through their traumas, a process that can only occur through the witnessing process (3). Survivors of atrocity are stuck between “dead space” and the “living surround.” While “dead space” reflects the abyss of trauma—that which cannot be told because the suffering is too intense—the living surround involves a “clearing away”—an opening for victims to share and the release their pain (3). Goodman describes the space that exists within the mind and between people in need of being closed; the opening and closing of this space is reliant upon the reciprocal process of self-disclosure wherein a speaker reveals what they have been holding on to while a willing listener acts as a companion who shares the journey of his or her suffering. Goodman argues, “The Holocaust can never be transformed—but through the power of witnessing, the mind gains expressiveness and greater capacity to see contemporary mass and individual trauma and the desire to intervene” (7).

These concepts reinforce to students the need for victims of atrocity to bear witness to their traumatic experience and the moral obligation of second and third-person witnesses

to listen and respond. Moreover, students are introduced to the concept of “self-disclosure” and its therapeutic effects during class lecture.

Self-disclosure, “the conscious decision to share personal information about ourselves” (Dunn & Goodnight 110), is a requirement for “working through” trauma. Trauma affects the mind, body, and spirit and creates a shock to the witness that is so deep and “impossible to process” that it is “in a sense never experienced by the person to whom it happens” (Dawes 29). After we perceive and interpret a traumatic event, there is a cathartic need to talk about it with someone. For victims, self-disclosure is a necessary part of the grieving process. For perpetrators, self-disclosure becomes a necessary part of expelling feelings of shame and guilt (Weingarten). For bystanders, it may be a combination of grieving and/or relieving shame and guilt, depending upon the circumstances.

Regardless of whether a witness assumes the position of victim, bystander, or perpetrator, it is emphasized to students that empathic listening is crucial for the witnessing process to occur. Empathic listening requires a second-person witness—someone who accompanies the first person witness on his or her “testimonial journey” (Laub 69). Through empathic listening, witnessing allows speakers and listeners to connect with one another by sharing pain and assisting with the grieving process and “letting go” of trauma. The speaker/listener relationship involves a reciprocity of minds as messages are exchanged through meaningful interactions. “For the testimonial to take place, there needs to be a bonding, the intimate and total presence of an *other*...” (Laub as qtd. by Goodman 12). Witnesses have waited a long time to tell someone their stories after suffering their traumas alone, and they cannot complete the grieving process without an “opening” (12). The listener must demonstrate a willingness to know and share information.

Terminology derived from Kelly Oliver’s *Witnessing: Beyond Recognition* is provided to students on the course website. Oliver refers to “the impossibility and necessity” of bearing witness in relation to subjectivity and subject positions. She states, “Subjectivity requires the possibility of a witness, and the witnessing at the heart of subjectivity brings with it responsibility, response-ability, and ethical responsibility” (Oliver 91). This paradoxical notion refers to the interactive process of witnessing between a speaker and a

listener. Witnessing demands reciprocity, a mirroring process reminiscent of Cooley's "looking glass self" in which we come to develop our self-concept through the reflective appraisals of significant others. Without a listener present, the inner witness cannot emerge; subjectivity demands recognition of the other. Oliver claims, "The inner witness is produced and sustained by dialogic interaction with other people" (87). Through our interactions with significant others, we are able to see ourselves more clearly (Mead); this enables the process of "working through" a trauma (Scarry).

Withholding the emotional pain of trauma can have negative effects on the body. Like chronic pain, emotional pain occurs in the front region of the brain cortex and never shuts off, which is detrimental to one's physical health (Hobson). Research in brain mapping indicates that humans respond, neurologically, in the same way to emotional pain as they do to physical pain, which draws attention to the lasting effects of traumatic experience. Interestingly, pain, love, and healing affect different parts of the brain; the body is, in turn, affected by pain in the brain very differently from the way that it responds to healing and love. Those who suffer severe trauma are more likely to experience serious bodily ailments in comparison to those who find ways to work through their pain. Pain in the brain, both physical and emotional, are important to ponder in light of witnessing because, as Elaine Scarry describes in *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World*, the healing process can only begin through the "articulation" of trauma. One remedy to silencing and erasure is giving a voice to those who have suffered, and this happens through the process of creation (i.e. testimony) in numerous forms (e.g. writing, film, artistic expression, etc.). This reinforces the necessity of witnessing to students.

Psychological harm shatters the human spirit and can sometimes make being alive unbearable. The grieving process, the pangs of losing a loved one, trauma—all of these emotional shocks to the psyche have the potential to harm the physical body. The first witness must expel his or her testimony as a means of catharsis; the process of engaging with a willing listener helps relieve some of the darkness that weighs on the soul. The sheer will to live in the direst of circumstances can be derived from the urgency to tell the rest of

the world what happened, as Holocaust testimonies reveal. Whether the harm is extreme or not is no consequence; the need to self-disclose, for many, is a means of survival.

Thus it is important for students to understand that rhetorical dimensions of witnessing involving historical, literary, psychoanalytical, and ethical frameworks are extremely complex and reveal different modes and "layers" of witnessing. The process of witnessing allows trauma to become known and communicated for myriad reasons. For some, the desire to have a listener present in order to share suffering helps victims to work through their trauma; others seek reparations and restitution for more egregious intolerable harms (Card). The majority of witnessing experts assert that in order for the world to learn the truth of others' experience a first, second, or third-person testimony is a requirement.

Within the context of a multimodal composition course, students are first assigned reading material and lectures that provide them with an overview of witnessing, rhetorical dimensions of witnessing, testimony, and the four literary genres. Significant terms and concepts are discussed in class along with small group exercises that give students an opportunity to test their knowledge of the reading and lecture material. In-class activities and discussion prepare students for a major writing assignment that requires students to examine the rhetorical dimensions of various testimonies. For the major written assignment, students are asked to provide an overview of the testimony; an explanation of the historical context that informs the testimony; an analysis of the text's rhetorical dimensions based on the linguistic framing of the text(s); and conclusions based on the summation and analysis (see Appendix I). Examining the rhetorical dimensions of witnessing in fiction, poetry, and nonfiction encourages students to consider the rhetorical functions of different kinds of testimony and raises critical questions pertaining to the veracity of a text. The goal is to emphasize the "impossibility and necessity for bearing witness" while simultaneously illustrating the importance of responsible and response-able composition practices in their own writing.

I

Witnessing: A Brief History

As an introduction to the course, students listen and respond to a lecture on a brief history of witnessing in order to lay the foundation for the remainder of the course. These concepts are presented along with an argument that establishes the need for witnessing to convey the overall aim of the course: responsible and response-able composition practices. In the following section, I summarize the content of this lecture, highlighting the concepts that I argue are most crucial for students to grasp in order to analyze various testimonies and compose their major research projects.

The notion of witnessing commonly refers to a traumatic occurrence that an individual experiences firsthand; it denotes “seeing” and “having been there.” According to Goodman in *The Power of Witnessing*, “...a witness is someone who is present for an event and can then testify to what has taken place” (13). There are multiple denotative meanings for the term “witnessing” which vary depending upon the source and historical context. Numerous theorists in the fields of psychoanalysis, history, and literature report that witnessing as a field of study originated from Holocaust studies (Felman and Laub; Goodman and Meyers). As several Holocaust victims attest, the urgency to bear witness to the horrors of concentration camp life was a means of survival (Frankl; Laub). Others believe that the concept of witnessing predates the Holocaust, for history itself is traumatic considering war is a contingent fact of history (LaCapra). Some theorists tend to focus specifically on trauma theory (Craps) while others refer to religious connotations such as the spiritual process of “bearing witness” (Lifton).

Giorgio Agamben, Italian philosopher and author of “Remnants of Auschwitz,” remarks that the deceased are the only “true” witnesses to atrocity; evidence of their lived experiences resides in the traces they left behind (34). “The survivors speak in their stead, by proxy, as pseudo-witnesses; they bear witness to a missing testimony...Whoever assumes the charge of bearing witness in their name knows that he or she must bear witness in the name of the impossibility of bearing witness” (34). Agamben draws this idea from

the notion of “the Shoah,” an event that cannot be witnessed “since no one can bear witness from the inside of death, and there is no voice for the disappearance of the voice” (35). It is precisely the impossibility of witnessing that necessitates witnessing by proxy.

Although witnessing typically refers to people, a broader framework of witnessing takes into account any type of wrongful harm or injustice that affects humans *or* non-humans. Tracy Chapman sings in “Rape of the World”:

Mother of us all
Place of our birth
How can we stand aside
And watch the rape of the world.

You’ve seen her strip mined
You’ve heard of bombs exploded underground
You know the sun shines
Hotter than ever before...

If you look you’ll see it with your own eyes
If you listen you will hear her cries
And if you care you will stand and testify
And stop the rape of the world (“Rape of the World”).

These lyrics illustrate the ways in which we are all guilty of turning a blind eye to the destruction of our natural environment and have a moral obligation to bear witness to this injustice. Issues related to mining, deforestation, water contamination, pollution, endangered species among others illuminate a different approach to witnessing although these do not reflect a “break” in the human spirit. Anyone who embraces the notion of the interconnectedness of humans with the natural environment and all creatures of the earth can appreciate the need to bear witness to these kinds of egregious violations. Even though I have yet to address topics related to non-humans within the context of my course, I encourage students to explore these kinds of topics for their research projects. This

provides students with an opportunity to make connections to course concepts they can relate to their own research interests.

Modes and “Layers” of Witnessing

According to Meyers, there are three modes of witnessing: intrapsychic, interpersonal, and societal (27). *Intrapsychic witnessing* involves internal suffering and processing. Each individual experiences trauma in a unique way as the mind’s eye absorbs what is happening in an “external hell”; the mind simultaneously takes protective measures that affect the ways in which a witness processes and “works through” trauma (27). *Interpersonal witnessing* includes a speaker and listener, or a “first witness” who shares his or her experiences with a “second witness” (27). Often referred to in the clinical sense, interpersonal witnessing can include any type of dyadic or small group communication (e.g. interactions with friends, family, or support groups) that involves self-disclosure and/or the cathartic process of sharing suffering. *Societal witnessing* engages a wider audience and includes human rights activism. The cultural, national, and transnational circulation of testimony in accordance with its reception functions as a means of appropriating reparations to victims of human rights violations (Hesford 106).

In “Psychic and Historic Timeline: Opening and Closing Space” Meyers describes the “first witnesses” as victims, survivors, bystanders, perpetrators, liberators, and anyone else who saw firsthand what occurred during a moment in time (27-43). Some examples of first-person testimony include courtroom testimonies, oral histories, journal entries, and autobiographies. In the classroom, I have used courtroom testimonies given by Charlie Company, recorded oral testimonies and journals in the Veterans against the Vietnam War’s *The Winter Soldier Investigation*, excerpts from Filip Müller’s book *Eyewitness Auschwitz: Three Years in the Gas Chambers*, part one of Frankl’s *Man’s Search for Meaning*, and John Perkins’ *Confessions of an Economic Hitman*. (Some may consider Müller’s and Frankl’s pieces as secondary sources since the original texts have been translated into another language.) Each of these sources provides eyewitness accounts of atrocity that are useful for showing students different types of first person witnesses, namely survivors, bystanders, and perpetrators.

What constitutes a “first-person witnesses” varies depending on the source. Some sources consider Cabos (i.e. Jews with “special privileges” who participated in the brutal treatment of other Jews), prison guards, other prisoners, bystanders, and other kinds of abusers as first person witnesses. In the legal and moral sense, perpetrators are not considered “witnesses” since they are the ones who are guilty of committing an intolerable harm. It is important to note that certain other fields—such as the psychoanalytical--do not distinguish between victims, bystanders, and perpetrators in terms of bearing witness. In the psychoanalytical sense, bystanders and perpetrators also suffer a traumatic shock to their psyches as a result of witnessing atrocity first-hand, regardless of whether or not they endure physical pain. In my class, I suggest that students refer to anyone who is an “eyewitness” to an event a first-person witness.

According to Meyer, “the witness to the original witness” acts as a second-person witness by engaging in the listening process in an effort to share the traumatic experience. Second-person witnesses may include journalists, translators, descendants of victims, or friends and family members who act as a second witness to the first witness. Authors and translators who were not present during events described in literature qualify as second-person witnesses if they were present to listen to and record the testimony of the first witness. For instance, in *The Nazi Doctors: Medical Killing and the Psychology of Genocide* psychoanalyst Robert J. Lifton interviews men who actively participated in the medical killing of countless Jews during the Holocaust. Lifton qualifies as a second-person witness since he acted as a listener to the first witness, even though he interviewed perpetrators rather than victims. In a similar vein, James Dawes writes about his interrogation of war criminals from the Second Sino-Japanese war in *Evil Men*. Dawes visited perpetrators on their deathbeds and recorded their final confessions, an act the men hoped might atone for their crimes.

Cynthia Ozick represents a very unique type of second-person witness. Although she never experienced the Holocaust first-hand, she writes about the Holocaust based on her experiences as a teenager living in the United States during and after World War II. She learned from her father how, as a child living in Russia, he was locked in a synagogue and

nearly burned to death due to his Jewish background. Ozick listened to testimonies shared by distant relatives and friends who survived life in the concentration camps and felt compelled to write about this subject matter. She recalls the hostility she endured while growing up in the Bronx and ponders the shaping of her identity as an American Jew based on all of these experiences. As do many such second-person witnesses, she feels compelled to write about the Holocaust.

What is most interesting, though, is why Ozick chooses to write about the Jewish experience using fiction rather than nonfiction. When prompted as to why she makes this rhetorical decision, Ozick famously states, "All good stories are honest and most good essays are not" ("The Many Faces of Cynthia Ozick par. 9). She supports the radical constructivism viewpoint that history is fictionalized and fiction historicizes: that whatever 'move' a writer makes, it is always constructed. She remarks:

In an essay you have the outcome in your pocket before you set out on your journey, and very rarely do you make an intellectual or psychological discovery...For an essay you have to acquire some knowledge, have a point of view, and make an authoritative claim. And non-fiction can sometimes be dangerous -- I have been haunted for decades by things I wrote years and years ago, positions that I now repudiate (par. 10-11).

Ozick responds to the criticism she received after publishing "The Shawl" and the controversy that ensued. Many survivors accused Ozick of destroying the credibility of other Holocaust testimonies by attempting to encapsulate the traumatic experiences of Holocaust prisoners. She defends this act by saying, "All writing is presumption of course, since no one knows what it is like to be another human being" (Brocke par. 10). In this way, Ozick reveals the struggle of second-person witnesses to fully witness the first-person witnesses' experiences. This controversy is presented to students to in order to make the case that this witnessing paradox should not deter second and third-person witnesses from bearing witness to traumatic history. First-person testimonies have a certain function, but second-person and third-person testimonies are essential "layers" of witnessing because they provide unique perspectives that deepen our understanding of traumatic history.

The final “layer” of witnessing—third-person witnessing—occurs when an observer bears witness through a secondary witness. Second generation family members, historians, film makers, and audiences would fall under the category of third-person witnesses. Examples used in class include Jorie Graham’s poem, “History,” and excerpts from Stephen Ambrose’s historical rendition of Easy Company’s experiences in the best-selling nonfiction book, *Band of Brothers*.

Each “layer” of witnessing reveals problems that occur during the witnessing process. Foremost, “time is dynamic and cannot be captured, stopped, or reversed” (Meyers 27). Testimony can never truly capture with absolute accuracy a fleeting moment in time; this reflects the “linguistic struggle” that Elaine Scarry describes in *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World*. The eyewitness witness relies on a faulty memory in order to relay events, but the account is always affected by a filtering process that is skewed by the speaker’s subjectivity and unique interpretation of events. The witnessing process further convolutes the truthfulness of events as information sifts through multiple layers. With these paradoxes in mind, students are asked to examine various testimonies and weigh the potential positive outcomes of witnessing in comparison to the potential costs of turning a blind eye.

Testimony

On the course website, students are provided with an overview of **testimony** as it is outlined in this section. This section provides a working definition of the term “testimony” and its varied meanings, an explanation of various types of testimony, its function in different contexts, and an argument pertaining to the ways in which testimonies can empower victims of trauma.

Integral to the concept of witnessing, **testimony** “reveals an inner truth that is both deeply cherished and essential to survival...it goes through an evolution over one’s lifetime” (Laub 73). Testimony is cathartic: it allows witnesses of trauma to purge their experiences to an invested listener. The witnessing process is constantly in flux; testimonies alter over time, and a witness will recall events differently, and sometimes with

even greater clarity, as time elapses. Common associations of testimony refer to narrative accounts provided by first hand witnesses in police reports or other legal contexts. However, testimonies may be provided by any variety of individuals and take on myriad forms.

Although testimony is typically associated with legal references to bearing witness, philosophers in other fields of study (such as rhetoric, psychoanalysis, and history) consider various other forms of testimony as valid representations of experience. Courtroom testimonials involve first-person oral narratives that recount experiences and/or human rights violations. In the literary sense fiction, drama, poetry, and nonfiction narratives are considered forms of testimony. Historical accounts include oral testimonies, journal entries, written records of events, and even poetry. A psychoanalytical viewpoint might consider case studies, journal entries, poetry, and therapeutic art as testimony. An anthropologist might be interested in *testimonio*, a genre of testimony that is specific to collectivist cultures. *Testimonio*, an oral tradition practiced in tribal communities, occurs when an individual's testimony accounts for an entire group's set of experiences. For instance, Rigoberta Menchù provides an account of the Mayan people's oppression in Guatemala by relaying narratives in the first-person.

Literature, film, music, memorials--all of these fall under the parameters of "testimony" in the rhetorical sense. These notions stand in direct contrast to the positivist perspective which relies on archival evidence and primary research in terms of documenting events. This approach to recording history, referred to by LaCapra in *Writing Trauma, Writing History* as "the self-sufficient model," generally considers first-hand testimony from credible eyewitnesses as the most reliable support for truth-claims. Valid forms of testimony may also come from experts who have worked closely with victims or have acquired a special knowledge of the event by thoroughly researching primary evidence.

Testimony serves many functions in various contexts. One significant function of testimony involves engaging listeners in the process of rhetorical witnessing in an attempt to reveal deeper levels of truth regarding human experience. Furthermore, by talking about traumatic events *both* speakers and listeners support the healing aspect of witnessing which

is crucial. Most importantly, testimonies remind us of the deceased and their suffering—to commemorate those who were not lucky enough to survive and tell their stories. Many victims struggled to survive the Holocaust for the sole purpose of sharing their accounts with the world with the hopes that people would listen to their experiences, recognize their suffering, and respond ethically. “The only reason to live is to ensure that the witness does not perish” (Agamben 15). In this regard, testimonies keep the story going so the world will never forget what has happened to over six million Jews. In Wiesel’s words, “To forget a Holocaust is to kill twice.”

Regardless of the form it takes, testimony brings victims back to a **subject position** (a term defined in class lecture as well as on the course website). It is through **discourse** that the rhetorical culture is influenced; therefore, witnessing is an essential means of empowering individuals to gain access to a platform upon which to share their suffering—their truths—with the world. By showing students different forms of testimonies and familiarizing them with the conventions and ideological investments that influence the linguistic framing of events, students can gain a more critical perspective on traumatic history.

II

Rhetorical Dimensions of Witnessing

The rhetorical dimensions of witnessing can best be understood through intersecting concepts in rhetoric, communication theory, psychoanalysis, and ethics. These concepts can be used to analyze the process of witnessing in terms of discourse, its reception as a valid form of testimony, and the exigency for victims to “work through” trauma. Moreover, Burke’s notion of **identification** correlates with Oliver’s call for secondary and tertiary witnesses to move “beyond recognition.” The following terms and concepts—terministic screen, identification, interpretation, empathy, numbing, Subject/object positions, symbolic interactionism, identity construction, subjectivity, Sapir/Whorf hypothesis, power relations, agency, recognition, discourse, psychoanalytical aspects of the neurological and emotional effects of trauma, and philosophies in ethics—are presented to

students prior to assigning readings (i.e. linguistic testimonies) in order to provide them with a conceptual framework for interpretation. These terms are provided on the course website and in handouts to supplement class lecture. It is important to address witnessing from numerous vantage points for the purpose of emphasizing the complexity of and paradoxes associated with the witnessing process. This approach challenges students to consider variables that underlie the witnessing process to facilitate openness to a richer interpretation of traumatic history.

Theories in Rhetoric and Communication

The rhetoric of witnessing ties directly to Burke's notion of the **terministic screen**, an important concept for students to consider considering the interconnectedness between language, perception, and reality. In essence the terministic screen is a filter that selects, reflects and deflects reality including where we focus our attention and what we choose to ignore. It is determined by our culture's communication systems. According to Burke, "The dramatic view of language, in terms of "symbolic action," is exercised about the necessarily *suasive* nature of even the most unemotional scientific nomenclatures...Even if any given terminology is a reflection of reality, by its very nature as a terminology it must be a selection of reality; and to this extent it must also function as a deflection of reality" (Burke, *Language as Symbolic Action* 45). Our **interpretations** of and attitudes toward others are influenced by the language system of any given culture, so everything we "see" passes through a sieve of sorts and affects how we decode and respond to frames of rhetoric. Additionally, the way information passes through an individual's terministic screen determines whether or not identification occurs. These concepts coincide with symbolic interactionism (Mead), an important concept in communication and cultural studies defined on the next page.

Identification, in the most basic sense, refers to a witness's ability to establish common ground with the listener. According to Burke, identification produces empathy, and without it rhetoric fails (*A Rhetoric of Motives* 19-21). Rhetoric is receiver-oriented, therefore in Burkean philosophy identification is crucial in order for recognition to occur. While this

context reflects a positive aspect of identification, other instances of identification produce a negative effect.

Identification requires the listener to act responsibly, an ethical consideration for others. In *Writing History, Writing Trauma*, LaCapra refers to “**heteropathic identification**” in which empathy is described as a virtual experience. He states: “emotional response comes with respect for the other and the realization that the experience of the other is not one’s own” (40). **Empathy** counteracts victimization and is a crucial aspect of understanding the pain of another. **Numbing**, on the other hand, refers to the objectification of the “other,” a protective shield that results in the splitting of the **Subject** into an **Object**. LaCapra infers that it is the difference between empathy and numbing that determines if the rhetoric of witnessing produces the desired effect: for the witness to share his or her suffering with a listener who is willing to accompany the witness on his/her testimonial journey (40-1). It is emphasized during class discussion that if identification does not occur, then the witnessing process ultimately fails. After reading testimonies from Ozick, Frankl, and Müller in comparison to watching a film, students are asked to reflect upon their sensory perceptions as they read the graphic details of these Holocaust testimonies. Many of the students express greater empathy for first-person witnesses, whereas a few remark that the haunting nature of Ozick’s fiction has a greater psychosomatic impact. Most students remark that visual stimulation that occurs in film and photography allows for greater empathic engagement than the written word. This matter will be explored at greater length in Chapter 3.

John Stewart argues in *Bridges Not Walls* that our “humanness” is derived from our language system and communication processes (7). Our unique ability to engage with one another as symbol-using animals separates us from other species in the world. Communication not only shapes our “humanness,” it shapes our sense of communion with family members who nurture, love, and support us (7). In *Witnessing: Beyond Recognition* Oliver discusses at great length the ways in which our senses operate in conjunction with one another and cannot be separated, and human behavior and interactions are affected by “the flow and circulation of affective energy” in our environments (194). Oliver states, “I

am both connected to and different from those around me” (213). Through interpersonal relationships and communities, humans develop their unique sense of self as *both* a subject (the “I”) and an object (the “me”) (Griffin 60-1). It is through communication and culture that the **subject** is formed.

The **subject** refers to the production of selves as a result of interactions with others. According to Lyn Hejinian’s “The Subject,” “The term ‘subject’ foregrounds the relationship between ethnology, psychoanalysis, and semiotics. It helps us to conceive of human reality as a construction, as the product of signifying activities which are both culturally specific and generally unconscious” (131). The “subject” refers to our self-concept: in **symbolic interactionism**, we form a perception of who we are and what that means by communicating with others, and the culture into which one is born has a direct influence (Griffin 56). Meaning is negotiated within a community, and our interactions with others shape our sense of self through meaning, language, and thought processes (56-7). Our **identities** shape our **subjective** world view which affects how we interpret information and respond to internal and external stimuli. According to the Sapir/Whorf hypothesis, our perception of reality is informed by the language system that supports individual thought processes (30). The “I” (i.e. the subject) reflects our subjective sense of self whereas the “me” (i.e. the object) refers to “the looking-glass self,” or the way we think others see us (60-1). Our reality and our sense of self is constructed through a shared set of symbols that take on a certain meaning. “The self is a function of language...There is no ‘me’ at birth. The ‘me’ is only formed through continual symbolic interaction—first with family, next with playmates, then in institutions such as schools” (61-2). In some contexts, the term suggests that one is always a subject in regard to an ‘other’, but in other contexts, the subject becomes annihilated as a result of extreme form of oppression. In these instances, the goal is for the victim to find his or her way back to a subject position through the process of witnessing.

According to existential philosophy, “the subject” refers to **power relations** (such as the Master/slave dialectic) that allow some voices to be heard while others are silenced. An individual who resides in a “subject position” is empowered; these individuals are able to

use their **agency** in order to gain **recognition**. Those who have been rendered powerless (e.g. those in object/slave positions) endure silencing and erasure. When an atrocity occurs, victims are unable to witness their own suffering *due to the annihilation of their own sense of self*—what Goodman refers to as an “intrapyschic” protective measure to endure an “external hell.” Oliver explains, “The inner witness operates as a negotiating voice between subject positions and subjectivity” (87). She presupposes that the witnessing process cannot occur if one’s **subjectivity** has been destroyed, which suggests that victims of extreme violence endure an internal struggle during which it is both impossible and essential to bear witness—what can be referred to as the paradox of witnessing. Oliver states, “Although there were eyewitnesses to the Holocaust, they could not really see what was going on...victims were not only empirically annihilated as witnesses—murdered—but also cognitively and perceptually destroyed as witnesses because they were turned into objects and dehumanized” (85-9).

As such, the powerless must rely on someone in a privileged position to speak by proxy, which poses several questions: How can those in privileged positions understand the suffering of the disenfranchised? What are the ethical responsibilities of those in subject positions who act as a second witness to an atrocity? What happens during the telling and re-telling of events when someone in a subject position speaks for those who do not have access to the primary language or media system? Paradoxically, “The content of testimonies of oppression reinscribes the survivor as victim and object even while the act of testifying restores subjectivity to the experience of objectification” (Oliver 98). So just as the privileged speaker attempts to help restore a victim’s subjectivity, the process further violates the first witnesses by forcing them to re-live their trauma and representing them to the world as “victims.”

In terms of an atrocity as unfathomable as the Holocaust, it seems a writer may never be able to do justice to the victims or their families across literary genres. While some may argue that **testimony** is the most “appropriate” way to regard the Holocaust, others contend that perceptual, psychoanalytical factors render **testimony** unreliable. Those who privilege scientific approaches to gathering and analyzing data may believe that the Holocaust

should only be re-presented using these methods. Those who see the value in more open, creative forms of expression may not feel that the conventions utilized to shape a narrative of events detracts from the “truthfulness” of its contents. To summarize, no matter what method or methodology is used write to about trauma or history, all linguistic representations are **subjective** to a certain extent. It remains an impossibility to completely extract our personhood from the writing process, regardless of the strides we take to maintain a certain level of objectivity. The linguistic framing of lived experience is influenced by a writer's preference for hard facts over the “softness” of literary conventions as a means of conveying the truth.

Significantly, those in **subject positions** are the ones with the **power** or **agency** to shape the **discourse** on a given subject. The term ‘discourse’ has multiple denotative meanings. In the most basic sense, discourse refers to ways of establishing knowledge through social interactions. In Weeden’s “Discourse, Power, and Resistance,” he summarizes, “Discourses are more than ways of thinking and producing meaning. They constitute the 'nature' of the body, unconscious and conscious mind and emotional life of the subjects they seek to govern” (185). This definition demonstrates the interrelated aspects of power, discourse, and subject positions. According to Oliver, “...rhetoric is a repetition of operations and citation that can either subvert or conserve dominant discourse” (112). This assertion emphasizes the power of language to shape the rhetorical culture from within a particular system of **power**. In order to influence others, one must have the necessary resources, interpersonal linkages, communication skills, and certain level of expertise or experience (Wilmot and Hocker 410). The discourse of witnessing directly correlates with frames of access that provide an outlet for witnesses to provide a testimony to a wider audience. Those who cannot access the language necessary to give testimony cannot adopt a “subject” position; their stories remain untold and unrecognized by the world. As such, their suffering continues.

The concept of **discourse** ties directly to agency as “rhetorical agency” refers to “the capacity to influence the form and shape of a rhetorical culture” which can be “shaped both in a material sense and a sociological sense” (Greer, *Kairos News*). **Agency** is not

something that we are born with, rather, our agency ebbs and flows in relation to our power (or rather, our perception of our power). Human beings are both actors and shapers who are acted upon and shaped by their rhetorical cultures (which include written, oral and visual modes of communication). Greer claims that we do not have a choice when it comes to whether or not we have agency, but we do have a choice in terms of what we *do* with our agency. In order to act as a responsible witness, it is necessary to provide testimony as a means of bringing about social justice and implementing change for the common good.

According to Wilmot and Hocker, **power** entails one's ability to make choices and influence others (409-10). They refer to power as a perception that influences others through coercion, rewards, or identification. Some forms of power are legitimized through appointed positions of power, while others demonstrate expert power through specialized knowledge in a particular field of study. In the most egregious form, power is "a force that pushes others around against their will" (410). A human being does not have power by himself; s/he can only have power in relation to another individual. Concepts associated with power relate to subjectivity in the sense that those in **subject positions** are empowered individuals with the freedom to make choices. As Judith Butler suggests in *Frames of War: When is Life Grievable?*, the ways in which rhetors use their **power** to shape **discourse** through linguistic framing can either serve to empower the disenfranchised and restore their **subjectivity** or further dehumanize them by treating them like romanticized objects for those in privileged positions to pity and mourn from afar.

Psychoanalytical Dimensions of Witnessing: Trauma Theory and the Mind/Body

The psychoanalytical is an extremely important dimension of witnessing in terms of driving home the exigency for bearing witness. These dimensions are useful for students to consider because it sheds light on the neurological processes that occur when an individual witnesses a traumatic event, the short and long-term effects trauma has on the psyche, and the importance of purging the trauma for the emotional, psychological, and physical well-being of the witness. In the broadest sense, the **psychoanalytical dimension** of witnessing is crucial for understanding the *why* and the *how* of atrocity. Why and how do atrocities occur? Why and how are different parties affected? In what ways do these

factors impact the witnessing process (particularly subjectivity and interpretation)? Students are asked to ponder these questions as they consider the different subject positions of victims, bystanders, perpetrators in atrocity-producing situations, which will be explored more in-depth in Chapter 3.

The darkest end of the witnessing spectrum addresses extreme instances of trauma. According to LaCapra, **trauma** is “a disruptive experience that disarticulates the self and creates holes in existence” (41). Trauma theory considers the immediate, short term, and long term effects of witnessing a shocking event in relation to biological, psychological, and societal impacts. Inevitably, neurological processes affect the witnessing process and the way victims, bystanders, perpetrators as well as second and third-person witnesses interpret and relay events.

According to Dr. Kaethe Weingarten, a “trauma response” is a “normal response to abnormal situations” (43). When the body’s trauma center in the brain—the “locus coeruleus”—reacts to highly stressful environmental factors, victims, perpetrators, and/or bystanders are susceptible to experiencing a “fight or flight” or “freeze” response. During “fight or flight,” an alarm reaction occurs to external stimuli; the body experiences increased respiratory and cardiovascular activity, pupil dilation, and a diversion of blood from the digestive system (which causes the feeling of “butterflies” in the stomach) (46). During a “freeze” response, the body may experience paralysis and the mind may go numb as it passively observes what is happening without registering events (44), similar to what witnesses describe as an “out of body experience.” When the nervous system has been stressed to its maximum capacity, the effects are irreversible: the mind is permanently altered. Long term effects include lethargy, shaking, tremors, night terrors, rapid heart rate, insomnia, uncontrollable sweating, and hypervigilant reactions to noises (42-4).

The limbic system controls the part of the brain responsible for emotion, long-term memory, behavior, motivation, emotional life, and memory formation. In “Central Nervous System Processing of Human Visceral Pain in Health and Disease,” Anthony Hobson states physical sensations of pain begin with the nerves and are catalogued into memory. Nociceptors are special pain receptors that function for both visceral and somatic pain. The

spinal cord functions as the “middle man” by transmitting signals to and from the brain—a freeway for sensory and motor impulses. The dorsal horn acts as the “information hub,” and the limbic system serves as the emotional center of the brain (par. 15). Every witness processes a traumatic event very differently. Some bury the trauma deep within their psyches whereas others are never able to escape it.

When defensive processes are enacted as a result of a “shock” to the psyche, the mind stores the information in long-term memory (i.e. the limbic system). For some, the information stays buried there until a “trigger” conjures up the memories and forces the witness to re-live the trauma, a condition initially referred to as “shell shock” but more recently referred to as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). These instances can happen very suddenly, often because of night terrors or loud noises, and in extreme circumstances can cause a psychological break that blurs the line between the unconscious and reality. First-person witnesses to war crimes may suffer from this disorder and have a difficult time documenting their experiences because the “layering” of memory from recurring episodes prevents them from accurately recalling the course of events that have taken place.

Some people experience the trauma on a regular basis, a process referred to as *aporia* through which one replays an event over and over again and cannot let it go (LaCapra 23). This not only affects the testimonies they offer, but the need to constantly tell and re-tell events can sometimes prevent victims from “working through” the trauma. In other instances, it is not unusual for a witness to psychologically withdraw during trauma as a protective measure. This defense mechanism creates an “intrapsychic world” that prevents the mind from fully absorbing the excruciating pain of living in an “external hell” (Goodman 3). These protective measures can make it difficult for even the most lucid eye witness to recall events. Children who witness trauma pose a unique complication because they develop a “mode of adventure” when they provide a testimony (Laub 68). Children create an alternate reality that allows them to replay their experiences as if they are telling a fairy tale. Laub states, “A split occurs between an experience and a memory of adventure and the comprehension of an awesome reality, a reality that is most likely confined to those layers of precocious memories” (68).

The psychological state of perpetrators varies, and evidence shows that the brain responds differently for “normal” men as opposed to those who are truly “evil.” During an atrocity-producing situation, such as the events that transpired during the Holocaust, perpetrators who have entered an altered state of mind may not even be fully conscious of the fact that their actions are harming innocent people (Lifton). As a result of ideological brainwashing that occurs during military training, perpetrators come to see their victims as objects that must be annihilated. Soldiers are trained to obey orders without question, and a sense of morality instilled during peacetime conditions no longer applies. According to Lifton, it is not unusual for soldiers to undergo a psychological transition called “doubling” when they mirror the behaviors of their unit, functioning autonomously and without question. In a “kill or be killed” situation, soldiers must make difficult, split-second decisions under duress. Afterwards, they must live with the consequences of their actions, and many suffer extreme cases of depression, guilt, and shame. In this respect they, too, are victims of trauma and in need of bearing witness.

Like chronic pain, emotional pain occurs in the frontal region of the brain cortex and never shuts off, which is detrimental to one’s physical health. Withholding trauma, therefore, negatively affects witnesses both physically and psychologically. There exists a strong link between depression and chronic pain, and many scientists and doctors believe that traumatic events that cause prolonged emotional pain are responsible for causing physical ailments. The correlation between emotional responses to trauma and memory formation might explain why witnesses have such a difficult time coping with past experiences and letting go of somatic pain (46-8). It further reveals the exigency for bearing witness.

Psychological dimensions of witnessing intersect with ethical dimensions of witnessing in critical ways. The following section will discuss some of these overlapping concepts more in-depth as a way to help students reflect upon ethical considerations of witnessing from first, second, and third-person vantage points.

Ethical Dimensions of Witnessing

In class, we spend a few days discussing the importance of ethics and witnessing. The purposes are two-fold: it teaches students how to analyze and interpret ethical aspects of testimonies while asking them to bear in mind ethical composition practices as the work toward their final projects. These concepts are introduced to students in a lecture format followed by a short writing assignment on the My Lai massacre. Philosophies in **ethics** present a vital and complex dimension of the witnessing process. **Ethical considerations** affect the witnessing process in relation to the ways in which a testimony is “framed” as well as the moral obligations of first, second, and third-person witnesses. This section will examine Burke’s and Aristotle’s conceptions of ethics, Claudia Card’s “atrocious paradigm,” and Robert J. Lifton’s theory on “atrocious-producing situations” in order to consider individual and institutional culpability in the wake of human rights violations. The topic of the My Lai massacre serves as a metaphor for understanding why and how other atrocities happen in war time conditions to show them the ways in which history informs our current circumstances. A major goal of rhetorical witnessing should be to guard against intolerable harms, and what better subject to explore than the abomination of war.

According to Aristotle, **ethos** refers to the character of a rhetor in his or her attempt to identify with and influence an audience. In its highest form, rhetoric is “the art of a good man” and demonstrates credibility, competence, morality, and trustworthiness (60). In *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle refers to *ethiké areté* (i.e. “excellent character”) as the standard toward which a person should strive to achieve a good and happy life (60). According to Aristotle, a “good” person embodies compassion, empathy, and altruism—someone who serves the greater good of mankind and engages in “other-centered” behavior (50-81). The goal of a moral person should be “to achieve the highest human good” and inspire others to be good as well (3-30). However, moral judgments of what constitutes “right” versus “wrong” cannot be reduced to universal principles (10-13). The main question of concern, then, is: are others suffering as a result of our actions? Do our actions reflect virtuous or vicious behavior?

According to Aristotle, a “good” person: 1) strives for happiness; 2) reflects moral and intellectual virtues; 3) considers what is “right” versus “wrong” based on how others are affected by his or her decision-making. A “virtuous” person exemplifies courage, temperance, generosity, honor, nobility, amiability, sincerity, wit, and patience (50-111). An “intellectually virtuous” individual aims to achieve the highest level of truth through contemplation, resourcefulness, understanding, and consideration for others (144-166). Virtuous persons show jurisprudence by acting justly when assessing their own and others’ actions—whether voluntary or involuntary—in order to determine wrongdoing (51-54). A truly “good” person refrains from committing deeds for personal gain that harm others and demonstrates the capacity to speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves.

Since I do not have a religious background, I incorporate theories that employ a more secular viewpoint. Rooted in rationalism, these theorists tend to reject the existence of a supreme being and rather hold people accountable for the actions they commit. The ability to be a “good” person has less to do with divine intervention and pre-destination and more to do with acting as a rational thinking being. The theorists we examine support the viewpoint that free will is an important ideological construct that holds individuals responsible for the decisions they make, which ultimately benefit the self or the common good.

In a similar vein, Claudia Card’s *Confronting Evils: Terrorism, Torture, Genocide* discusses “the atrocity paradigm,” a theoretical model rooted in ethics and philosophy. Card examines inexcusable actions, immoral deeds, and intolerable harms in order to explain why “normal” people commit evil deeds and the ways in which these are influenced by institutional structures of power. She explains that “evil deeds” exist on a continuum from culpable ignorance or weakness to deliberate evil; she further aims to explore ways for the government to respond to evil deeds without incurring further harm. Card points out that “real people” are both victims and perpetrators, and victims easily become perpetrators as a result of the harm they have endured. Furthermore, she distinguishes between individuals who commit evil deeds and institutional evils that do not necessarily reveal individual culpability (4-5). Significantly, when institutional evils occur—such as

military decisions that result in human rights violations—determining blame becomes convoluted.

To illustrate for students, I refer to Card's example of Nazi Adolf Eichmann (whose bureaucratic influence enacted the transportation of Jews from their homes to the death camps), who testified that he could not be blamed for the deaths of 6 million Jews, as he was charged during his trial in Jerusalem. According to Eichmann, he was merely following orders and would have faced death had he refused to perform his duties. Eichmann attempted to assign causation for his role during the Holocaust to Adolf Hitler's implementation of National Socialist ideology into German society. Eichmann's testimony reveals a man who lived his life in *bad faith*, choosing to oppress others for his own personal gain rather than *being-for-others* and living an authentic life. Although Eichmann attempted to evade responsibility for his actions by asserting the institutional powers of Nazi Germany dictated his role in the Holocaust, he was eventually found guilty and put to death.

During this trial, Hannah Arendt served as a first-person witness to his testimony. In *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report of the Banality of Evil*, Arendt claims to have been shocked to discover that this man she envisioned as a diabolical monster was, in fact, rather ordinary. Her findings revealed a perturbing fact: that evil deeds are not—as many assume—committed by monsters but by “normal” perpetrators. In accordance with Arendt's findings, Card dispels the religious myths of “good” versus “evil”; human beings are far more complicated than a simple binary and most are fully capable of reverting to primitive behavior when the right set of circumstances presents itself. Arendt refutes the notion that evil doers are all monsters incapable of reasoning because many perpetrators from the Holocaust were fully conscious of what they were doing. According to these thinkers, evil is *not* a metaphysical power or force that possesses certain people; the S.S. officers who committed various atrocities during Hitler's reign of terror were average men with normal functioning minds. They made choices; therefore, they are responsible for what they did. The assumptions Card operates under supports this extremely unsettling idea that we are all capable of committing evil deeds. This problem is perpetuated by the fact those

individuals who witness violence or are victims violence are at a higher risk of becoming perpetrators (8). In essence, violence begets violence (8).

To further illuminate, Card's theory of evil includes the basic premise that "evils" are inexcusable wrongs that are reasonably foreseeable and result in intolerable harms (6-8). According to Card, an "intolerable harm" is a normative concept that refers to "what a decent life cannot include" (8). Not all evils are atrocities, but these acts *are* urgent; life and basic quality of life are what is at stake (6). Evils cause irreparable and irreversible harm and do not have to be "astonishing" (6). Evil deeds can include domestic abuse or rape as well as other egregious human rights violations including premeditated murder, torture, or terrorist acts. Evil deeds typically involve some kind of motivation—greed, ambition for power, intolerance toward opposing ideologies, or even pleasure in causing physical or psychological pain. Based on Card's presuppositions, evil deeds are committed by people who *choose* a certain course of action; there is *always* a choice. However, underlying this theory resides a very crucial paradox: soldiers who commit intolerable harms based on orders from a commanding officer. This "paradox of evil" will be discussed near the end of the chapter, but it begs the question: in what ways do the psychological conditions of an atrocity-producing situation affect the ethical considerations?

Thus, it is important to convey to students the ways in which the ethical dimensions of witnessing intersect with the psychological dimensions of witnessing. According to Robert J. Lifton, an atrocity-producing situation is militarily and psychologically structured to turn average people into criminal killers; the environment causes the atrocity. In terms of the military structure, the situation involves a counterinsurgency war in a distant, "alien" environment. Combat conditions that make it difficult to discern who or where the enemy is results in a dehumanization of the "other" as a faceless enemy who must be destroyed. Furthermore, guerrilla warfare, land mines, ambushes, booby traps, and other stressful combat conditions result in a hypervigilant state that ultimately affects the psyche. The psychological structure of warfare instills fear and helplessness in combatants who are on edge because of their military vulnerability. Anger and grief over deaths of brothers in arms creates a hunger for retaliation and may lead to a dual role of soldiers acting as both victims

and executioners (Lifton, “Conditions of Atrocity” par. 2). Lifton refers to the phenomenon of “doubling” to explain a formation of “a second self” in combat situations (par. 6). This “psychic dissociation” results from witnessing repeated traumas in an unstable, life-threatening environment; a sub-self becomes autonomous with a group’s actions in brutal circumstances. Lifton claims, “In environments where sanctioned brutality becomes the norm, sadistic impulses dormant in us all, are likely to be expressed. The group’s violent energy becomes such that an individual soldier who questions it could be turned upon” (par. 10). These conditions make it ripe for “normal” men to commit the most heinous crimes. Under these conditions, are these men responsible for the acts they commit? According to Sartre, yes; they are responsible for every act they commit, because they have a choice to kill or not. According to Card, while the soldier may be guilty of committing a harm, accountability reverts back to the institutional power structure that forces men to commit non-voluntary acts in a “kill or be killed” situation. Sartre would argue that this is merely an example of bad faith, whereas Card might counter that a soldier’s options may be limited if he wants to survive. Card might further argue that the ideological programming that occurs during the process of training for war and witnessing countless acts of violence creates the perfect storm for unspeakable acts to occur. Of course, this is just conjecture. These ethical paradoxes will be revisited later in Chapter 3.

It is important to note that, according to Card, there is a difference between an “evil deed” and an “atrocious.” An **atrocious** involves culpable wrongdoing that occurs on a mass scale. Genocides, massacres, mass murder, torturing prisoners, and rape warfare are all examples of what constitutes an atrocious. “The atrocious paradigm” suggests that the root of this kind of violence manifests from institutional structures of power (5). These power structures influence evil deeds that are carried out by people who willingly comply with “morally inexcusable wrongdoing” (5-7). Moreover, Card correctly presupposes that these incidents are ideologically motivated (24). Many people incorrectly assume that most wars are religiously motivated. While this is partly true due to the fact that religions are ideologies, non-religious ideologies have incurred far more mass harm than the latter (Schumacher 1). One only has to examine the wide acceptance of slavery in the United

States, the Communist regimes of Mao or Stalin, the influence of the Hitler's Third Reich, or the widespread global suffering caused by capitalism to witness non-religious ideologically motivated mass suffering.

Does it stand to reason that institutional harms do not necessarily imply individual culpability, as Card suggests? It is far easier to accept our role in the oppression of others when we are merely cogs in a machine, far removed from the larger "face" of human suffering. The men who helped to build the atomic bomb indirectly participated in mass murder due to "compartmentalization," but does that necessarily indicate they are responsible for the deaths of over 100,000 civilians in Hiroshima and Nagasaki? Most Americans would say, "No." The Japanese might disagree. It is far more difficult to assign blame when the individuals responsible become obscured as a result of bureaucratic processes and the way traumatic history is "framed" in particular ways. If the Nazis had been the victors, would Adolf Eichmann have been rendered as a mass murderer or would he have been considered a hero?

Acts of war remain unavoidable, yet this fact should never suggest that no hope exists. The atrocity paradigm focuses specifically on evil deeds at the institutional level in order to create an exigency for ethical humane responses to intolerable harms (9). Card argues, "Inhumane responses by government not only jeopardize the possibility of post-conflict peaceful co-existence but also rightly undermine the confidence of a people in the government that do respond" (6). The knowledge that human suffering exists on a mass scale in various regions of the world should not deter us from recognizing intolerable harms and using our agency ethically in order to mitigate these issues. It is our moral obligation to speak out against these acts and consistently work toward conflict resolution by engaging as second and third-person witnesses. Protesting, petitions, responsible voting, apologies, truth commissions, reparations, memorials, education—all of these "moves" reflect ethical responses to intolerable harms. These "moves" are discussed in class so students can understand the positive effects of witnessing while keeping in mind the intended goal(s) of their research projects.

Testimonies thus also reflect the essence of “responsibility” and “response-ability” as described in Chapter One. Linguistic frames of traumatic history are integral to the construction of cultural memory; these frames also reveal the tension between mimesis and representation. While we must rely on testimonies in order to bring light to matters of great concern, it is also important to remain critical of the ways in which these testimonies are “framed,” the sociopolitical effects and ethical considerations of releasing these testimonies into the rhetorical culture, and the educational benefits.

Students are given an overview of concepts outlined in this chapter and asked to apply these to various assignments throughout the semester. When examining the traumatic realism in a work of fiction or nonfiction, students are encouraged to examine the poetics of a text as it encapsulates the truth of human experience and raise critical questions pertaining to the ethics of aesthetics. When looking at testimonies provided by perpetrators, students are asked to ponder how the ethical dimensions of witnessing overlap with the psychoanalytical dimensions as we raise questions related to accountability and retribution. Providing a general outline of ethical dimensions to witnessing works well for examining linguistic testimonies such as those provided by the Nazi doctors or Adolf Eichmann’s testimony in Jerusalem. These concepts can also be carried over into a unit on visual frames of the dark side and Vietnam and will be discussed in Chapter Three. Perhaps most importantly, students are asked to bear these questions in mind when acting as a first, second, or third-person witness and composing their final projects.

By providing students with an overview of theories related to rhetoric and communication, psychoanalysis, and ethics, students are better able to understand the rhetorical dimensions of witnessing and the complex nature of the witnessing process. Furthermore, this overview provides students with a critical framework for examining linguistic frames of traumatic history in order to enhance their understanding of human experience. The next section will discuss different literary conventions used to frame traumatic history as well as how to apply the aforementioned terms and concepts to

Holocaust literature and how to incorporate relevant, engaging assignments in the classroom.

III

Linguistic frames of Traumatic History: Application in the Classroom

Witnesses frame their testimonies using different forms, some more conventional than others. Within the context of this study, linguistic frames refer to testimonies depicted across various literary genres including prose fiction, poetry, drama, and nonfiction. Visual frames refer to representations of trauma as these appear in photographs, art, or film. This chapter will focus specifically on linguistic frames whereas visual frames will be examined in chapter three. This section will make a case for the importance of exposing students to different genres by demonstrating the ways in which fiction, poetry, and nonfiction bring their own unique elements to the witnessing process. I will demonstrate ways in which nontraditional testimonies such as fiction and poetry written by second or third-person witnesses reflects a significant aspect of human experience. Using various literary examples, I will discuss critical thinking activities and assignments that highlight the educational benefits of witnessing in theory and praxis.

The literary conventions used to craft first, second, and third-person witnesses' experience is contingent upon the literary genre in question. The following section will examine fiction, poetry, and nonfiction in conjunction with their corresponding forms and devices to explain how each piece typifies witness testimony. Specifically, it will illuminate the ways in which various Holocaust testimonies are "framed" by first, second, and third-person witnesses by applying terms and concepts associated with rhetorical dimensions of witnessing in order to demonstrate how these works may be implemented in a multimodal composition course. It will also raise important questions regarding ethical considerations of composing traumatic history through the poetics of the text.

Fiction: Cynthia Ozick's "The Shawl"

Cynthia Ozick's disturbing portrayal of the Holocaust, "The Shawl," serves as a useful pedagogical tool for analyzing rhetorical dimensions of traumatic history. Due to the length

of the story, students can read this story in class following a lecture on rhetorical dimensions of witnessing and literary conventions to demonstrate ways to apply course terminology to select testimonies.

As noted by Roberts and Jacobs in *Literature: An Introduction To Reading and Writing*, fiction takes the form of prose, narrative, myths, novels, short stories, and parables. Notable literary devices include verisimilitude, *donné* (i.e. the “given”), character, plot, structure, theme, narration, style, point of view, description, dialogue, tone, irony, and symbolism. A piece such as Cynthia Ozick’s short story “The Shawl” reflects a second-person witnesses’ fictional account of the Holocaust through the point of view of Rosa, a mother struggling to protect her infant from being discovered at a concentration camp. Although Ozick’s story is entirely fictitious, the level of verisimilitude remains high due to her skillful use of figurative and descriptive language.

Perhaps the most notable literary convention Ozick uses pertains to figurative language. Her grotesque metaphors describe the emaciated bodies of the characters Rosa, Stella, and Magda. Rosa, the mother of a small toddler, is described as “a floating angel, alert, seeing everything, but in the air, not there” (696). Ozick’s metaphor represents an out of body experience that occurs from starvation as well as Rosa’s inability to fully process the “external hell” of the camp due to a state of delirium. Ozick describes Stella, a fourteen-year-old orphan: “Her knees were tumors on sticks, her elbows chicken bones” (696). Clearly, her body has become so emaciated from starvation that Ozick saw fit to make readers imagine the havoc this wreaks on a child’s body by using such stomach-gnawing references. These metaphors are the epitome of death: cancer and the remnants of animal carcass. The most heart-wrenching metaphors pertain to Magda, a toddler who never lives to see her second birthday: “Magda lived to walk. She lived that long, but she did not walk well, partly because she was only fifteen months old, and partly because the spindles of her legs could not hold up her fat belly. It was fat with air, full and round” (697). She uses metaphors such as “pencils” and “spindles” to emphasize the direness of the situation, making a careful rhetorical decision to clue readers into Magda’s certain death rather than building up to it and shocking them at the end. One might assume that the reason Ozick

chooses to reveal Magda's fate at the beginning of the story is because the story's focus has to do with what the magical shawl represents in this hellish place.

Ozick uses numerous metaphors to refer to the shawl to illuminate what it represents in the larger aspect of the story. At the outset, it appears to represent the comfort and safety associated with any child's security blanket. "[Rosa] looked into Magda's face through a gap in the shawl: a squirrel in a nest, safe, no one could reach her inside the little house of the shawl's winding" (696). The shawl represents a source of nourishment for the ravenous baby who sucked on the shawl, a precious "milk of linen" that made her so content she never even uttered a sound. Rosa used the shawl as a hiding place so that the S.S. officers would not find Magda and kill her. At times, the shawl became a toy when the wind blew its corners and made Magda laugh with joy. Eventually, Stella steals the shawl because she was "cold," leading to the tragic death of an inconsolable child. When readers witness Magda's murder through Rosa's eyes, they are left with one final mental image of the shawl as Rosa shoves it down her throat to prevent the "wolf's screech" of an anguished mother from erupting out of her body (699). Ozick uses all of these metaphors to convey that the shawl is the ultimate symbol of survival: the lengths humans will go to when they are forced to endure the most heinous living conditions imaginable in order to make it out alive.

Although Ozick uses many other significant literary conventions to convey this story, her reliance on figurative language to represent the tragedy of the Holocaust warrants the most attention. Since Ozick never witnessed life in the concentration camps firsthand, many readers who lived through the Holocaust responded quite angrily to her framing of traumatic history. Some survivors argue that her portrayal presents an ethical conundrum due to its fictitious nature. How dare she attempt to write about something she never witnessed personally? More importantly, fictional accounts bring into question other Holocaust testimonies and perpetuate the outrageous presupposition that the Holocaust never happened. Ozick defends herself by stating that even nonfiction fictionalizes events, so to write something as a work of fiction is to acknowledge that it is a construction. "All writing is presumption of course, since no one knows what it is like to be another human

being” (as cited by Brockes 9). LaCapra also acknowledges the paradox of writing, which will be discussed at greater length near the end of this chapter.

At a mere four pages, Ozick’s piece is rich with meaning that allows for in-depth analyses. The linguistic framing of “The Shawl” establishes traumatic realism, and Ozick’s position as a second-person witness makes this piece a unique example of testimony. Even though the characters are fictitious, students can empathize with Rosa’s plight as she struggles to ensure her child’s survival. The story shocks the psyche of the reader as it reaches its horrific conclusion and demands recognition: it is precisely the traumatic nature of wartime conditions that warrant a response. “The Shawl” serves as a metaphor for real-life survivalist situations and demands recognition not only in terms of the Holocaust, but also any and all human rights violations. Some might argue that a fictional depiction of war may be more effective than nonfiction in terms of having an emotional impact on readers and getting them engaged in the witnessing process. At the same time, it raises important questions regarding ethical considerations of traumatic realism. This story is read aloud in class, then analyzed in small groups. Afterward, students are asked to write a short paper. They are required to apply numerous terms associated with rhetorical dimensions of witnessing as it relates to the fiction genre in order to demonstrate what they have learned. In an online course, students read the story independently and participate in an online discussion. Both of these approaches have yielded insightful responses from students.

Poetry: Jorie Graham’s “History”

Poetry as a linguistic frame may take on the shape of a sonnet, ballads, blank verse, couplets, elegies, epigrams, hymns, limericks, odes, quatrains, songs, villanelles, haiku, epic poems, or free verse. A witness may rely on such literary devices as diction, syntax, imagery, meter, rhythm, rhyme, figurative language, or tone to convey meaning. Although poetry may not be commonly associated with the notion of witnessing, many prisoners in concentrations camps wrote poetry about their experiences with the hope that someone would one day find their testimonies and share them with the world. More recently, a book of poems written by prisoners at Guantanamo Bay emphasizes the significance of poetry as a type of testimony that addresses human rights violations.

Metaphysical poet Jorie Graham examines the complexity of how we process traumatic history and ponders the struggle to experience “presence” of mind when confronting issues related to war. Although this is a challenging poem to analyze, it is an excellent example of third-person testimony about the ways in which traumatic history is “framed” and received. Her free verse poem “History” appears simple in its form, but it makes up for this seemingly simplistic form by the complexity of its content and use of literary devices. Graham use elevated diction and rather obscure imagery in order to create a montage of different frames relating directly or indirectly to World War II. The ideas she presents create a porous effect where the reader moves through time and space to experience the horrors of how history is received and shaped in different contexts.

She opens:

History
Into whose ear the deeds are spoken. The only
listener. So I believed
he would remember everything, the murmuring
trees,
the sunshine’s zealotry, its deep
unevenness (lines 1-6).

In the most literal sense, this passage raises questions regarding who encodes and who decodes details of past events. It critiques the common misconception that history is told accurately and objectively. She refers to the historian as a “he,” perhaps a jab at the association of the word “history” with “his/story” to point out that, for the most part, men in positions of privilege are the ones to document events and put these ideas into circulation. It further emphasizes the fact that history is told by the victors. In the figurative sense, we are left wondering what exactly the murmuring trees represent, if anything. Are the trees a metaphor for people, who whisper the deeds of the past back and forth to one another, like wind that moves ceaselessly through the branches and leaves? Does the sunshine symbolize the one who has the power to rule, like the sun God Apollo, a zealot in the eyes of many? And why deep unevenness? Is this to show the inconsistency with which

details are documented and translated over time? These questions are raised in class to make connections with the poetics of the text and the underlying meaning of the poem.

What Graham lacks in simplicity she makes up for in her adept critique of how historic events are told and re-told. She answers the question: what is “history”?

For history
Is the opposite
of the eye
for whom, for instance, six million bodies in portions
of hundreds and
the flowerpots broken by a sudden wind stand as
equivalent (Graham lines 6-12).

This passage reinforces the oft-told adage: “History is written by the victors.” The discovery of concentration camps and recognition of mass casualties among the Jewish population justified the Allied cause for fighting against the Nazis. Yet from the enemies’ perspective, the Jews were mere objects to be discarded like waste, the bodies of millions akin to broken flowerpots that turned to ash and disappeared like they were nothing. Had the Allied forces failed to defeat the Axis powers, what tales of the past might be told around the family fire instead? Graham creates the exigency for bearing witness to traumatic history by contesting the “exhausted solitude of San Francisco in 1980” that deigned to argue the Holocaust never happened (lines 14-16). “What more is there than fact” (lines 12-14)?

Graham’s poem takes the form of a montage: she moves through three different frames of the Holocaust to emphasize what the subjective, interpretive nature of witnessing traumatic history are and what this means in different times and places. The poem itself reflects the societal mode of witnessing because it intends to engage a wide audience and bring attention to human rights violations. Graham serves as a third-person witness in each of the “spaces” in time and history that she examines. In the first instance, she examines a broad conception of history and critiques the very nature of how history is told and retold

over time and in different contexts. In the next, she uses graphic descriptions of a photograph to show the framing of a victim's mutilated corpse next to what one can assume are Nazi soldiers.

Far in the woods
in a faded photograph
in 1942 the man with his own
genitalia in his mouth and
hundreds of
slow holes
a pitchfork has opened
over his face
grows beautiful. The ferns and deepwood
lilies catch
the eye. Three men in ragged uniforms
with guns keep laughing
nervously. They share the day
with him (lines 19-30).

Graham uses adjectives, and contrasting imagery points out the irony of man's destructive nature amidst a naturally beautiful environment. This use of contrast makes what she is describing that much more horrifying: "A bluebird/sings. The feathers of the shade/touch every inch/of skin—the hand holding down the delicate gun,/the hands holding/ down the delicate/hips. And the sky is visible between the men, between/the trees, a blue spirit/enveloping/anything" (lines 19-38). Rather than focusing solely on the disturbing subject matter depicted in the photograph, Graham uses language in a way that makes the ugly beautiful. The irony of referring to a lethal weapon as "delicate" is rather jarring but emphasizes the sheer brutality of the scene. How is it that these soldiers can treat a human life with such carelessness and cruelty?

In the final instance, she describes witnessing a news story to convey the traumatic experience of processing violence in the media.

Late in the story, in northern Italy,
a man cuts down some trees for winter
fuel. We read this in the evening
news. Watching the fire burn late
one night, watching it change and change, a hand
grenade,
lodged in the pulp the young tree
grew around, explodes, blinding the man, killing
his wife. Now who will the tell children
fairytales? The ones where simple
crumbs over the forest
floor endure
to help us home? (lines 38-50)

Readers witness Graham witnessing the news and are left to ponder the everlasting effects of warfare. Readers are also left to ponder the absurdity of war and its consequences: why must these unnecessary acts of violence persist? By ending on an allusion to *Hansel and Gretel*, perhaps Graham suggests that we will never be able to undo the past: we can never go “back home” to the way things were before. Traumatic history was and always will be; there is nowhere to go after innocence has been drowned except forward. This is the price we must pay for the choices of our predecessors.

This poem, while difficult for students to dissect independently, works well as an in-class exercise following a discussion on what the poetics of a text are and what it means to act as a third-person witness to traumatic history. There is an initial reading of the poem followed by a guided explication and analysis in class. It is important to note that while Graham’s piece functions as a terministic screen through which we, as readers, see Graham’s perspective of history, it simultaneously scrutinizes the ways in which terministic screens distort our perception of reality by shaping history a certain way. In this sense, it is the rhetoric of anti-rhetoric. The extremely strikingly realistic imagery shocks the reader and establishes pathos, thereby showing Graham crafts the poem for the purpose

of demanding identification from the reader. The poem is riddled with paradoxes. As a privileged speaker, Graham resides in a Subject position as she attempts to speak for those who cannot speak for themselves. She never specifically identifies any of the victims she describes, most likely as a ‘move’ not to exploit the victims and dehumanize them any further than what we see in photographs and newscasts. She discusses a desire to be present as a witness to history, and yet we are never able to fully witness any event of traumatic history. At the same time, history demands recognition, responsibility, and response-ability. The goal of examining this piece has less to do with expecting students to understand the complexity of literary conventions associated with poetry and more to do with illustrating what it means to act as a third-person witness in different contexts and what we can learn about the framing of traumatic history. Moreover, Graham’s piece provides an exigency for third-person witnessing. We are all—as third-person witnesses to traumatic history—ethically obligated to understand the past and its consequences in order to learn from it and do our best to ensure more innocent children are not left to fend for themselves. In these ways, students can relate to Graham’s poetry and understand the relevance of third-person witness testimony.

Traumatic Realism: Nonfiction and the Poetics of framing History

Traumatic realism is an important concept to bring into the classroom discussion because all the material we examine—whether it is fiction, poetry, or nonfiction—in some way represents lived experience in meaningful ways. LaCapra defines **traumatic realism** as “a metaphor that signifies a referential relation (or truth claim) that is more or less direct or indirect” (LaCapra 14). The breadth of traumatic realism includes autobiographical writings by first, second, and third-person witnesses, fictional representations of trauma, and war literature in general. It can include minor discourses with minimal resemblance to actual lived experience as well as major discourses that demonstrate a more significant mode of expression. Traumatic realism arose from World War II war literature and testimonials, an important and inventive mode of expression, or as Aleksandra Szczepan explains: “a language of description proving the community of experience, as a terminological frame” (1). Furthermore, the use of allegory, symbol, metaphor, and

metonymy in order to frame a testimony shows “that rhetoric is a set of fundamental, possible answers to how a human being transposes the real” (2).

The poetics of a text and its reception raise important questions pertaining to the ethics of aesthetics when it comes to framing a given testimony. Fiction based on truth claims such as Ozick’s “The Shawl” bring into question the validity of Holocaust testimony that is intended to be nonfiction. Her short story received considerable criticism by actual Holocaust survivors who were outraged by her audacity to write about concentration camp life, arguing that it diminished their actual lived experiences. Moreover, aesthetic qualities are a concerning issue when writers make the ugly beautiful through their rendition of events. From this perspective, pieces like Müller’s *Eyewitness Auschwitz* or Frankl’s *Man’s Search for Meaning* are worthy of recognition whereas Ozick’s fiction or Graham’s poetry should be regarded with careful scrutiny.

Two predominant methods of writing nonfiction traumatic history exist: the self-sufficient model and radical constructivism. Both of these methods reside in the nonfiction genre, but it is important to recall that one of the paradoxes of writing is that history fictionalizes just as fiction historicizes. As such, both of linguistic frames of traumatic history exhibit rhetorical dimensions.

The self-sufficient model, one that applies to many documentaries, involves a positivist approach to gathering evidence and makes referential statements based on truth-claims. This technique privileges the used of archival and primary research documents that can authenticate facts about the past as opposed to hermeneutic writing methods that value interpretation. As Lacapra describes it, in the technique “Writing is subordinated to content in the form of facts, their narration, or their analysis...its ideal goal is to be transparent to content or an open window on the past—with figures of rhetoric serving only an instrumental role in illustrating what could be expressed without loss in literal terms” (LaCapra 3). The self-sufficient model may include narrative histories as well as an analysis of empirical evidence. In terms of witnessing, positive functions include rebuilding civil institutions, forming movements toward restitution and reparation, and advancing international human rights agenda (Hesford 105).

Stephen Ambrose's *Band of Brothers* serves as a possible example for students to learn about of the self-sufficient model. He refrains from utilizing ornate literary devices and describes the chronology of events in a straightforward, logical manner. At times, his writing style may seem dry or devoid of any emotional connection to events which is a rhetorical decision of a more objective historiographer. In the chapter "Getting to Know the Enemy," Ambrose focuses on the essential facts to describe the course of events that took place. The liberation of the concentration camp is practically glossed over and certainly never treated as a climactic event intended to prey on the reader's emotions or instill identification with the Jewish prisoners. Ambrose plainly mentions the looting that took place, the ways in which the American soldiers identified with the Germans, or the emotional effects of witnessing the piles of bodies at the concentration camp.

It is interesting to note that Ambrose only offers four short paragraphs in his book regarding the incident. Instead, as a rhetor he chooses to focus on the American soldiers' experiences "getting to know the enemy" and the various perspectives the men of Easy Company had during their time in Germany. Ambrose provides cursory mention of the German people cleaning up the rubble in their towns, which differs significantly from Spielberg's version of events (and will be discussed in greater depth in Chapter 3). Spielberg uses this example as a narrative technique in order to craft his opening and closing scenes of the episode. While Ambrose refers frequently to Webster's diary entries in order to support his writing through primary research evidence, Spielberg uses other characters to substitute for real people and their actual experiences. For instance, Ambrose describes an encounter Private Webster and Reese have with a *fraulein* while they are on a mission to find eggs, yet in the film Pvt. Webster is replaced by T-4 Luz and Tfg. Perconte. Students are asked: Why not replicate history as accurately as possible in the dramatic interpretation as opposed to creative nonfiction? What are the ethical considerations of asserting that a film is based on actual events, but making these kinds of rhetorical decisions? In application, these examples of first and second-person witnessing not only allows students to serve as third-person witnesses to the Holocaust, but also allows them to apply terms and concepts associated with the rhetorical dimensions of witnessing to two

contrasting testimonies that address many of the same events. By drawing comparisons between these testimonies, students are better equipped to understand the ways linguistic forms and conventions are used to frame traumatic history. Furthermore, we are able to discuss the problematics and the tensions around the use of different conventions and narrative modes in film that interpret historical events.

As LaCapra defines radical constructivism, historiography and fiction are one and the same; “essential are performative, figurative, aesthetic, rhetorical, ideological, and political factors that ‘construct’ structures—stories, plots, arguments, interpretations, explanations—in which referential statements are embedded and take on meaning and significance (1). Writers who prefer this writing style regard the telling of history as similar to fiction and other literary genres on aesthetic and structural levels” (8). These writers acknowledge that even more “closed” approaches to documenting history display certain “poetics” in terms of the text’s design, no matter the writer’s conscious decision to refrain from implementing stylistic conventions. LaCapra points out that although the self-sufficient model reflects a “closed window . . . at least on a structural level, it reflects back only on the historian’s own distorted image” (8). In other words, the writer’s subjective viewpoint always influences the poetics of the text, even when attempting to resist it.

Viktor Frankl composed a radical constructivist memoir, *Man’s Search for the Meaning of Life* (2006), as a first-person witness to the Holocaust. The traumatic realism of their texts reinforce the psychoanalytical dimension of rhetorical witnessing from first-person survivors. Students are shown, through detailed description, the emotional and psychological effects of living through the most heinous form of physical abuse as Frankl struggled to survive the Holocaust. Enslaved, beaten, starved, and mentally tormented in Auschwitz, Frankl used his skills as a psychiatrist to befriend the right guards to ensure his survival. Frankl discovered a means of mentally projecting the love for his wife—whose fate remained unknown—as a focal point for giving his life meaning and, in effect, the will to withstand the unspeakable.

Man’s Search for the Meaning of Life presents truth-claims regarding living conditions and experiences for prisoners in Auschwitz. Since prisoners were not allowed tools for

writing, Frankl recreated his experiences from memory. With this text, students can explore how subjectivity and interpretation affect the framing of events. Students are asked to examine the poetics of the text and raise questions pertaining to the ethics of aesthetics. Notably, the psychoanalytical dimension of these texts creates an exigency for witnessing by illuminating the mental anguish of being stripped of all power and personhood. As Frankl describes, the physical pain is nothing compared to “the mental agony caused by the injustice” (24).

In his testimony, Frankl lays out three distinct psychological phases that occur as a reaction to life in the concentration camps. First, the period following one’s admission into the camp is characterized by shock, disbelief, suicidal thoughts, and the loss of all hope (7-18). Frankl believed many of the prisoners experienced a “delusion of reprieve” as a coping mechanism, even as they headed to the crematory and right up until the moment their lives were extinguished (18). The second phase is the period during which a prisoner has become “entrenched” in concentration camp life (8-9). Relative apathy, emotional death, longing for family, disgust, and an insensitivity to beatings characterize this phase (20-22). Frankl claims that survival situations make empathy an impossibility because witnessing repeated acts of violence squeezes the humanity out of you (22). The dehumanizing behavior, devaluation, and denigration instill a sense of worthlessness that leads to an eventual regression (29). Wish fulfilment in dreams, art, and humor become necessities for self-preservation in a place where compassion ceased to exist (38). By focusing on the ones they loved, prisoners gained the will to live. The third phase, the period following liberation, is not discussed at great length except in the occasional flash forward. In one instance, Frankl describes a friend expressing shock at a photograph of men crowded together in their sleeping quarters. Frankl recalled these cramped conditions as the one time of day that provided the men with some semblance of comfort and could not understand his friend’s shock: these men in the photograph might have been happy (48).

For at that moment, I saw it all again: at 5:00 a.m. it was pitch dark outside. I was lying on the hard boards in an earthen hut where about seventy of us were ‘taken care of.’ We were sick and did not have to leave camp for work;

we did not have to go on parade. We could lie all day in our little corner in the hut and doze and wait for the daily distribution of bread (which, of course, was reduced for the sick) and for the daily helping of soup (watered down and also decreased in quantity). But how content we were; happy in spite of everything. (48)

This example exemplifies indoctrination into concentration camp life that makes the abnormal seem normal. The majority of Frankl's narrative takes place during the second phase, which is rich for psychoanalysis particularly given the nature of the author's work. Students can examine the events that transpire during these phases to better understand the psychological harm of trauma that warrants the exigency for bearing witness.

Ironically, all of these testimonies—in one way or another—reinforce LaCapra's presupposition that narrative form is in some way affected by political and social ideology (10). Furthermore, representing traumatic history in any context runs the risk of exploiting victims, dehumanizing them, and causing them to re-live their traumas based on repeated exposure to these "frames." At the same time, it is important to be aware of what happened during the Holocaust not so that we can ensure that it doesn't happen again, but so that people can open their eyes to the fact that the suffering that occurred during the Holocaust still occurs throughout various regions of the world.

Pedagogically, Holocaust testimony opens the door for students to learn about other instances of traumatic history so that they can more clearly see through the fog of modern warfare. Examining pieces such as the ones described helps students ponder the rhetorical dimensions of witnessing as it relates to the linguistic framing of traumatic history. Moreover, it teaches them that although testimonies are socially constructed representations of reality—which remains problematic—this does not negate their relevance. Witnessing the Holocaust and other atrocities may pose several ethical conundrums, but the exigency to bear witness ultimately outweighs these concerns. I argue, recalling Aristotle's notion that a "good" person "serves the greater good of mankind" (51), that it is important to teach students the value of acting as responsible witnesses.

Conclusion

Through linguistic frames of traumatic history, witnesses bring outsiders into their private little worlds by providing glimpses into their lives. It is a formidable task to challenge students to confront human suffering or any other form of intolerable harm. Testimony allows witnesses to connect with people all over the world, and through recognition people have the power to come together and take a stand. It does not matter whether the testimony takes the form of a poem, a *testimonio*, a short story, a novel, a journal, or a memoir. The goal remains the same: to provide those who have endured unspeakable acts of violence with a voice, bring justice to those who have endured intolerable harms, and strive to make this world a better, less violent place to live.

I argue that the educational benefits of implementing theories related to witnessing are incalculable. It not only encourages empathic engagement, various writing assignments centered on critical thinking and analysis connect directly to the aesthetics and ethics of students' major research projects. Asking students to examine the history of witnessing along with various rhetorical dimensions of witnessing provides students with a framework for interpreting various texts while simultaneously asking them to keep these concepts in mind as they move through different stages of the composition process. It has been my experience that students will generally select a topic for the final research project that is meaningful and personal to them in some way. They typically situate themselves within the research and writing from a second or third-person standpoint with a goal of drawing attention to relevant, thought-provoking issues with which they identify. Each rhetorical 'move' they make is intended to garner recognition for their causes and ask audiences to support their request for change, action, awareness, retribution, etc. It is not enough to teach students the theoretical underpinnings of witnessing; the exigency of witnessing demands more from us. Teachers and students have the response-ability and responsibility to work together to create meaningful work that transcends the classroom. This process starts with an understanding of witnessing's history, rhetorical dimensions of witnessing, and the linguistic framing of traumatic history. The next chapter will discuss rhetorical dimensions of witnessing as it pertains to visual framing of traumatic history.

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Chapter 3

Rhetorical Dimensions of Witnessing: Visual Frames of the Dark Side

“Physical pain has no voice, but when it at last finds its voice, it begins to tell a story” (Scarry 3).

Introduction

What is visual witnessing, and how does it differentiate from “linguistic frames” as discussed in the previous chapter? Why is visual witnessing necessary? In what ways is visual witnessing the same as and distinct from visual testimony? What are the different forms it takes? What are its functions, and in what ways is it problematic? These questions underlie visual frames of the dark side and support a liberatory pedagogy that embarks upon the examination of dark, disturbing matter as a rhetorical move toward responsible, response-able composition practices. Analyzing graphic images of death and violence is an extremely unnerving task for some students. It also puts teachers in a compromising position because students, to a certain extent, are “captive” audience members. Who am I to force students to flinch at the sight of a corpse scorched into the earth? Or to gaze upon a child scalded by napalm? To justify, in order for students to grow intellectually, they need to enlarge their perspectives of the world by confronting relevant issues. While some students embrace the opportunity to research and write about dark topics, some resist it and resent having to do so. Therefore, it is important to have a candid conversation with students the first day of class to discuss the content of the course as well as provide a disclaimer in the course syllabus. It is crucial that students understand the current state of affairs because they are the ones who are inheriting these problems. Visual frames of the dark side as a liberatory pedagogy intends to teach students about the roots of oppression and the ethical consequences of standing on the sidelines as spectators. Albert Einstein once said, “The world will not be destroyed by those who do evil, but by those who watch without doing anything.” What better way to teach ethical responsibility than to show

students the dark side and then encourage them to engage as responsible, response-able witnesses?

In “Witnessing,” John Durham Peters expands upon the concept of **witnessing** by describing three different meanings: 1) *to watch* (i.e. as a bystander, voyeurism, and spectatorship); 2) *to narrate* (i.e. through testimony, framing); 3) *to “be present”* (i.e. physically and psychologically) (709). Whereas narration reflects the *rhetorical process* of “**bearing witness**,” the other meanings reflect the *ontological experience* of witnessing (709). A **witness** may denote the “agent who bears witness,” (709) or a witness may refer to *the audience* who bears witness to the first or second witness. **Visual witnessing** refers to *a shared, public trauma* wherein the media frames traumatic events in such a way that the exposure creates “a locus” of cultural memory (Hagopian 218). Images of airplanes crashing into the World Trade Center on 9/11 are a relatable example for students (see fig.

2). How can we understand 9/11 from different witness testimony vantage points? In other words, who was there, physically, when the planes struck? Who reported it “live”? How did Americans experience the event on television that day, as they sat home to see the horrifying attacks replayed for days on end? How did Americans experience this event in comparison to the rest of the world? In what ways does this incident reveal the power of the image to create a shared public trauma? This is a tangible example for students for introducing core concepts of visual witnessing, although there are countless examples from history that can be discussed in class.



Fig. 2. Twin Tower Attack. Photographer unknown. (*Wikipedia*; Wikipedia Foundation; 11 Sept. 2001; Web; 1 Apr. 2017).

Visual frames of the dark side provide students with a unique perspective on rhetorical witnessing that focuses on ethical considerations of viewing the body in pain. While in many ways visual testimony serves as a subjectifying, signifying process that sheds light on grievous matters, it simultaneously presents the conundrum of *object-ivity*: a

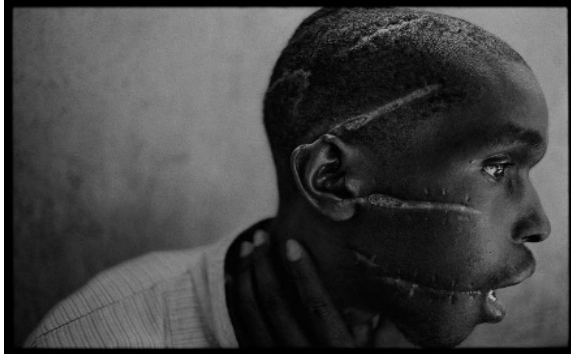


Fig. 3. Hutu Man. Photographed by James Nachtwey. (*Witness Photography*; 1994; Web; 1 Aug. 2016).

photographer—or rhetor—resides in a position of power by capturing the subject within the confines of the “frame,” just as the viewer’s gaze violates the victim. Many victims depicted in atrocity photographs remain nameless; they do not have an opportunity to provide a narrative to support the visual account, and they have no say in

terms of the reproduction of the image. In this way, they are unable to bear witness to their experiences. These subjects are not given a choice in the matter; therefore, they lack agency. Some victims of atrocity, however, beg to be photographed. For instance, witness photographer James Nachtwey recollects his experiences photographing a young Tutsi boy from Rwanda during his TEDTalk. The young man’s scarred face and maimed ear illustrates beyond a shadow of a doubt the heinous war crimes committed by the Hutus (see fig. 3): “He allowed me to photograph him for quite a long time, and he even turned his face toward the light, as if he wanted me to see him better. I think he knew what the scars on his face would say to the rest of the world.” War photography may encourage spectatorship and certainly obfuscates larger truths by removing a moment in time from its original context. Paradoxically, war photography *also* serves a unifying purpose in light of recognition, responsibility, and response-ability. Clearly, visual witnessing presents complex issues worthy of consideration.

In order to be efficacious, visual testimony requires the responsibility and response-ability that recognition demands. In *Witnessing: Beyond Recognition*, Kelly Oliver explains that demands for recognition occur “only after oppressed people are dehumanized . . . More perverse is that they seek recognition of their humanity from the very group that has denied them of it” (26). It is not enough that we, as viewers and free agents, recognize the direness of atrocity and make efforts to bring forth justice. Oppressors must gaze upon the bodies they have inflicted with pain, take accountability for their actions, and make the appropriate reparations for said suffering: this is a *central aim* of visual witnessing.

Furthermore, visual frames of traumatic history demand remembrance. In *Remnants of Auschwitz*, Giorgio Agamben makes the audacious claim that the dead are “the only true witnesses” (13). The dead have no voice; therefore, photographs of victims frequently serve as the only existing testimony of their suffering. To remember the dead is to honor the dead: we honor the dead by acknowledging the significance of their losses and by learning from past mistakes; we honor them by living responsibly in this world. (Witnessing traumatic history can be distinguished from witnessing live trauma and will be elaborated upon later in this chapter.)

Different from the passive process of visually observing an event, **visual testimony** is the rhetorical act of bearing witness through visual modes of representation; it demonstrates the distinction between *seeing* and *saying* (Peters 709). Visual testimonies create a “presence” of pain, a re-cognition of what it was once like for us to suffer. Witnessing pain reminds us of the fragility of the human body and spirit, raising questions pertaining to the meaning of existence—that angst-inducing notion that inspires countless forms of linguistic and visual expression. Witnessing pain also makes us aware of the existence of those outside of ourselves. The examination of visual testimonies remains paradoxical: to capture the body in pain is to exploit...to dehumanize...to re-traumatize...to politicize. Generally, this chapter will make a case for, as well as examine, critical aspects of visual witnessing to create an engaging dialogue among teachers *and* students that considers the costs and benefits of viewing frames of the dark side.

The contents of this chapter will outline concepts provided as a basic framework for the multimodal classroom. The first section will explore 1) working definitions of visual witnessing, its modes, and different genres of visual testimony. From there, it will explore fundamental concepts associated with visual rhetoric as well as discuss the interrelatedness of vision, the mind/memory, pain, and empathy in terms of “mirroring,” a process that supports Burke’s notion of identification and is inextricable from the rhetorical “move” witnessing requires. The second section will provide terminology related to visual rhetoric & semiotics, the media and propaganda, and practices of looking as second and third-person witnesses from psychoanalytical and ethical standpoints. The final section examines

practical applications of visual witnessing in the classroom and various ways it supports a liberatory pedagogy.

I

Visual Witnessing: A Brief History

Visual frames of the dark side as a form of witnessing can be distinguished from linguistic frames in that the visual appears to replicate that which is **ontological witnessing**¹ through its rendering. Yet the framing—whether in art, film, or photography—is, by definition, a rhetorical manner of witnessing. The visual frame impresses upon the viewer a means of experiencing—or rather, re-experiencing—a moment in time privy to the first, second, or third-person witness. In the case of photography, the photographer-as-



Fig. 4. Camera-eye. Digital image by unknown author in “Biotech News: Artificial Ears and Eyes!” by Matt Williams. (*Stories by Williams*; Feb. 2013; Web; 1 August 2016.

bystander both witnesses and bears witness simultaneously—a passive, ontological experience in addition to a rhetorical act—that distinguishes this particular genre of visual testimony from other artistic modes of expression. Unlike linguistic frames as testimony, this form of bearing witness does not come from the victim as part of a process whereby s/he attempts to restore subjectivity through expression and recognition from oppressors. Photography-as-testimony supplants victims in a subject position that is less about subjectivity and more about object-being from the standpoint of the viewer. When these images permeate the rhetorical culture and become a form of media witnessing, consciousness-raising runs the risk of becoming more about politicizing than restoring the

¹ As I define it in this dissertation, ontological witnessing is that act of witnessing by actually *being there* during a trauma and processing the event through sensory, perceptual, and psychosomatic processes

subjectivity of the victim(s), despite whatever benevolent intents on the photographer's part.

In terms of artistic renderings, viewers witness a vision of the rhetor that is transposed through the mind's eye: an illusion that attempts to replicate the truth of experience. The artistic rendering represents the truth but is not mimetic; therefore, every creative attempt to convey tangible experience serves a rhetorical purpose. Differently, the photographer or documentary filmmaker allows viewers to see firsthand experience through the lens of a camera, intended to replicate the functions of the eye (see right). The power of the camera holder's gaze transfers over to the viewer, who experiences the event through the lens of the camera. This rhetorical act creates the illusion of ontological witnessing despite the obvious separation of time and space.

The framing of events through visual means involves a complex system: 1) the eyewitness or witnesses who saw, first hand, what occurred (as victims or bystanders); 2) the artist, filmmaker, or photographer who bears witness to the event by composing the image in question; 3) the technologies that document events (apparatuses of control that transform experience into representation); 4) the institutions that produce and disseminate images into the public sphere for consumption by viewers (Kozol 6). Visual testimonies are wide-ranging, and while each suffers from what Peters refers to as "a veracity gap," some genres (e.g. photography, live broadcast news, documentary film) are considered more reliable than others (e.g. narrative film, murals, other artistic renderings) (711).

We witness, visually, in very distinct ways from the linguistic act of bearing witness. Usually, testimony functions as a form of rhetorical witnessing—an active engagement. Only un-doctored photographic depictions and film recordings function as a means of *both* ontological and rhetorical witnessing. For these reasons, witness photography has become a genre of interest central to the design of the course. However, we examine a wide range of visual testimonies that are reproduced by the media. **Visual witnessing** functions as a form of societal witnessing; it requires media channels of communication, agency, and recognition from the masses. This section will emphasize visual modes of witnessing specific to film and photography. Mainstream media plays a major role in terms of how

frames of atrocity permeate the rhetorical culture and are part of the discussion early on in the semester.

Peters analyzes the concept of **media witnessing**: witnesses can act *in, of, or via* media (707). With advances in modern technology, access to media outlets provides witnesses with greater agency. Regardless of the media system's ability to empower witnesses, television and news media obscure the witnessing process. Peters refers to the two faces of witnessing: *seeing*—a passive form of witnessing—and *saying*—an active form of witnessing (709). Peters argues the concept of witnessing is complex because there will *always* be a difference between *what someone experiences* and *what they say about that experience* (711).

Witnessing emerged from three fields of study: legal (Ancient Greek), religious (martyrdom; Christianity), and atrocity (Holocaust) (707). The media as a channel of communication remains crucial to recognition. Without mass media and the reproducibility of photographs as evidence, these events would cease to exist in our collective societal mind. “If a tree falls in a forest, and no one is around to hear it, does it really make a sound?” This metaphysical question lies at the root of the challenge to witnessing—the demand that *one must see* in order to believe. In many ways, visual witnessing is of higher value than oral or written testimony. If a moment in time is not documented in some way, then society treats it as though it never happened. **Visual testimony** constructs a reality—proof something actually happened--and qualifies oral testimony. Photojournalism remains a fundamental mode of visual witnessing; a trauma must be publicly acknowledged—recognized—as part of a performative, engaged process in order for the first witnesses—the victims—to find some peace and move forward.

In order to expand upon our notion of visual witnessing, I briefly the interconnectedness between vision, the mind, pain, and empathy with students, because it helps them form a personal connection to the material. Additionally, it is intriguing to consider the relationship between witnessing and neurological processes that occur when we view the body in pain and what this means for us, as viewers. All of the concepts outlined here are available for students to review on the [course website](#). Questions of interest include: How

does information travel through the eye to the brain, and how does it affect memory and “consciousness”? What is the correlation between seeing pain, sharing suffering, and mirroring in light of visual witnessing? By understanding the intersections among these complex systems, students can begin to think critically about the witnessing process as it relates the artifacts examined in class and better relate to course material in a subjective way. Purposefully, these concepts undergird class discussion and short writing activities as they move through a scaffolding process of developing their own multimodal research projects.

Vision: Seeing is believing?

From an *ontological perspective*, witnessing *is* seeing. From a *rhetorical perspective*, witnessing remains a far more complex concept. According to Peters, witnessing involves passive observation, whereas **bearing witness**—the heart of rhetorical witnessing—remains an active process that includes the triad of rhetor, symbol(s), and audience (709). Visual frames of traumatic history such as war photography differ vastly from linguistic frames if there is no linguistic element provided to direct the meaning of the image (i.e. **anchorage**) (Barthes 38-41). Viewers must rely solely on nonverbal symbols in order to interpret the image’s intended meaning. In one sense, images speak in all languages. In another sense, each person’s interpretation of an image relies on individual subjectivity resulting in a multiplicity of meanings (i.e. polysemy) that never fully encapsulates the “truth” of said frozen moment in time.

It has often been uttered: *seeing is believing*. Without physical proof of a trauma—such as photographic evidence—to support one’s testimony, all we have is faith that what one has said holds true. If one were to take the My Lai massacre as an example, one can easily see that the world ignored the atrocities soldiers reported witnessing until Ron Haeberle’s photographic evidence permeated the rhetorical culture, leading to a shift in the political landscape of the United States. Americans did not want to believe the horrors of the Vietnam War, just as they did not want to believe the horrors of the Holocaust. It seems easy enough to discredit witness testimony in a court of law or within the contents of a

memoir, but to photograph—to frame the truth using a device that mimics the eye—how can this be contested?

The eyes, commonly regarded as the “windows to the soul,” absorb stimuli through the retina, which is comprised of rods and cones that function as antennae that communicates information to the brain (Retina Institute of Hawaii 1). These nerves directly correlate to the back region of the brain, or the *limbic system*, that is responsible for perceptual processes and memory storage. When the eye witnesses a trauma, the psychological impact is no different from physical pain concerning the way the pain center of the brain responds to the trauma (Fogel 1). According to psychology professor Dr. Alan Fogel, physical and emotional pain travel through the same physical pathways in the brain (1). Numerous studies have revealed that psychological or emotional pain causes physical pain, and physical and chronic pain is accompanied by psychological/emotional pain. Furthermore, “Data have shown that in conditions of social pain there is activation of an area traditionally associated with the sensory processing of physical pain, the posterior insular cortex. . . This occurred both when the pain was experienced in first-person and when the subject experienced it vicariously” (Silani as cited by Bergland par. 6). Based on these assumptions, one could surmise that *seeing* someone else suffer causes the viewer *to feel* pain, however abstract that may seem. If mimicry holds true (which I discuss in the next section), then bearing witness to trauma *second hand* may cause one to feel pain as well. *Looking* helps us to understand the pain of others, to empathize. Without empathy, recognition may occur but nothing beyond.

The eye absorbs what we see via the optic nerve, transmitting signals throughout the brain. Certain messages “imprint” on our minds and become stored in our long-term memory. Some philosophers presuppose that what we perceive as the “soul” is rather our consciousness, which has developed over time because of sensory perceptions that transmit messages throughout the brain. If this presupposition holds true, does it not stand to reason that the events we witness are inextricable from our identities because *who we are* is an “enworlded” process that forms our consciousness and perception of reality? Are we *what we se(e)(nse)*? In a way, seeing *is* believing. To see the images of Holocaust victims or the

women and children slaughtered at My Lai is to give credence to testimonies stating war crimes occurred. And yet, our minds play tricks on us as well; even what we see in our mind's eye after witnessing an event can sometimes seem *so* real that we convince ourselves it is so. But what *is real*? “If real is what you can feel, smell, taste and see, then ‘real’ is simply electrical signals interpreted by your brain” (Wachowski & Wachowski). How do we discern between what we believe we saw and what we *actually* saw? If the camera is an extension of the eye, does it not make sense photographs may perhaps be a more reliable form of witness testimony than other genres?

Camera: eye

What can a photograph—a moment in time frozen for eternity using an aperture and snap of a shutter—convey to a viewer about objective truth? The lens of the camera quite literally reflects the human eye of the photographer who “selects” and responds to stimuli in his or her immediate surroundings, implicating the subjective nature of witness photography (see fig. 5). As sensory perceptions create a series of electrical impulses throughout the brain, the photographer responds cognitively and pathologically to the stimuli in his or her environment. As such, the “camera as eye” presents an intriguing dimension of visual witnessing.

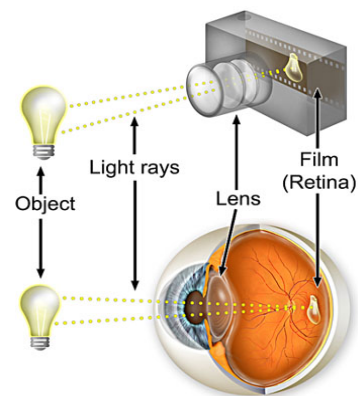


Fig. 5. Diagram of a camera and eye. Unauthored digital image in “Camera vs. the Human Eye” by Dave Johnston. (*Vision Service Plan*. Vision Service Plan; 28 June 2013; Web; 1 Aug. 2016).

The eye includes a diaphragm that controls the amount of light that gets through to the lens. The pupil functions like an aperture, opening and closing to let in a certain amount of light depending on the amount of light in the surrounding environment (Kellogg 1). Both the eye and the camera use a “converging lens” that operates as a magnifying glass to make images appear larger. A converging lens can only focus on objects that are either near or far away, but not simultaneously (1). Both lenses have the ability to focus light on an object and “create” an image that is “real” and “inverted.” While the process of transferring an image on film into a print converts an upside-down image right side up, the brain flips the

image for us (1). As the lens brings an object into focus, the retina of the eye acts much like camera film: it contains “photoreceptors” which convert the light rays into electrical impulses that are then sent to the brain via the optic nerve where the image is perceived by the mind’s eye (Retina Institute of Hawaii 1). The rods of the retina allow the eye to see light in a certain spot (i.e. a black and white photograph) whereas the cones allow the eye to see what color is. The cornea acts as a lens cover, the eyelid functions as a shutter, the iris and the pupil work together to create an aperture, and the personal subjectivity of the photographer acts as the viewfinder (Kamp 1).

Dissimilar from a camera, each eye includes a ‘blind spot’: the nerve of each eye connects to a different part of the brain, providing humans with two lenses, whereas cameras only have one (1). Additionally, the eye uses a sensory method to store the information in the brain whereas the camera stores information on film or some type of electronic storage device. Both the eye and the camera share one particularly significant function: “crystallizing” a moment in time (Hagopian 218). Just as a traumatic event becomes stored in a witness’s long-term memory, a traumatic image that is released, reproduced, and voraciously consumed by the masses forms cultural memory (Sturken).

Despite whatever truthfulness provided in an image, photographs are—as Sontag suggests—“miniatures of reality” (*On Photography* 4). There will always be a “gap” that exists with this type of testimony. As the brilliant late photographer Diane Arbus once said, “A picture is a secret about a secret: the more it tells you, the less you know.” What information exists outside of the frames? Is the photographer’s subjective point of view ever inextricable from the framing of the composition? If atrocity photographs fail to reveal larger truths, then what is the purpose of witness photography? These are important questions to raise in class.

Pain: Seeing, Saying, and Sharing Suffering

pain sliding all along,
sliding into the fine crevices on the side walls of this brain
. . . and the pain lodging, and the pain finding the spot of

unforgetting,
as in here I am, here I am (Graham 33).

What does it mean to suffer in a way that “shatters the spirit”? Is it physical pain? Psychological? Emotional? Or are all of these aspects of pain intertwined, in terms of neurological processes? The notion of extreme suffering heightens students’ awareness of the need to witness, bear witness, and share suffering. Pain takes many forms, and each of us experiences it differently. As Jorie Graham describes in the poem above, pain moves slowly along the edges of the brain, lodging deep into the psyche long after it first pierces the flesh or heart. Pain reminds us of our existence and brings us back to the present moment. “As in here I am, here I am” (33). Interestingly, physical pain and psychological pain affect the mind in a similar manner. “Researchers in California have discovered a broken heart causes as much stress in the pain center of the brain as physical injury” (Graham lines 2-4). Moreover, our memories of physical and psychological pain are stored in the same part of the brain. The traumatic pain that lies deep in our memories emerges again when confronted with the suffering of others. By re-living our own understanding of suffering, we identify with others when we see them in great pain.

Physical, psychological, and emotional pain remain lonely experiences: agony, despair, and hopelessness are rooted in the human condition. Scarry emphasizes at the onset of her book that part of the complication with describing pain to another is that pain can neither be confirmed nor denied; it cannot be shared nor can it ever be fully understood by anyone other than the one who bears the burden of experience (1-5). It is precisely the inexpressibility of pain that locks in its power to oppressors. It is the impossibility of its expression that necessitates its expression through visual means: *I cannot speak of my suffering, but I can show you*. The atrocity photograph always has a certain presence, a “now-ness,” as in “this is happening somewhere in this world right now.” The dead live within the confines of an image’s frame: their stories must live on because they cannot. Their narratives serve as a reminder that egregious abuses of power occur every day in every corner of the world. Seeing the body in pain—*true* seeing—extends beyond what the eyes behold.

To live with the type of pain that creates “holes in existence” is not to live at all. As Lacapra points out in *Writing Trauma, Writing History*, one may survive the most seemingly unbearable circumstances only to re-live the trauma over and over again before the mind’s eye. To move forward, the survivor demands **recognition**: another must bear witness to his or her suffering. The survivor must release the pain, and recognition asks that others endure the burden of knowing. Pain renders one silent, unable to speak. Being seen gives a voice to the voiceless in an attempt to render silencing and erasure obsolete. Everyone can relate to concepts of pain and the loneliness of those experiences. *Seeing pain*—human suffering, social injustice—lies at the heart of visual witnessing. However, the seeing of pain in the mind’s eye must strike a particular chord with the viewer—i.e. perhaps triggering a memory of pain—that evokes empathy. In order to see pain—to witness the pain of another—a mirroring process must occur. **Mirror neurons**, the neurological recognition of other’s emotions (e.g. pain, disgust, empathy), are part of a bond that reflects social cues. These concepts will be discussed in the next section.

Mirroring: Seeing Pain and Empathy

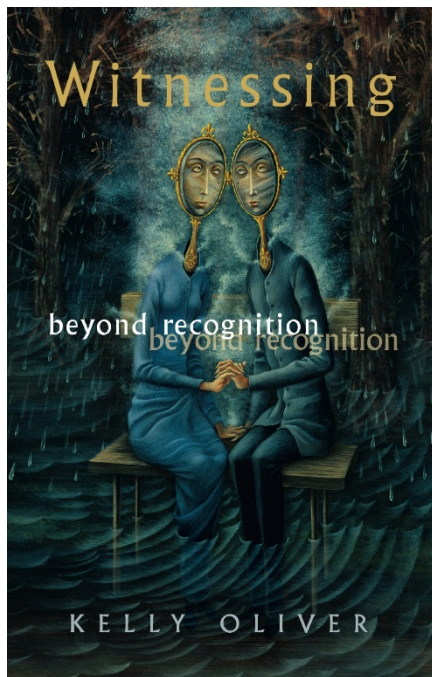


Fig. 6. Two mirrored figures clasping hands. Unauthored illustration on the cover of *Witnessing: Beyond Recognition* by Kelly Oliver.

The murky cover of Kelly Oliver’s *Witnessing: Beyond Recognition* shows two melancholy human figures donned in blue, sitting in the darkness on a bench as they face one another (see fig. 6). The artist depicts the figures’ “faces” as two ornate, handheld mirrors. Although the figures’ faces are androgynous and identical, one body represents a female form by adorning a blue button down dress whereas the other male figure wears blue pants. Their ankles submerge in rising water as rain pours down from the blackened sky. Two trees reside in the background on either side of the figures, their roots drowning in the torrential storm. The branches seem to be exploding—almost reminiscent of fireworks--but perhaps the trees are

weeping instead? Mist engulfs the two figures as they clasp hands, their gazes fixed upon one another as if they are the only two beings in the world. They hold onto one another and mimic one another—tears streaming down their mirrored faces—as if to say: *This journey will not be easy. In fact, it will hurt like hell. But I am right here beside you. I will hold your hand, share your pain, and bear the burden of knowing.* Paradoxically, the figures are different yet the same. The faces and positioning of the bodies demonstrate perfect symmetry. One male, one female. One brown eye, one blue eye. One face with lighter skin, the other with darker skin. In terms of suffering, we are all the same beneath the surface: male, female, white, brown, black—underneath it all, we are human beings who suffer in different ways. To not suffer alone—*this* notion is at the helm of witnessing’s exigency. For it is the loneliness of pain that is the difference between surviving and living. If one does not let go, one continues to suffer. To see is to recognize. To *witness* is to re-cognize. If I do not see myself in you, then I will not bear the burden. I will not empathize.

In Temma Ehrenfeld’s “Reflections of Mirror Neurons” she explains, “Memory is embedded in our mirror system” (par. 3) (see fig. 7). The human mind includes what is referred to as “mirror neurons,” tiny cells that light up throughout the brain when a person perceives an action or takes an action. These mirror neurons make up a system that affects the medial temporal lobe of the brain where memory is stored. When we observe an emotion, the mirror neurons cause us to engage in mimicry, a social cue that helps human beings bond with one another. Ehrenfeld further reports, “Many researchers had proposed that the brains of two people ‘resonate’ with each other as they interact, with one person’s mirror system reflecting changes in the other” (par. 10) (see fig. 8). Through mimicry, human beings learn to respond to a wide range of human emotions: neurological recognition that is responsible for empathy.

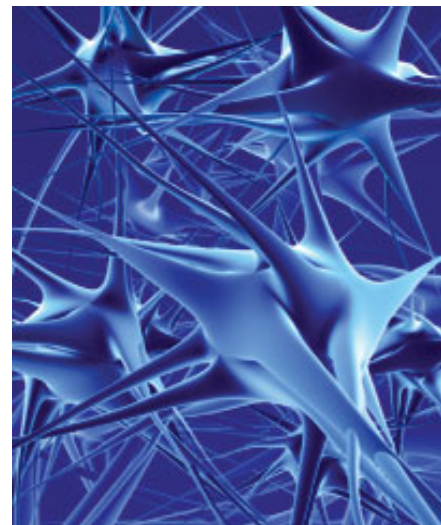


Fig. 7. Digital image of magnified mirror neurons. Unauthored image in “Reflections on Mirror Neurons” by Temma Ehrenfeld. (*The Observer*; Mar. 2011; Web; 1 Aug. 2016).



Fig. 8. The process of mimicry. Unauthored illustration in “The Mirror in Us: Mirror Neurons and Workplace Relationships” by Marco Iacobani. (*The Intentional Workplace*; 12 Jan. 2012; Web; 1 Aug. 2016).

While mimicry teaches humans to empathize with the suffering of others, it also runs the risk of teaching prejudice toward others, particularly those who are not members of the same cultural group (par. 9). Some research suggests mimicry indicates why victims of abuse are at a higher risk for becoming perpetrators and why the vicious cycles of violence never cease.

The “gaze” directly correlates to mimicry; we mirror what we see and respond accordingly. A healthy human mind sees suffering and feels that pain as well. Mirror neurons, in conjunction with our own memories of suffering, cause us to feel sympathy, empathy, anger, etc. Some scientists believe mirror neurons evolved to ensure the survival of the species “so we could learn from observation and communication” (par. 17). Studies show that fMRI scans fail to show activity in the anterior cingulate cortex in autistic persons, psychopaths and those who have suffered head trauma, whereas the normal functioning brain mirrors that of the person in pain. This phenomenon intensifies when we witness someone we know or love or in pain. Without empathy and the inherent desire to protect the weak and disenfranchised, it is likely that everyone would turn a blind eye to atrocity. Witnessing is, quite literally, a mirroring process as depicted on the cover of Oliver’s book. In order to recognize another’s suffering, we must re-cognize our own. And even that is not enough. As Oliver argues, we must “go beyond.”

Concepts associated with mirroring correlate with Burke’s notion of identification. Visual testimonies create a “presence” of pain, a re-cognition of what it was once like for us to suffer. Witnessing pain reminds us of the fragility of the human body and spirit, raising important questions pertaining to the meaning of existence. Recognizing and “re-cognizing” human suffering through the process of visual witnessing makes us aware of

the existence of those outside of ourselves, a unifying practice that cannot occur without empathic identification.

Visual Testimony

The courses I teach touch upon various genres of visual testimony but focus mostly on photography and film. **Visual testimony** demonstrates the rhetorical act of bearing witness through visual modes of expression. This section focuses on the testimonial genres of media witnessing, witness photography, and film (documentary and narrative). Different genres of visual testimony may include photography, film, and art (although countless other forms exist given recent advancements in technology). Depictions of pain, suffering, and war in these genres offer unique insights into the field of witnessing in terms of expression and necessity. Artistic expression in particular is an essential means of “working through” trauma for some victims and represents traumatic experience in a very different way than photographs or film. As such, art as a testimonial genre will be discussed at greater length in chapter 4, which emphasizes rhetorical agency via creative expression.

Artistic representations of traumatic experience can include paintings, drawings, murals, sculptures, etc. as significant modes of expression that bear witness to an event. Prominent memorials, films, and photographs demonstrate aesthetic values even if the rhetorical purpose addresses a different exigency (e.g. the need to remember vs. a moral obligation to act). Oftentimes, we tend not to consider documentary films or war photographs in an artistic sense because the myth of mimesis clouds the fact of representation. Just as rhetors construct art and narrative films, they construct documentaries and photographs; each genre includes an underlying subjectivity or framework that affects its reception by the masses.

Media witnessing as a genre became prominent during the Vietnam era. It refers to live broadcast news as a testimonial genre, which provides viewers with an opportunity to witness events firsthand. To witness in the media is to be “present-at-a-distance” and, therefore, creates the perception that the information presented is trustworthy. As spectators, we see pain, suffering, and death in a way that seems firsthand despite the

various filters of our news system. Cameras “are able to catch contingent details of events that would previously have been either imperceptible or lost to memory” (Peters 708). As such, the details captured by cameras provide the illusion of fact. Witnessing *is seeing*; the sensory experience of *the one who was actually there* can never be replicated. **Visual testimony** is “the surrogate of sense-organs of the absent,” therefore a “veracity gap” remains inevitable (711). A photograph, for example, may appear mimetic but is always representative because of a broader context that extends beyond the confines of the “frame.” The veracity gap creates a dialectical tension between certainty and doubt that can never be satiated.

Sensory experience transforms into coded symbols when it becomes part of discourse. Furthermore, cameras as an apparatus of power present a promise of objectivity, but media events can never be separated from the dominant ideology that underlies the rhetorical culture. These concepts are important to bear in mind when viewing visual frames of the dark side and are discussed at length in class. Unlike linguistic “frames,” visual frames create an ontological experience for the viewer, albeit the framing of the experience remains a myth. Rather than re-imagining events through the mind’s eye while reading or listening to an oral testimony, visual testimony leaves little to the imagination. In terms of broadcast news, the spectacle has been created for the viewer by the rhetor(s), and although viewers are present-at-a-distance, “the borrowed eyes and ears of the media become, however tentatively or dangerously, one’s own” (Peters 717). Live events create a sensory experience for viewers that appears factual, supporting the notion of truthfulness that tends to ignore the veracity gap; the liveness of events instills a sense of guilt in the viewer that does not occur when watching fictional films (722). Even if spatially removed from the broadcasted event, we might feel a more urgent sense of responsibility to do something as opposed to experiencing other genres of visual testimony. As such, broadcast news remains a significant testimonial genre.

Witness photography “can bear witness to history and even serve as a catalyst for change” (“Museum of Modern Art”). While the history of war and atrocity has long been the subject of artists, witness photography as a testimonial genre did not come to fruition

until the mid to late 1800s. Sontag reflects, “Photography has kept company with death ever since cameras were invented, in 1839” (“Looking at War” 8). The earliest photographs documented the aftermath of war: dead bodies piled upon one another in heaps and the devastation of cities and villages. It is important to note that many photographers staged their images, such as Alexander Gardner’s depictions of the Civil War. Moving forward, World War I photographers captured the first images of actual combat, although these were produced anonymously. It was not until the Spanish Civil War in the 1930s that witness photography emerged as a profession (Sontag 5). Pictures taken during combat were immediately published; the circulation of war photographs in newspapers and notable magazines allowed civilians access to eyewitness accounts of war’s brutality. For the first time, social advocacy campaigns used photographs to mobilize the public sphere on a global level (8). The work of photojournalists “spelled out an enlarged, ethically weighted mission” that never existed in prior years (7). Since then, the use of a camera to bear witness to catastrophe has become so commonplace that such images risk losing their shock value.

Camera derives from the Latin term for “chamber,” or “a vaulted room” (Merriam-Webster). The first camera, invented in 1685 by Johan Zahn, evolved from the *camera obscura* (or “dark room” in Latin), followed by other photographic technologies such as daguerreotypes, calotypes, dry plates, film, and digital cameras (PBS.org). In 1885, George Eastman—inventor of Kodak—invented moving film (PBS.org). Prior to the advent of photography, civilians learned about war from depictions in artwork. The creation of the camera changed the way in which the world, at large, witnessed war. For the first time, a mechanism existed that replicated the function of the eye, except this machine accomplished what the human eye lacked: the ability to capture a moment in time, thus crystallizing a “memory” for all of eternity. Previously, one could only dream of grasping a moment of passing time as s/he endured the existential angst of life slowly slipping away from his/her fingertips. The camera as an apparatus of power and control could document and reproduce real life experiences. For the witness photographer, the camera is an extension of the eye and serves as a unique means of witnessing trauma—paradoxical in nature and most certainly problematic. At one point in time, if only for a fraction of a

second—the eye did behold that moment and froze it within the confines of the “frame.” Yet, photographs remain “miniatures of reality”—*representations* of the truth that always excludes as it includes (Sontag 4). The camera captures what the eyewitness cannot beyond that present moment. What the firsthand eyewitness sees may leave an imprint for the mind’s eye; the moment is not captured in the same sense; the “layering” of memories distorts the truth whereas the photograph will stand the test of time. In the legal sense, photographic evidence often provides a more substantiated “truth” than the oral testimony of even the most lucid eyewitness. But what of the rhetorical sense? While the eye witnesses, the camera captures fragments in time and space that have the power to transcend these temporal-spatial boundaries through reproducibility and crystallize cultural memory for eternity.

Any film that claims to bear witness to actual events serves as a useful pedagogical tool for a course that emphasizes visual witnessing. Narrative and documentary films are similar to media witnessing and witness photography in the sense that these genres also use a camera, but both of these testimonial genres are constructed and formulaic. All films are methodically “framed”—whether these are narrative or documentary. Viewers are “led” by the director through a sequence of shots that create a cohesive beginning, middle, and end. While some may question whether or not a war film (e.g. *Saving Private Ryan*) qualifies as visual testimony, viewers may be less inclined to question the validity of a documentary film (e.g. PBS’ *American Experience: My Lai*) since the genre implies an uncensored recording of live events along with eyewitness testimony. Documentaries are somewhat misleading in the sense that viewers assume that these are objective representations of the truth. Even the most straightforward documentary uses rhetorical devices to persuade an audience. The creators move through multiple phases of production that reflect a scaffolding process: writing a script, fund-raising, preparing for the shoot (finding film locations, designing a set, memorizing lines), shooting on the set, and assembling the separate parts. This entire process must occur before distributors release the film to the public sphere. Viewers get to enjoy the final product without thinking about the arduous process that goes into composing the film. The final product, then, is part of a

rigorous, iterative process of composition. This process is not unlike the tasks asked of students throughout the semester, which makes these particular genres useful for in-class analysis and short writing assignments. They start with a script, then a storyboard, a rough cut, and a thorough editing process before it can be released to the public.

In terms of positive responses to war photography/propaganda, studies show that a viewer is less likely to respond if he or she does not have an emotional reaction to a violent photograph. According to Campbell in “The Myth of Compassion Fatigue,” we also must feel an individual connection to the victim; group photographs are less likely to elicit an emotional response (103). What we see—what the eye *absorbs*—and our perceptual connection to it determines whether we will engage in witnessing that extends beyond recognition. It is not enough that we recognize suffering or bear the burden of knowing; we must *do something*. And something cannot be done if we feel nothing, if we gaze upon the flesh of another with indifference. For some, the camera is an instrument of survival. For those less lucky, it serves as the only means for the dead to offer their testimonies. Recognition. Re-cognition. Seeing, mirroring, remembering. These concepts live at the core of visual witnessing. Visual witnessing requires that viewers believe that something as intangible as someone else’s pain exists and is worthy of recognition so that we may ‘move’ beyond it.

Each of the genres discussed above involves the creative use of a camera as a tool for bearing witness. Further, making a **narrative** or **documentary** film involves a process of multimodal composition. Thus, these genres can assist students in understanding the underlying rhetorical dimensions of visual witnessing. One can implement visual witnessing into a multimodal course in countless ways. An instructor may elect to include a unit on the subject or shape the entire course around the theme of visual witnessing. For the purposes of this study, I will describe a course that emphasizes visual witnessing throughout the entire semester by addressing the following three units: 1) visual rhetoric and semiotics; 2) media and propaganda; 3) psychoanalytical and ethical dimensions of looking at war (photography & film). I will explore these concepts in detail in the following section.

II

Rhetorical Dimensions of Visual Witnessing

The sheer brutality of war—from the destruction of cities and small villages, to famine and disease to piles of dead bodies—destroys the earth and shatters the human spirit. “War tears, rends. War rips open, eviscerates. War scorches. War dismembers. War ruins” (Sontag). What better way to challenge students to ‘move’ toward enlightenment than exploring the darkest end of the spectrum? The power of visual rhetoric in light of atrocity and other depictions of violence remain elusive. In *Simulacra and Simulation*, Jean Baudrillard describes the key objective of war as “total liquidation . . . every form of exchange, of language, of symbolic organization, that is what must be abolished, that is the object of murder in war” (37). To recognize war as a “spectacular death apparatus” is to acknowledge not only the verisimilitude of visual testimony, but also the ways in which frames of war create *simulacra* that shape mass perceptions and distort the truth (37). Systems of power infuse visual frames of the dark side into our culture in order to reinforce dominant ideologies. These frames re-present reality. As such, visual genres of testimony demand recognition and response-ability while paradoxically raising critical inquiries into the reproduction of traumatic images. Analyzing and examining visual frames of the dark side as a theoretical framework reinforces the practical aims of a multimodal project wherein students must act as responsible witnesses. I find that it is helpful to cover a unit on the fundamentals of visual rhetoric and semiotics followed by a lesson on how the media system operates prior to examining more of the complex terminology associated with visual witnessing. Understanding these “systems” in conjunction with theories related to practices of looking helps students think about the choices they need to make in order to complete a project which satisfies the goal of responsible, response-able witnessing.

This section will provide an overview of rhetorical dimensions of visual witnessing as these relate to communication and cultural studies to demonstrate concepts I present to students in a multimodal course. The first section provides an overview of visual rhetoric, semiotics, and myth; the second section addresses the media and propaganda; the third section addresses the psychoanalytical and ethical dimensions of viewing the body in pain;

the fourth section examines the framing visual testimonies by rhetors as well as the framing of events by the overarching media system.

Visual Rhetoric and Semiotics

Visual rhetoric is integral to the fabric of any given culture. Likewise, the meaning-making associated with **visual rhetoric** ultimately reflects the embeddedness of dominant bourgeois ideologies in a given culture. Students can clearly see the social, political, economic, and ideological frameworks that influence various artistic modes of expression. Visual rhetoric only reflects one aspect of culture, but certainly, “We live in cultures that are constantly permeated by visual images with a variety of purposes and intended effects” (Sturken and Cartwright 9). Human beings create and respond to visual rhetoric in incredibly meaningful ways, whether viewers are conscious of this or not. An artist or a photographer’s work reflects the ideologies related to a specific culture at a particular point in history, and these frames of rhetoric transcend time and space through **reproducibility**. According to Sturken and Cartwright in “Images, Politics, and Power,” **representation** is defined as “the use of language and images to create meaning about the world around us” by referring to “a system of rules and conventions” (12). The manner in which a viewer interprets an image is contingent upon the cultural context out of which it is wrought. Language and visual imagery are intertwined; therefore paintings, drawings, digital media, etc. can be understood through methods of analysis related to **linguistics** (i.e. the scientific study of language and its structures) and **semiotics** (i.e. the study of signs and symbols and their use or interpretation).

Consider René Magritte’s prominent work *The Treachery of Images* as artistic artifact to use for in-class analysis (see right). This painting reflects an important critique of representation. The meaning of an image is subjective and alters from one context to another (i.e. arbitrary). One viewer may examine Magritte’s image and refer to the **denotative meaning** that we are literally looking at a pipe. A more cynical viewer may explore its **connotative meaning** by referring to its cultural context; this viewer might realize that the artist is actually criticizing the ways viewers respond to art. This particular painting is a critique of representation by bringing to attention the correlation between the

sign, the **signifier**, and the **signified** (Barthes, “The Rhetoric of the Image,” 155) (see fig. 9). Such a painting tests the boundaries of modern 1920s art, for Magritte “highlights the very act of labeling as something we should think about” and “asks us to consider how labels and images produce meaning yet cannot fully invoke the experience of the object” (15).

Magritte’s work demonstrates individual genius, social criticism, and a unique vision by making implicit references to language and semiotics while emphasizing the irony of art as a commodity rather than *l’art pour l’art* (i.e. art for art’s sake.) The pipe resembles an advertisement of a pipe, a reference to pop culture and a jab at capitalism and the propaganda machine. Magritte’s



Fig. 9. René Magritte’s famous painting “The Treachery of Images.” (1929).

rendering is realistic and exceptionally well-executed. The complexity of the piece pertains to the linguistic element that reminds viewers they are looking at a **representation** of a pipe, not an actual pipe, bringing into question whether the painting has **aesthetic** or **material value** (or both?). He appeals to enlightened viewers as he makes a clever commentary on social, political, and intellectual facets of material life. Magritte was particularly conscious of economic factors, for as a member of the working class he only earned a living wage through factory work. He struggled to sell his artwork and, eventually, resorted to selling forgeries of popular artists’ work, for these were commodities in a competitive market (Lambirth par. 10). Interestingly, this famous work of art appears to provide a critique of the upper class, the most frequent patrons of modern art who have the power to lock in the value of such work. One must ponder whether Magritte intends to insult elitists who have the privilege of purchasing a work of art they may not necessarily understand.

Magritte’s *The Treachery of Images* illustrates cynicism by embracing the horror of reality, and he examines the relationship between **reality** and **perception**; this is apparent in his choice of title. “Magritte was melancholic and sarcastic, with a taste for black

humor,” and his pessimism toward the mundane emerges in *The Treachery of Images* through his puzzling statement about the meaning of the pipe in reality as opposed to our perception of a realistic **representation** (Lambirth par. 8). This piece is extremely complex and philosophical because the meanings are *layered* and *mimetic*, which obfuscates Magritte’s intentions (Sturken and Cartwright 12). French philosopher Michel Foucault pondered the complexity of this piece in his article “Ceci n’est pas une pipe” by stating, “I cannot dismiss the notion that the sorcery here lies in an operation rendered invisible by the simplicity of its result, but which alone can explain the vague uneasiness provoked” (20). Although the image appears simplistic in terms of **denotative meaning**, we grapple with the tension formed between **perception** and **reality**. Magritte wants viewers to determine the reality of the painting as a representation of a pipe and not the pipe itself and bring into question the difference between *reality* and *what we perceive to be real*.

Visual rhetoric—whether it appears in medieval, modern art, or post-modern eras—mirrors the social, economic, and ideological frameworks of the culture in which it is produced. Viewers rely on cultural codes related to race, gender, class, religion and politics in order to interpret the image. These **codes** are ingrained in our thought processes based on the language system (symbolic and arbitrary) in which we are immersed. As stated in the previous chapter, perceptions of reality directly correlate to the language system of given culture and the messages that permeate communication systems. “Every time we interpret an image around us (to understand what it signifies), whether consciously or not, we are using the tools of semiotics to understand its **signification**, or meaning” (Sturken and Cartwright 27). I use the example of Magritte’s painting as it appears in Sturken and Cartwright’s *Practices of Looking* because it has proven to be a useful pedagogical tool for introducing students to fundamental principles of visual rhetoric and semiotics. All of the concepts discussed here are available for students on [the course website](#) in order to assist them with their first writing activity (discussed at greater length in section III of this chapter).

The Myths of Visual Rhetoric

A brief lesson on “myth” as it relates to visual rhetoric provides a useful segue into a unit on “Media and Propaganda.” Iconic war photographs are especially beneficial for in-class activities and online writing discussion that provide students with an opportunity to practice applying course terms/concepts to artifacts before submitting their first writing assignment. Roland Barthes’ *Mythologies* defines **myth** as “a system of communication,” “a mode of signification,” and a form with “historical limits” and “conditions of use” (217). It is “a type of speech” but is not constrained by oral communication (218). Myth is more about *appropriation* than tangibility and “can be defined neither by its object nor by its material, for any material can arbitrarily be endowed with meaning” (218). Photographs, for instance serve an important function in light of truth-telling, but a photograph is *not* mimetic; it does not imitate reality but rather represents reality and is, invariably, “layered” with meaning (Sturken and Cartwright 12). As the photographer looks through the Stenope of the camera, s/he “limits” the composition by framing it in a way that reflects his/her subjectivity in relation to the subject/object depicted in the photograph (Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, 14). A “micro-version of death,” images are myths that distort perceptions and render a subject an object in the eye of the beholder (Barthes 14). John Berger articulates, “Perspective . . . is like a beam from a lighthouse—only instead of travelling outwards, appearances travel in. The conventions called those appearances *reality*” (16). With the camera, there is only one spectator who is in a particular place at a certain point in time, and the camera functions as a “mechanical eye” that selects which objects to crop within the parameters offered by the frame (16).

An **image** is “a sight which has been recreated or reproduced. It is an appearance, or set of appearances, which has been detached from the place and time in which it first made its appearance and preserved The photographer’s way of seeing is reflected in his [*sic*] choice of subject” (Berger 10). In “*Rhetoric of the Image*,” Barthes distinguishes between literal and symbolic messages and examines the complex relationship between images, linguistics and semiotics. Barthes’ argues: “[Even] if a totally ‘naïve’ image were to be achieved, it would immediately join the sign of naivety and be completed by a third

symbolic message” (Barthes, “The Rhetoric of the Image”, 157). Therefore, all of the photographer’s decisions “(framing, distance, lighting, focus, speed) effectively belong to the plane of connotation” as they re-present and represent a recorded event (158).

Visual rhetoric *also* demonstrates the problem of **polysemy**, which refers to the multiplicity and ambiguity of an image’s meaning. “Polysemy poses a question of meaning and this question always comes through as dysfunction . . . in cinema itself, traumatic images are bound up with an uncertainty (and anxiety) concerning the meaning of objects or attitudes” (156). As such, the encoding and decoding of an image’s literal and symbolic meaning across social, historical, and cultural contexts reveals: 1) the inability to pin down the meaning of visual rhetoric in any absolute terms; 2) the arbitrary nature of language; 3) the normative rules that guide our language system and thought processes; 4) the subjective nature of interpretation. As Berger states, “The camera is never neutral. The representations it produces are highly coded, and the power it wields is never its own” (246).

In *Camera Lucida*, Barthes applies notions of *studium* and *punctum* to the interpretation of images by various audiences. He coins **studium** as a universal, coded quality that animates and reflects a particular culture. In contrast, **punctum** derives from the Greek word for trauma to describe the ability of an image to “bruise,” “puncture,” or “disturb” the viewer (53). Barthes defines *punctum* as “what I add to the photograph and what is nonetheless already there,” something that is “revealed after the fact,” a “blind field,” the “subtle beyond . . . the Kairos of desire” (53-9). The opposition between *studium* and *punctum* remains blurred: these concepts operate simultaneously and yet are experienced differently from one viewer to the next. The meaning an American viewer assigns to an image of the atomic bomb differs from the meaning a Japanese viewer assigns in terms of *punctum*, whereas the *studium* reveals a universal interpretation. No matter the symbol system or cultural affiliation, an image of the atomic bomb “speaks loudly” in all languages.

John Tagg describes the function of an **iconic war photograph** as “a mode of cultural production. It helps shape history” (246). At the same time, the photograph is **myth**. The

frames of war that become part of the center of discourse remain inextricable from the underlying social, political, and economic factors that create their exigency. The spectacles of society becomes history, blurring our sense of reality as our memories crystallize representations of the truth. Judith Butler argues in *Frames of War: When is Life Grievable?*, “The represented image thereby signifies its admissibility into the domain of representability, and thus at the same time signifies the delimiting function of the frame” (75). Take, for example, the iconic image of the atomic bomb taken by the U.S. government and the framing of this incident by the media. How did the American public receive this image? What myth(s) are present, and how has the meaning of this image changed over time? How does this frame compare to Yosuke Yamahata’s ground zero coverage of the aftermath of the atomic bomb? How does this image compare to Robert Capa’s infamous ‘Omaha Beach’ photographs or Joe Rosenthal’s “Raising of the Flag at Iwo Jima”?

Just as photography has the ability to capture “miniatures of reality,” (Sontag, *On Photography*, 4) Baudrillard points out that our culture has become so saturated by the simulacra that all meaning has been rendered meaningless (10). “The photograph is literally an emanation of the referent. From a real body, which was there, proceed radiations which ultimately touch me, who am here: the duration of the transmission is insignificant; the photographs of the missing being, as Sontag says, will touch me like the delayed rays of a star” (Barthes 78). Our reality has been replaced by a system of symbols and signs; therefore we require a visible myth and visible past that “reassures us of our end” (Baudrillard 10). The **simulacra** copies reality whereas **simulation** reflects the “hyperreal,” a false representation of reality in which the “real” is no longer real (10). In “Precession of the Simulacra,” Baudrillard reveals that imitations now precede the real as opposed to a succession of actual phases. War comes when society is convinced it is coming, such as the “war on terror,” an abstraction that defies fighting or resistance. While students might initially find these concepts rather confusing, introducing a few clips from *The Matrix* serves as a useful example. Many of them are already familiar with the film which was actually inspired by Baudrillard’s *Simulacra and Simulation*.

One of the driving myths in our mass communication system, according to Noam Chomsky, pertains to the myth of “liberal media” in the U.S. It is common knowledge that a few media giants own the majority of everything consumers read (including books, magazines, textbooks, and newspapers), listen to on the radio, and see on the television, in the news, or in film productions. Every bit of information released by the media trickles down to viewers via filters, which convolutes the truth through bias and vested interests. With the exception of social media, the masses struggle to gain access to the public sphere in influential ways. Although some of the ideology certainly reflects social liberalism, the underlying economic forces that control the majority of information more closely align with neoliberal ideology (Herman and Chomsky xiv).

On the far left we have an ideology scrutinizes the framing of events that support military intervention in regions of the world where—from their perspective—the U.S. has no business interfering. In *Distant Wars Visible: The Ambivalence of Witnessing*, Wendy Kozol harshly disparages the U.S. media system for its portrayal of Afghani women and underlying messages that infer demeaning treatment toward women in the Middle East. The framing of the atrocities at Mahaweel, for example, reflects “the workings of militarized structures of visual perception that are today a fundamental part of the U.S. national security state, its means of waging war, critical practices confronting that visuality” (8). She refers to **the gaze** of the camera as *an apparatus of power* that creates a stereo-typified view of life in the Middle East wherein the ethnic “Other” represents a brute savage in comparison to Americans who are portrayed as the rational, just, and civilized agent (8).

As Baudrillard suggests, “History is a strong myth, perhaps, along with the unconscious the last great myth. It is a myth that at once subtended the possibility of an ‘objective’ enchainment of events and causes and the possibility of a narrative enchainment discourse” (47). In other words, there are no absolute, objective “Truths” to what viewers learn from a photograph as historical evidence but rather subjective “truths,” a reinforcement of the complexity of representation and meaning-making as these permeate our media system.

Media and Propaganda

As shown in fig. 10, the allegory of Plato's Cave illustrates a scenario in which a group of men (or prisoners) are shackled within the confines of a cave. Their bodies are strapped to a chair which forces them to stare at a series of shadows on a wall. They have never experienced life beyond the imprisonment of the cave. They cannot look at each other; all they can see is the wall. Behind these men resides a wall with a roadway where puppeteers cast shadows on the wall through the illumination of a campfire. These puppeteers are much like "the man behind the curtain" in *The Wizard of Oz*: they are able to manipulate the prisoners' sense of reality by



Fig. 10. Depiction of Plato's Cave. (Wikipedia; Wikipedia Foundation; Web; 1 Aug. 2016).

projecting the images they desire onto the wall. Like the shadows dancing on the wall of Plato's Cave, our media functions like a system of smoke and mirrors--a "matrix" that shapes reality and distracts the masses from larger truths. Many philosophers such as Antonio Gramsci and Aldous Huxley present the argument that while the media system wears a mask of democracy, it ultimately serves as an oppressive force that dupes the masses into state of compliance for profitable gain: what Herman and Chomsky refer to as "manufacturing consent." The media selects as it omits, informs as it persuades. The visual frames that permeate our rhetorical culture indicate whose lives are worthy or unworthy of recognition.

Aldous Huxley warns in "Propaganda in a Democratic Society" that propaganda saturates Western society using distractions and repetitious catch phrases: propaganda remains a necessary "tool" for dictators as a means of enslaving the masses, particularly through entertainment and religion—the "opium of the masses," as he puts it (137). In *Propaganda: The Formation of Men's Attitudes*, Jacques Ellul defines **propaganda** as "an organized myth that tries to take hold of the entire person. Through the myth it creates,

propaganda imposes a complete range of intuitive knowledge, susceptible to only one interpretation, unique and one-sided, and precluding any divergence” (11). Propaganda



Fig. 11. Depiction of Westward expansion, i.e. “Manifest Destiny.” The painting, *American Progress*, is by John Gast. (*Wikipedia*; Wikipedia Foundation; 1872; Web; 24 Apr. 2017).

targets a specific audience using fallacies and/or emotional appeals and reflects the interests of a particular group’s political agenda (Shabo 5). While some forms of propaganda take a more positive approach (e.g. encouraging civic duty or helping those in need), negative propaganda encourages violence, destruction of property, and instills racist ideologies to justify expansionist policies such as paintings that supported the myth of Manifest Destiny (see fig. 12).

The most primitive form of propaganda can be traced throughout history, as Ellul describes. Propaganda began with the democratic oratory of the Ancient Greeks and can be traced to the religious dogmatism of The Crusades. As shown in fig. 11, Peter the hermit traveled the Holy Land to plead the cause of Pope Urban II. With the advent of the printing press circa 1450, literacy increased as propaganda evolved. From “the liberal propaganda” of the Renaissance and Reformation to “the republican propaganda” of Rome; from the tyranny of the Napoleonic era to “the totalitarian propaganda” of the Nazi regime, *every* dominant nation has used techniques of propaganda to sway and control the attitudes and perceptions of the masses (4). Although I tend to focus mainly on visual examples of propaganda, it is sometimes helpful to refer to oral communication when considering the function of propaganda over time.



Fig. 12. Peter the Hermit as depicted during The Crusades. Unauthored illustration as cited in *London Reading Book*. (*Wikipedia*; Wikipedia Foundation; 1851; Web; 1 Aug. 2016).

According to Ellul, propaganda involves a rigorous analysis of data: the environment and individual are analyzed by borrowing models from psychology and sociology, and specific sets of rules and practices are put in place to measure results and determine the effects of data (4-5). Even the propagandist functions as a variable of the effects of propaganda, for s/he is *trained* and, therefore, has been indoctrinated by the very system s/he desires to control (4). An efficacious propagandist must be precise and calculated, and propaganda must be *total* (14). Total propaganda controls the news, radio, television, film, advertisements, literature, education—even history is placed within a certain context by those in power. “Propaganda carries within itself, of intrinsic necessity, the power to take over everything that can serve it” (14). Each medium of propaganda serves a unique purpose, and these modes complement one another. The news cycle creates spectacles and incorporates buzzwords as the radio engages in psychological warfare; rallies and advertisements shock while film creates a social climate: all of these mechanisms slowly infuse cleverly crafted ideologies within the culture (11-14). Ellul describes a deliberate process of saturation responsible for “programming” the masses who remain unaware that they have been indoctrinated by the dominant bourgeois ideology, a technique successfully implemented by Hitler’s Minister of Propaganda, Joseph Goebbels.

The propagandist must target both the individual and the masses at once: these two elements are inseparable (8). Ellul describes the “lonely crowd situation,” where we all “participate in the same myths” (8). People of a given culture share similar centers of interest, feelings, reactions, and ideas but experience the spectacles offered by propagandists as solitary witnesses: the experiences of the movie spectators occur *en masse* and in isolation (8-9). The “lonely crowd situation” is essential to effective propaganda because it weakens a person’s psychological state and makes him or her more susceptible to manipulation. Ellul states, “The most favorable moment to seize a man and influence him is when he is alone in the mass: it is at this point that propaganda can be most effective” (9).

Dehumanizing propaganda in particular poses a dangerous threat to society, for this technique portrays a targeted scapegoat by using animalistic caricatures (Shabo 129). According to *Techniques of Propaganda and Persuasion*, the purpose of using this method is to dehumanize those the state wants to exterminate from society. “The agenda to eliminate an entire population is rarely stated openly;” rather it is more effective to implement ideas of the dehumanized “Other” subliminally by framing it a certain way in order to saturate a racist ideology within the culture (129). As shown in fig. 13, the Nazi party depicted the Jewish population as vermin; the English compared the Irish to gorillas; and, the United States portrayed the Japanese as having fangs and pointed ears (130-35). These tactics justified aggressive actions against racialized “Others.”



Fig. 13. Dehumanizing propaganda. (Wikipedia; Wikipedia Foundation; Web. 24 Apr. 2017).

Even more dangerous, however, are myths that support **the rhetoric of prophetic nationalism** (Garsten 18). This form of propaganda aligns national leaders with deities in order to make them appear holy and legitimize their positions of power as well as their policies. National symbols and colors reinforce feelings of national pride as the leader—front and center—rises above the people with heavenly light shining down upon them. Hitler, Stalin, Kim Jong-Il, FDR—each of these leaders reproduced representations of themselves in a similar fashion (see fig.14). Persuasive appeals of this nature prey on the fears and nationalistic pride of the people, using clever catch phrases and repetition—the backbone of Goebbels’ Nazi propaganda machine—to frame events in ways that are politically and economically beneficial. The media conveys a sense of urgency by



Fig. 14. Deification rhetoric depicting Adolf Hitler in *10 Most Evil Propaganda Techniques* (Brainzorg; 2009-2010; Web; 24 Aug. 2016), Kim Il-Sung (*Wikipedia*; Wikipedia Foundation; June 2012; Web; 24 Aug. 2016), and FDR poster by Wilkinson (National Museum of American History; Smithsonian Institute; 1942; Web; 24 Aug. 2016).

reiterating the notion that violence in modern society is an epidemic. In “Watching War Evolve,” Hariman illustrates that the first half of the twentieth century resulted in over 77 million war-related deaths (141). By comparison, the number of military officers and civilians killed during the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan barely skims the surfaces of those who perished during the Vietnam Conflict. In fact, the last fifteen years reflects a far more peaceful period than the world has experienced since the Korean War (141). The incessant flow of images and use of buzzwords saturate our media system: it creates the illusion that we must acknowledge the crisis of terrorism handle it accordingly. In these ways, the media system preys on the fears of the consumers in order to get us to tune into an anxiety-ridden, never-ending violent news cycle. To the misfortune of those “worthy” enough to gain access to the media, what appears to be coverage of a dire situation may have more to do with generating a profit than raising awareness or actually helping those in need.

Just as events are “framed” to fulfill a certain agenda, the media suppresses other events to maintain a certain image of those in power. In terms of “framing,” Kozol points out that our media system neglects to include the history of U.S. foreign policy as it contributes to distant suffering to convey a more comprehensive overview of war that explains *why* there is so much unrest in the Middle East. Providing a more balanced and accurate perspective would undermine U.S. policy by painting the country in a negative light and, as Shirato and Webb illustrate in “Public Sphere and the Media,” this conflicts with corporate

interests. As such, it is important to remind students to consider how visual narratives are constructed, produced, and disseminated as well as how these processes reflect the political agendas of vested parties.

The economic interests of a corporate-owned, neoliberal media system overshadow whatever visual testimonies accomplish in an attempt to gain and go beyond recognition. For example, the role of war photography in American society has shifted over time, as Susan Sontag illustrates in “Looking at War: Photography’s View of Devastation and death.” In the 1800s, many war photographers staged their images, such as those taken by Alexander Gardner during the Civil War (14). Shock photography from World War I was designed to show the real gruesomeness of war with close ups of soldiers whose faces had been decimated by heavy artillery (2). Notably, the political divide that resulted from photographs and live coverage of the Vietnam conflict had an historical impact on the function of war photography in our current media system (Hagopian 218-9). Americans consumed images from the Vietnam War more voraciously than any war since and the ability to witness war “live” from the front lines—the essence of what Peters describes as “media witnessing”—allowed Americans to form opinions regarding foreign policy based on these broader frames of access. In the 1970s, major corporations began swallowing up independently owned media stations, allowing for those in power to better manipulate what frames of war the people can access in order to support the dominant ideology of the culture.

It is extremely important to note the correlation between photojournalism, moral politics, and the political economy as it relates to the U.S. media system. These forces operate together to shape the invisible powers of a ceaseless propaganda machine in our culture. Photographic depictions of war reflect a system of power that infuses a particular ideology into the culture. “Photography as such has no identity. Its status as a technology varies with the power relations, which invest it. Its nature as a practice depends on the institution and agents which define it and set it to work” (Tagg 246). So no matter how much access we have to certain frames of war from which we are far removed, there are always countless other narratives that exist outside these frames of access. As such, those

who control mass media systems have the power to shape political discourse based on whose lives are deemed “worthy” or “grievable” and whose are not.

Nazi Propaganda

A course that emphasizes visual frames of the dark side needs to have an understanding of basic principles related to propaganda and the media, and the destructive nature of the Nazi propaganda machine is essential for students to inspect. By providing a brief overview of this important era, I ask students to ponder how the Nazi propaganda machine came to fruition. From there, they can examine the differences and similarities among various contemporary visual representations to consider what (if anything) has changed over time regarding methods used by those in power.

Often, the concept of “propaganda” evokes a memory of Adolf Hitler’s Nazi regime. While this remains a critical period for students to examine, the term “propaganda” first emerged in 1622 Italy and has Roman Catholic roots (PBS.org). “Sacre Congereti de Propaganda Fide” refers to the propagation of religion to congregate and convert the people (PBS.org). Even though the Catholic Church coined the term “propaganda,” the practice can be traced as far back as 98 AD to Emperor Trajan, who used both oral and visual practices to promote his empire and encourage men to enlist in his military (PBS.org). Historically, one can trace American propaganda back to the Patriots’ use of pamphlets to ignite the Revolutionary War by arousing dissent; the publication and distribution of *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* brought attention to the plight of slaves and helped ignite the Civil War; the emergence of “yellow journalism” sensationalized the Spanish-American War through spin and exaggeration (PBS.org). Each era utilizes various media to mobilize the masses and garner support for military action and government policies. As David Welch points out in *The Third Reich: Politics and Propaganda*, propaganda is part of any body politic; therefore it is inextricable from political processes (6). In *Selling the Great War: The Making of American Propaganda*, Professor Alan Axelrod discusses the influential men behind Woodrow Wilson’s Committee on Public Information, a government entity that controlled information disseminated to the public. The CPI, or “Creel Committee” (named for its minister, George Creel), was the first ministry of propaganda formed in the United

States (x). According to public relations director Edward L. Bernays, this “invisible government” sold the Great War to the American people as a “necessity” for making the world safe for democracy (as cited by Axelrod x). The CPI implemented various media (e.g. posters, advertisements, editorials, radio, etc.) to market the war; enlisting in the military and purchasing U.S. war bonds was every American’s patriotic duty, as seen in the images to the right. Creel defended his war propaganda efforts as positive spin rooted in facts, but it was the successful use of persuasive techniques by the CPI that informed and molded Hitler’s propaganda machine.

The State-controlled Nazi propaganda machine was absolutely absolute; there was an intention, a structure, an aim, and a target demographic (Welch, *The Third Reich... 2*). Over a twelve year period of time, the Nazi party gained complete control of all aspects of German culture—radio, press, film, theater, fine arts, literature, music—to reinforce the notion of “national community” (37). “Objectivity and opinion, however, were eliminated, and replaced by a definition of truth as defined by the Nazi regime” (37). Hitler believed public speeches and visual imagery to be the most effective modes of communication for persuading the masses. According to Hitler, the public address was an opportune moment to gauge the current political climate so one could enflame people’s anger, fears, and frustrations. Spectacular events such as parades and ceremonies—with flashy uniforms, flags, and marching bands—energized the German people with nationalistic, patriotic ideologies (4-6). Through a “closed” media system, Hitler sought to perpetuate “existing trends and beliefs to sharpen, to focus them” (9). He strongly believed in appealing to the emotions rather than the intellect of the people and emphasized the use of simplistic, persistent messages to indoctrinate the masses. Hitler pandered to people by drawing out their fears, targeting a scapegoat, and lifting up their hopes that he was the solution to their problems (i.e. “the myth of *Fürher* power”) (6).

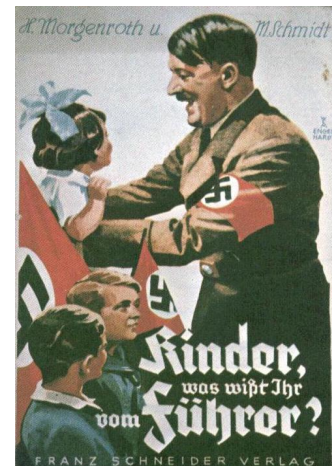


Fig. 15. Nazi propaganda poster created by Franz Schneider Verlag.(U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum; Web; 2 Apr. 2017).

As part of the “Final Solution,” Hitler launched a plan to “decontaminate” and “restore the nation’s moral and material health” by honing in the culture’s foundation and building a new social hierarchy through the arts (Welch, *Propaganda and the Cinema...* 33). Inspired and motivated by the CPI as well as the Bolsheviks, Hitler used bright red to contrast to drab neutral colors in his campaign posters to catch the viewer’s eye and provoke the German people (“The Power of Nazi Propaganda”). The “charismatic leader” myth repeatedly depicted Hitler with children to give him a God-like aura” (see fig. 15). Hitler also believed strongly in straightforward propaganda—what Welch refers to as “lie direct”—found in documentary films (Welch, *Propaganda and the Cinema...* 8). Common themes such as “the charismatic superman,” “the myth of resurrection and return,” and “the myth of *Führer* power” were intended to unify the classes (Welch, *The Third Reich...* 108) and create a sense of identification with Hitler—“a man of the people” who would lead the German people back to greatness (55).

To illustrate these tactics, I ask students to view the first twenty minutes of Leni Riefenstahl’s documentary, *The Triumph of the Will*, which covers the 1934 Nazi Party’s Congress rally. One of the most lauded documentaries of all time, Riefenstahl incorporated various themes and symbols to legitimize Hitler’s position of power and unify the audience. At the beginning of the documentary, religious overtones instill the myth of Hitler as a messiah: he descends from above the people in an airplane—a royal entrance—and emerges to greet an enthusiastic crowd. From a low vantage point, Riefenstahl incorporates a shot of Hitler that shows blue sky and clouds above his head, the sun illuminating



Fig. 16. Still shot of Adolf Hitler from Leni Riefenstahl's *The Triumph of the Will*. (1935).

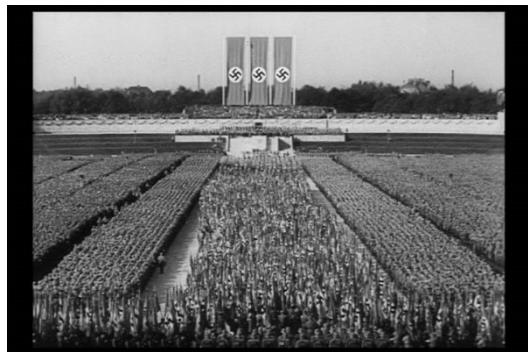


Fig. 17. Still shot of Nazi ranks from Leni Riefenstahl's *The Triumph of the Will*. (1935).

his face in a heavenly manner (see fig. 16). Another recurring theme shows the German people as unified: the still shot in fig. 17 perfect symmetry; the attire and positioning of the people reflects a conformity that strips away their identities and class status. Unification and purification are key themes. Unifying the people requires that they must eliminate non-Aryans as well as other “undesirables” who have tarnished the majesty of the German people. The notion of German pride is used to enrage the people regarding their descent from power; they must strive to take back what was taken from them in order to make Germany great again.

Two critical Nazi symbols—the swastika and German eagle—appear on uniforms, flags, and signs. Patriotic music blares, men march in perfect unison, and the people raise their hands to *heil* the almighty *Führer*. The mindless conformity of the masses should frighten any viewer, especially when considering current campaign practices. Riefenstahl’s documentary counters clips from *The Eternal Jew* to illuminate the differences between



Fig. 18. Still shots taken from *The Eternal Jew*. (Hipler; Deutsche Film Gesellschaft; 1940).

positive and negative propaganda. Whereas Reifenstahl framed *The Triumph of the Will* to uplift the German people by appealing to their pride, *The Eternal Jew* functions as dehumanizing propaganda that appeals to their fears and prejudices. Director Fritz Hipler depicts Jewish people as a drain on German culture: the dark lighting and unflattering camera angles portray Jewish people as dirty and disgusting to reinforce the idea they are lazy, greedy, and useless. At the end of the film, Hipler uses images of rats infesting the town to compare the Jewish people to vermin with the following voiceover: “The Jews’ power lies in their superior numbers, and like proliferating rats, they are a danger to human health” (Hipler) (see fig. 18). The message is quite clear and shameless: an entire race of people must be exterminated to preserve the purity of the Aryan race. While Hitler believed in the

effectiveness of a direct approach to propaganda in newsreels and documentary film, his propaganda minister preferred a less obvious approach.

Joseph Goebbels' role as Minister of Propaganda was integral to the Nazi party's eventual taking over of German culture. Hitler commissioned Goebbels in 1930 to "centralize" the Nazi propaganda machine (Welch, *The Third Reich...* 11). Through various information-gathering methods, Goebbels examined the people's grievances and exploited them by carefully orchestrating Hitler's election campaigns. Through the façade of national unity, he convinced the German people that voting for Hitler would best serve their interests (6). The theme of unification created a myth of class harmony that enabled the Nazi party to garner support from various sects of society, especially the middle class. Once Hitler won the election, Goebbels worked to create a "closed" media system for boosting morale and maintaining support for the Nazi party (11). Outright control over all facets of culture provided Goebbels with the ability to indoctrinate the masses with Nazi party ideology through a slow process of saturation.



Fig. 19. Nazi youth propaganda used to advertise Hans Steinoff's film *Hitler Youth Quex*. (1933).

Chiefly, Goebbels wanted to mix propaganda with entertainment by overhauling the entire film industry (55). By 1939, Goebbels successfully brought together the trifecta of big business, government, and banks with the goal of producing 100 films per year (54). Narrative films provided an opportunity to proselytize National Socialist ideology using subliminal messages because the consumer was less likely to expect such messages in an ostensibly fictional film. Goebbels believed: "The moment a person is conscious of propaganda, propaganda becomes ineffective. However, as soon as propaganda as a tendency, as a characteristic, as an attitude, remains in the background and becomes apparent through human beings, then propaganda becomes effective in every respect" (as cited by Welch 38). The use of narrative film served a dual purpose: it diverted attention from the realities of the war and reinforced the social and economic order. Especially, youth culture became a target

demographic. At the beginning of Hitler's reign, films featured a young, lower class Aryan youth experiencing familial strife and struggling against a Communist adversary, such as *Hitler Youth Quex* (see fig. 19) (Welch, *Propaganda and the...* 53). Propagandists used lead protagonists such as the "exemplary martyr" in the form of the "Unknown SA Mann" or the "Unknown Hitler Youth" to inspire the masses. "The rationale behind this strategy was presumably that it was easier to get the German people to identify in the first instance with the individual characters, and then, through the fictionalized drama that unfolded, with the movement as a whole" (41). In Goebbels' mind, targeting young, impressionable citizens would guarantee the continued success of Hitler's reign. He also believed that certain themes must be implemented at opportune moments, so these themes shifted throughout the Nazi regime to coincide with the timely goals of the movement. Mythical themes including "blood and soil," "the heroic warrior," "leadership," "war and the military," and "the image of the enemy" coincided with the political moment in time that warranted a certain type of support from the masses. Once Hitler came to power, he needed a "permanent scapegoat" in order to "fulfill a psychological need for Germany. Nazi propaganda simply used the historical predisposition of the audience toward an anti-Semitic explanation for Germany's cultural, economic, and political grievances" (237). The reality that visual rhetoric and mythology supported mass genocide is sobering and worthy of recognition in terms of witnessing.

By banning and censoring any and all dissenting views and passing laws to create a "closed" media system, the Nazi party was able to craft messages that promoted the idea Hitler was a savior of capitalism—a revolutionary intent on destroying social hierarchies in order to restore the status quo (15). Undoubtedly, the propaganda efforts of Adolf Hitler and Joseph Goebbels have inspired techniques employed by countless world leaders and propagandists who have followed. After reviewing these concepts and viewing the aforementioned clips, I ask students to examine the American propaganda machine and media system. Watch the news. Look at advertisements. Watch CNN, MSNBC, and Fox News. Scroll through Hulu and Netflix. What kinds of ideologies operate within American culture? What are the common themes presented in films today? What has changed? What

has remained the same? What, if anything, can we do to prevent history from repeating itself? The study of Nazi propaganda helps us to become third-person witnesses to history. We can readily see, through multiple visual representations, the power of rhetoric in terms of shaping mass perception. It is our responsibility to examine this extremely critical point in history because we live in the shadow of this machine.

Practices of Looking: Psychoanalytical and Ethical Considerations

The Power of the Gaze

Looking, looking away or refusing to look reveal different aspects of power, and any form of looking requires the viewer to make a choice. “Even when we choose not to look, or when we look away, these are activities that have meaning within the economy of looking” (Sturken & Cartwright 9). The power of the gaze as a theoretical concept emerged from the psychoanalytical framework of Jacques Lacan’s *Of the Gaze as Objet Petit A*. In film theory, **the gaze** refers to *the objectifying process whereby the eye fixes upon another person as a thing* (or *objet petite a*) in a way that reveals power dynamics between individuals.² Although these concepts emerged from film studies, the power of the gaze also applies to art and photography. I ask students to examine these concepts via the course website to supplement their understanding of practices of looking.

The gaze operates in various ways. The subject-object of the gaze resides in the first witness position; the artist/photographer resides in the second witness position; the viewer resides in the third witness position. The One (e.g. artist, photographer and film maker) uses his/her gaze to bear witness to an event and uses a specific medium (e.g. the paintbrush, camera, etc.) in order to construct a testimony (e.g. canvas, photograph, film). The machines that are used to construct these frames are an extension of the self: an

² Laura Mulvey’s research expanded upon Lacan’s work by exploring the sexual objectification of the female form by the **male gaze**. Mulvey’s work examines **voyeurism** and **scopophilia**—visual acts that violate the subject by rendering him/her as an object. **Voyeurism** indicates the pleasure in looking—which could arguably include pleasure in viewing the body in pain—whereas **scopophilia** denotes sexual pleasure through voyeuristic acts.

extension of the eye, the consciousness, the 'I', and the ego. As such, the gaze of the One indicates an ever-present subjectivity that cannot be removed from the frames s/he creates.

The gaze also reveals the importance of power dynamics between the Subject and the Other. Power relations are immanent to the gaze: the Subject gazes upon the other, thereby asserting his/her power over s/he who is beholden to the gaze. The Other may either avert or return the gaze. To gaze back at the Subject indicates a reversal of power, whereby the viewer feels violated by the gaze of the Other. In this sense, the Other regains some of the power that has been lost: a subject-turned-object-turned-subject.

In the most Lacanian sense, the gaze of the artist/photographer/filmmaker violates the subjective self of the person depicted. One oscillates between a subjective and object-ified self when the gaze falls upon him/her, but what if the camera "freezes" a traumatic experience? What does a photo-graph *take* from the victim? At the same time, Lacan's theory presupposes that the gaze, as a libidinal response, always informs the rhetorical act: "The painter must submit to the scopic drive before achieving a signifying shaping of the real."

The term **spectacle** denotes "an event that is visually impactful in some way: "something that attracts attention because it is very unusual or shocking" (Merriam-Webster). A public trauma such as the 9/11 attacks creates a spectacle that is collectively shared and remembered by a given culture. It is precisely because the event shocks the viewer in some way that it becomes a spectacle. Images of collective trauma become spectacles for mass consumption; it is the society of the spectacle that locks in the value of an image based on how viewers respond. The spectacle created by witness photography sends mixed signals to viewers. In one instance, the viewer may experience a "Stop this!" response, yet in another instance an awestruck viewer may react by thinking, "What a spectacle!" ("Looking at War" 94). From an ethical standpoint, victims of an atrocity photograph in particular represent dehumanized objects: their pain transforms into a spectacle when released into the rhetorical culture for mass consumption. The photographer initially resides in a subject position as a viewer who fixes the gaze upon the victim, passively observing disempowered objects whose suffering becomes captured on

film. As Sontag elaborates in *On Photography*, the camera itself is a “predatory weapon” (14). “To photograph people is to violate them, to see them as they never see themselves; it turns people into objects that can be symbolically possessed” (14). The viewer, then, assumes the power of the gaze when viewing the image, grasping a moment of time that belongs to the original sovereign subject. The responsibility of the photographer transcends the surface of the image and seeps into the viewer who endures the horror of witnessing the atrocity.

Spectatorship—a term typically used in reference to sporting events—describes a visual process whereby a viewer acts as a passive observer to an event. Photographers and viewers, as second and third-person witnesses to atrocity, respond similarly to sports fans: they sit in the sidelines and watch the event from a distance without intervening. The voyeuristic act of creating a spectacle out of suffering raises several questions of interest in terms of the ethics of viewing the body in pain and the role of witness photographers. For example, what responsibility lies in the hands of the war photographer who passively observes a massacre? Are witness photographers culpable bystanders? Alternatively, does the role of the witness photographer denote passive observation and prohibit intervention? At what point does acting as a war photographer become—a *sport*?

Spectatorship remains a complex process, particularly when the body becomes a site of torture. According to Simone Weil, “Violence turns anybody subject to [war] into a thing” (as cited in “Looking at War” 86). The body as a source of pain and torture represents power and domination over the body. Depending upon the viewer, for some there is an “appetite” for the depiction of bodies in pain that feels empowering—a satisfaction in the gaze or “pleasure in flinching” (88). Sontag emphasizes that it is common for viewers to enjoy the spectacle of torture: “As objects of contemplation, images of the atrocious can answer to several different needs. To steel oneself against weakness. To make oneself more numb. To acknowledge the existence of the incorrigible” (*Regarding the Pain...98*). To distinguish between “real” versus “fantasy” violence, viewers typically experience a sense of guilt or moral obligation when exposed to a factual representation of violence whereas fictional representations do not have the same effect (Peters 722). The mind can distinguish

between *actual* violence versus fantasy violence, and a healthy mind should experience feelings of empathy or compassion when regarding factual accounts of the body in pain, *not* pleasure.

From a social advocate's viewpoint, witness photography demonstrates the power to shift political discourse and alter public policy to serve the common good. I ask students to consider images of the My Lai massacre released by Ron Haeberle: the photographic evidence of the atrocity provided people with a better understanding of combat conditions in order to help remove U.S. troops from the Vietnam conflict. I further ask them to consider the travesties documented by James Nachtwey that brought attention to the genocide in Rwanda or the food crises in the Sudan. These examples emphasize the important role witness photographers play in shedding light on serious matters. The question remains—Does the demand for recognition exceed the ethical consequences of commodifying and exploiting the victims?

It remains a curious undertaking to ponder visual witnessing in terms of the power of the gaze and the myriad ways in which concepts associated with it problematize the witnessing process. Who resides in empowered, subject positions? Who resides in powerless, object positions? In what ways are subject/object positions, subjectivity and object-ivity affected by the power of gaze? What must occur in order for a viewer to partake in ethical spectatorship? These are questions of interest that are just as important to consider as they are impossible to answer.

Viewing the Body in Pain

Elaine Scarry's *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World* examines the political ideology and perceptual implications that underlie the act of inflicting pain upon the body and expressions of that pain. Scarry's major concepts examine the difficulty articulating pain through linguistic expression, the political and perceptual complications of expressing pain, and the nature of both material and verbal expressibility (1-4). This includes the framing of messages as one bears witness to an event as well as the testimonial medium through which the messages are "framed" (e.g. art, narratives, film photography, etc.). The inexpressibility of pain remains a primary source of concern when examining the

visual witnessing process. As Kahlil Gibran so eloquently puts it in *The Prophet*, “Pain is the breaking of the shell that encloses your understanding.” Part of the problem relates to the invisibility of pain as another experiences it; it always causes a sense of doubt while simultaneously reinforcing the exigency for recognition. That which is invisible is impossible to recognize and, therefore, most in need of recognition. Additionally, the invisibility of pain grants power to the oppressor and makes it easier to cause further harm to the disenfranchised, thus evading responsibility. How does one stop that which is invisible? How do you give voice to the voiceless? Visual witnessing provides an alternative means of re-experiencing another’s suffering.

The linguistic struggle to find words or symbols that offer descriptive representations of painful experiences always causes a “gap” between *ontological experience* and *the expression of that experience* (bearing witness): the feelings of pain you experience during a fleeting moment can never be fully grasped nor accurately articulated. At the same time, the suffering of humankind drives creative expression across literary and artistic genres. The desire to know and the desire to be known underlies the exigency of bearing witness. My internal reality and your external reality reflect a split of subjectivities: a true empathic impossibility. Whereas my pain is certain truth, your pain remains incomprehensible. I can only use my imagination in an attempt to understand your pain via my personal experiences with pain. Faulty memories, distorted perceptions, speaking on behalf of others—every witness is “bereft of speech” to a certain extent (6). The practical and ethical consequences that underlie the creation of linguistic structures to articulate pain further complicate the witnessing process.

As John Durham Peters points out in “Witnessing,” “seeing” and “saying” are inextricably linked, but what of internal experiences? We rely on the voice and what Scarry refers to as *analogic verification* to describe bodily experiences in medical, scientific, and psychological contexts to answer the elusive question: what *is* pain? Pain in the body and psychological pain remain very much intertwined: both experiences result in initial primitive vocal expressions such as screaming or crying out in anguish. These primitive vocal expressions are not enough to “work through” the trauma of bodily harm. The power to gain visibility relies on the effective communication of pain, or the “precise reflection

of material reality” through carefully crafted symbols (9). Verbal documents such as poems, journal entries, etc. as well as visual documentation such as photographs and film enter the public realm with the goal of transforming the rhetorical culture. In order to extend “beyond recognition” the audience becomes the rhetor, an underlying goal of responsibility. While the expression of pain never eliminates the “fact of pain,” the healing process directly correlates to the power of voice: the reversal of silencing and erasure depend on it. But the power of voice does not even seem to matter if no one is listening. Voice relies on visibility, and one cannot listen to that which cannot be seen or heard. Visual witnessing provides proof of pain in a way that escapes language.

Scarry explains the impossibility of witnessing in terms of expressing physical pain, for “pain” remains conceptual, primitive, and distant. If pain is conceptual, meaning cannot be referenced as an object; this means the experience of pain can never access the necessary language to express itself. Victims of intolerable harms struggle to articulate physical pain, for pain remains temporary, and language fails to accommodate the feeling or intensity of pain. Significantly, pain destroys language; severe pain makes it impossible to speak and can only be expressed through such primitive expressions as moaning and screaming. Finally, pain remains distant: it is conceived of and experienced within the mind of the individual, rendering it unsharable (4). The effect of pain inflicted upon the body demonstrates “a certain mechanism of power: of a power that not only did not hesitate to exert itself directly onto our bodies, but was exalted and strengthened by its visible manifestations” (Foucault 57). Inflicting pain upon the body through various means such as scarring, amputating, maiming, or burning functions as a “locus of power” for the sovereign, intended to be a spectacle for the purpose of establishing norms within a given culture (Hesford 4). These acts always disempower and weaken the agency of victims, so arguably, we must rely on images as evidence of distant pain in order to support first-person witnesses who are unable to bear witness.

Due to the impossibility of accessing the language necessary for conveying pain, we can turn to images of the inflicted body in an attempt to better understand distant suffering. This, however, does not occur without consequences. The “paradox of suffering” James Dawes describes in *Evil Men* illumines political problems that, regrettably, sometimes

serve to “push” pain “into further invisibility” (Scarry 13). Moreover, some scholars such as Sontag argue that the saturation of violent imagery runs the risk of creating compassion fatigue. On the one hand, releasing images of the body in pain provides a referent of objectified, “felt-attributes of pain” that lead to “the sentient fact of the person’s suffering” in order for pain to become knowable to others (Scarry 13). Images inspire people to provide aid to others, provide us with evidence of crimes in order to bring justice to victims of atrocity, and help form cultural memory by never letting us forget the past.

Scarry illustrates ways in which pain may become more visible through “analogic verification,” a comparison between the concrete and abstract in order to provide us with a reference point to pain. For instance, showing an image of an emaciated man crawling on the ground at an NGO camp provides viewers with a concrete reference point to the notion of “genocide by starvation”

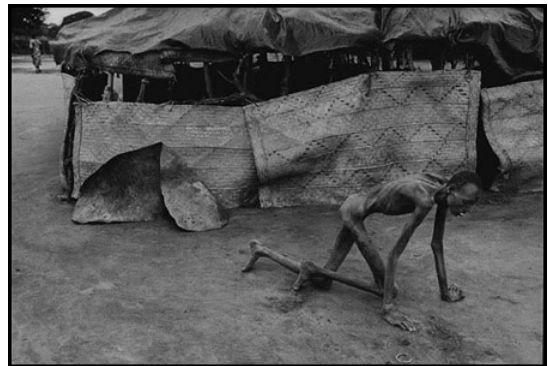


Fig. 20. Famine victim at an NGO feeding center in Sudan. Photograph taken by James Nachtwey. (*Witness Photography*; 1993; Web; 1 Aug. 2016).

(see fig. 20). We can gaze upon this body and imagine pangs of hunger by referring to our own memories of pain. This makes it possible to understand pain in a more comprehensive way that oral testimony alone cannot satisfy.

Violating bodies reinforces power: it is intended to strike fear, control the masses, and show dominance. Foucault argues, “Atrocity . . . is a figure inherent in the mechanism that produces visible truth of the crime at the very heart of the punishment” (56). Paradoxically, just as the spectacle of torture conveys “truth and power” of sovereign rule, it also brings justice to victims if perpetrators are held accountable. At the same time, the humanity of the victim is at stake, and the reproduction of images depicting the body in pain dehumanizes those striving for agency. The responsibility and response-ability of viewing the body in pain are paramount.

To *see* the body in pain is to see the truth; words are unnecessary. And yet, it is precisely the fact that pain escapes language that makes the witnessing process ambivalent and, therefore, deficient. As Scarry emphasizes, the inexpressibility of pain through language

reflects its unsharability. Yet is it precisely this linguistic unsharability that lends itself to visual expression: what a witness fails to achieve through language they can strive to achieve through visual representation. It is expression that breathes life into our pain, makes it *real-ized* to others. In terms of spectacle and spectatorship, Peters reveals an extremely important aspect of what happens when voyeurs witness violence. He describes “faux violence” as inducing pleasure in viewers—similar to what Sontag refers to as “the pleasure in flinching”—whereas real violence *should* elicit empathy (assuming, of course, that we are referring to someone with a healthy mind). Ethical considerations related to the spectacle of suffering are crucial to bear in mind any time we view the pain of others as second or third-person witnesses. What is ethical spectatorship? When does an event become a spectacle, and why is this potentially problematic? Is there a difference between viewing, voyeurism, and spectatorship? These are important questions to ask students as they assess the consequences of viewing the body in pain. Kozol refers to the problem of **ethical spectatorship** as:

The actions of the self toward the other that recognize such acts as relational and intersubjective. . . I use the term ethical spectatorship to describe visual projects that trouble the self/other construct by foregrounding the inseparability of spectatorship and the ethical imperative ‘to see’ in order to know about acts of violence and injustice (15-6).

Witnessing trauma as part of a larger human rights narrative intends to, instrumentally, encourage viewers to engage in empathic identification, for the alternative is *not to look* (16-7). She further considers all visual representations of war as spectacles, for frames of distant suffering always run the risk objectifying and dehumanizing individuals captured by the photographer (15).

These concepts reinforce the interconnectedness of discourse and power. Frames of distant atrocities serve social, political, and economic purposes that, as Kozol argues, obfuscates the witnessing process. The aesthetics of the image, for example, may please the eye in a certain way and detract from the subject matter in a dehumanizing fashion. A young Afghani girl becomes an exotic object for us to pity and mourn from our privileged positions, turning the child into a symbol of all the women and children who must be saved



Fig. 21. Afghan girl. Photograph taken by Steve McCurry in *National Geographic* (1984).

from the evils of the Muslim world (see fig. 21). Moreover, the *act* of media witnessing—second or third-person witnessing—is complicated by the “ethical imperative” of humanitarian efforts that emerge from academic efforts, which paradoxically operate in conjunction with expansionist policies (65). As Kozol points out, “Western viewers are hailed to witness within distinct positions of privilege in relation to the subject of that gaze” (65). These conundrums are raised throughout the course and will be explored further in the section III.

Framing: Problems of Reproducibility and (Un)Worthy Lives

Photography and film are curious genres. In light of visual witnessing, the camera functions as an apparatus of control which raises numerous provocative questions: what goes into the framing of the scene? What does the camera “take” from the subject of an image? What are the ethical considerations of “freezing” someone else’s trauma and exploiting that trauma through mass reproduction? What are the short and long-term effects of reproducing trauma? Whose lives are worthy of recognition, and whose are not? These questions underlie the function and ethics of framing in relation to visual witnessing by expanding upon the definitions of frames/framing discussed in chapter 2. These concepts are available on [the course website](#) as a reference guide and assist students in completing some of their shorter writing assignments as well as drafting their storyboards, rough cuts, and final edits of their multimodal projects.

Framing: Technical Aspects

From a technical standpoint, the witness photographer and film director rely on numerous factors to frame an event. The frames, whether implicit or direct, serve a rhetorical purpose. As Butler points out, “Even the most transparent of documentary

images is framed, and framed for a purpose, carrying that purpose within its frame, and implementing it through the frame” (70). Bordwell and Thompson illuminate the role of the photographer and function of framing in moving film to create the *mise-en-shot* (literally, “the things in the shot”). “The **frame** is not a neutral border; it imposes a certain vantage point” by defining the size, shape, height, distance, and angle of the shot (182). Significantly, the frame defines onscreen and off-screen space (182). The term **photography** literally means “writing in light” whereas cinematography builds upon this by adding movement; the photograph stands alone while a film is, quite literally, a series of photographs (162). The **framing** of a shot relies on the positioning of the lens in terms of angle (i.e. high, low, straight on), level (parallel to the horizon or tipped), height (i.e. high, low, straight on), and distance (extreme long shot, long shot, medium long shot, medium shot, medium close-up, close-up, and extreme close-up) (190-1). The aperture and shutter operate in tandem as light passes through the lens in order to capture the shot. The **aperture** absorbs light from the scene through an opening, hole, or gap, and the **lens** creates a depth of field between itself and an object of focus to compose a foreground and background of the shot (172). **Lighting** is integral to the *mise-en-shot* (literally “things in the shot”) because it develops highlights and shadows to create a sense of spatial relations among people and objects (126). Hard light creates “defined shadows, crisp textures, and sharp edges” whereas soft light refers to “diffused illumination” (126). **Exposure** refers to the amount of light that passes through the lens when the shutter snaps. **Shutter speed** refers to the amount of time a shutter is open (165) In photography, a slow shutter speed is usually more appropriate for still shots such as portraits and landscapes whereas a fast shutter speed is more appropriate for action shots. However, a photographer may opt to use a slower shutter speed for an action shot to create a blurred effect, which is sometimes very effective for conveying movement in the shot. Robert Capa’s images taken on Omaha Beach during D-day demonstrate the chaos of the moment through the blurred shots; the viewer can almost feel the men struggling to move through the water. In film, **speed of motion** refers to the rate of motion and rate of projection, or “frames per second” (165). An action packed scene moves more quickly, whereas a scene meant to create tension might use slow motion. In *Saving Private Ryan*, the first twenty minutes of the film uses

an incredible speed of motion: a reported 24 frames per second (Stripek 1). This film is also well known for using a 45 degree shutter and extremely fast shutter speed in order to create crisp frames bordering on virtual reality (1). All of these elements come together to create six zones: the space beyond the four edges of the frame, the space behind the frame, and the space behind the camera (187). Therefore, how we perceive an event has everything to do with the manner in which it is “framed” by the person looking through the viewfinder and anyone who edits the image after the shot has been taken.

It is not only important for students to consider technical aspects of the frame but to think about the underlying structures which shape it—i.e. the “framing of the frame” (74). According to Butler, “The frame functions not only as a boundary to the image, but as structuring the image itself . . . not only what it shows, but how it shows what it shows” (71). What are the larger structures, which underlie the frame? In what ways do these larger structures reveal a “normalizing effect” in terms of the way we view such concepts as “race” and “civilization” (74)? Butler points out that frames establish norms, and these **norms** govern “which lives count as human and as living, and which do not” (74). This also relates to the “when” and “where” factor. Geographically, where are our cameras fixated, and how does this reflect military directives and U.S. interests? Who determines the extent to which we visually witness war? How do you raise political consciousness when everything we visually witness in the news is operated by those with political and economic power?

Problems of Reproducibility

There are countless problems with reproducing images of trauma. Susan Sontag’s *Regarding the Pain of Others* remains a noteworthy critique of war photography for its examination of problems evident in the framing and reproduction of violent images. She explores the history of photography as a unique mode of witnessing war and introduces provocative questions related to reproducing and viewing violent images. In one of the most significant claims, Sontag presupposes the saturation of violent images in our culture feeds apathy. “Flooded with images of the sort that once used to shock and arouse indignation, we are losing our capacity to react. Compassion, stretched to its limits, is going

numb” (Sontag, “Looking at War,” 20). She further contends that war and human suffering transform into a spectacle for viewers to consume which, in turn, causes **image-glut** i.e. an insatiable desire to expose oneself to violent images (20). The problem of image-glut relates back to the power of the gaze and its potential to exploit, objectify, and dehumanize victims of distant suffering. Finally, Sontag addresses the problem of **image-flow** which relates to the political economy that not only underlies the framing of news stories, it determines whose stories are “worthy” or “unworthy” of being told (Herman and Chomsky xx).

These are important issues to consider. What is the best way to approach these issues in the classroom? And more importantly, how do we, as teachers, respond to these concerns? In Sontag’s book, she opts not to include the images she describes throughout her argument. This, to me, is a political move to support her central claim that we consume too many images of war and need to consume less. What are the politics of showing violent images in class when discussing the topic of visual witnessing? Repeatedly I ask myself: to show or not to show? Sontag’s concepts are also intriguing to counter with Hariman’s argument regarding “the myth of compassion fatigue” along with Jon Stewart’s plea, “We can only make decisions about war if we know what war is.”

Interestingly, there are places in the world where people refuse to have their photographs taken based on superstition. “In Kayapo, ‘akaron kaba’ not only means ‘to take a photo’ but that it also means ‘to steal a soul’” (Moraes). Barthes likens a photograph to a “micro-version of death”:

I am neither subject nor object, but a subject who feels he is becoming an object. For what society makes of my photograph, what it reads there, I do not know; but when I discover myself in the product of this operation, what I see is that I have become Total-Image, which is to say, Death in person; others—the Other—do not dispossess me of myself, they turn me, ferociously, into an object, they put me at their mercy, at their disposal, classified in a file, ready for the subtlest deceptions (14).

In *On Photography*, Susan Sontag elaborates upon the notion of the camera as a predatory weapon. “To photograph people is to violate them, by seeing them as they never see

themselves, by having knowledge of them they can never have; it turns people into objects that can be symbolically possessed” (14). Whatever the camera “takes,” one thing remains certain: something significant, albeit elusive, transcends the atrocity photograph through its reproduction. Having your photograph taken, for some, can be an extremely violating and objectifying experience. This intensifies through the reproduction process.

One image that is powerful for students to consider is the iconic Vietnam War photograph of Kim Phuc, a nine-year-old girl running naked down a highway after a napalm attack (see fig. 22). Phuc initially “hated the photo. It embarrassed her. And she struggled with the publicity that surrounded it. For her, it was personal: It captured a moment of



Fig. 22. Kim Phuc as a young girl, running naked down the street during a napalm attack. Photograph taken by Nick Ut and reprinted in “The Napalm Girl.” (Wikipedia. Wikipedia Foundation; 8 June 1972; Web; 1 Aug. 2016).

torment -- her face frozen in an agonizing wail moments after a napalm attack burned and disfigured her for life.” As Hesford explains, “freezing trauma” in a photograph and reproducing it has the potential to force the victim to re-live the experience over and over again. That moment in time, fragmented and dissociated though it may be, becomes a recorded part of the rhetorical culture. Through its reproduction, the image is a ghost of the past, haunting the individual caught within the confines of the frame for all of eternity. Over time, Phuc’s feelings about the photograph changed. “After a long struggle, Phuc came to realize that if her pain and terror had not been captured on film that day, the bombing -- like so many other wartime horrors -- might have been lost to history. She began to think about what the photograph could give, rather than what it could take away” (Newton and Patterson 1). It is important to ask students: what are the benefits and drawbacks of visual witnessing in terms of “freezing trauma”? Do the drawbacks outweigh the benefits?

Kozol refers to the “exposure of tyranny” and the “rhetoric of exoticism and brutality” to shed light on the paradox of visual witnessing. From a First World Western perspective, the norm is to view those in Third World countries as less than human, an exotic ethnic other in need of our “civilized” culture to save them from their “savage” one. According to Butler, those who are perceived as “human” versus “less than human” are determined by societal norms, which are communicated through visual and discursive frames (77). If Kozol’s and Butler’s assumptions are correct, the way we visually witness the framing of world events inadvertently instills racist and ethnocentric ideologies that degrade those we gaze upon, even as we attempt to bring them “freedom for democracy.” Hariman also addresses **the paradox of visual witnessing** in “Watching War Evolve.” On the one hand,



Fig. 23. Serbian militant kicking a civilian woman in the head. Photograph taken by Ron Haviv and reprinted in “Looking at War: Photography’s View of Devastation and Death” by Susan Sontag. (*New Yorker*; 2002).

photography and the distribution of violent images “sanctions” violence; on the other hand, social reform depends on the production and distribution of violent images (Hariman144). The only way to address injustice is through education and raising awareness. Witness photography certainly runs the risk of exploiting, objectifying, and re-traumatizing victims, but at the same time, these images have the power to mobilize opinion and policy reform, “activate” morality, and serve as the “ethical lens” through which the world can better understand distant suffering (144).

Another problem to consider is the way war photography and other forms of “material-rhetorical violence” risk hindering the empathic identification necessary for moving beyond recognition (113). For example, students examine includes Ron Haviv’s photographic evidence of events that occurred in Novi Sad, Serbia in 2002 (see fig. 23) (113). The photograph provides conclusive evidence of a Serbian militant kicking a civilian woman in the head while she lies helplessly on the ground. The reproduction of this image resulted in outrage by the Serbian government because of the way it depicted Serbians as a whole (113). An American visually witnessing Serbia’s traumatic history can never

understand these frames in the appropriate context. Hesford emphasizes that trauma is “an unstable referent” and history is never “fixed” in time, so to identify with victims of an atrocity is an illusion (113). This point emphasizes the paradox of witnessing. Viewers project a narrative onto a photograph, which obfuscates the truth because it omits the larger narrative (114). Hesford refers to these constructs as “memory-narratives”—unstable referents that are, essentially, *ungovernable* (115). Because we are so far removed from the identities of “the first witness”—particularly when referencing the distant past—our perception of these victims becomes distorted, and we lump them into categories: personhood becomes lost, and the listening process is interrupted. Thus, identification becomes an impossibility and disrupts the entire visual witnessing process. Hesford’s argument is extremely important to bear in mind, because it brings back the question: to show or not to show?

These concepts shed light on a few of the major problems related to reproducibility and “freezing trauma.” From an ethical standpoint, it is crucial to address these issues with students in order to raise their critical consciousness regarding image consumption, particularly as they begin to think about ways to frame their multimodal projects.

(Un)Worthy Lives: (In)Accessible frames

In *Manufacturing Consent*, Herman and Chomsky discuss five filters (limited ownership, advertisements, public relations spin, “flak,” and the dominant bourgeois ideology) through which information travels before reaching the masses (see fig. 24). Major issues with framing war and atrocity stem from



Fig. 24. The five filters of the media, according to Noam Chomsky and Edward Herman’s Propaganda Model. Published in “CNN and the Propaganda Model” by John McEwen. (WordPress; 7 Oct. 2015; Web; 1 Sept. 2016.)

profit-driven media conglomerates who control a corrupt system. At the end of the day, the media system has the power to determine whose lives are grievable and worthy of

recognition and whose lives are not based on the frames they release to the public. It stands to reason, “People watch and read in good part on the basis of what is readily available and intensively promoted” (xix). So, when students take a good look at these five filters in conjunction with the military agendas directing the scope of the camera, it becomes evident that those whose lives are worthy of public grief are largely determined by the (in)accessibility of the “frame.” Which testimonies do the people have the opportunity to visually witness, and why are these victims worthy of recognition? More importantly, whose testimonies linger outside our frames of access, and why are their voices silenced?

Visual witnessing generates a spectacle of war to gain support from the people to take military action, frequently under the guise of “national security.” Through the persistent framing of enemy states, the media has the power to produce an ethnocentric viewpoint that reinforces “the myth of the savage” and shapes an elusive history (Kozol). According to Herman and Chomsky, the media portrays worthy and unworthy victims based on what best serves U.S. military interests. For instance, *National Geographic*’s Afghan girl becomes a representation of female suffering in the Middle East in order to garner support for military action while ignoring those who suffered as a result of U.S. policy. As Herman and Chomsky state:

This bias is politically advantageous to U.S. policy-makers, for focusing on the victims of enemy states shows those states to be wicked and deserving of U.S. hostility; while ignoring U.S. and client-state victims allows ongoing U.S. policies to proceed more easily, unburdened by the interference of concern over the politically inconvenient victims (xx).

According to Butler, the purpose of visually framing war a certain way is to legitimize support for military action that will expand global powers; the nation-state relies on the media in order to frame events based on the political and economic interests of the United States. Kozol divulges the irony of “framing of the frame” to justify military action which leads to more deaths of innocent parties as part of “interventionist” strategy. By creating binaries, the theme becomes “us vs. them”—good vs. evil; civil vs. savage; just vs. unjust; rational vs. irrational (Ivie). These themes support the dominant ideology of the culture,

and those who own and control the media decide which stories are “covered” and which ones remain beyond the people’s access. A significant contributor to these problems lies with public relations “spin” control. “Studies of news sources reveal that a significant proportion of news originates in public relations releases. There are, by one count, 20,000 more public relations agents working to doctor the news today than there are journalists writing it” (Herman and Chomsky xvii). Journalistic integrity may one day become obsolete as entertainers, political pundits, and embedded reporters continue to dominate our news system.

The people can only respond to what they know, and through the suppression of information these entities ultimately determine whose lives are “worthy” or “unworthy” of recognition. The media system has the power—the agency—to lock in the value of a life. Therefore, viewers’ access to information that resides outside the scope of the frame is limited. **A paradox of perception** pertains to the fact that images which are “supposed to deliver reality, withdrawal reality from perception” (Butler 75). Even though visual witnessing can be an enabling process, it is also extremely limited. How do we—as students, teachers, and citizens—combat this problem? Kozol presents an interesting argument against the spectacle of war and asks that we “look elsewhere.” The question is, then: where should we look instead? Further, what are the consequences of “looking elsewhere”?

III

Visual frames of the Dark Side: Application in the Classroom

Integrating visual frames of the dark side in the classroom as a means of addressing witnessing can occur in various ways. Visual witnessing can be the focus of the course, or one can elect to design a unit that covers the subject matter in conjunction with linguistic “frames.” This section will discuss a few different approaches to incorporating foundational concepts of visual witnessing in the multimodal course as part of in class and/or online discussion, short writing assignments, and major research projects. The

concepts outlined in this section are available for students on the [course website](#) which also includes a working [glossary](#). The first examples will illuminate concepts associated with visual rhetoric and iconic war photography; the second section will examine examples of the media and propaganda; the third section will explore viewing the body in pain and problems of reproducibility. The final section considers war photography as a testimonial genre and explores its application in a multimodal course to support a liberatory pedagogy.

Visual Rhetoric: Iconic War Photography

For the first week of class, I introduce students to concepts related to visual rhetoric and semiotics, as discussed in part two of this chapter. For their first writing assignment, I ask students to provide an overview of terms and concepts from Sturken and Cartwright's "Images, Power, and Politics," Roland Barthes "The Rhetoric of the Image," and an overview of visual rhetoric from the course website. They must also provide a rhetorical analysis of five iconic war photographs using terminology from the weekly readings. These include an image of the atomic bomb exploding in Hiroshima (see fig. 25); Robert Capa's image of men storming the beaches of Normandy (fig. 26); an image taken after the liberation of a death camp in Dachau (see fig. 27); Ron Haeberle's photograph of women and children on the My Lai path (see fig. 28); James Nachtwey's photograph of the Twin Tower attack on 9/11 (see fig. 29); and, a controversial photograph from Abu Ghraib prison (see fig. 30). I ask them to examine these photographs without giving them any additional information. As the semester progresses, various lessons cover the historical events that coincide with these iconic war photographs. At the end of the semester, we explore problems of reproducibility wherein they examine reproductions of the initial photographs and then must expand upon their first rhetorical analysis assignment. This final assignment not only allows them to reflect upon the ways in which their perceptions of these images have changed, it is also an opportunity for them to apply a comprehensive overview of what they have learned throughout the semester.



Fig. 25. U.S. troops storming Omaha Beach on D-Day. Photograph taken by Robert Capa. (*Wikipedia*; Wikipedia Foundation; 6 Jun. 1944; Web; 1 Sept. 2016).



Fig. 26. Liberation at Dachau. Photograph taken by the United States army. (*Wikipedia*; Wikipedia Foundation; 1945)



Fig. 27. Deceased woman, children, and babies on the My Lai Path. Photograph taken by Ron Haerberle. (*LIFE*; 16 Mar. 1969).



Fig. 28. Destruction of the World Trade Center on 9/11. Photograph taken by James Nachtwey. (*Witness Photography*; 11 Sept. 2001; Web; Aug. 2016).

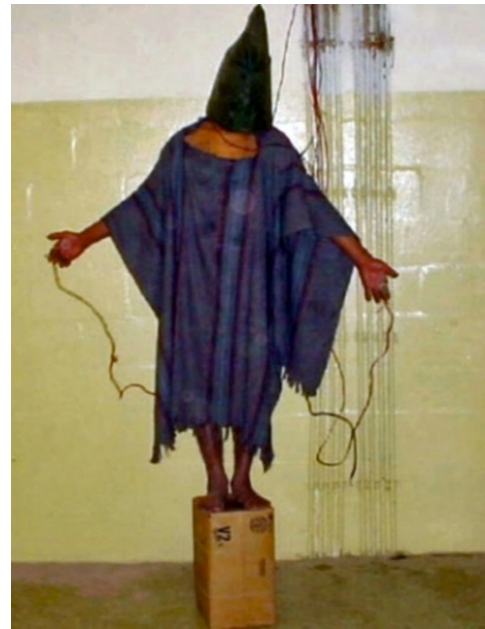


Fig. 29. Prisoner at Abu Ghraib undergoing torture by U.S. soldiers. Photograph taken by Lyndee England and published in *Torture and Truth: America, Abu Ghraib, and the War on Terror* by Mark Danner. (New York; New York Review; 2004).

For their first in class (or online) assignment, I bring up an image of the atomic bomb, and we discuss the denotative and connotative meaning of this image, its symbolism, and the ways in which these meanings alter depending upon its cultural, historical, and social context. As seen in fig. 30, the dark pillar of smoke emerges from below as an organic shape resembling a mushroom reaches into the sky like a determined fist.

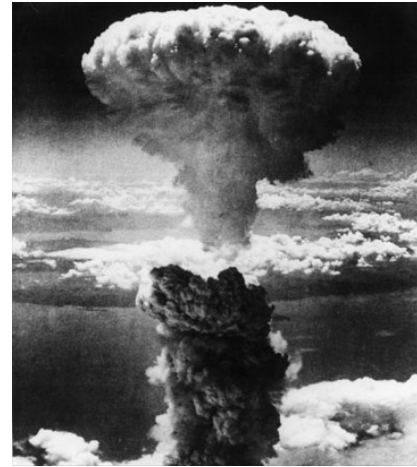


Fig. 30. Aerial view of the atom bomb. Photographed by the U.S. government. (*Wikipedia*; Wikipedia Foundation; 6 Aug. 1945; Web; 1 Aug. 2016).

Denotatively, most viewers understand the literal context of the image immediately: The aerial shot of the atomic bomb taken on August 6th, 1945 in Hiroshima, Japan. Connotatively, its meaning varies depending upon the viewer and context. For many Americans, the mushroom cloud symbolizes victory over the Japanese empire, marking the end of World War II. The connotative meaning shifts drastically for the Japanese; it is a symbol of brutality, death, destruction—mass murder as a result of technological determinism. The U.S. pilot who captured this moment in time becomes an iconic war photographer by turning an unspeakable act of violence into an exquisite mushroom cloud, which hardly captures the reality of nuclear warfare or the real suffering behind it. As the U.S. army photographer looms high in the sky, far beyond the distant cries of hundreds of thousands of innocent civilians, photographer Yosuke Yamahata frames a dramatically different face of war.

In fig. 31, as we zoom into a small Japanese village, Yamahata captures a scene of rubble and smoke. A dead Bonsai tree and remains of a house linger in the background, cloaked in smoke. No life remains in this place. This place is death. Beneath this image, we zoom in even further as Yamahata captures the corpse of what appears to be a child, her face and body charred



Fig. 31. A small Japanese village. Photographed by Yosuke Yamahata in “Aftermath of the atomic bomb in Hiroshima, Japan.” (*The Memory Exhibition*; Exploratorium; 7 Aug. 1945; Web; 1 Sept. 2016).

beyond recognition (see fig. 32). No voice remains to express the suffering of this child: only the flash of the shutter and aperture can give this child a voice by tracing what violence left behind. Those who died instantly in the blast may have been luckier than those who survived, and one must wonder about the effects of radiation upon the innocent baby seeking comfort in a stranger's arms (see fig. 33). The bloody wound and bandage wrapped around the infant's head provide a focal point. One cannot look but cannot turn away from the frozen image of this nameless victim. The tiny white fingers reach onto the woman's chest, the woman's arm wrapped around the baby as she pulls her into her chest. This is the cost of war. Here, a glimpse of humanity amid ultimate despair begs the question: why did this happen?



Fig. 32. A child's body discover in ruins. Photographed by Yosuke Yamahata in "Aftermath of the atomic bomb in Hiroshima, Japan." (*The Memory Exhibition*; Exploratorium; 7 Aug. 1945; Web; 1 Sept. 2016).



Fig. 33. Nurse caring for wounded infant. Photographed by Yosuke Yamahata in "Aftermath of the atomic bomb in Hiroshima, Japan." (*The Memory Exhibition*; Exploratorium; 7 Aug. 1945; Web; 1 Sept. 2016).

Given its historical relevance, many students can easily relate foundational concepts associated with visual rhetoric, semiotics, and practices of looking to these images. Additionally, the aesthetic qualities of widely reproduced images raise numerous critical questions pertaining to ethics and the reproduction of atrocity photographs. An examination of this image in contrast to Yamahata's photographs exemplifies the precariousness of grievable lives as the media system reveals them. It provides a useful reference point at the beginning of the course to apply basic concepts while offering an alternative perspective they may otherwise not have considered. Moreover, it demonstrates whose lives those in privileged position consider "grievable"—or rather, whose lives

were unworthy of recognition by our media system. Following this activity, I ask students to review these concepts on the course website. In the past, I have given students the option of a Visual Rhetorical Analysis assignment in which they analyze an iconic image of their choosing. They incorporate images and other visual elements into their assignment in order to gain experience creating a multimodal document. This also introduces them to the citation practices necessary for their major research projects.

Media and Propaganda

For their second writing assignment, students read work by Aldous Huxley, Edward Herman and Noam Chomsky, and Magedah Shabo as well as review concepts on [the course website](#). All of the information covered in the previous section applies to an analysis of two types of propaganda: a video compiled on YouTube coincides with a radio rant by Joe Rogan regarding “The American War Machine” and a documentary by Daniel Pappas, *Orwell Rolls in His Grave*. They not only assess these two videos using terminology from the reading material, but they must also evaluate the sources using the same criteria they will implement in the Extended Annotated Bibliography. I provide this information in conjunction with library research processes in order to reinforce the importance of discerning between useful and biased sources. Furthermore, they must take into account the multimodal aspects of these compositions in order to begin thinking about their Multimodal Projects.

In some courses, I elect to cover material specific to World War II propaganda including an assignment about Nazi propaganda and Walt Disney’s propaganda efforts, and the political cartoons of Dr. Seuss. This unit begins with reading material about Joseph Goebbels’ and Adolf Hitler’s different approaches to utilizing the propaganda machine. From this material, students learn about Goebbels’ theory regarding the use of narrative film as a means of subconsciously saturating fascist ideology into the rhetorical culture in comparison to Hitler’s belief in the efficacy of more straightforward documentaries such as Leni Riefenstahl’s *The Triumph of the Will*. From there, we watch various Disney cartoons such as *Education for Death: The Making of the Nazi*. Political cartoons from *Dr. Seuss Goes to War* provide yet another genre of propaganda that illustrates the

dehumanizing propaganda targeting the Japanese in comparison to attacks against Adolf Hitler and Benito Mussolini. In my experience, students are fascinated by the fact that two childhood icons—Walt Disney and Dr. Seuss—distributed propaganda and always makes for a lively discussion. Moreover, the strategic components of each multimodal composition are discussed and later compared to more modern films and cartoons for the purposes of showing *how little has changed* over the last 70 years in terms of these persuasive techniques.

Every once in a while, I will ask students to select a piece of propaganda and write a rhetorical analysis based on concepts we cover in class. (See Propaganda Assignment) This provides students with an opportunity to apply relevant terminology and begin thinking about the multimodal composition processes that underlie visual frames of the dark side.

Viewing the Body in Pain – Framing Atrocity

For a course that brings both linguistic and visual frames of the dark side into the course, I create an assignment in which students must summarize and review Elaine Scarry’s *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World* and Susan Sontag’s “Looking at War” (Part One). Then they are asked to analyze different testimonial genres related to the Holocaust (Part Two). I split the material into two separate assignments so students have time to process complex concepts associated with viewing the body in pain before they apply this knowledge. Incorporating all of this material into one assignment tends to overwhelm students. Next, they are asked to examine three testimonial genres: Cynthia Ozick’s short story “The Shawl” (discussed in chapter 2), Stephen Ambrose’s chapter “Getting to Know the Enemy” from the historical account *Band of Brothers*, and Steven Spielberg’s “Why We Fight” from HBO’s *Band of Brothers*.

Bringing forward terms and concepts from chapter 2 as well as those previously discussed in this chapter, students consider a fictionalized rendering of Easy Company’s experiences during World War compared to an historical account. Spielberg’s series demonstrates first, second, and third-person witnessing as well as a radical constructivist approach to framing history. He bases the series on Ambrose’s book, a second-person

testimony written using the self-sufficient model. Even though each of these testimonies covers the same subject matter, the two can hardly be compared due to the stylistic differences. In terms of examining the linguistic framework, one has to distinguish between the poetics of the text and the audiovisual elements that enhance the performative aspect of the drama. The linguistic includes plot, character, dialogue, and stage direction, whereas the performative includes setting, lighting, costumes, nonverbal communication, sound effects, musical score, etc. The writing informs the performative, so it is important to focus on the way an author develops plot and character based on the dialogue and stage directions.

Visual frames of the dark side span an enormous spectrum, which serve various rhetorical functions. From art to film to photography, each medium is “framed” in a specific way to serve a purpose. The artist paints a mural on a government building to raise awareness or inspire outrage. The atrocity photograph may be used as evidence to ignite change, or it may be used as an apparatus of control. Photographs habitually generate anonymous victims of distant suffering who “need to be liberated” to support foreign policy. News frames create spectacles and use buzzwords, and filmmakers design and compose images in a way that leads the viewer to “fill in the gaps” perceptually by providing a limited amount of information. Rhetors methodically construct these frames to elicit a desired response.

In terms of **propaganda**, film remains an extremely important medium that frequently goes undetected. Propagandists use a sociological scientific approach to instill ideas into a culture through a slow process of saturation. Narrative film has the power to shape the rhetorical culture by reinforcing nationalist, racist, xenophobic, etc. ideologies. For instance, Joseph Goebbels recognized the power of narrative film and used this medium to reinforce the notion that the Aryan race was superior. Those in charge of running the propaganda machine (e.g. Goebbels) have the power to program the masses beginning at a young, impressionable age. The danger lies in the calculated nature of these subliminal messages: most people watch narrative films for entertainment, so one might not suspect the use of persuasive appeals in an action movie.

In contrast, a documentary film uses a more straightforward approach to swaying the audience. The basic assumption of the documentary as a form of testimony is that it is factual and credible (Bordwell and Thompson 338). Most documentaries are compilations and include recorded events, unscripted eyewitness interviews, “shot on the fly,” montages, and archival footage (338). The documentary filmmaker controls camera placement; the types of frames to incorporate into the film; what ideas, people, and events are central to the film; and, the final editing (339). Sometimes, the filmmakers stages events to emphasize a point or s/he shows events out of chronological order, bringing into question the value and reliability of the documentary as a testimonial genre (339).

Bordwell and Thompson propose that narrative film as a formal convention includes various principles: function, similarity and proximity, difference and variation, development, and unity and disunity (66). Each element serves a specific function that contributes to the larger structure or system. Plot, character, dialogue, lighting, costume, set design, special effects, make up, sound—all of these stylistic elements work in tandem to shape a cohesive narrative (66-70). For example, in “Why We Fight?” what is the purpose of the woman in red? What role does she play in revealing something significant about Captain Nixon and his ongoing conflict? Here we have a nameless character, and yet there is an extremely important function to her presence in the film. The shots taken in her home serve a purpose: what is Nixon doing there? What is the smashing of the picture intended to convey? Why the use of the color red? What does the silent gaze shared by Nixon and the woman in red emphasize? Why use a shot of a dog barking as Nixon walks out the door? How do these rhetorical decisions move the narrative forward?

The use of mirrors also serves an important function. The first time viewers see Captain Nixon in the flashback, the cinematographer hones in on Vat 69, then follows him as he pours himself a drink and stares at himself in the mirror. His reflection in the shot may seem arbitrary. However, mirrors serve numerous functions in a film: a mirror can reveal the duplicity of a character such as hidden vanity or malevolence; a mirror can be used to remind characters of the past or snap can function as a "reveal" to help them see who they

really are or who they have become (Robbins par. 1-3). In this instance, what is the function of the mirror?

Another important principle in film, similarity and proximity are “any significant repeated element in a film” which helps to create parallelism (66). When the men of Easy Company walk through the forest prior to the discovery of the concentration camp, the shot parallels the Battle of the Bulge—a particularly harrowing battle sequence in the series. The event occurs in a different episode, but the shot and the dialogue cue the viewer to the previous battle to create tension as the soldiers continue to move through potentially dangerous terrain.

The principle of difference and variation in tonality, texture, direction, speed of movement, and characters is used to prevent a monotonous sequence of shots. A pattern of shots such as ABACADA cues the viewer through repetition but also provides variation (66). In “Why We Fight,” the episode begins where it ends, but it also moves through a



Fig. 34. Still shot the woman in red from “Why We Fight.” Produced by Stephen Spielberg and Tom Hanks. (*Band of Brothers*; DreamWorks; 2001).



Fig.35. Still shot of concentration camp prisoner from “Why We Fight.” Produced by Stephen Spielberg and Tom Hanks. (*Band of Brothers*; DreamWorks; 2001).

sequence of shots that at times focus on the struggles Captain Nixon faces in juxtaposition to **ancillary characters**. The **costumes, make up,** and **setting** include drab, neutral colors which contrast the outfit and lipstick of the woman in red as well as the yellow Star of David on the prisoner’s attire (see fig. 34 and fig. 35). These splashes of color are symbolic and intended to attract the viewer's attention. In terms of character, the unworldly replacement officer Pvt. O’ Keefe contrasts seasoned soldiers Pvt. Lieb Gott and Pvt. Perconte who have become disillusioned by the brutality of war. Major Winters—a decorated war hero who never questions the war effort—contrasts with Captain Nixon, who has lost his faith in the cause.

The development principle refers to the progression of a story (68). Each shot leads us to the next shot in the progression: there is always a beginning, middle, and an end whether the director chooses a linear, circular, or disjointed approach. “Why We Fight” is both circular and linear. As with all of the episodes in the series, testimonies from surviving members of Easy Company precede the credits. The testimonies in this particular episode mirror Ambrose's book: it illustrates the similarities between soldiers fighting on opposite sides of the war. Following the opening credits, the episode begins with a melancholic violin, zooms out to reveal debris and civilians, then segues to a shot of the soldiers standing stoically over the German people. The men stand in a pyramid formation, wearing their uniforms proudly as they stand over the civilian population in the ruins of a small village. We begin and end on this shot for a reason: why might that be?

All of the relationships among elements in a film create the total filmic system, which refers to the principle of unity (70). A film that displays disunity lacks closure by ending the narrative on an ambiguous note. In “Why We Fight,” certain questions are answered whereas others remain uncertain. We know that the war between the U.S. and Germany is over, and Hitler is dead. For the most part, the plot is tight and leaves no loose ends that creates a cohesive, unified narrative. At the same time, the viewers are left to wonder what happened to Captain Nixon following this episode, and the episode fails to mention the ongoing war in Japan. The construction of the narrative involves plot, cause-effect relationships, and temporal-spatial elements. The plot differs from the overall story: it is everything that is visually and audibly available for the audience. “We create the story in our minds on the basis of clues in the plot” (77). The story includes all of the events and characters onscreen as well as inferred events/characters not shown to us. Viewers understand the story based on a sequence of shots that reveal a time line of events. What do we infer about Easy Company and their experiences together based on the information provided in the dialogue?

Regarding cause and effect, characters of the film are the agents (77). Characters embody certain traits and play an important function in terms of driving the narrative

forward through their actions/reactions to events and other characters (78). Even performers in documentaries are “characters” that serve a specific purpose in order to convey a larger narrative. What function does a character such as Captain Nixon serve in terms of communicating the horrors of war? What function do various “characters” in the My Lai documentary play in terms of driving forward the filmmaker’s rhetorical vision?

Based on what viewers see on the screen, they create a sense of time and space in their minds. Time can be chronological and/or indicate duration. According to Bordwell and Thompson, “A film does not just start, it begins” (86). The temporal order of a film uses a sequence of shots to convey transitions



Fig.36. Still shot from *Saving Private Ryan*. Directed by Steven Spielberg. (DreamWorks; 1998).

in time. Flash backs, flash-forwards, and flash sideways are used to create a timeline of events that communicate something about the larger narrative structure. In “Why We Fight,” what is happening at the opening and closing of the episode? How do viewers become aware of the duration of events and movement to different locations based on cues provided by the filmmaker? How much “time” is covered in an hour? How do the testimonies at the beginning of the film enlarge upon this period? A film such as *Saving Private Ryan* begins *in media res* (i.e. in the middle of action) as shown in fig. 36. In PBS’ *American Experience: My Lai* documentary, the film begins with Charlie Company in Hawaii; leads viewers into the events that precipitated the attack at on “Pinkville”; discusses the event; and, sheds light on the short and long term consequences of the events in conjunction with the release of Ron Haeberle’s photographs. There is a clear beginning, middle, and end with various soldiers and journalists providing eyewitness and second hand accounts of events. Both narrative and documentary films rely on *mise-en-scene*, sound, and editing to create a dramatic effect that holds the viewer's attention.

According to Bordwell and Thompson, **realism** is the standard by which all films are evaluated (117). Steven Spielberg's *Saving Private Ryan* has been hailed as the most

realistic war film in cinematic history. Yet, Howard Zinn argues in “Film and History” that Spielberg’s portrayal fails to accurately depict the true horrors of war but rather sensationalizes war and reinforces patriotic and nationalistic ideologies (246). Zinn states: “Any history is a selection of data from an enormous base, with the historian (or filmmaker) deciding what to include and what to omit. Therefore ‘nonfiction’ can be as fictional or more fictional than fiction” (246). In order to make a point, the director of "Why We Fight" focuses specifically on the climatic tension leading up to the discovery and liberation of the concentration camp, but in doing so s/he dramatizes the event in a way that re-presents the testimonies of Easy Company as opposed to using first-person testimony. In comparison, Ambrose provides the testimony of Major Winters in his written historical account: "The memory of starved, dazed men," Winters wrote, "who dropped their eyes and heads when we looked at them through the chain-link fence, in the same manner that a beaten, mistreated dog would cringe, leaves feelings that cannot be described and will never be forgotten. The impact of seeing those people behind that fence left me saying, only to myself, 'Now I know why I am here!'" (105) Regardless of the ways in which these testimonies are "framed," the underlying message remains the same: *This is the true face of war. This is why we fight.*

Cinematography literally means “writing in movement” (Bordwell and Thompson 162). To demonstrate how linguistic and audio/visual elements operate in tandem, the following section provides an overview of understanding the construction of plot in narrative film. This material has been used as part of in-class as well as online discussion. The narrative construction of any film relies heavily on the **plot** in the framing of events using linguistic and audio/visual elements. In “Why We Fight,” the **dialogue** and **plot** shape the characters of Captain Lewis Nixon, Major Dick Winters, and Private Patrick O’Keefe in meaningful ways. Even though these characters are based on actual soldiers, they are still constructed by the poetics of the text (i.e. the script). The writing process precedes filming, and various rhetorical devices operate in tandem to compose a unified narrative.

During the **exposition** of the episode's plot, the writers reveal that the protagonist, Captain Nixon, has developed a drinking problem because of witnessing the horrors of warfare. Major Winters epitomizes the very essence of heroism and leadership, a man who believes unwaveringly in the duty, honor, and loyalty of being a soldier. Pvt. O'Keefe, a replacement, represents the disillusionment of a naïve young soldier thirsty to "see some action." The writers shape characters based on the dialogue they exchange with one another and the progression of the plot.

The **complication** of the **plot** ensues as Capt. Nixon discovers that his wife plans to leave him and take his dog with her. He struggles to find his favorite whiskey in order to ease his psychological suffering, so he begins looting. The writers cleverly incorporate a scene where Nixon breaks into an S.S. officer's home to find whiskey only to be confronted by an older woman in a red dress, presumably the officer's wife. A drawn out silence written into the scripts conveys the tension between these two characters in the present moment in order to mirror Capt. Nixon's troubled relationship with his estranged wife. He glimpses in the foyer to see a dog barking at him, then back at the woman in red who glares back at him. Nixon takes a long, exasperated look at the barking dog as he closes the door behind him. This scene dramatizes the psychological toll of warfare on those who are both directly and indirectly involved in the war.

During **the rising action** of the episode, members of Easy Company set out in armored vehicles to witness the recently-surrendered German troops march through town. The dialogue exchanged amongst Major Winters and Capt. Nixon emphasizes the proud and dignified nature in which the Nazi officers carried themselves, even in surrender. Webster ruminates how he intends to return to college after returning home from the war, then snaps when he sees the herd of German soldiers. "Dragging our asses halfway around the world, interrupting our lives...What the FUCK are we doing here?" This simple line of **dialogue** refers back to the title of the episode: why we fight. The answer looms right around the corner of the narrative.

Shortly thereafter, a group of soldiers walks slowly through a patch of woods. The camera speed slows down as a buzzing sound--an electric fence, perhaps?--creates a sense

of foreboding as the men proceed with caution. The scene cuts to a shot of Pvt. Perconte running through the forest, then a shot of him scurrying through town as he searches frantically for Major Winters. This scene creates **tension** as it leads into the **climax** of the **plot**: discovering a concentration camp with countless emaciated prisoners. The writers construct this scene in a manner that effectively draws out the tension before unveiling the climactic trauma. The moment the gates open and the walk through of the camp begins, the audience witnesses the exact same event firsthand. The visual effects are extremely graphic and effective, but the performative could not exist with the poetics of the text that informed the **framing** of the scene. The writers moved through different scenes to reveal the horrifying living conditions of concentration camp life. At one point, Pvt. O’Keefe sits next to a trench filled with dead bodies as he stares off into space: his romanticized view of war no longer exists.

The **falling action** involves stocking up on bread and water to feed the prisoners only to learn from a medic that the soldiers must lock the prisoners in the camp again in order to prevent them from eating themselves to death. Joseph Liebgott, a member of Easy Company portrayed as Jewish, must translate this order to the newly released prisoners. While the prisoners protest, Liebgott breaks down into sobs; this rhetorical move connects the Americans directly to the Jewish cause and solidifies **empathic identification**.

The **denouement** brings us back to the beginning of the episode. A group of musicians plays Beethoven, German residents work to clean up the demolished remains of their city, and members of Easy Company stand above them in a rhetorical move that illustrates heroism, superiority, righteousness, and a sense of patriotism and nationalistic pride. Capt. Nixon announces, “Hitler’s dead” and comments on how much time they could have saved if he had committed suicide a few years prior. The closing remarks and somber musical selection leaves the audience to ponder the devastating effects of the Holocaust.

In conjunction with the technical and narrative devices used to frame this visual testimony, I ask students to consider the “framing of the frame.” While the film appears to tell the story of “why we fight,” the underlying message gives viewers an obscured viewpoint of the reason the U.S. fought against the Germans. In actuality, the U.S. entered

the war after Japan attacked Pearl Harbor, the last time in U.S. history Congress officially declared war on another nation. The alliance between Japan, Italy, and Germany provoked Hitler to declare war against the U.S. Even though it was evident why we were fighting the Japanese, soldiers were oblivious to the on-going slaughter of Jews by the millions. All they knew was what they were told: “The Germans are bad. Very bad.” (Spielberg & Hanks). In “Why We Fight,” the liberation of the camp focuses mainly on the Jewish prisoners, but other sources state that Dachau’s camp mainly included other “undesirables.” According to the Holocaust Encyclopedia, “Initially the internees were primarily German Communists, Social Democrats, trade unionists, and other political opponents of the Nazi regime. Over time, other groups were also interned at Dachau, such as Jehovah’s Witnesses, Gypsies, homosexuals, as well as ‘asocials’ and repeat criminal offenders” (par. 2). There is no mention of the subsequent massacre of innocent German and Hungarian officers sent to assist with the liberation of the Dachau camps because it would undermine the war effort and paint the Allied forces in a negative light. According to eyewitness Don Ritzenthaler, “The men, who were killed by the American liberators, were completely innocent, but were murdered in cold blood by the Americans who didn’t bother to ask questions before shooting anyone they saw who was not dressed in a prison uniform.” The events in the film are “framed” in such a way that the viewer experiences a sense of patriotism. The subtlety of the “international good guy” theme supports current foreign policy based on the verb tense of the title, which indicates the here and now: “why we fight” as opposed to “why we fought” (Cummings & Cummings). Based on these revelations, I ask students: what might Joseph Goebbels have to say about this film? I also ask students to read Howard Zinn’s piece on “Film and History” so they can gain an alternative perspective from a World War 2 vet who opposes U.S. war efforts. Albeit controversial, these examples illustrate the rich dimensions of visually witnessing the Holocaust through the orchestrated framing of events.

This application is available on [the course website](#) after students complete their writing assignments in order to provide them with an example of how these concepts can be applied to a visual testimony. Many of these concepts are reiterated throughout the duration of the

semester and help them to think about outlining and framing their Research Papers and Multimodal Projects. Additionally, they can begin to think deeply about how all of these rhetorical decisions serve a purpose in order to achieve a desired response from the audience. I ask: What are the underlying goals of the rhetor? How does the rhetor use persuasive appeals, literary devices, and/or visual elements to shape a successful multimodal composition? Asking these questions resides at the heart of rhetorical criticism while simultaneously reminding students to bear in mind ethical composition practices as they move into the final stages of the composing process.

Ethical Considerations of framing Atrocity: My Lai and Metaphor Criticism

On the morning of March 16, 1968 a U.S. military operation took place in the area referred to by officers as “Pinkville,” a small village populated with migrant farmers in North Vietnam. Charlie Company responded to orders given the previous evening to “sanitize” the area under the false pretense that the operation could help them locate the Viet Cong 48th Local Force Battalion (Taylor 122; Olsen & Roberts 16). The raid resulted in the slaughter of approximately 500 unarmed civilians including women, children, infants, and the elderly (*The Winter Soldier Investigation* “Preface”; Olsen & Roberts 18). Bearing Richards’ metaphor criticism in mind, Ron Haerberle’s photographic evidence of the My Lai massacre serves as a *vehicle* for understanding other heinous war crimes—as *tenors*—that occurred during the Vietnam War. This section raises critical questions related to ethics and visual witnessing as it can be applied in the composition classroom by addressing Haerberle's role as a passive observer during what Lifton defines as an “atrocity-producing situation”; immediate and long term impacts of releasing photographic evidence into the rhetorical culture; harmful effects of reproducibility; and the responsibility and response-ability of voyeurs who assume “the power of the gaze.” How, I ask, *ought* we to compose ourselves in response to trauma witnessed?

First, students are given an overview of the incident from readings published by the Vietnam Veterans against the War; Secretary of Defense John Kerry’s testimony before Congress; an article by Robert J. Lifton on bearing witness atrocity-producing situations; and, a handout on ethics. In class, we watch the documentary published on PBS’s *American*

Experience as well as examine an original copy of *LIFE* magazine's coverage. After we have covered this material, students are given a short writing assignment on frames of My Lai: Ethical Considerations of Atrocity-Producing Situations. One of the reasons I chose this topic pertains to the fact that these unconscionable events might never have become known to the world if it were not for the photographic evidence documented by army photographer, Ron Haeberle. Haeberle's visual testimonies captured isolated moments of murder and destruction, shaping audience perceptions in positive and negative lights. Photographic evidence of this particular atrocity serves numerous didactic purposes. It not only serves as a metaphor for other atrocities that occurred during the Vietnam War, it functions as a purposeful historical reference point for understanding the power and consequences of visual witnessing in various other contexts.

The photographic evidence from My Lai serves as a useful starting point for examining the phenomena of visual witnessing in the classroom. Aside from the fact that release of the photographs raised awareness by providing proof American soldiers were committing heinous war crimes abroad, these visual representations of war demonstrate the immediate and long term effects of unleashing such powerful, evocative photographs into the rhetorical culture. What are the problematic effects of reproducing frames of atrocity? What are the responsibilities of photographers who document war crimes? In what ways do frames of war produce harmful effects through the reproducibility of visual rhetoric? What political agendas influence or constrain the reproduction of frames that are inevitably taken out of context? Of what violations might Haeberle be guilty for assuming a position of power and fixing his gaze on victims preparing for death? Finally, in what ways do voyeurs assume the power of the gaze, and what is the response-ability of voyeurs once they witness the trauma of victims? These are some of the questions I raise to students during class and online discussion to prepare them for a Rhetorical Analysis on James Nachtwey's witness photographs (which will be discussed at greater length in chapter 4).

Moreover, it is purposeful to analyze the ways in which Haeberle's photographs represent positive and negative aspects of war propaganda. By applying I. A. Richards' metaphor criticism to *Life* magazine's depiction of My Lai, students can understand the

complicated effects of war propaganda in other historical contexts. On the one hand, the reproduction of the My Lai photographs raised awareness and may have helped put an end to disastrous U.S. foreign policy. On the other, the framing of nameless ethnic “Others” as part of a politically charged campaign dehumanizes, objectifies, and exploits. “Photographs of the victims of war are themselves a species of rhetoric. They reiterate. They simplify. They agitate. They create the illusion of consensus” (Sontag). The My Lai massacre remains significant because it reflects war crimes that occur on a daily basis, and currently images of war are reproduced by profit-driven, politically biased news media sources that distract and control the perceptions of the masses. Rather than focus on the importance of raising awareness regarding the ‘truth’ behind war in order to help bring unnecessary wars to an end, we must ponder whether the reproduction of war photos has the potential to reinforce misguided notions of nationalism as well as instill racist perceptions toward oppressed “Others.” Richards’ interpretation of metaphor criticism shows the ways in which photographic evidence of tortured Vietnamese men, women and children represent *a metaphorical tenor*, and colonialism represents the *metaphorical vehicle* to reinforce dominant/subordinate power relations. In order to emphasize these points, students compare the reproduction of these photographs to the controversial release of photographs taken of the Abu Ghraib prisoners. From here, students have the option of either analyzing the framing of the photographs presented in *LIFE* magazine or PBS’s *My Lai* documentary. This exercise coincides with their work on the storyboard in order to get students thinking about the way linguistic and visual elements operate together to frame a historical testimony.

Problems of reproducibility: revisiting images from the beginning of the semester

For their final short writing assignment, students are asked to review terms/concepts examined throughout the semester, read Patrick Hagopian’s “Vietnam as a Locus of Memory,” and to review the following post (which is available [the course website](#)) in order to revisit the photographs they analyzed for their very first writing assignment and reflect upon what they have learned throughout the duration of the semester (see slides 32-37). Additional recommended reading material offered to students includes “See No Evil” from

James Loewen's *Lies My Teacher Told Me* and an excerpt on "Torture and the Ethics of Photography" from Judith Butler's *Frames of War*.

One of the major discrepancies regarding war photography concerns the framing of images that focus on victims of war who are dehumanized and objectified by both the photographer's and the viewer's gaze. The denotative interpretation of Haeberle's photograph in fig. 37 includes a group of women and children



Fig. 37. Excerpt from *LIFE* magazine. Photograph taken by Ron Haeberle in "The Massacre at Mylai." (5 Dec. 1969).

huddled together in terror, one woman's face twisted in anguish as a young girl desperately clings to her mother for protection. The image by itself is alarming, but the truly problematic aspect of this picture pertains not to what the frames of the photograph encapsulate, but rather what resides beyond the frame of this shot. "To photograph is to frame, and to frame is to exclude" (Sontag, "Looking at War" 90). Without proper historical contextualization, each viewer's interpretation becomes distorted by the myths constructed through the composition of symbols. As Roland Barthes describes, myth is "a mode of signification, a form...Myth is not defined by the object of its message, but by the way it utters this message" (51). The viewer might gaze upon this image and connote the horror of witnessing some form of tragedy commonly associated with warfare, but information that resides outside of the frame becomes lost, the meaning improperly decoded. How could a viewer who is far removed from this incident by time and space know that this photograph was shot just moments before these women and children were executed? Or that the woman in the foreground is being restrained as she attempts to protect her daughter from being sexually violated by a group of soldiers? Although it appears to be a candid photograph, as most historical war photographs are inaccurately assumed to

be, the soldiers directed Haeberle to compose this image as part of a spectacle of torture (Bilton and Sims 133).

According to Haeberle's testimony, the victims were taunted, beaten and sexually violated during this public display as if these women and children were toys to be used and abused for the soldiers' amusement (133). The question that has plagued so many viewers through the years is: how could these young men, trained to honor their country by serving and protecting others, commit such horrendous war crimes? Based on the testimonies of *Vietnam Veterans against the War*, the U.S. military trains soldiers to hate the faceless enemy—a racialized, subhuman object undeserving of their mercy. Soldiers were trained through repeated exposure to images of scalping, maiming and torture, to perceive the violation of bodies as fun and enjoyable. Cpl. John Geyman states, "So what, they're just gooks, they're not people. It doesn't make any difference what you do to them; they're not human... This is the thing built into you... If you're told to kill, you kill. It's just to be a machine" (as cited in *The Winter Soldier Investigation* 5). Through this process of "Othering," and the ridicule directed toward the Geneva Convention "rules" by superior officers, is it any wonder these young men, dragged halfway around the world to a foreign terrain and immersed in uncontrollable, dire circumstances might come to hate the enemy to such an extent that they become unhinged? Does Haeberle's framing of these women, in effect, shape the viewer's perception of racial "Otherness"?

Sontag argues, "The account of war's cruelties is constructed as an assault on the sensibility of the viewer" (90). The framing of events is typically deceptive and/or intended to elicit the desired emotional response from the spectator, raising the question of ethics on the part of war photographers, publishers, and the media. The central subjects in the foreground of the frame illustrates the grouping of ethnic others whose names remain unknown. Their untold stories linger within the confines of this frozen image and reflect the dehumanization of Vietnamese women and children, not only during this mission, but also during the war in general. It seems commendable for Haeberle to come forward with his photographic evidence, yet even as this framing encapsulates this objectification, does it not perpetuate the "Othering" that occurs on the part of the viewer? In an attempt to

rectify the harm committed through the reproduction of these images, does it not produce further damage by reinforcing racism through these depictions?

Problems with war photography are varying. One of the primary concerns of image repetition relates to the desensitization of voyeurs who begin to regard violent photographs as “callous” (Sontag, *Regarding the Pain...* 105). “An image is drained of its force by the way it is used, where and how often it is seen” (105). When viewers become overexposed, they lose interest, and media stations search for new ways of engaging consumers. The reproduction of popular war photos on posters, books, in films and on web site galleries causes viewers to forget the immediate impact of the image, and the loss of intensity leads to apathy.

Haeberle’s famous image of “Massacred Civilians on a Path at My Lai” was reproduced on a presidential campaign poster protesting Lyndon B. Johnson’s second term in office in 1972. As seen in fig. 38, it queries: “And babies?” to the incredulous response: “And babies.”



According to Barthes, linguistic elements direct the viewer to interpret the visual elements in a certain way. These simple words transform the photograph into a political message that ignores the complexity of events that precipitated this unfortunate incident. Judith Butler argues that new meanings arise each time a frame breaks away from its context and transcends time and space. Similarly, Patrick Hagopian postulates that certain photographs achieve “new layers of meaning” over time and that “the photographic act is mirrored to infinity with each new publication and each new viewing” (202).

Fig. 38. Reproduction of the My Lai Path. Poster created by Art Workers Coalition in 1970 and featured in “Artists and the My Lai Massacre” by Mark Vallen. (*Art for a Change: Events, Theory, Commentary*; Web; 6 April 2016).

On the *Peers Commission Report*, the publishers use one of the most widely-produced images on the cover of the book along with linguistic elements that draw attention to the question of whether the massacre and the top-down cover up by military leaders violated international codes of warfare (see fig. 39). The query “Beyond the Reach of the Law?” in juxtaposition to the black and white images of the women and children connotes that a conspiracy occurred and a discrepancy does, in fact, exist. Yet, the real event and real people involved are obscured; therefore, the realness of the photograph alters and distorts its meaning until the “Truth” dissipates entirely.

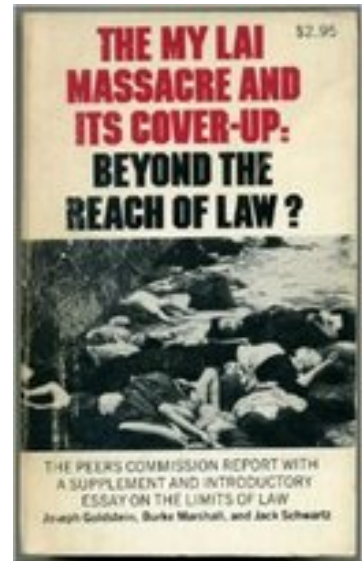


Fig. 39. The My Lai Path reproduced by the Peers Commission (United States Department of the Army; 1976).

In contrast, the reproduced image in fig. 40 uses satire and parody to criticize *FOX News'* frequent manipulation of media messages to perpetuate conservative views. The heading reads: Great Moments In ‘What If’ Faux News History. The reference to “Major Powell” connotes that the snapshot of dead “Viet Cong insurgents”



Fig. 40. Meme of Haeberle’s My Lai Path photograph. (Photobucket; 2016; Web; 1 Aug. 2016).

symbolizes modern day terrorists in the Middle East. Rather than the “Terrorist Alert” commonly associated with the Bush administration, the image uses “Domino Alert” as a parallelism to Lyndon B. Johnson’s fear tactic for justifying military action. “Communism” in this sense is intended to refer to Iraqis, implying that the enemy is an irrational, savage ‘other’ who must be destroyed for the sake of making the world safe for democracy. The reproduction adeptly illustrates the manner in which history repeats

itself because of poorly executed foreign policy by corrupt administrations. Viewers must be alert to and critical of the ways in which reproductions such as this are problematic.

Serious problems arise through the repeated reproduction of Haeberle's photographs. For one, war photography freezes the victims' trauma, resonating in the minds' of viewers in a manner that symbolizes the event quite differently from its 'true' meaning. In addition, mass-produced images of trauma create generic depictions of nameless victims who cannot speak for themselves. Another problem pertains to the political divide perpetuated through the reproduction of these images. Rather than combining forces, the right-wing conservatives argued that the massacre was justifiable based on the nature of guerilla warfare and slandered those who released the photos. In opposition, left-wing liberals incited divisive debate over other horrors of war not being discussed due to government deception and censorship. Domestically, the debate created further animosity between both parties as people in other countries came to view all Americans as monsters even though most Americans came to perceive the massacre as appalling and unacceptable. One thing is certain: the My Lai incident forever tarnished the virtue of the U.S. military.

There is no doubt that Haeberle's photographs have endured over time. The images illustrated in this analysis demonstrate the power of visual rhetoric over the use of oral testimony alone. The immediate impact influenced perceptions to the extent that it shifted public opinion and, ultimately, changed the course of history. As Sontag emphasizes, one of the most significant functions of war photography is that it mediates our knowledge of war by revealing the clandestine ("Looking at War 87). The purpose of photography is to help those who have never experienced war understand it, and to create an impact on viewers that will, ideally, generate positive action for the sake of innocent parties.

The notion that United States' foreign policy could be responsible for the mass murder of innocent civilians during any war remains a contentious topic of discussion. When it comes to the pain and suffering of others in regions far removed from American soil, why should the population care if we can stop war? Is there a point to war photography? I raise these questions are raised in class in order to bring forward concepts from the previous discussions and assignments as we ponder why an instant in traumatic history such as the

My Lai massacre still matters today. Moreover, I intend it as a final illumination for students to ruminate the significance of visual witnessing.

Toward a Liberatory Pedagogy

How do we avoid moral presumptions and create a classroom climate conducive to engaged discussion on controversial and potentially offensive issues? What are the politics of looking in the classroom, and how should we negotiate these issues as instructors? At the onset of the semester, I provide a disclaimer and explain the nature of the course theme on the very first day of class in order to prepare students for the graphic nature of course content. I convey to them that this course may challenge delicate sensibilities but encourage them to keep an open mind and try to understand the importance of taking on different perspectives. Furthermore, I make a case for why it is important to get out of their comfort zones and think about issues from which we are far removed in order to expand their modes of thinking. This is a crucial part of the college classroom experience, and it is okay to feel a wide range of emotions when confronting these grave matters. Due to the dark nature of the course content, I make a concerted effort to incorporate activities and satirical videos that break the tension in class. In an online forum, however, this is much more difficult to accomplish; therefore it is helpful to have regular online discussions where students can interact with one another and pose questions to create a sense of community that becomes lost without face-to-face interactions.

Much of the literature written in the field of media criticism discredits the aim of war photography. Yet at the same time, most of these authors are anti-war. War photography is, by its very nature, “anti-war”—so would it not stand to reason that some of these critics should support the reproduction of war photography? Truthfully, one is hard pressed to find anything written about the subject in academic literature that does not take a left-leaning perspective, which some students find frustrating. Although these sources offer valid critiques of the problems associated with reproducing images of violence, there are alternative viewpoints worthy of discussion. It is important to encourage students to remain open-minded when reviewing the literature and to find at least one “take away” from the material as well as offer a fair criticism of it. Sometimes students are afraid to engage with

the material because they feel compelled to agree with the authors. I try to affirm that students will not be penalized for expressing a contradictory viewpoint from the literature or asking controversial questions. By assigning the task of summarizing and analyzing the material as well as raising critical thinking questions, I intend to give them some “breathing room” for openly expressing their ideas while demonstrating active reading. This interactive approach to class discussion is further intended to develop a positive rapport with students by encouraging “spirited debate.”

Even though we look through the “lens” of visual witnessing using different filters, it remains important to remind students of beneficial aspects associated with visual witnessing. For one, there would be no voice for the deceased without photographic evidence. As James Nachtwey urges in the documentary *War Photographer*, some of these people *want* their stories to be told. The impact of visual media yields some positive results, and these should be a part of the conversation in the classroom. Reparations, truth-seeking, justice—these are noble causes. Yes, atrocity photographs are representations of truth. Yes, these images have the potential to rip the personhood from the subject, particularly nameless victims who can offer no other narrative than that which resides within the confines of the “frame.” Nevertheless, what are the costs of looking away?

Conclusion

“Whether and how we respond to the suffering of others, how we formulate moral criticisms, how we articulate political analyses depends upon a certain field of perceptible reality having been established” (Butler 64). One of the paradoxes to a pedagogy of witnessing pertains to the framework from which I must operate as a researcher and a teacher. The challenge is trying to figure out the best way to provide a comprehensive overview of visual witnessing that complements the Research Paper and Multimodal Project in meaningful ways without overstepping any moral boundaries. “To lead a child” is one thing, but to indoctrinate students is an abuse of power. I feel that it is my role to act as a facilitator of knowledge by providing students with a wide range of material and giving them the opportunity to come to their own conclusions as they practice the craft of rhetoric

and argument. A course that emphasizes visual witnessing supports a liberatory pedagogy because it encourages ethical composition practices through a process of shared suffering. By keeping the content of the material “distant” using historical examples, students are able to make important connections to current issues that may be too sensitive to address directly. (This recommendation came directly from the brilliant Mary Louise Pratt when I asked her advice on the best way to approach dark topics with young, inexperienced students.)

War photographers, artists, and filmmakers alike bear witness to traumatic experience as visual rhetors who compose their narratives for an intended audience. Imagery helps victims *become alive* through “the making of the world”—a crucial aspect of “working through” the pain of trauma. “Working through” pain involves a purging process, and yet language escapes us when it comes to expressing traumatic experience. Some forms of visual testimony provide victims with a creative outlet and serve a therapeutic purpose, whereas others serve as firsthand evidence that bring injustices to light. All of these testimonial genres demonstrate the possibilities for visual witnessing to alter rhetorical culture and help those who cannot speak find a voice.

So what does visual witnessing ultimately require in order to “go beyond” recognition? *Empathic identification*. Consider the enigmatic condition of *pain asymbolia*. **Pain asymbolia** occurs when severe trauma to the brain produces lesions in the insular cortex that results in an inability for the afflicted to experience the discomfort of physical pain; this occurs due to the brain’s failure to send pain signals throughout the central nervous system (Wegener & Jacobs 1847). A significant contributing factor to the way in which we develop empathy stems directly from the manner in which our central nervous system responds to external pain signals. In theory, someone born with pain asymbolia would lack an ability to empathize because s/he can never understand what pain *is*. In order to recognize pain, we must engage in active listening, and active listening requires empathy; to empathize with suffering one must have some knowledge of or experience with pain.

Despite pain’s inexpressibility through language, visual frames provides viewers with an ontological experience that linguistic testimonies resist. Viewing pain creates a

neurological response based on the memory of experiencing pain, thus making empathy possible. **Empathic listening**, as demonstrated by the Chinese symbol for “listen,” involves multiple sensory perceptions (see fig. 41). It is not enough to hear the words or that we see pain: we must “see” and “hear” with our hearts and minds as well. According to Scarry, justice entails a prolonged process of: vision, empathy, active listening, intervention, and change. Likewise, Oliver argues witnessing must extend beyond recognition: by seeing, we empathize and from there we are able to *actively* listen and make strides toward effective change, however slow and incremental.

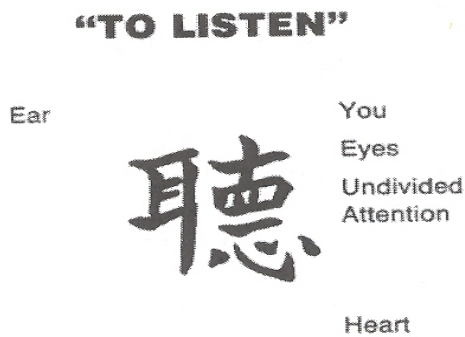


Fig.41. Chinese symbol for “active listening.” (U.S. Department of State; Web. 24 Apr. 2017).

Scarry’s work creates a dialogue concerning physical pain and human sentience (i.e. awareness) including 1) the ways in which pain become visible 2) the ways in which pain ceases to be visible to us 3) the ways in which we make ourselves available to one another through verbal and material artifacts (e.g. multimodal composition). The infliction of pain upon the body and its expression directly mirrors what Scarry refers to as the “unmaking” and “making” of the world as well as the tension between “seeing” and “saying” that Peters illuminates. The “seeing”—i.e. ontological witnessing—causes the “unmaking” of the world whereas “saying”—i.e. bearing witnessing, creation, expression—results in the “making” of the world. It is precisely the “making of the world” through multimodal practices that I focus upon in the next chapter.

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Chapter 4

Rhetorical Witnessing and Multimodal Composition: Responsibility, Response-Ability, and Working through Trauma

Introduction

As an instructor of rhetoric and **multimodal composition** (i.e. linguistic, aural, gestural, spatial, and visual communication), it has been my experience that challenging students to explore the dark side via witnessing stimulates student work in provocative ways. One of my goals as both a teacher and a researcher entails exploring ethical aspects of classroom instruction by focusing not only on what it means to be human but what it means to be alive in light of recognizing the suffering of others and responding to it responsibly and response-ably. Part of this requires showing students that their voices have the power to shape our rhetorical culture in meaningful ways by teaching them how to become response-able composers in the digital realm. Further, it is not enough for students to recognize the suffering of others as these are “framed” by speakers, writers, and photographers, and it is not enough that they already have agency. What matters is what students *do* with their agency; they have a *choice* to apply their knowledge and skills ethically in order to produce positive change for the common good—but how can this be done? Can it be accomplished in the multimodal classroom?

Human beings are visceral creatures who respond visually and kinesthetically to stimuli. When teaching a course emphasizing multimodal communication, it is essential to incorporate relevant, thought-provoking material for the purpose of inspiring the composition process, whether this reflects writing, art, filmmaking, creating a blog, etc. Theoretically, students form lines that leave a “trail” when they compose. From a more pragmatic standpoint, students think critically about important topics and acquire knowledge as they compose. An exceptional teacher constantly strives to find ways to ‘move’ (in a Burkean sense) his or her students into producing knowledge. My aim is to explore the possibilities for creating an embodied view of the world in the multimodal

classroom and the importance of ethical, response-able composition practices by applying a pedagogy of witnessing. This chapter will focus on responsibility and response-ability as it relates to multimodal communication. Whereas the previous chapter emphasized the “seeing” aspect of witnessing, this chapter emphasizes the “saying” aspect of bearing witness through creative expression. First, I will describe the exigency for bearing witness through writing, art, and, more specifically, multimodal composition. Then, I will examine responsibility and response-ability in terms of rhetorical agency, ethics, sharing suffering, and embodied experience. To this end, I will examine the theoretical and practical application of these concepts in the multimodal classroom by addressing the work of war photographer James Nachtwey and ways for students to engage with his work as second/third-person witnesses.

I

The Exigency for Bearing Witness through Creative Expression

Human existence is wrought with chaos and suffering. As Lyn Hejinian’s poem remarks, “The settling-in that we’re describing is a preliminary to being blown up” (106). In the wake of ongoing crises and seeming unwavering pain in this world, it is crucial for humans to work through their pain. From writing to drawing to composing a song, human beings creatively express themselves using tools as an extension of the self. Performative practices allow us to use our minds, bodies, and voices to express our suffering through dancing, singing, acting, playing an instrument—countless artistic modes across cultures are explored for the sole purpose of healing the self and collectively sharing lived experience. This section will look specifically at writing and art as significant testimonial genres through which we bear witness to trauma.

Various modes of creative expression remain central to the rhetorical culture because “art provides a foundation for human dignity” (Scarry 189). Literature, art, music, and film serve a didactic purpose and help audiences imagine a world of experience that exists far beyond their scope. From the time we are children, we are told parables and fables that teach us important life lessons about how to make the right choices and be a good person—

“altruism in poetry” (Hejinian 161). There is a notable link between aesthetics and ethics, for the arts teach us about beauty as well as provide uncensored political and social commentary. Our use of symbols to express ourselves is, in part, what gives us our humanness. According to Article 27 of the United Nations’ Universal Declaration of Human Rights, artistic expression is a basic human right. Representations of human suffering help to produce social relations and new kinds of empathy and compassion with the aim of progress. In “The Animal Who Writes,” Marilyn Cooper refers to writing as an embodied, enworlded practice through which we are constantly “becoming”—a “mode of making” wherein we attempt to create order out of chaos (1-2). The traces we leave behind through various testimonies make up the history of the world; we are recording our very existence and have the power to frame it for benevolent purposes. So why *not* write?

In “Why Write?” Sartre distinguishes writing from music and art as modes of expression because *only* writing is a signifying practice. He argues that if you are presented with a drawing of an object—say, for instance, a heart wrapped in barbed wire as shown in fig. 42—you will not perceive this object as a symbol unless it is supported by a linguistic referent. The drawing is just an idea of a broken heart or a feeling of anguish that does not exist in this moment except within the strokes of each chalk mark. It is an imaginary heart, not a sign of a heart. Language transforms this image into a symbol; therefore, it is not a symbol without language to guide it. The viewer can make of the drawing anything he or she wants. What does the title “Bleeding Love 1?” lend to the meaning of the image? How does meaning expand when viewing the image of “Bleeding Love 2?” What does the heart represent, as a symbol, upon viewing a second image in the sequence? While it is true that colors and tones evoke emotions, these



Fig. 42. Charcoal drawing entitled “Bleeding Love 1.” Drawing by Lindsay Hingst (2013).

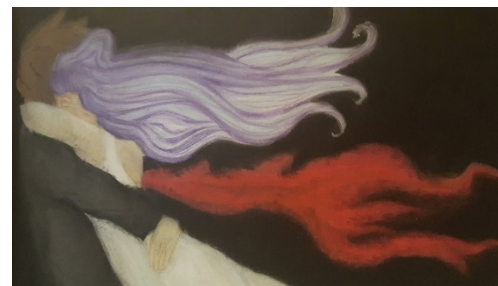


Fig. 43. Charcoal drawing entitled “Bleeding Love 2.” Drawing by Lindsay Hingst (2014).

elements need language to be considered a signifying practice. Likewise, the melody of a song by itself only signifies meaning when lyrics are associated with it. According to Sartre, this is what makes writing a unique form of expression.

Artistic expression occurs through multiple modes of communication (i.e. **multimodality**) and is integral to human existence and experience. Even as I draw, I am thinking (thereby referring to the linguistic structure of which my psyche is comprised), and so even if it is a visual mode of communication, it is still working in tandem with language. (These notions lie at the root of semiotic-materiality and actor-network theory, which I will briefly touch upon later in the chapter.) What I am thinking and feeling is part of the composition process as I work through a trauma to create a visual narrative. Artistic expression occurs in countless media and serves therapeutic purposes from which victims of trauma undoubtedly benefit.

From a philosophical standpoint, an artist-writer breathes life into an idea and makes something tangible using tools (brain-arm-hand-tool-surface). Composing is “movement,” the very “meshwork” of the artist-writer’s life (these concepts will be discussed in section II). Since the dawn of human existence, people across all regions of the world have conveyed the extent of their suffering through creative expression in art, music, and literature. The psychoanalytical dimension of rhetoric is integral to witnessing. We cannot extract our traumatic experience from the craft of the encoded message because our subjectivity is always a part of its framing. For the witness of trauma, composing serves a therapeutic purpose. **Art therapy**, for example, involves a process of healing the psychological pain through creative expression. “It is about connecting with, accepting, communicating and acting from a deep, personal level” (Wallace 1). Art therapy allows creators to reconnect with the self by processing traumatic memories and complex feelings; it functions as a mode of making wherein witnesses reflect upon and learn from painful experiences. Making something real out of deep-laden pain is a restorative practice for trauma victims. “When you can imagine, you begin to create. And when you begin to create you realize that you can create a world that you prefer to live in, rather than a world you’re

suffering in” (Okri). The next section will examine multimodal composition to expand upon the exigency for creative expression and “working through” trauma.

Multimodal Composition

As Cynthia Selfe describes in “The Movement of Air, the Breath of Meaning: Aurality and Multimodal Composing,” “The history of writing in U.S. composition instruction, as well as its contemporary legacy, functions to limit our professional understanding of composing as a multimodal rhetorical activity and deprive students of valuable semiotic resources for meaning-making” (617). Incorporating multiple modes of communication into the composition classroom is a matter of increasing importance. According to the National Council of Teachers of English, multimodal communication allows students to express ideas and invent meaning in creative ways. It also allows teachers the ability to incorporate multiple modes of communication in the classroom that broaden students’ knowledge in “art, music, movement, and drama”—studies that are often reserved for students from privileged backgrounds. Hawisher and Selfe argue that reading, writing, and communicating in a digital realm has become essential not only for academic success, but for succeeding in the work place (642-3). In a competitive job market, students need to acquire a variety of practical skills that can transfer over from the academy to the professional world, for “if they cannot design, author, analyze, and interpret material on the Web and in other digital environments—they may be incapable of functioning effectively as literate citizens” (642). Literacy remains a requirement not only for economic success, but also for the ability to interact in a variety of social spheres as well as engaging in deliberative discourse.

In “Thinking about Multimodality,” Takayoshi and Selfe argue that conventional writing assignments have become increasingly irrelevant in a digital era that requires composition teachers to incorporate assignments into their course that will allow students to use various modes of communication (1-2). “The inadequacy of texts—and composition instruction—that employs only one primary semiotic channel” is no longer appropriate in a technological era (2). The immediacy of information in the digital realm requires students to learn meaning-making using textual and visual elements. “We have a responsibility to

ensure our students become comfortable and competent with multimodal literacy practices...If we fail to expand our understandings of literacy and rhetorical considerations to incorporate digital composing practices...‘we also run the risk of our curriculum holding declining relevance for students’” (Shepard 129; Selfe 55).

Teachers of multimodal communication can provide students with a variety of invaluable learning experiences. By assigning multimodal projects that require multiple layers of communication, students can collaborate and create meaningful projects they can take with them at the end of the semester. For instance, students can gain first-hand experience with newer technologies by creating teaching manuals for different media of communication (e.g. Prezi). Working collaboratively, they can gather the necessary information and compile it into a simple step-by-step handout that is then presented to the class—emphasizing written, spoken, and visual communication. Additionally, students can analyze multimodal websites to gain an understanding of the ways in which visual and linguistic elements operate in tandem to serve a rhetorical purpose. Finally, I assign a Multimodal Project which is based on their major Research Paper (see Appendix for sample assignments). Students then present their projects in a formal presentation at the end of the semester, building upon their oral communication skills (and hopefully, their confidence).

In the online classroom, these projects present greater challenges. As Mary Hocks expounds in “Understanding Visual Rhetoric,” online composition “involves the intertwining of production, interaction, and publication” that forces students to be cognizant of the rhetorical dimensions they implement into every assignment (631). The best way to teach students the ways in which visual elements operate simultaneously with verbal elements is to design the class accordingly (631). The class design itself must take on a multimodal format to illustrate to students not only what “multimodality” means, but ways in which it can be applied in a digital environment. The layout of various handouts (e.g. syllabus) should be thoughtfully designed as well as the PowerPoint lectures, videos, [websites](#), etc. implemented into the course, which is precisely what I do for my courses. This can be a rather time-consuming endeavor. However, when teachers challenge

themselves to learn these technologies, they are better able to assist students when questions arise pertaining to their projects. As Jennifer Sheppard informs readers in “The Rhetorical Work of Multimedia Production Practices: It’s More than Just Technical Skill,” teachers should “Support students in learning to utilize these technologies by providing resources, tutorials, and/or guest presenters, as well as having realistic expectations for final projects” (128).

Although these projects may be daunting and time-consuming, students find these “refreshing,” and “engaging” as they push themselves above and beyond the expectations of the assignment to produce meaningful work while learning useful, practical skills (Takayoshi and Selfe 4). Furthermore, “People can exert their own powerful agency in, around, and through digital literacies” (Hawisher and Selfe 644). Through “hypertextual medium,” students can create interactive digital media projects such as web sites, blogs, podcasts, Prezi presentations, YouTube videos, Tumblr sites, or self-running narrated PowerPoints to respond to a specific rhetorical situation and meet the needs of their audience (Hocks 633). Not only does this provide students with an opportunity to convey meaning using verbal and visual elements, they can interact with their audience by creating discussion forums or ‘comments’ sections on their sites. If students “go beyond formal innovation to help audiences take more conscious responsibility for making meaning out the text,” they “can experience the pleasures of agency and awareness” (633).

Teaching multimodal composition requires two factors: rhetorical criticism and text production. By implementing relevant digital technologies into the multimodal composition course, instructors “engage students in a multisensory experience and active construction of knowledge.” For example, *VII* is an activist website I refer to in class; it is designed by influential photographers and journalists who work to shed light on matters of global concern. By asking students to examine the audience, context, and purpose of textual and audio/visual elements incorporated into the site, they are not only able to think critically about the function and efficacy of design elements, they are exposed to important subjects that expand their knowledge. This also teaches them to think critically about their own projects and come up with innovative ways of responding to assignments. “The

‘shaping’ of resources gives students’ work social and political impact and allows them to learn how to represent new forms of knowledge” (644).

From here, we will turn to philosophies related to rhetorical agency and ethics. What is rhetorical agency? What does it mean to have agency? In what ways do these notions relate to ethics? How does the composition process reflect extensions of the self? Does multimodal composition have the power to alter rhetorical culture? This next section explores some of these relevant, complex questions. Although many are not directly discussed with students, these concepts undergird my teaching philosophy and the ways I integrate various source material into the course to support theory (witnessing) and praxis (multimodal communication).

II

Responsibility and Response-Ability in Multimodal Composition

Rhetorical Agency

Marilyn Cooper defines **agency** as: “The process through which beings create meaning through acting in the world and changing their structure in response to the perceived consequences of their actions.” (1-2). Cooper’s work illustrates that inextricable nature of agency (response-ability) and responsibility in writing. As an “enworlded” practice, the writer has the power to be an agent of change; Cooper’s theory expounds upon this notion of agency by examining the deeper complexity of writing as well as the responsibility of the writer by proposing that the act of writing is enmeshed with a series of interrelated systems within our bodies as well as our “surround” (2). In this way, she emphasizes that writing is *more* than just an act that gives humans access to reality through rationality. Rationality is never separate from our experiences and emotions, and our on-going selves impact the products of our knowledge (i.e. embodiment). **Response-ability** refers specifically to agency and power, for it denotes our ability to recognize trauma and respond to it as empowered individuals. **Responsibility** is used interchangeably with “ethics,” a requirement for truly understanding the pain of others. According to Scarry, the language of agency involves one of three things: 1) to express one’s own pain 2) to express someone

else's pain 3) to imagine someone else's pain (17). Ensler ruminates, "To allow another's pain to 'enter us forces us to examine our own values, insists that we be responsible for others, compels us to act'" (as cited in Oliver 206). To read about or view suffering and then write about it, we expand upon our "humanness" as knowledgeable, thinking, compassionate beings. It is through the rhetorical culture that we experience rhetorical witnessing and are enabled to recognize suffering and do something about it.

To expound, Greer claims the notion of agency has sociological and technological implications. Greer defines **agency** as "a process" whereby **rhetorical agency** "is the capacity to influence the form and shape of a rhetorical culture" which can be "shaped both in a material sense and a sociological sense." Agency is not something that we acquire but rather something we already have as well as something that constantly affects us. Human beings exist as both actors and shapers who are acted upon and shaped by their rhetorical cultures (which include written, oral and visual modes of communication). Greer claims that we do not have a choice when it comes to whether or not we have agency, but we do have a choice in terms of what we *do* with our agency. Scholar Carmen Werder problematizes references to power and authority in light of agency and expresses urgency for professional ethics in the classroom. It is important to teach students that they already have agency and that it is not something that they are given by teachers. The idea that agency entails teachers empowering students falsely assumes that teachers have power to give in the first place, and students come into the classroom in powerless positions. Rather than adopting positions of dominance, instructors should focus on de-centralizing power and engage in more open and cooperative processes.

Donna Haraway's research in *When Species Meet* examines the ways in which humans live with objects as well as the ways in which we live our lives through our work. She argues that one's work makes up one's life, and humans become entangled within the relationships that shape their lives. We are constantly "becoming" as a result of our relationships with technology, and students shape their "becoming" through the writing process. She describes the theory of semiotic materiality, which is directly related to actor-network theory. Actor-network theory demonstrates the power a writer has to shape a

rhetorical culture. This theory can help students realize the significance of their voices; students often forget the power they bestow, and reaching inward to produce a composition not only helps students learn through a process, but if done responsibly, it can enact change. As Greer describes, students are already acted upon and shaped by their rhetorical cultures, but they have to choose the ways in which to act upon and shape the world in which they are immersed. The old adage, “The pen is mightier than the sword” perfectly encapsulates a writer’s ability to influence the social realm through the use of technology (i.e. the pen).

According to **actor-network theory**, objects are treated as part of the social sphere; this theory further examines the relationship between materials and concepts, or **semiotic-materiality**. In Haraway’s chapter on “Able Bodies and Companion Species,” she provides an engaging narrative regarding her father’s relationship with his crutches to illustrate the powerful connection of humans to technology. The presupposition that people are inextricably connected to the inanimate objects they use emphasizes the powerful connection between the writer and his or her pen. We are constantly becoming as a result of our relationships with technology, and students shape their becoming through the writing process. As Haraway and Ingold surmise, a “vital entanglement” of various people and particular materials shape our lives, as we make trails and our pathways cross with the trails of those people and things that happen to come our way. Some of these happenings are by chance whereas others are by choice. If we always have agency, then response-ability is an ethical choice we must always consider.

For some people, creating work is an urgency, a need to purge something deep within—and in order to accomplish this, humans rely on various technologies. A writer relies on her pen, the war photographer his camera, and through each of these interactions with the material, we create meaning. Through the writing process, we engage in movement and leave a trail, “the body always-in-the-making”—the text and the body are one (Haraway 163). Writing involves an intertwining of the mind and body as the student focuses on a particular subject; semiotic materiality emerges from every thought, every feeling one attempts to grasp at that moment in time through the creative process. Every line written reflects the imprint of the student’s soul—even as the writing itself contributes to the soul’s

“becoming”—and so marks the world in a meaningful way. Simultaneously, the writing process imprints upon the student writer, the meshwork of writing shaping her in significant, irreversible ways. The writer’s pen is an extension of the self, and as one’s thoughts become crystallized onto paper, the writer becomes immortalized.

To reinforce the exigency for a pedagogy of witnessing in the multimodal classroom, I will now turn to the ethical imperative for sharing suffering by encouraging students to recognize the interconnectedness of human and non-human lives.

Sharing Suffering: Human and Non-human Lives

Just as a great a threat as war are the threats to our natural environment at the hands of human beings. Life on this planet is in great peril, and scientists have proven that climate change is a reality, not a myth (as purported by our egregiously unqualified president-elect). The poisoning of our water, air, and soil supplies; the depletion of our rainforests; fracking; oil pipelines; mining, hunting endangered species, and all other forms of destruction to the earth are—arguably—the most important issues of our time. And yet, these very critical concerns have been largely ignored by politicians and the media. In the ground-breaking documentary *Racing Extinction*, filmmaker-activists address the possibilities for mass extinction as a result of human beings destroying our natural environment. Humanity is refusing to deal with the problem of mass extinction because it not only lacks the news coverage that it desperately needs, the political right treats science as a liberal conspiracy. The rhetor, Louie Psihoyos, makes a push for filmmakers to play a critical role in bearing witness to crises the human race faces but chooses to ignore. In 100 years, we can lose up to 50% of the species in the world and face mass extinction. The rate of extinction is massive, and yet the media all but ignores the exigency. Taking into account a repository covering a span of 70 years, ornithologists have recorded that many species of birds are now extinct. Frighteningly, the amount of phytoplankton in the oceans has decreased 40% since the 1970s, and if this problem continues at the current rate, the oceans will continue to increase in temperature and cause cataclysmic events world-wide. According to senior scientist Dr. Christopher W. Clark:

There have been five major extinctions in the earth's history of the planet: there's the Ordovician, the Devonian, the Permian, the Triassic-Jurassic, and then the K-T extinction (the one that killed the dinosaurs). It's very difficult to comprehend in deep time 4.6 billion years of earth's history. So if you take, say, the history of the earth and try to squeeze it into a 24 hour clock, where does man fit on that clock? Just a few seconds before midnight. That's it.

Currently, we live in the Anthropocene era—the era wherein humans are leaving their “mark” on the earth. The earth will exist long after the human species dies off, and we need to realize that our actions seriously affect the atmosphere and will inevitably lead to the extinction of the human race. We need to see the world outside of our limited bubbles, for we minimally frame our realities due to the vastness of the world. Most people can hardly conceive of the world outside of themselves without visible evidence—after all, seeing is believing. Documentary film provides a multimodal form of communication which bears witness to the biggest crisis we face. Our children and grandchildren will inherit this mess, and so it is up to the current generation to educate the next generation and work toward preserving life on this planet (Psihoyos).

According to the documentary, ninety-percent of shark species—a creature whose existence predates the dinosaurs—has been decimated by humans. In China, nearly every type of endangered species can be found on the Hong Kong waterfront—whales, sharks, manta rays—all of these species which are critical to the marine ecosystems. Photojournalists are documenting footage of a world that, very soon, may no longer exist (Psihoyos). Jerry Greenberg, an underwater photographer for *National Geographic* in the 60s and 70s, developed the first panoramic images of coral reefs. Upon returning to the same reefs in 1989, these exact same reefs had been nearly depleted as a result of carbon acid. Oil spills, industrialization, traffic, mining, farming—all of these practices contribute to the rise of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere which, if it continues, has the potential to produce a calamitous event (Psihoyos). Now, we have an unqualified president (who refuses to believe in the scientific facts which support the reality of climate change) who

appointed Scott Pruitt—a known climate change denier—to direct the federal Environmental Protection Agency (Davenport 1). Contrary to what the world’s leading scientists have proven with extensive data, Pruitt does not believe that carbon dioxide is “the primary contributing factor to global warming,” which will undermine advocates’ attempts to protect our natural environment. The current situation is dire.

Tree frogs, turtles, birds, sharks, manta rays, phytoplankton, honeybees—all of these species are in danger of becoming extinct if people do not wake up and realize the necessity for changing the way humans interact with the environment. Many people wrongfully assume that nonhuman species are not worthy of recognition; their suffering does not matter if they are not human (what Haraway refers to as **anthropocentrism**). If they do not exhibit any human qualities, then their lives are not grievable. And yet, there are instances where it is apparent that animals are fully capable of exhibiting



Fig. 44. An elephant slaughtered by a poacher for his ivory tusks. Photograph taken by an anonymous photographer in “Sri Lanka Destroys its Ivory, Apologizes to Poached Elephants” by Ashely Mansour. (Lady Freethinker: For a Free and Compassionate World; 8 Feb. 2016; Web; 5 Sept. 2016).



Fig. 45. Suda the Elephant, painting a portrait with her trunk. Photograph taken by Dean Wickham in “An elephant painting a picture in Thailand”. (Theroadtoanywhere.com; 2013; Web; 5 Sept. 2016).

qualities often regarded as uniquely human. Animals feel fear, anxiety, happiness, grief, and pain just like humans do. For instance, elephants engage in mourning rituals when members of their social group die by hovering around the corpse of the deceased and exploring the remains with their tusks. Scientists have discovered that just like humans, elephants are capable of crying when they experience emotional distress caused by grief (*National Geographic*). Moreover, these magnificent creatures are also capable of creative expression using tools (e.g. Suda the elephant), a practice most would believe is reserved

specifically for humans. As shown in fig. 45, the remarkable elephant Suda attracts visitors from around the world by painting with her trunk. Her trunk is as an extension of her Self, and her unique abilities demonstrate that nonhuman species deserve recognition as much as humans. As one student revealed in her research paper on the Ivory Trade, elephants continue to be slaughtered at an alarming rate throughout Africa and Asia to acquire their tusks (see fig. 44)—a barbaric practice that warrants recognition and response-ability. And yet for some reason, the suffering of nonhumans repeatedly goes ignored by the masses because these species rely on humans to speak for them. The exigency for bearing witness to nonhuman suffering is crucial because humans and nature are bound together. What will happen to human existence if mass extinction of countless species continues at this alarming rate?

Donna Haraway's research in *When Species Meet* focuses primarily on abuses animals experience through lab experiments in her section on sharing suffering. However, her argument is applicable to *any* being—whether human or nonhuman—whose lives have been deemed expendable through “the logic of sacrifice” (e.g. testing on animals to prevent harm to humans) (76). Regardless of a living being's position within the structure of society, every living creature “has face,” deserves visibility and has the right to live a quality life free of pain and suffering (76). For these reasons, recognition and response-ability are warranted. This remains a challenge. As Haraway explains:

The needed morality, in my view, is culturing a radical ability to remember and feel what is going on and performing the epistemological, emotional, and technical work to respond practically in the face of the permanent complexity not resolved by taxonomic hierarchies and with no humanist philosophical or religious guarantees. Degrees of freedom, indeed: the open is not comfortable” (75).

A **logic of sacrifice** indicates “there is no responsibility toward the living world other than the human,” and Haraway rejects this sentiment. She argues that *all living creatures* are worthy of recognition and response; to perceive that only human beings can be “murdered” whereas other living creatures are “killed” “is the height of moral outrage...the definition of genocide” (78). Just as marginalized groups have been “othered” by patriarchal regimes, nonhuman beings endure oppression and pain, yet it is regarded as “sacrifice” rather than “inhumane.” As shown in fig. 46, lab animals are subjected to pain and suffering as part of this logic.



Fig. 46. Lab monkey subjected to painful experiments as part of the “logic of sacrifice.” Photograph taken by an anonymous photographer in “Should We Use Animals for Testing?” (Debate.org; 2017; Web; 5 Jan. 2017).

The logic of sacrifice is extremely problematic because it reinforces the notion that certain lives are grievable while others are not. It is precisely because of this issue that those who are targeted as a scapegoat and worthy of sacrifice, whether animal or otherwise, demand recognition and response. “Reaction is for and toward the unfree; response is for and toward the open...I suggest that it is a misstep to separate the world’s beings into those who may be killed and those who may not” (78-9). What is the difference between the pain and suffering shown in the image of lab monkeys in comparison to the image of the children from the My Lai Massacre as shown in fig. 47 and fig. 48? Granted, most people would probably argue that one cannot compare human children to monkeys, but who is to say one species suffers more than another when it comes to physical pain? According to Jones, members of “the establishment” believe they are a separate, superior species and target specific groups in order to conduct unethical testing and control the population. Power elites rationalize the oppression of others by depicting ethnic minorities and those trapped at the lower end of the socioeconomic totem pole as a subspecies on a par with nonhuman creatures. Perhaps if the rhetorical culture began recognizing that humans and nonhumans deserve the same rights, the logic of sacrifice would not extend itself to marginalize groups during times of war. Simultaneously, if people regarded the pain of human and nonhuman

“others” as equal, perhaps the recognition and response Haraway calls for may lead to more aggressive action.



Fig. 47. Two Vietnamese children during the My Lai Massacre of 1968. Photograph taken by Ron Haerberle. (LIFE; 16 Mar. 1969).



Fig. 48. Lab monkeys holding one another for comfort. It is clear to see that both nonhuman and human beings “have face.” Photograph taken by an anonymous photographer in “Animal Testing.” (Animal Liberation Front; Web; 05 Dec. 2016)

Interestingly, Oliver points out a critical matter: “The issues of the relationship between power and identity, subjects and those othered, the process through which positions are curdled and solidified cannot be recognized by the eye-witness; they cannot be seen. The stakes are precisely the unseen in vision—the process through which something is seen or not seen” (Oliver 158). Information that resides beyond the frames of war is unattainable by the viewer; as such, the ability to respond is crippled. There are innumerable stories revealed via rhetorical culture, but too many crying voices continue to go unheard. Without visibility we can neither witness nor recognize, but if we can recognize the suffering of those whose stories permeate a rhetorical culture, we can use our agency to act ethically and response-ably. I concur that teachers have the agency to response-ably inspire students to compose projects that address these serious concerns. It is from here that we will examine ways in which students *become* alive through their writing, and use their agency in order to compose for the common good.

Movement: Composing as “Embodied Experience”

In *Being Alive*, Tim Ingold claims that knowledge is not derived through the process of data collection and observation, but rather through the process of **movement**; as humans take different pathways during their lives, they engage in “wayfaring” and create lines that form “knots” which ultimately become the “meshwork” of their existence. He conceives the human as a “singular nexus of growth within a continual unfolding field of relationships” and postulates that growth is a fundamental component to movement (xii). Like Haraway’s notions of semiotic materiality, Ingold states that technologies are the means through which humans utilize their skills, observe, gain knowledge and, essentially, move through the world. He uses detailed descriptions of writing and drawing to illuminate the process of using different tools; the combined effect of the person using the tool in accordance with the tool itself and the material; and, the function of perception and action (53). He surmises that human operators work together with the machines, therefore through the process of writing, a human being achieves movement (hence, “becoming”).

Ingold postulates that lives are lived by moving through and around places via “wayfaring,” an “embodied experience.” As a life unfolds, humans leave a trail; every movement creates a line, and as humans inhabit different places, they create the meshwork of their lives. “Where inhabitants meet, trails are entwined, as the life of each becomes bound up with the other. Every entwining is a knot, and the more that lifelines are entwined, the greater the density of the knot” (148). Writing *is* a **meshwork**, a way of entwining lifelines and forming knots that change all of those who are entwined in the process. These knots refer back to Greer’s definition of agency, for writing reflects embodied experience and shapes our rhetorical culture.

Ingold imagines “a world of incessant movement and becoming, one that is never complete but continually under construction, woven from the countless lifelines of its manifold human and nonhuman constituents as they thread their ways through the tangle of relationships in which they are comprehensively enmeshed” (141). Ingold describes **wayfaring** as a mode through which living entities inhabit the earth, and human beings become enmeshed within their “domain of entanglement” (71). Humans live in a meshwork

of lines that are continuously in flux, knots in a tissue that create the tangle of texture (70). As he describes the relational constitution of being in conjunction with the primacy of movement, Ingold suggests that rather than perceiving an organism in a circular shape that is cut off from the outside world, that we perceive an organism as a line that has no boundaries--a “trail of movement or growth” (69).

If the goal of a composition course entails students using their agency response-ably, one could argue that the work they produce represents the knots Ingold describes. Writing about representations of suffering is a form of rhetorical witnessing, for the writer recognizes the pain of the “other” by responding. The camera is instrumental in framing an event, but the pen is instrumental in composing an argument that provides a broader context to help fight social injustice. Sontag argues that images and the written word must operate together in order to raise ethical consciousness, for the image alone is fragmented and lacks narrative coherence. More importantly, a photograph fails to achieve significance within a culture if it is not embraced during times of political consciousness. This claim creates the exigency for students to write about the significance of *both* linguistic and visual frames of the dark side.

For some of people, creating work is an urgency, a need to purge something deep within, and in order to accomplish this, humans rely on various technologies. A writer relies on his or her pen, the war photographer his or her camera, and through each of these interactions with the material, we create meaning. Through the composing process, we engage in movement and leave a trail, “the body always-in-the-making”—the text and the body are one (Haraway 163). Writing involves an intertwining of the mind and body as the student focuses on a particular subject; semiotic materiality emerges from every thought, every feeling one attempts to grasp at that moment in time through the creative process. Philosophically, every line written reflects a fragment of the student’s soul—even as the writing itself contributes to the soul’s “becoming”—and so marks the world in a meaningful way however abstract that may seem. Simultaneously, the writing process imprints upon the student writer, the meshwork of writing shaping him or her in significant,

irreversible ways. The writer's pen is an extension of the self, and as one's thoughts become crystallized onto paper, s/he becomes immortalized.

III

Practical Applications

James Nachtwey's TEDTalk

"The hottest places in hell are reserved for those who, in times of great moral crisis, maintain their neutrality" (Dante Alighieri, *Inferno*).

This section focuses on the work of witness photographer James Nachtwey. Nachtwey's contributions to shedding light on issues related to war, famine, genocide, disabled veterans, racial injustice, and poverty reflect the theory and praxis of rhetorical witnessing and illustrate the process of confronting the dark side as a responsible, response-able witness. Taking into account the ethical considerations of bearing witness in the classroom, the attempt here is to demonstrate what it means to move "beyond recognition" and the ways this can be accomplished. It will examine the potential for the witnessing process to help students not only understand the significance of human suffering but try to engage responsibly and response-ably. Nachtwey's speech in conjunction with images of war demonstrate what his rhetorical agency as a first and second-person witness was and what he felt was his ethical responsibility to bear witness to extensive trauma throughout the world. Finally, students' responses to Nachtwey's multimodal presentation through their own work demonstrate their rhetorical agency as third-person witnesses.

As part of our discussion on witnessing, recognition, agency, and ethics, students watch a short twenty-minute video and apply terms and concepts from the course website and Peter's "Witnessing" to complete either an in-class assignment or an essay assignment. In both cases, they are asked to ponder what it means to witness the suffering of others in light of recognition, why it is vital to bear witness to atrocity and other aspects of social injustice, and what our responsibilities and response-abilities are as third-person witnesses to suffering. They must explain what the function of war photography in a democratic society

is, what their reactions are to certain images, and what they believe the role of a war photographer should be.

In Nachtwey's moving TED talk, he describes the importance of witness photography for bringing to light transnational matters of concern. Nachtwey grew up during the Vietnam and Civil Rights era, inspired by the sweeping social movements and critical questions raised regarding foreign policy and government abuses. As a response to the unprecedented view of the Vietnam War, a political divide within the United States emerged that still exists today. The prevalence of war photography has significantly decreased since Vietnam as a result of a highly regulated, corporate-owned media system that leaves American citizens in the dark. This regulation was a response to the unprecedented view of war that resulted from Vietnam coverage. In reference to the 1960s, Nachtwey remarks, "Our political and military leaders were telling us one thing and photographers were telling us another. I believed the photographers" (Nachtwey 1:08). His desire to seek the truth amid a fury of chaos and government cover ups motivated Nachtwey to dedicate his life to exploring the most crucial questions related to social justice in order to raise awareness and fight for change. Nachtwey's work proves that the role of the photojournalist in a democratic society is paramount.

According to Nachtwey, war photography is "vital" in a democratic society because as a journalist, there is a responsibility to identify problems in society so that they can be solved (Nachtwey 3:09). One of the main purposes of documentary photography is to provide a voice for those who cannot speak for themselves and present a point of view for victims who suffer from war and various social injustices. Nachtwey purports, "What happens at ground level, far from the halls of power, happens to ordinary citizens one-by-one. And I understood that documentary photography has the ability to interpret events from their point of view" (Nachtwey 2:20). Documentary photography not only represents a powerful form of rhetorical witnessing, it also has the power to inspire students in a multimodal composition course to write about topics that matter and to act ethically and response-ably.

Upon viewing any variety of Nachtwey's images, it is impossible to understand the context of the images due to the fact that there are no explanations or narrative devices. The victims remain nameless, and their stories are not told beyond the framing of reality as Nachtwey chose to depict it. Without a deeper understanding of the political implications that surround the context in which the images were taken in the Sudan, for instance, images lose their resonance with viewers. Sontag questions if, given the saturation of images through the media system, photographs attain the power to move viewers into thinking politically about war photography. I think a more important question to explore is not whether images have the power to alter perceptions or raise awareness, but whether images of war can spur the necessary response from viewers. Sontag believes that the only way that this can be achieved is if an image has shock value, for the more shocking an image is, the more likely it will evoke an emotional response (68).

At the end of James Nachtwey's profoundly moving and influential TEDTalk, he provides a narrative to contextualize the image shown in fig. 49. This example emphasizes the power of the written word when it operates in conjunction with visual rhetoric.

After the fall of Suharto in Indonesia, I began to explore conditions of poverty in a country that was on its way towards modernization. I spent a good deal of time with a man who lived with his family on a railway embankment and had lost an arm and a leg in a train accident. When the story was published, unsolicited donations poured in. A trust fund was established, and the family now lives in a house in the countryside and all their basic necessities are taken care of. It was a story that wasn't trying to sell anything. Journalism had provided a channel for people's natural sense of generosity, and the readers responded.

This image in juxtaposition with Nachtwey's narrative illustrates how witnesses have an ethical obligation to recognize and share the suffering of others, and writers have the agency to help fight any number of social injustices that have become visible through the altruism of documentary photography. Just as a photographer accomplishes this feat through the process of photographing atrocities, a writer can do so through writing. When

students view images of human suffering and listen to the narratives that accompany them, they can better understand the importance of sharing suffering response-ably through the multimodal composition process. Nachtwey’s work is merely one example of how multimodality can be incorporated within the content of a composition course to teach students the importance of rhetorical witnessing and agency. We need to continually open our eyes to a new world, bear witness to different moments, recognize the world is not complete, and through this re-birth, demonstrate the capacity for “being alive” in the most ethical, response-able way possible.



Fig. 49 Indonesia man caring for his family after losing an arm and a leg in a tragic train accident. Photograph taken by James Nachtwey and presented in his TEDTalk, “My Photographs Bear Witness.” (Apr. 2007; Web; 27 Nov. 2012).

Multimodal Project: Challenging Students to Compose Responsibly and Response-Ably

What should teachers do with their unique position in the classroom? How do we teach students responsible ways to use their writing skills and creativity? Each and every one of us has the power to work toward positive change—but what does that mean for students beyond the classroom? In Fall 2011, I taught in a multimodal classroom for the first time. Prior to this experience, I taught public speaking, fundamentals of communication, and first-year literature and composition courses. I was largely unfamiliar with the concept of multimodality and designed the department-required multimodal project as a “fun” assignment to wrap up the end of the semester. It had not occurred to me to require students

to compose these projects as part of the scaffolding process between their research papers and gave them the option to choose a different topic altogether. One student's efforts making a short video based on his research paper revealed to me the potential for multimodal composition. While most of the students composed their projects within a few days, this student clearly put forth an extraordinary amount of time and effort. His video, *The Myth of the American Dream*, illustrates the problem of living in an anaesthetized society and ends with solutions for how we can wake up from this ongoing myth. Although the audio elements need some work, the visual elements and organization of ideas created a compelling message, and he received a standing ovation from his peers. The gears back turning in my mind.

The following spring semester, I began the first day of class as I usually do: with an open-ended questionnaire that asks students to outline their research interests and expectations for the course. One student—an engineering major—openly (and in a rather hostile manner) admitted he expected to gain absolutely nothing from “a boring English class” that he had not already learned in high school. He expected to write about topics that did not interest him, turn them in for credit, get his ‘A’, and never think about the papers of the course ever again. Initially, I felt a mixture of irritation and hurt by this student's comment and stewed about it for quite some time. The more I thought about this student, the more I realized that not only was he right to a certain extent—but that it was my job to change his mind about what “an English class” could be. How could I get students' attention? This is when I decided to ask students to venture “down the rabbit hole” and explore “the dark side” for their research projects. I revamped the reading schedule to cover more controversial topics and held round table discussions to get students engaged in the process of deliberation. Instead of holding the reins by lecturing every day, I began sitting back and listening to what students had to say about a variety of issues I previously never dared to discuss in class. This more open format helped me to shift gears toward a more Freirean pedagogy that focused on what students wanted to get out of the class. However, it was not until I began researching the concept of rhetorical agency in conjunction with

my interest in rhetorical witnessing that I began to realize the potential for a multimodal course that emphasized frames of the dark side.

About a year later, I launched an online course designed to cover the dark side and rhetorical witnessing around responsible, response-able composition practices through short writing assignments and a major research project. Each of the discussion board assignments reflects, in some way, what students are supposed to be working on for their research projects. This scaffolding process includes a research proposal, annotated bibliography, research outline, storyboard, first research draft, final research paper, and final multimodal project (usually the equivalent of a rough cut) that needs to be published on the internet. The initial results exceeded my expectations, and students continue to impress me with their thoughtful application of concepts discussed in class along with their technical proficiency composing creative and inspiring projects. For example, one student created a video on human trafficking which includes various visual aids, background music, and a voice over to create a captivating third-person testimony. She ends the video with links to such organizations as The A21 Campaign, The Polaris Project, and Love126.org aimed toward helping victims. Another student examined the drug war epidemic by creating a public service announcement on cocaine addiction and the normalization of drug use by the media. He uses linguistic elements, dark and foreboding images, and background music to set the tone for the topic and reinforce the extent of the problem. He ends with a plea for viewers to vote ‘yes’ for proposal 3 which supports ‘Mothers Against Drugs in the Media.’

Many students choose topics due to a personal investment in the subject matter such as a female ROTC student’s project on sexual abuse in the military or an environmental engineer’s project on the effects of industrialization on the environment. One student endured severe bullying throughout high school and wanted to use his experiences to encourage others to speak out against cyberbullying. Even though he struggled throughout the composing process, it was apparent that he felt strongly about the subject matter by the amount of time and effort he put toward his final self-narrated PowerPoint. At the end of the semester, the student sent a private email to thank me for the supportive feedback I

gave him and let me know how much he enjoyed the course. The assignment gave him an opportunity to share his suffering with others while working through some of his pain, even though it was indirectly part of the project. In this way, I believe the very “meshwork” of his life gave him the courage to leave a “trail” in the public sphere—who knows how many people he may have influenced by publicly sharing his work? I believe that if a rhetor can influence just one person, he or she has been successful.

Conclusion

“To remain indifferent to the challenges we face is indefensible. If the goal is noble, whether or not it is realized in our lifetime is largely irrelevant. What we must do therefore is strive and persevere and never give up” (Dalai Lama XVI). The power of response-able writing is revolutionary; all we have to do is convince students that their voices matter and they have the ability to make a difference. A pedagogy of witnessing is about slow, incremental change. Students’ “voices” matter. The “trails” they leave behind matter. It is up to us—the “good” teachers—to convince students their voices matter and provide them with the guidance and encouragement they need to find the right path.

It is my belief that by examining testimonies in a variety of forms—whether these are linguistic or visual frames of the dark side—one gains the psychic ability to enter a new world that exists far beyond the here and now and helps students understand the vastness and complexity of issues related to suffering. As we read about and look at victims of atrocity, we are compelled to think critically about the state of the world we live in today in a way that connects us with people we have never even met. Oliver reminds us, “Far from being alienated from the world of others, we are intimately and continually connected, and responding, to them” (198). I believe teachers have the responsibility and agency to encourage students to compose projects that address these serious concerns. The camera is instrumental in framing an event, but the pen is instrumental in composing a clear argument; together, these two modes of communication provide a broader context for audiences to more effectively help fight social injustice. Sontag argues that images and the written word must operate together in order to raise ethical consciousness, for the image

alone is fragmented and lacks narrative coherence. More importantly, a photograph fails to achieve significance within a culture if it is not embraced during times of political consciousness. This claim creates the exigency for students to act as second or third-person witnesses to human and/or nonhuman suffering by creating their own frames of the dark side.

“To surmount the situation of oppression, people must first critically recognize its causes, so that through transforming action, they can create a new situation, one which makes possible the pursuit of fuller humanity” (Freire 47). Ideally, the multimodal composition instructor must create a positive communication climate in the classroom to promote discussion and deliberation. Courses that incorporate process-oriented writing activities require an engagement with reading and audiovisual materials that helps students understand and apply relevant terms and concepts related to rhetorical witnessing. By showing students the ways in which artists, filmmakers, writers, or photographers have used their talents responsibly and response-ably to fight social injustices, they can become motivated to create meaningful work that has the potential to influence the rhetorical culture. As Bertolt Brecht points out, “Art is not a mirror to hold up to society, but a hammer to shape it.” A course related to witnessing and frames of the dark side can address any number of issues: war, famine, genocide, poverty, testing on human subjects, germ warfare, forced sterilization, eugenics, environmental contamination, conditions of the poor and working class, racial struggles, gender inequality---the possibilities are endless. With this in mind, I urge teachers to use their agency responsibly in the class to inspire students to research and write about topics that have the power to raise awareness and instill change—this, I believe, is the very definition and purpose of “response-able writing.” As poet philosopher Ben Okri once said, “The most authentic thing about us is our capacity to create, to overcome, to endure, to transform, to love, and to be greater than our own suffering.”

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Chapter 5

Why A Pedagogy of Witnessing? Why frames of the dark side?

Introduction

Jean Baudrillard's *Simulacra and Simulation* poses a critique of our virtual culture to demonstrate the ways in which we are living in a hyper-reality, far removed from truth and nature. The spectacles we experience *en masse* not only distort our perception of reality, they support a cultural ideology that is essentially self-centered and materialistically driven. Baudrillard's sophisticated philosophy has influenced numerous rhetors, including the creators of such dystopias as *The Matrix*. In *The Matrix*, computer hacker Neo suspects that the world he lives in is not quite as it seems. When he meets Morpheus (a reference to the Greek God of dreams), Neo must make a choice between two pills: the red one will allow him to explore the truth and see "just how deep the rabbit hole goes" so that he can fight against the injustices of his oppressors; the blue one will give him blissful ignorance in a simulated world in which he must unknowingly spend the entirety of his existence unknowingly—as a slave. This film presents an important notion: our consciousness remains far removed from reality and the truth of human existence in the face of larger structures of power. The fact that a notorious reality star--whose life could not be farther from the reality of most people—managed to can garner enough support to become president despite his character, lack of qualifications, and divisive rhetoric is confounding.

In regard to education, the current states of affairs in this country is frightening. Since Donald Trump finagled his way into office, he has appointed the highly unqualified Betsy DeVos as Education Secretary—who will, no doubt, destroy our already crumbling public education system—and made moves to pull funding from the National Endowment of the Arts and National Endowment of the Humanities (Deb 1). If our educational system is under attack by people who do not value education, then the exact same values that underlie our democracy are under attack as well. As teachers and administrators, we need to stop

and think critically about how something like this can happen and what positive actions we can take moving forward. We need to show students—to the best of our ability--what is *actually* happening in the world, the dangers of living in a society of spectacles, and the detrimental effects of apathy in a culture driven by violent pleasures, fantasies, and the false assumption that materialism in some way equates happiness. These desires and distractions are either directly or indirectly related to the suffering of others whose lives have been deemed ungrievable by an insatiable global empire. As teachers, we must ask our students and ourselves: what is at stake if we turn a blind eye to human and non-human suffering?

Sir Ken Robinson identifies a major part of the problem: educators need to create new ways to wake students up instead of anaesthetizing them. “A Pedagogy of Witnessing: Linguistic and Visual Frames of the Dark Side in the Multimodal Classroom” is a Burkean move to encourage students to bear witness to the dark side by taking the red pill—the essence of responsibility and response-ability. Through a series of writing exercises that ask students to synthesize concepts from an array of challenging reading material, images, and films, students can: 1) deconstruct the rhetorical framing of artifacts in order to understand ways to compose their own work; 2) visualize the underlying structures that influence their own way of thinking; 3) reframe how they think about witnessing, our media system, our government, foreign policies, the corporate-ocracy, and suffering. The multimodal classroom provides students with the necessary tools to help create new, independent media with the ability to influence the public, and a pedagogy of witnessing can help provide the impetus for positive change. By starting in the distant past and asking students to analyze various frames of the dark side, they come to see on their own how recent events have transpired, the dangers of sitting idly by on the sidelines as spectators, and the exigency for working toward the common good. This chapter will reinforce my argument for Edu-Activism in terms of a pedagogy of witnessing. So why a pedagogy of witnessing? Why frames of the dark side?

I

Reinforcing the Exigency

In the award-winning film *Mr. Holland's Opus*, Principle Jacobs tells Mr. Holland, “A teacher has two jobs. Fill young minds with knowledge, yes, but more important: give those minds a compass so that it does not go to waste.” Although Principle Jacobs’ first premise seems to contradict Freire’s criticism of bank deposit teaching, the second premise perfectly encapsulates the purpose behind my teaching philosophy: to lead students from the darkness into the light by giving them the tools necessary for survival. Much like a labyrinth, students take a journey through the maze of life, coming to forks in the road wherein the choices they make either take them toward enlightenment or down the path of darkness. A liberatory pedagogy strives to shed light on dark subjects by showing students the myriad ways in which overarching power structures oppress them. Intersections among history, the media, and the political economy are integral to courses of this nature to nurture well-informed critical thinking and logical reasoning.

Literacy and Media Literacy in an Era of “Faux News”

Early in the semester, it is important to illustrate to students that although they reside in privileged positions from an educational standpoint, no matter how smart they are, how much research they have conducted, or how well they write, “Every new bit of knowledge is merely indicative of a wider ignorance” (Hejinian). I fervently believe excellent writers are avid readers, therefore to become a better writer, students must read. Students take for granted one of the most important skills they can ever master: reading! They must recognize the privilege in reading, the history of literacy, the current problem of illiteracy, its ties to freedom, and why it is in their own best interest to read as much as they can. “If there’s nothing out the windows look at books” (Hejinian 125). More importantly, they must surround themselves with the kind of literature that will nourish their minds rather than feed into political echo chambers lacking in substance or truthfulness.

Media literacy is a crucial aspect of witnessing and bearing witnessing in the multimodal classroom because it not only helps students to better understand events that

are framed in myriad forms of rhetoric, but how to more clearly and logically frame their own compositions. Our current state of affairs is one in which the white supremacist capitalist patriarchy bell hooks describes in *Teaching to Transgress* continues to oppress marginalized groups, legitimizing the rise of alt-right power by bearing false witness. The alt-right bears false witness under the negligible pretense that equality for the disenfranchised oppresses those in privileged position who resist the equal distribution of power. Obama's presidency created an illusion supporting the decline of racism and a shift toward equal rights for women, minorities, and the LGBTQ community. What we have learned from this recent election—in conjunction with trends emerging in other countries—is that not only is racism alive and well, but sexism, misogyny, homophobia, and xenophobia have been legitimized by those who have taken power. Blatant ignorance and hate speech—while supported by the first Amendment—remain a social taboo for anyone who wants to live in an enlightened, civil society. Somehow, the absurd argument that “tolerance is a two-way street” has given credence to the notion that advocates for marginalized groups should have to tolerate intolerance. People continually fail to grasp that giving a group of people the same basic civil rights (e.g. women, gays, minorities) as everyone else is not oppression for those who already have those rights. On one side, you have groups bearing witness to actual oppression, and on the other side resides a privileged group bearing false witness to oppression that does not, in fact, exist. Bearing witness, in many cases, requires advocates to speak on behalf of those who have, traditionally, been silenced.

Over the past year, the media has exploited people's most basic fears and prejudices via a non-stop flow of rhetoric and framing of events. As people find themselves enraptured by a media frenzy, the blind lead the blind on social media sites by sharing viral news that presents false information (which stirs up fear, anger, and anxiety as profit margins increase). According to the U.S. Department of Education, roughly 32 million American adults over the age of 25 are illiterate. Aldous Huxley warned back in 1933, “The people cannot be safe without information. Where the press is free, and every man able to read, all is safe” (135). Over the last forty years, corporate-owned media swallowed up the

majority of independent news sources (Jones), and 90% of all of the information we receive comes from 1 of 6 major media conglomerates (Critchfield). We live in an era of (mis)information that leads us to believe the press is “free,” but most people fail to discern between credible information and faux news. A recent study conducted by the Stanford History Education Group shows 80% of students surveyed were unable to distinguish between credible sources and fake news. How is the general population supposed to develop well-informed positions on important matters when the availability of reliable information is scarce not to mention the distortion of truth that occurs in the framing of events (or lack thereof)? As Thomas Jefferson once stated, “Educate and inform the whole mass of the people...they are the only sure reliance for the preservation of our liberty.”

When I began writing this dissertation, I wrote with a sense of optimism that this country was headed in the right direction, and a pedagogy of witnessing could help teachers show students how to continue down a path toward progress. After witnessing the terrorist attacks on Paris and Belgium and the more recent chemical weapons attacks in Syria, a sense of dread has settled inside of me that I have not experienced since I watched the Twin Towers fall over fifteen years ago. I wonder how the world at large is witnessing these traumatic events and which stories are not receiving any coverage. Why were the attacks in Beirut, Lebanon being ignored? Why are the lives of innocent Muslims less grievable than other lives covered by the U.S. media? Why are we able to turn on the news and witness children and babies frothing at the mouth due to nerve gas, but helpless to do anything about it? This feeling of helplessness can easily turn to apathy unless we show others the importance of bearing witness and the power of collective action through composition processes.

Our sense of reality is directly contingent upon the linguistic system and visual frames that support our thought processes. What would our sense of the world outside of our Selves be like without these dark frames to inform our thinking, our consciousness? To help raise consciousness and teach students to do what they can outside of the classroom in order to be positive agents of change, I believe incorporating frames of the dark enhances students’ literacy and capacity for civic reasoning. Further, it is important to tap into

students' natural ability to feel empathy and compassion for others, to engage in altruistic acts aimed toward the common good.

Altruism: The Human Capacity to Love

Are human beings fundamentally selfish, driven by our own motives, desires, needs, and interests? What events change the course of one's life and determines our ability to feel either apathy or empathy? In order to understand compassion, we need to understand cruelty. This is why bringing the dark side into the classroom has the ability to bring light into the world through the "becoming" of composing practices.

Imagine a "caring continuum" wherein psychopathy resides on one side and altruism on the other. Psychopaths have no regard for human (or nonhuman) life and engage in dangerous behaviors without conscience. **Altruism** is defined as selfless and voluntary behaviors, "motivated by the desire to help another individual" (Marsh). It involves caring about total strangers and engaging in acts that benefit others without reward. According to researcher Abigail Marsh, altruists do not think of themselves as the center of the universe: they are simply not self-centered. They do not think they are special, unique, or better than anyone else. People who demonstrate the most positive agency are those who have an, "It's not about me" mentality. There are average people who engage in simple acts of kindness such as donating or volunteering their time for a particular cause, and then there are extraordinary altruists who donate all of their money to charity or perhaps even a kidney to a perfect stranger. Interestingly, Marsh's research reveals that extraordinary altruists have a hyperactive and/or larger than average amygdala and are better able to recognize fear or people who are in distress. This counters what research shows about psychopaths who have an impaired, missing, underactive and/or smaller than average amygdala as well as an inability to recognize fear or people who are in distress.

There is a common misconception that the world is becoming an increasingly violent place, and yet Marsh's research illustrates that more people volunteer and donate in comparison to 100 years ago. Despite the direness of our current situation, humans have the capacity to continue to work toward more peaceful relations with one another. Part of the problem relates to the framing of violence through various forms of media and the

widespread sharing of misinformation. While the framing of events certainly poses numerous problems, educating the masses about distant suffering through multimodal composition provides people with the knowledge they need to recognize suffering and act accordingly. Marsh points out that everyone has the capacity to remove themselves from the “center” and expand their compassion for others outward—to become “other-centered.” Being-for-others by opening our minds to the reality that we—as individuals—are not the center of the universe liberates us from being indoctrinated by an ideology that fools us into believing that the more we have, the more content we will be in our lives. A capitalist-patriarchy depends upon the self-centered attitude of the masses in order to drive competition. Other-centeredness—or, dare I say “socialism”—threatens this entire system. The meaning of our existence *has* to be more than material and as a whole, our society has much to learn from those who have very little other than the happiness they derive in being-for-others.

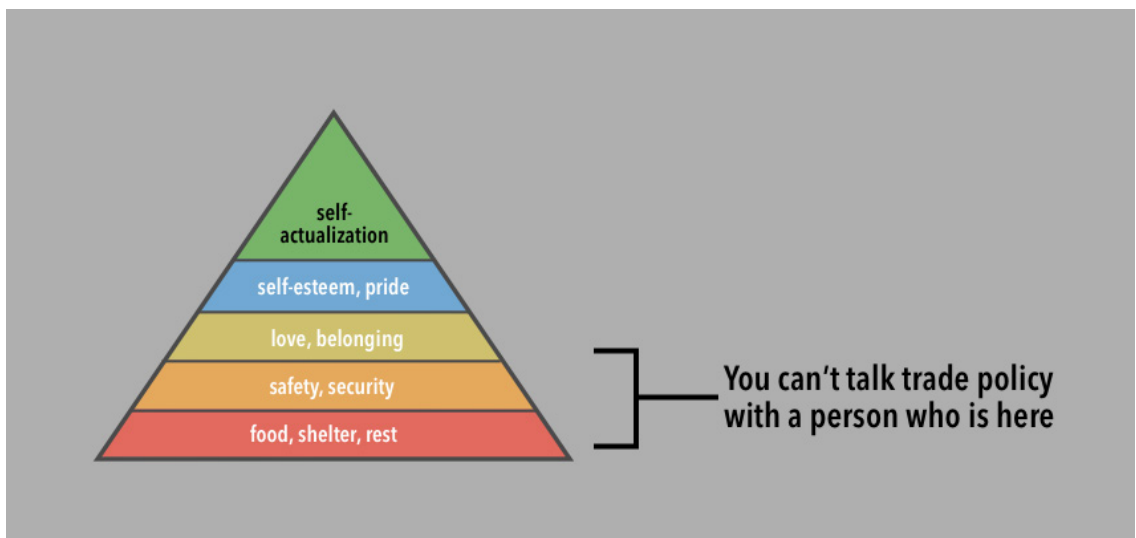


Fig. 50. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. Unauthored digital image published in “A Dangerous Lack of Empathy Prevails” by Bruce Kasanof. (LinkedIn; 10 Nov. 2016; Web; 10 Apr. 2017).

In a recent interview with *Hollywood Reporter*, Trump's campaign strategist Scott Bannon (an alt-right economic nationalist) stated, “Dick Cheney. Darth Vader. Satan. That's power. It only helps us when they get it wrong. When they're blind to who we are and what we're doing” (Wolff 1). Bannon claims that these notoriously evil figures are misunderstood, and that if only liberals understood their position—economic gain through

isolationism—they might come to the dark side. Despite the moral repugnance of this mindset, millions of ignorant voters bought into the alt-right propaganda devised by this neo-fascist who is, obviously, well-versed in the tactical strategies of Joseph Goebbels. As Bruce Kasanof points out in “A Dangerous Lack of Empathy Prevails,” Trump won the presidential election by appealing to the most basic needs depicted in Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs (see fig. 50). People flocked to Trump’s camp for the fact that he understood the power of appealing to the lowest common denominator of the masses. People need to understand the position of those on the dark side of the spectrum, because you must know evil to defeat evil. The dark side illuminates the imperative for an altruistic force lest the empire continue taking everything for itself while laying waste to whatever is in its path.

As discussed in chapter 3, human beings mimic what they observe (i.e. mimicry). If all a child knows is violence, cruelty, and disregard for human life, then he or she will imitate that behavior. It seems simple enough: If you teach a child to hate, s/he will hate. If you teach a child to love, s/he will love. The ability to increase humanity’s capacity to love can be realized through a pedagogy of witnessing. Psihoyos reiterates, “It is better to light one candle than to curse the darkness.” The camera can be used as a weapon for enacting positive change along with other forms of audiovisual communication. We live in a visually dominated world, and images speak across languages. New media for the masses—*this* is a key to change. I want to show other teachers and students the importance of bearing witness and ways to use multimodal composition as a means for enacting positive change: to take the problems with news media and social media find viable solutions for entering the public sphere and leaving positive trails, however minute those contributions may be. Many Americans are so out of touch with the natural world and with each other—this self-centeredness beaten into us by an individualistic ideology—that they have lost sight of what is happening out there. We must educate others to be better than our predecessors, to learn from past mistakes and do better—*that* is progress. Educators cannot lose hope, and we cannot let our students lose hope. As Jane Goodall argues, “If we all lose hope, there is no hope. Without hope, people fall into apathy. There’s still a lot left that’s worth fighting for.”

III

Practical Applications

This section will provide a more in-depth discussion of the courses I have taught and discuss the limitations of this project in light of various ethical paradoxes. I will counter these problematic aspects of witnessing with by illuminating the light side: altruism and the capacity for love. This research will also reflect upon the relevance of incorporating these teaching methods in the multimodal classroom. Using writing samples, sample projects, and student surveys this study will make a case for shifting educational paradigms to improve upon teaching and composition practices. It will discuss benefits and challenges of implementing Edu-activism in the classroom and reflect upon the exigency for using rhetorical witnessing and frames of the dark side as a pedagogical tool for teaching ethical composition practices. The overall goal is to consider new approaches to teaching in the multimodal classroom by encouraging a dialogue among writing program administrators, teachers, and students regarding the significance of bearing witness (i.e. rhetorical witnessing).

The design of the courses I teach reflect a hermeneutic approach to teaching multimodal composition. Through process-oriented writing, students examine various forms of rhetoric applicable to the theme: Exploring the Dark Side: Rhetorical Witnessing and Responsible, Response-Able Composition Practices. Specifically, we examine significant historical events as these relate to war rhetoric, trauma theory, human suffering, and social injustice complemented with discussions on ethical, response-able composition practices. The controversial content makes for spirited debates, and I encourage students to keep an open mind by embracing various critical perspectives. Through a scaffolding process, students learn strategies for crafting effective, research-based arguments to demonstrate an effective use of rhetorical devices. They learn basic research skills including how to use library resources, evaluating validity of sources, and citing research data. Students transform written texts into multimodal documents (visual, audio, oral, etc.) to apply conventions of framing the dark side, as discussed in class. The purpose of the major research project

intends to show them ways to bear witness by creating their own frame(s) of the dark side, whatever their topic may be. Depending upon the nature of their topic, students may act as either a second or third-person witness; in some cases, they may serve as both. Some students may even provide first-person testimony if they have chosen a topic that is very personal to them.

Over the last five years, I have taught a variety of courses that have allowed me to bring in some aspect of the dark side and witnessing. Most notably, I have taught first-year Multimodal Composition: Written, Spoken, and Visual Communication in f2f settings and online. I have also taught a 3000-level Communication Theory course in which I implemented a unit on witnessing as it related to final small group projects. In regard to the composition courses I have taught, I apply a scaffolding method that highlights the importance of process-oriented composition in combination with concepts drawn from critical pedagogy. Students begin with a proposal that outlines their plans for a paper and multimodal project by addressing a significant need. From there, they create an annotated bibliography and write a research outline. After writing a rough research draft, students craft a storyboard for the multimodal version of their project. Finally, they complete the final draft of their paper and what is usually the equivalent of a rough cut for their multimodal project. Ideally, a course of this magnitude would certainly benefit from having access to a computer lab. In the future, I would like to create a 4 or 6 credit course or sequence of courses for upper classmen that would allow students to spend more time perfecting the technical skills necessary to create a truly stellar multimodal project. It would also provide more time to discuss the technical aspects of using various software programs which students are left to research on their own.

In terms of the research component the course, Turabian's *Student's Guide to College Writing* and Arola, Sheppard and Ball's *Writer/Designer: A Guide to Making Multimodal Projects* et al.'s are used to guide the research writing process and multimodal project. As a supplement, students review the Research Process, Plagiarism, Oral Communication and Multimodal Communication Power Points. Additionally, students analyze, proofread, and revise written research drafts through peer review process. In-class presentations of rough

cuts for the multimodal project creates what Arola et al. refer to as a **feedback loop** which allows students to share their work with their peers while gaining valuable insight into ways to they can build upon their work.

As noted in the course schedule, each unit includes a research and discussion board component. Students read, interpret, and critique complex arguments through online interactions and in-class discussions. The weekly readings, videos, and writing assignments are intended to support the topics and assignments that are related to the research component. For example, the Source Analysis assignment is intended to support the Extended Annotated Bibliography (see Appendix). Also, the “Witnessing” article by John Durham Peters and material by James Nachtwey are intended to illustrate the rhetorical dimensions of witnessing in various modes of communication as well as illuminate the theory behind agency and ethics as students move toward the final stages of the composing process. The entire design of the class supports the iterative process of composing through reader-response and critical thinking assignments that reflect what they are supposed to integrate into the design of their own projects. Each research project-related activity in some way aligns with the weekly discussions on the dark side. Moreover, I design assignments to teach technical communication proficiency in terms of writing mechanics as well as the use of various software programs.

Some students tend to embrace the challenge of responsible response-able witnessing better than others. For instance, one student chose to write her research paper on Domestic Violence, because someone close to her fell victim to relational abuse, and she wanted to do something to raise awareness. Another student worried that he may not have enough funding to take courses the following semester, so he chose to write about High Cost of Higher Education in order to make a case for free college education in support of Bernie Sanders’ campaign. An engineering student explored the topic of Automation to illustrate the economic impact of technologies that eliminate jobs from the work force. This paper was inspired by his conflicting feelings toward learning how to build machines that eliminated a need for human labor so he could better understand his role as an engineer. Members of the military who travelled throughout the world and had an opportunity to see,

first hand, some of the problems those of us in First World countries can barely fathom, wrote some of the most compelling papers. One soldier travelled through villages in Africa during her tour and spoke to people whose family members were kidnapped for Joseph Kony's militia. Another soldier who spent a significant amount of time in Afghanistan wrote about the Rise of Hate Speech that has escalated because of the Trump campaign in order to dispel myths directed toward the Muslim community. Students who felt some sort of a personal connection to their topic wrote the most thought-provoking papers I have read. Feeling invested in the topic is a crucial aspect of showing students what it means to be a responsible, response-able witness. If teachers can help students hone in on something they truly care about and convey to them that their voices matter, it motivates them to engage in the research writing process.

Of course, some students struggle with the theme of the course and choose topics that are not exactly suitable for the concept of responsible witnessing. For example, one student was determined to write his paper in support of training child soldiers. Despite my personal views on the subject, I try to make it a point not to assert what students can and cannot write about, as long as they fulfill the research requirements of the assignment. The student was well aware of the moral repugnance associated with the topic, but he claimed that he wanted to challenge himself by constructing an unusual argument. I strongly believe in allowing students to find their own ways, so I wished him luck and told him he could switch positions later down the road, if need be. After submitting the rough draft, it was apparent that despite whatever logical reasoning one can provide for such a cause, his paper was seriously lacking in ethos and pathos, which would impact his final grade. Ultimately, he switched positions and finished the assignment with a far more effective argument.

For the most part, students produce papers that fulfill basic requirements for composing an effective research-based argument. The multimodal project is an opportunity for them to transform their formal paper into a more simplified, creative version of their central argument. As noted in chapter 4, many students go above and beyond to fulfill my expectations for this project. Given the time allotted to complete these projects, what they turn in at the end of the semester tends to be more of a rough cut than a final product. The

feedback I provide to students encourages them continue working on these projects after the course has ended. One student created a storyboard and self-running narrated PowerPoint regarding the media's inaccurate coverage of global warming. Another student composed his proposal, storyboard, and final video project on the effects of war on the environment. An exchange student from Columbia create a converted Prezi video on environmental and social injustice by examining the effects of climate change on South American populations. All of these projects demonstrate a successful use of rhetorical devices to bear witness to important matters via visual and linguistic frames of the dark side.

A pedagogy of witnessing can be applied to various courses across the disciplines. For an upper level course in Communication Theory, I asked students to write a reading response on Peters' "Witnessing" article and assigned an in-class discussion sheet (see Appendix). Using basic concepts from the reading, we applied the theme of rhetorical witnessing to the public sphere for their final group projects. Each group conducted a Social Advocacy Analysis (see Appendix) of their chosen campaign and presented their findings at the end of the semester. Students provided an overview of the campaign in light of witnessing, the political economy, public communication, and mobilization. Each group created a multimodal project to support their oral presentation. One group went all the way back to The Crusades and made connections to current religious tensions among Christians and Muslims. Another group examined the America First Committee to compare the isolationist attitudes of Charles Lindberg and Donald Trump. One of the more ambitious groups created a mock Anonymous video to discuss the re-emergence of the clandestine group and recent hacks against Donald Trump, the World Trade Organization, and terrorist organizations such as ISIS. Even though this assignment diverts from the process-oriented method I implement in composition courses in that it was more theory than praxis, I felt students successfully applied complex communication theories to their chosen artifacts and learned a great deal about witnessing and social advocacy.

At the end of the semester, students watch a thirty-minute condensed version of *The Matrix* and given a final writing assignment that asks them to take into consideration all

the material covered throughout the semester, and make the same choice Morpheus posed to Neo in *The Matrix*. I ask students to reflect upon what the matrix represents, metaphorically, in terms of the content of the course. Then, they must either choose the red pill (truth) or the blue one (blissful ignorance), and defend this answer by composing a solid argument. Morpheus explains to Neo that he has been born into slavery, and yet his bondage is a choice—he has free will to accept or reject it. The matrix represents false consciousness and the fragmented mirror reflects a journey into the self (Schuchardt 7). Neo (i.e. “The One), is the Christ figure who has returned to find that world configured “to oppress you not through totalitarian force, but through totalitarian pleasure.” *The Matrix* is “a lens, an object through which light is focused and projected so as to provide illumination—so that we can distinguish our environment . . . so we can look at the world in ways that go beyond the limitations of the physical eye. In that regard, we are using not the body’s vision, but the mind’s.” The underlying premise of the film is all about responsibility and response-ability: “humanity has a choice, not just as a species but as individuals as well. We can accept our roles as slaves of the machine, or we can reinvent ourselves as masters” (Gerriold 3). The life is that of a dream world wherein “life on the screen is a disembodied life” (Schuchardt 8). The matrix is designed to awaken the dulled mind into asking as many questions of possible because the matrix, in and of itself, represents a system of control, “the trap the world has become” (19). Although the main focus is on a technological system of control, students are able to apply it to the media system, frames of war, etc. Out of six courses surveyed, approximately 80% made a case for taking the red pill; 12% made a case for taking the blue pill; the remaining 8% either refused to take a stance or never clearly articulated a position. One advocate for the red pill argued, “I believe that in order for society to improve and progress, all people need to have the thirst for the truth, the ability to understand different situations, and the unrest to want a change and the only way for this to become a reality is by knowing the facts and therefore taking the red pill.” Another rather poignantly ended:

As humans we must never stop trying to understand pain, and never stop trying to alleviate the pain of others. Any full acceptance of this is simply

another means of taking the blue pill. Instead as a nation, as a species we must all plunge down the rabbit hole and truly fix what is wrong in the world. More people will be hurt, many more will die if arrogance isn't put aside. Change is needed in the world, and it starts with each and every person.

Even though choosing the red pill supports the argument embedded in a pedagogy of witnessing, some students demonstrate a preference for ignorant bliss. As one student admitted, "I would rather die a happy man than an enlightened one." I respect this kind of honesty but worry too many people think this way. I suppose if I can convince the majority of students to see the light at the end of the darkness, then I have succeeded. At the same time, I acknowledge that some of those students might be giving me the answer they think I want to read, even though I encourage them to answer the question candidly without repercussion.

A few months ago, a student told me, "The Humanities department is a joke." At first I was offended, but then I started to wonder why. From an outsider's perspective, those of us in the Humanities only engage in dialogue with one another and stand before our students in what they perceive as self-righteous arrogance. If teachers fail to engage students, nothing will change. We need to stop and ask ourselves what it means to produce new modes of knowledge in the classroom—not as a proselytizer, but as a facilitator. McLaren and Jaramillo argue that we need to *push* a radical agenda in the classroom, and this is where I believe they are wrong. Students need *to want* to become agents of change, and forcing it upon them breeds resistance. What people—and Americans, especially—desire is a choice to make up their own minds. Persuasion works best when it occurs indirectly: when you lead the way, but ultimately allow students to come to conclusions on their own. As Morpheus tells Neo when he hands them the red and blue pills, "I can only show you the door. You have to be the one to walk through it." This requires, to a certain extent, remaining as politically neutral as possible—entertaining all perspectives to pull from as many vantage points as possible. As teachers, it is our duty to show students how to learn from the past to insure a better future: understand history; pay attention to the

political economy and government corruption; think critically about how our media system works; know the dangers of misinformation on social media sites; take accountability; form an argument based on logic and facts; listen to those whose views differ from your own; and, most importantly, work as agents of change to extend “beyond recognition.”

Human beings “draw upon perception, emotion, and reason to respond to each situation in all of its particularity” (Garsten 115). By raising students’ awareness of the various complications associated with interpreting and responding to frames of war, they can make informed judgments about witness photography that combine their education with empathy as they engage in the writing process. It is important to note that in terms of situated judgment, “people tended to judge better when they considered matters related to their own ends than when they strive to take on a perspective detached from those concerns” (128). Looking for ways to help students relate to victims from whom they are rather far removed is a challenge, particularly given the framing of events. It is also important to nurture a healthy skepticism in students that encourages them to judge matters for themselves rather than trying to persuade them to adopt a particular perspective (170). As Cicero cautioned against power figures who sought glory for selfish purposes and corrupted people in the process, teachers must also not abuse their power by attempting to mold students according to their personal political agendas. However, it should become a goal to help students develop a sense of a morality for the common good that will help bring important issues to light and perhaps even resolve issues. Every teach should aim to figure out a way to teach students to become connected with a sense of what is ethical in order to understand how issues that are seemingly disconnected from them *do* affect and touch them.

Conclusion

As discussed in chapter 3, human beings mimic what they observe (i.e. mimicry). If all a child knows is violence, cruelty, and disregard for human life, then he or she will imitate that behavior. It seems simple enough: If you teach a child to hate, s/he will hate. If you teach a child to love, s/he will love. The ability to increase humanity’s capacity to love can be real-ized through a pedagogy of witnessing. Psihoyos reiterates in *Racing Extinction*,

“It is better to light one candle than to curse the darkness.” I want to show other teachers and students the importance of bearing witness and ways to use multimodal composition as a means for enacting positive change: to take the problems with news media and social media and find viable solutions for entering the public sphere and leaving positive trails, however minute those contributions may be. Many Americans are so out of touch with the natural world and with each other—this self-centeredness beaten into us by an individualistic ideology—that they have lost sight of what is happening out there. We must educate others to be better than our predecessors, to learn from past mistakes and do better—*that* is progress. Educators cannot lose hope, and we cannot let our students lose hope. As Jane Goodall argues, “If we all lose hope, there is no hope. Without hope, people fall into apathy. There’s still a lot left that’s worth fighting for” (as cited in *Racing Extinction*).

The camera can be used as a weapon for enacting positive change along with other forms of multimodal communication. We live in a visually dominated world, and images speak across languages. New media for the masses—*this* is a key to change. Multimodal communication courses allow instructors to design their courses in order to tackle a myriad of needs that will not only enliven the classroom experience, it will provide students with the knowledge they need to become agents of change. There is a very serious need for new media that informs and inspires rather than propagandizes, and all of the tools we need are at our fingertips if we open our laptops and log on to the internet. In “Linguistic Approach to the Problems of Education,” Burke states, “Man literally is a symbol-using animal. He really does approach the world symbol-wise (and symbol-foolish) (260). We need to reinvigorate an emphasis on symbolic action within our teaching philosophies. Some people may point out the valid ethical conundrum of a rhetorical approach to critical pedagogy. Is it morally presumptuous? Or is that part of our task, as teachers? To do our best to lead our students to aspire to become the best version of themselves possible, to make good decisions, to do everything they can to work hard to fight for what they believe in—just as we would our children? Or is this radicalization and merely another form of indoctrination? Should we revolutionize the classroom, or should instruction be more about

giving students a compass in order to find their own way? All teachers should consider these serious questions. I have heard some colleagues argue that students do not have a right to an opinion because they do not know enough, and I disagree with this sentiment. This approach only serves to silence students whose lived experience is valuable to the communal aspect of the course. Rather than stifling their voices, we should be encouraging students to tap into their strengths and interests in order to inspire their creativity and show them that—yes—they have the agency to do something. Apathy and boredom is the reason our current states of affairs may push us further into the past as those in power attempt to “make America ~~great~~ white and right again”. It is time to wake up and do whatever it is in our power to do to ignite positive change both inside and outside of the classroom.

Through the media, we have witnessed the effects of hateful rhetoric on our culture and the way these harmful ideas have normalized bigotry and escalated violence. Now is the time to organize and fight for change. As educators, we can start in the classroom, but change needs to extend beyond the classroom. Community-engaged composition, new media platforms, audio/visual projects, theater arts—all of these avenues can be explored using a pedagogy of witnessing in the multimodal classroom. Strength of conviction is not enough without purpose and direction, and this requires courageous effort. A pedagogy of witnessing applying various frames of rhetoric provides teachers with an opportunity to explore the darkest realms of the current moment: ISIS, the South Dakota pipeline, the Syrian refugee crisis, women’s reproductive rights, domestic terrorism, intolerance toward Muslims and Jews, violence toward members of the LGBTQ community, endangered species, climate change—we all have a responsibility to bear witness to what is happening in this world. The opportunities for teachers and students to become agents of change are endless.

“Historians and psychologists justifiably probe the causes of evildoing, with the aim of helping future generations avert some of the worst consequences of past errors and ignorance” (Card, *Atrocity Paradigm*, 8). A pedagogy of witnessing that uses visual and linguistic frames of as a methodology for the multimodal classroom supports Card’s aim. By challenging ourselves to become more conscious of the ideological forces and power

structures that influence the classroom, teachers and students can work together to transform educational paradigms in meaningful ways. It is important that teachers and students engage in a deliberative discourse that reveals the underlying causes of oppression to transform the world for the common good. This begins in the classroom. “Education either functions as an instrument which is used to facilitate integration of the younger generation into the logic of the present system and bring about conformity or it becomes the practice of freedom, the means by which men and women deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world” (Freire). A pedagogy of witnessing as a move toward responsible, response-able composition practices has the ability to open up new avenues of change by showing teachers and students how to create meaningful work that transcends the confines of the classroom. Allan Bloom once said, “Education is the movement from darkness into the light.” What better time for a pedagogy of witnessing than the present?

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APPENDIX

DOCUMENTATION OF FAIR USE FOR IMAGES

Based on the information I provide below, I, Lindsay Hingst, assert the use of all images in this dissertation are either: 1) accessible in the public domain, therefore permissible or 2) 'FAIR' under section 107 of the U.S. Copyright Code.

Figures 1, 42, and 43 were created by Lindsay Hingst, the author of this dissertation.

Figures 2, 10, 11, 12, 13, 21, 22, 23, 25, 26, 27, 29, 30, and 37 are iconic photographs that are widely recognized and reproduced in Wikipedia, a public domain. In terms of fair use, the nature of the intended use is to inform others on the ways iconic war photography and propaganda shapes perceptions and influences culture. Further, criticism and analysis of visual images for nonprofit educational purposes is a primary argument for fair use. In terms of the amount, each image is used specifically in reference to significant terms/concepts discussed in the dissertation as it relates to visual rhetorical analysis. These images are intended for nonprofit education purposes and not in market competition with any other persons or organizations (purpose/effect).

Figures 3, 20, 28, and 49 are select images posted on James Nachtwey's website on witness photography; these images are also included in his TED Talk on bearing witness. During his lecture, Nachtwey states, "Society's problems can't be solved until they're identified. On a higher plane, the press is a service industry, and the service it provides is awareness. Every story does not have to sell something. There's also a time to give. That was a tradition I wanted to follow." The photographs he elects to share on his website are for the purpose of garnering attention and raising awareness for the common good. The nature of the intended use is to demonstrate that witness photography is an important testimonial genre. In terms of amount, only four images on the gallery are used falling within the parameters of the 5 image max. rule (educational uses). These images are intended for nonprofit education purposes and not in market competition with any other persons or organizations (purpose/effect).

Fig. 4 is a digital image of a human eye as a camera. In terms of fair use, the nature of the intended use is to inform is to show readers the correlation between the function of the human eye in comparison to a camera lens. In terms of the amount, the image is used specifically to illustrate the different function of eye and camera lenses. This image is intended for nonprofit education purposes and not in market competition with any other persons or organizations (purpose/effect).

Fig. 5 comes from the Vision Service Plan blog that provides information on the human eye. The website indicates in its ‘terms of service’ that it welcomes sharing of information. In terms of fair use, the nature of the intended use is to inform is to show readers the correlation between the function of the human eye in comparison to a camera lens. In terms of the amount, the image is used specifically to illustrate the different function of eye and camera lenses. This image is intended for nonprofit education purposes and not in market competition with any other persons or organizations (purpose/effect).

Fig. 6 is an un-authored image on Kelly Oliver’s book cover. In terms of fair use, the nature of the intended use is to support Oliver’s theories on responsible and response-able witnessing. In terms of the amount, the image is used specifically in the dissertation as an analysis, which illustrates the significance of recognition and empathy. This image is intended for nonprofit education purposes and not in market competition with any other persons or organizations (purpose/effect).

Figures 7 and 8 are included on websites that discuss mirror neurons and empathy. In terms of fair use, the nature of the intended digital images are used to support my discussion on recognition and empathy. In terms of the amount, each image is used specifically in reference the way our brains function when we recognize suffering in others and respond through a process referred to as “mirroring.” These images are intended for nonprofit education purposes and not in market competition with any other persons or organizations (purpose/effect).

Fig. 9 is a widely reproduced image of Rene Magritte’s *The Treachery of Images* and can be found on Wikipedia, a public domain. In terms of fair use, the nature of the intended use of the image is to support my discussion on semiotics. In terms of the amount, the select image is used specifically in reference to significant terms/concepts discussed in the dissertation as it relates to practices of looking at visual representations. These images are intended for nonprofit education purposes and not in market competition with any other persons or organizations (purpose/effect).

Fig. 14 includes widely reproduced images that represent dangerous forms of propaganda. The image of Kim Il-Sung can be found on Wikipedia, a public domain. The image of FDR can be found on the Smithsonian website, which grants users permission to share images so long as the Smithsonian is cited as the source via terms of use. In terms of fair use, the nature of the intended use of these posters is to support my discussion on media and propaganda. Further, criticism and analysis of visual images for nonprofit educational purposes is a primary argument for fair use. In terms of the amount, each image is used specifically in reference to significant terms/concepts associated with techniques of propaganda. These images are intended for nonprofit education purposes and not in market competition with any other persons or organizations (purpose/effect).

Figures 15 & 19 are images of Nazi propaganda targeting youths. Fig. 15 can be found on the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum website, which gives permission to educators to utilize their resources with appropriate citation practices. Fig. 19 is from the cover of Hans Steinoff's film *Hitlerjunge Quex* (adapted from K.A. Schenzinger's novel by the same title.) In terms of fair use, the nature of the intended use of these posters is to support my discussion on media and propaganda. Further, criticism and analysis of visual images for nonprofit educational purposes is a primary argument for fair use. In terms of the amount, each image is used specifically in reference to significant terms/concepts associated with techniques of propaganda. These images are intended for nonprofit education purposes and not in market competition with any other persons or organizations (purpose/effect).

Figures 16-18 are still shots from widely distributed documentaries *The Eternal Jew* and *Triumph of the Will*.). In terms of fair use, the nature of the intended use of these still shots are to help students critique and analyze common themes prevalent in Nazi propaganda (e.g. unity, deification). In terms of amount, these still shots are used for analysis in-class and support discussion on propaganda tactics used by in contemporary society. These still shots are intended for nonprofit education purposes and not in market competition with any other persons or organizations (purpose/effect).

Fig. 24 is from an educational blog. In terms of fair use, the nature of the intended use is to inform others on the five filters of Noam Chomsky and Edward Herman's propaganda model. In terms of the amount, each image is used specifically in reference to significant terms/concepts discussed in the dissertation as it relates to visual rhetorical analysis. This digital image is used. This image is intended for nonprofit education purposes and not in market competition with any other persons or organizations (purpose/effect).

Figures 31, 32, and 33 are widely reproduced photographs of the atomic bomb aftermath, taken by Yosuke Yamahata. In 1952, Yamahata released these pictures to the public in order to raise awareness and preserve the memory of what happened at Hiroshima and Nagasaki so that we never forget. These images are available in a public domain on the Exploratorium website. In terms of fair use, the nature of the intended use is to inform others on the ways war photography that exists outside of American culture influences perceptions of U.S. foreign policy. In terms of the amount, each image is used specifically in reference to significant terms/concepts related to visual rhetorical analysis. These images are intended for nonprofit education purposes and not in market competition with any other persons or organizations (purpose/effect).

Figures 34, 35, and 36 are still shots from popular Steven Spielberg films and are widely recognized (amount). In terms of fair use, these still shots are intended for educational purposes to help students analyze technical and narrative aspects of framing Holocaust testimonies. In terms of the amount, each image is used to discuss specific technical terms associated with photography and film (e.g. film speed, contrast, etc.). These images

are intended for nonprofit education purposes and not in market competition with any other persons or organizations (purpose/effect).

Figures 37-40 are reproduced images of Haeberle's iconic photograph of the My Lai path. In terms of fair use, the nature of the intended use is to demonstrate to readers and students alike the ways in which doctored and reproduced renderings affect our understanding of historical events when they are taken out of context by other users. In terms of the amount, each image is used to discuss various interpretations of an image when particular linguistic elements are anchored to the image (i.e. polysemy). These images are intended for nonprofit education purposes and not in market competition with any other persons or organizations (purpose/effect).

Figure 41 is a Chinese symbol for listening that can be found on the U.S. Department of State government website, a public domain. Moreover, one cannot copyright a Chinese character.

Figures 44, 45, 46, & 48 are shared on various animal rights pages for raising awareness. In terms of fair use, the nature of the intended use is to inform readers on the importance of recognizing nonhuman suffering. Since the visual aspect of witnessing is crucial to empathy, it is important to provide a visual for readers so they can understand the ways in which human and nonhumans alike experience pain. In terms of the amount, each image is used specifically in reference to significant terms/concepts associated with the logic of sacrifice. These images are intended for nonprofit education purposes and not in market competition with any other persons or organizations (purpose/effect).

Fig. 50 is a reproduction of the well-known model referred to as Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. In terms of fair use, the nature of the intended use is to inform others on the five levels of Maslow's model. In terms of the amount, this image is used specifically in reference to the ways in which rhetoric targets the needs of the audience. This image is intended for nonprofit education purposes and not in market competition with any other persons or organizations (purpose/effect).

SAMPLE SYLLABUS (Online)

MICHIGAN TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY

UN 1015 COMPOSITION: Written, Spoken & Visual Communication

Instructor: Lindsay Hingst, PhD. Candidate in Rhetoric, Theory and Culture
Email: lahingst@mtu.edu (Please feel free to contact me with questions or concerns.)
Office Hours: TBD

Required Materials:

- ✚ Turabian, Kate. *Student's Guide to Writing College Paper*. 4th ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010.
- ✚ Arola, Kristin, J. Sheppard and C. E. Ball. *Writer/Designer: A Guide to Making Multimodal Projects*. New York: Bedford/St. Martin's Press, 2014.
- ✚ A home computer or lap top for taking notes, downloading PDFs, writing papers, etc.
- ✚ A working MTU e-mail account that you check regularly.
- ✚ Access to Canvas for announcements, homework assignments, discussions, quizzes, grades, etc.
- ✚ Supplemental readings, web site links and PowerPoints will be available via Canvas.
- ✚ A cleanly formatted flash drive (with at least **1 GB** of free space) for text and PDF storage.
- ✚ A 3-ring binder for storing supplemental reading material, handouts, notes, etc.

Welcome to UN 1015!

This handout is intended to give you a basic overview of class policies and procedures. You can only be successful at maximizing your full potential if the required work is completed and discussion boards are met with participation and enthusiasm. Completing the assigned readings and examining various audiovisual material in order to ask questions and engage in thought-provoking discussion are part of the requirements. Taking an online course provides students with the flexibility to work off campus. However, this is a reading and writing intensive class. The work load can seem overwhelming at times, and students are expected to put forth the same amount of time and effort for an online section of the course in comparison to one that meets on campus. Make sure that you are prepared to work hard so we can make this a wonderful learning and growing experience.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

UN 1015 is currently a freshman-level course that acquaints students with effective strategies for written, spoken, and audio/visual communication. Because students study, practice, and produce texts that are conveyed to target audiences through these multiple modes of communication, the course should be thought of as multimodal. You will utilize programmatic expertise in communication to build a participatory student culture and strengthen active learning. (*MTU Course Outline*)

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Learn strategies for crafting effective, research-based arguments that are appropriate for a particular audience, context, and purpose as well as demonstrating an effective use of rhetorical devices
- Learn basic research skills (i.e. using library resources, evaluating validity of sources, citing research data, etc.) and understand the expectations of academic integrity.
- Transform written texts into visual and/or aural modes that demonstrate an effective use of conventions from a particular genre or discipline
- Read, interpret, and critique complex arguments through online interactions and in-class discussions
- Analyze, proofread, and revise written research drafts through peer review process.

TIME MANAGEMENT

To get the most out of this course, remember to participate regularly in online discussions and peer reviews. Try to avoid procrastinating, and give yourself plenty of time to build on your research project.

Given that some of us are not on Eastern Time, there will be a 24 hour “window” during which you must submit all research-related major assignments. Please submit your weekly discussion board posts and responses in a timely manner. It is recommended that you check the discussion board several times per week to keep up with the class.

CANVAS COMPONENT: Course information, handouts, and/or assignments will be available on Canvas. Canvas is web-based. The address is: <http://mtu.instructure.com>. The login and password are the same as the ones you use for accessing Banweb and your Gmail account. You will need to access Canvas frequently in order to participate in on-line discussions, download assignments and supplemental reading materials, and upload attachments.

COMPUTER LITERACY: By enrolling in this class, I assume that you are familiar with the following: operating word processing software (including downloading and saving documents to flash drives), surfing the web and emailing attachments.

ASSIGNMENT POLICY:

- ✚ All assignments should be turned in by the designated due dates. ***Late work will not be accepted!!***
- ✚ All written work associated with the research paper must be submitted using PDF format. You do not need to submit PDFs for the discussion board posts OR the multimodal project.
- ✚ It is crucial for students to produce quality work in this course. Make sure that all paperwork associated with your research project fulfills the expectations outlined in course assignments. This includes creating well documented research writing that follows proper MLA or APA format. Improper documented research is plagiarism and will result in a failing grade.
- ✚ Wikipedia is not a credible source and may not be used in this class.
- ✚ There *may be* a minimum of 100-200 pages to read every week. Reading assignments will be announced weekly on Canvas, so make sure you check the web site regularly for updates or any significant changes. It is strongly recommended that you complete the readings before you participate in the discussions.
- ✚ Since we are “meeting” online, expect to spend several hours going through the assigned material, responding to peers on the discussion board, and working on your major research project.

TIPS FOR SUCCESS:

- ✓ Read and reflect upon the assigned reading material *before* submitting posts to the discussion board.
- ✓ While preparing for discussions, mark in your text (*annotate*) and/or take notes in a separate notebook about what you find important or difficult in the assigned readings. This is the *best* way to ensure that you will be able to contribute to and benefit from online interactions.
- ✓ Ask questions. Students who can identify and ask about what s/he did not understand will receive the greatest benefit from the discussion boards.
- ✓ Re-read the assigned material for clarity or to prepare for quizzes and major written assignments.
- ✓ Proofread your work two or three times prior to submission. Avoid spelling and grammatical errors.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY STATEMENT: Academic integrity is critical in this course. The use of another person’s words, organization, or ideas (including published and non-

published materials) without crediting the source is plagiarism and will not be tolerated. **Give credit where credit is due – source and cite all use of another’s work, ideas, and materials. If you copy another student’s work from the discussion boards, this will result in automatic failure of UN 1015.**

ADA STATEMENT: If you have a disability that could affect your performance in this class, please register with Christy Oslund at the Student Disability Services Office. If you need any accommodations and have already registered, please contact me as soon as possible so we can make the appropriate arrangements.

DISCUSSION BOARD:

- ✚ The weekly discussion board is intended to supplement time spent in f2f courses as well as challenge students to apply knowledge using a variety of writing techniques. Each week, I will provide instructions for the format of our online discussion; this will vary depending upon the nature of the material we are covering. Expect to write summations, critical thinking questions, and rhetorical analyses on this forum.
- ✚ Part of your discussion board grade will require you to provide peer reviews as students work through the research writing process. This is an invaluable opportunity for you to see what other students in class have created and gain insight from your peers.
- ✚ Learning to respect the diversity of others is a crucial aspect of this course. It is vital that you make thoughtful language choices in your interactions with classmates. Avoid any language or discourse that could be considered offensive. You may challenge one another, but always do so in a respectful manner. **Students who engage in inappropriate interactions may be restricted from the course.**
- ✚ Participating in the weekly online discussions is expected and essential to your success in this class. **Missing more than two weeks of online participation is the equivalent of missing more than two weeks of class and is sufficient reason for failure of the course.**

RESEARCH PAPER: A *completed* research paper should demonstrate a student’s ability to analyze a target audience, effectively implement library resources, organize ideas, and support a well-reasoned argument by incorporating the rhetorical strategies covered throughout the semester. This project must be documented using MLA format and includes a title page, 7-8 pages of research writing, and a works cited.

MULITMODAL PROJECT: The goal of this assignment is to demonstrate effective audio/visual communication using a well-crafted argument and scholarly evidence that targets a specific audience. You can focus on visual, sound and/or spoken communication using the medium of your choice (e.g. PowerPoint, Prezi, Windows Movie Maker, etc.). Students are expected to build off of their Research Paper in order to convey their argument using “frames” of rhetoric. Keep this in mind when selecting a topic and developing a story board.

SAMPLE COURSE SCHEDULE: UN 1015 Online

Theme: Exploring the Dark Side: Visual Witnessing and Responsible, Response-Able Composition Practices

Purpose: The design of this course reflects a hermeneutic approach to teaching multimodal composition. Through process-oriented writing, students will examine various forms of rhetoric applicable to the theme of the course. Reading material, short videos, documentaries, and online discussion will foster communication among *all* of us (myself included) so that we can think critically about complex issues associated with social injustice.

Specifically, we will examine significant historical events as these relate to war rhetoric, trauma theory, human suffering, and social injustice in order to inspire ethical, response-able composition practices. The content included in this course depicts images of violence and death, and the discussions will address controversial and, potentially, offensive issues. If you have delicate sensibilities, I encourage you to keep an open mind and embrace looking at the world through different theoretical “lenses.”

UN 1015 Online is a writing-intensive class, so it can be challenging and overwhelming when it is condensed into seven weeks. In order to stay on pace with the class, expect to spend several hours during the week completing the assignments. **It is highly recommended that you print out the reading material so you can take notes and annotate in the margins as you read.** This is an invaluable note-taking technique that will save you time in the long run.

Week 1: June 27-July 3

- **Research Project:**

- Read chapters 1-3 from *Student’s Guide to Writing College Papers* (Turabian) **Required Text**
- Read “A Brief Introduction to Argument” (Ainsworth) PDF
- Review “The Research Process” PowerPoint (slides 1-16)
- Review “Principles of Rhetoric and Argument” PowerPoint

- **Discussion Board:**

- Review Course Terminology website: “History of Visual Witnessing,” and “Visual Rhetoric”
- Read “Images, Politics, and Power” from *Practices of Looking* (Sturken & Cartwright) PDF
- View “Images, Politics, and Power” PowerPoint
- Read “The Rhetoric of the Image” (Barthes) PDF
- Further Reading Recommendation:

- “Myth Today” (Barthes) PDF
- **Complete Discussion Board 1 by midnight (7/1)**

Week 2: July 4-July 10

- **Research Project:**
 - **Research Proposal Due by midnight (7/5)**
 - Skim chapters 4, 5, 7, and 10 in *Student’s Guide to Writing College Papers* (44-76) **Required Text**
 - Review “The Research Process” PowerPoint (17-25) and Plagiarism PowerPoint
 - Review videos for online Library Tutorial
 - **Library Research Assignment Due by midnight (7/6)**
- **Discussion Board:**
 - Review Course Terminology website: Media and Propaganda
 - Read “Propaganda in a Democratic Society” (Huxley 132-138)PDF
 - Read “A Propaganda Model” from *Manufacturing Consent* (Herman and Chomsky) PDF
 - Skim short excerpts from “Techniques of Persuasion and Propaganda” (Shabo 5-8; 93-143)PDF
 - View select videos and images
 - Further Reading Recommendation:
 - “Media and Democracy” (Jones) PDF
 - **Complete Discussion Board 2 by midnight (7/8)**

Week 3: July 11-July 17

- **Research Project:**
 - **Extended Annotated Bibliography Due by midnight (7/11)**
 - Read chapters 8, 9, and 11 in *Student’s Guide to Writing...* (Turabian) **Required Text**
 - Read chapter 1-4 in *Writer/Designer: A Guide...* (Arola et al.) **Required Text**
 - Review Multimodal Project PowerPoint
 - Review Technical Manuals and sample student Multimodal Projects
- **Discussion Board:**
 - Read excerpt from *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World* (Scarry) PDF
 - Read “Looking at War” (Sontag) PDF
 - Review “Looking at War” PowerPoint (Sontag) PDF

- Further Reading Recommendation:
 - “The Myth of Compassion Fatigue” PDF
- **Complete Discussion Board 3 by midnight (7/15)**

Week 4: July 18-July 24

- **Research Project:**
 - **Research Outline Due by midnight (7/18)**
- **Discussion Board:**
 - Review Course Terminology website: The Body in Pain
 - Read: “The Shawl” (Ozick)PDF
 - Read “Film and History” (Zinn) PDF
 - Read “Getting to Know the Enemy” (Ambrose)
 - View *Band of Brothers*, “Why We Fight” (full episode) (will be sent via GoogleDrive)
 - **Complete Discussion Board 4 by midnight (7/22)**

Week 5: July 25-July 31

- **Research Project:**
 - **Multimodal Storyboard Due by midnight (7/25)**
 - Read chapters 12-15 from *Student’s Guide to Writing College Papers*
Required Text
 - Review chapters 6 & 7 in *Writer/Designer: A Guide...* (Arola et al.) **Required Text**
- **Discussion Board:**
 - Course Terminology website: “The Gaze” and Ethical Considerations of Witnessing Atrocity
 - Read select articles on the My Lai Massacre PDF
 - View PBS’ *American Experience: My Lai*
 - **Complete Discussion Board 5 by midnight (7/29)**

Week 6: August 1- August 7

- **Research Project:**
 - **Rough draft of Research Paper due for Peer Review by midnight (8/1)**
 - **Rough cuts of Multimodal Project for Peer Review by midnight (8/3)**
- **Discussion Board:**

- Review Course Terminology website: Rhetorical Witnessing, Responsibility, and Response-Ability
- Read “Witnessing” (Peters) PDF
- View James Nachtwey’s TED Talk: “My photographs bear witness”
- **Complete Discussion Board 6 by midnight (8/5)**

Week 7: August 8- August 14

- **Research Project:**

- **Final Research Project Due (8/8)**
- **Final Multimodal Project Due (8/10)**

- **Discussion Board:**

- Review Course Terminology website: Problems of Reproducibility and “Freezing” Trauma
- Read “Vietnam War Photography as a Locus of Memory” (Hagopian) PDF
- Read excerpt from *Distant Wars Visible: The Ambivalence of Witnessing* (Kozol) PDF
- View select images
- Further Recommended Reading:
 - “See No Evil” from *Lies My Teacher Told Me* (Loewen)PDF
 - “Torture and the Ethics of Photography” (Butler) PDF
- **Complete Discussion Board 6 by midnight (8/12)**

RESEARCH PROPOSAL

Directions: Develop 1-2 page proposal that indicates the subject of your research project, a proposed focus, driving research questions, limitations, research design, and the benefits.

Description: The theme of this course is *Exploring the Dark Side: Visual Witnessing and Responsible, Response-Able Composition Practices*. This course is designed as a hermeneutic and interdisciplinary approach to teaching multimodal composition. Through process-oriented writing, the content of this course will examine complex issues associated with social injustices to inspire response-able writing. **As such, students will select a relevant topic of local, national, or global concern with the goal of raising awareness and publishing work on the World Wide Web. Please review the contents of the Research Paper and Multimodal (A/V) Project to assist you in the brainstorming process.**

Contents of your proposal must include:

1. Statement of Problem

- What is the problem you are trying to answer/solve?
- What is the context of the paper?: the field (i.e. the audience), previous research conducted, etc.
- Who has worked on this before? (Beginning of your annotated bibliography)
- Statement of objectives: Scope and goals of the paper

2. Rationale and Significance

- Explain the “gap” you are filling. In other words, what makes the scope of your topic unique?
- Describe the “so what?” of your paper. This is the 'significance' aspect of the TQS.

3. Research Plan

- Describe your research design. Will you address a major controversial issue using Toulmin’s Approach or Cicero’s Rhetorical Design? Lay out the tentative organization. Consider a variety of organizational methods templates available in the ‘Writing Guides’ file.
- Come up with a minimum of three driving research questions that may help guide your project

4. Consider the “acknowledgement and response” (i.e. opposition).

- What are the limitations of your research project?

- Describe any opposition you expect to encounter during the research process.

5. Why is writing about this topic beneficial?

- Explain why you are interested in pursuing this topic
- Address your audience. What is your target demographic? How will you satisfy their "needs"

6. Explain how this topic will lend itself toward multimodal composition.

- What "modes" will you use? (E.g. linguist, visual, audio, etc.)
- What medium/channel? (E.g. Prezi, PowerPoint, iMovie, etc.)
- What kinds of audio/visual material will you implement into the project?

Make sure you are clear and concise in your proposal. Select a topic that will lend itself well to multimodal composition. The final draft will include visual elements such as images, borders, columns, etc. that you may want to start thinking about now. As always, I am here to help you. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me via email or during my office hours. I want to make sure that you are headed in the right direction, so make sure you get topic approval before performing any research.

Please upload your proposal in PDF format.

EXTENDED ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

DIRECTIONS: An extended annotated bibliography includes a list of the resources you intend to use for your Research Project and an assessment of their usefulness. Each source on your annotated bibliography must include specific explanations as to what the source type is and why it might be useful. As a researcher, it is crucial to ensure that you are including facts as well as expert opinion and testimony to reinforce your major argument. Avoid sources that are biased, outdated, or include information that cannot be verified elsewhere.

Requirements:

- Sources must be compiled using MLA or APA format. Create a heading and a title page header using the proper format, alphabetize your sources, and use 1/2" hanging indent when appropriate. (Please see the 'Citing and Plagiarism Guides' folder for additional information on compiling your sources.)
- The explanation/summary for each source listed should be *approximately* than 150 words in length. In your explanations, *please describe*:
 - Whether the source type is primary or secondary (try to avoid tertiary sources)
 - Who is the author? (Ethos) – consider bias/slant
 - Who is the intended audience?
 - What is the context?
 - Timeliness (e.g. 4 year window)
 - Historical context
 - Field of study
 - General purpose:
 - To inform, persuade, or entertain
 - What is the specific purpose?
 - What is the “crux” of the argument?
 - What are the overall goals of the work?
 - Which 5 key journalistic standards does the source fulfill? Which category does it fall into? (Jones)
 - Assess the supportive evidence (Logos)
 - Truth – verifiable evidence; facts
 - “truths” – subjective truths; witnessing
 - Assumptions – verifiable elsewhere?
 - Fallacies
 - Why it is a significant source and how you plan to use these parts to support your argument
 - Describe how you determined the currency and credibility of each selected source.

- Make sure that you provide a concise description and evaluation of each source's currency, credibility, and relevance to your research questions or working thesis statement.
- Your bibliography needs to be typed and double-spaced using 1" margins, and in 11 or 12 point font.
- Start researching your topic *now!*

Supportive Material:

Your annotated bibliography must include information from *each* of the following sources types:

- a mixture of primary and secondary sources that are scholarly in nature.
- min. 1-2 books or book chapters (history, biography, etc.)
- min. 2-3 periodical sources (i.e. credible newspapers such as *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, etc.)
- min. 2-3 scholarly journals (navigate such databases as EbscoHost, JSTOR, etc.)
- min. 2-3 additional *credible* sources may also be used (e.g. website, documentaries, quantitative or qualitative research data, interviews, etc.). Please contact me if you have questions about the validity of sources
- min. 1 testimony from a "first-person witness"
- Avoid using tertiary sources and web sites that are not credible!

Using the World Wide Web:

Make sure that when you are using an internet source that you can answer the following questions:

- Can I determine authorship of the site? (author/publisher):
 - Is the site sponsored by a reputable organization?
 - Who is responsible for the site?
 - Is it related to a reliable publisher or journal?
- How recent is the information? (copyright year) If it has not been updated in the last four years, search for more recent information.
- Is there contact information provided?
- Is the information verifiable elsewhere?
- What does the URL indicate? (e.g. Is it a .com, .org, .edu, etc.?)
- Is the site biased?:
 - Is it an advocacy site?
 - Is the information provided objective and accurate?
 - Who is the intended audience?
 - Does it make wild claims?
- Is it reliable?

RESEARCH OUTLINE

DIRECTIONS: For this assignment, you will need to create a typed, full-sentence outline with citations and an attached list of sources cited. Please either use APA or MLA format. Your outline **MUST** include *three* distinct parts: an introduction, body, and conclusion (Roman numerals I, II and III).

REQUIREMENTS:

- You must turn in a completed, full-sentence outline
- Outline must include all the correct labels (I,II,III; A,B,C; 1,2,3, etc.)
 - Each main point needs to include a clear, concise sentence
 - Each main point needs to include 2-3 subordinate points
 - Each subordinate point needs to include 2-3 full sentences
 - Transitions should be written out between main ideas
- Outlines should be approximately 3-4 pages in length, double-spaced. *This does not include your Works Cited or References Page.*
- Engage Your Sources
 - Use quotations accurately.
 - Cite all research data to avoid plagiarism.
 - Do not overuse quotations; more than two block quotations are too many!
 - Make sure that you cite sources even when summarizing or paraphrasing ideas.
- Include a Works Cited (MLA) or References (APA) section.
 - *Every source listed on your works cited must be cited in your outline/paper. Failure to do so is “padding,” a form of plagiarism.*
 - If there are sources you read but did not use in your paper, create a separate section on your bibliography entitled “Sources Consulted.”

BEFORE BEGINNING YOUR OUTLINE:

- Develop a *tentative thesis statement*
 - What is your argument? How will you fulfill the “so what?” of your paper?
 - Your thesis statement is tentative in the sense that your argument may shift as you delve through your research and begin organizing ideas
- **Brainstorm** – Look for ways to fill the “gaps” through your research. What are new and creative ways to approach your topic? Create research questions that will lead to interesting answers, and “scrap” those that will not (Turabian 38).
- **Gather evidence** from research; determine which information is useful and which source material to discard. Take notes and use these to narrow your topic to create greater focus.
- Choose an **Organizational Method**- What is your strategy for organizing ideas?
- Toulmin’s Approach and Cicero’s Rhetorical Design are two of the most effective organizational methods for crafting an argument

- Other methods include (but are not limited to): comparison/contrast, pro/con, causal, topical sequence, Monroe’s Motivated Sequence, comparative advantage, etc.

Your outline will be assessed based on the inclusion of the following components:

- I. The Introduction
 - Attention getter/opening statement
 - TQS established (i.e. Topic, Question, Significance)
 - Audience Analysis/Common ground established
 - Central Argument/Thesis Stated
 - Preview of Main Ideas
- II. The Body:
 - Main ideas are discrete (A, B, C, D...) (One topic sentence per paragraph)
 - At least 2-4 subordinate points per main idea (1, 2, 3...)
 - Incorporate transitional devices (transitional preview, summary, signposts, etc.)
 - Sources cited using proper format
 - The body is unified, focused and well developed.
 - Reasons are supported fully with logical explanations and research data
 - Addressed opposing viewpoints
- III. The Conclusion
 - Include a summary
 - Restate/Solidify Central Argument
 - Reflection/Observations/Solution Provided
 - Create a Lasting Impression
- Writing Style
 - Students are expected to demonstrate maturity of expression.
 - Avoid using the first-person for a formal research paper.
 - No vulgarity or colloquial diction.
 - Include a variety of sentence styles and structures to avoid repetition.
 - Your work should be proofread and free of major grammatical errors
 - Avoid digressions
 - Distinguish between your work and your research.

**The grading rubric is available here for your consideration.

RESEARCH PAPER

Directions: Students will independently create a 7-8 page documented Research Paper related to the theme of the class. It does not have to be specific to war rhetoric, but the idea is to **choose a relevant topic that addresses serious matters on a local, national or global level.** The purpose of this paper is to work toward a multimodal (AV) project that will be uploaded onto the internet to in order to demonstrate responsible, response-able composition practices. The **Research Paper** should incorporate the strategies covered throughout the semester, regarding a well-crafted and supported argumentative paper. The possibilities are endless.

REQUIREMENTS:

- A separate title page or with a running header
- 7-8 pages of text
- Double spaced, 11 or 12 pt. font, 1" margins
- A separate References or Works Cited or References page, citing *at least* 8 varied sources
- Proper MLA or APA parenthetical citations (author, year and page number [if applicable])
- Your Research Project should be of a scholarly nature, including a relevant (i.e. academic!) topic with *credible* support.
- Your primary purpose in this project is *to influence the reader/audience to adopt a particular attitude, belief or value or motivate the audience to take an action.* Be sure to include ethical, logical, and emotional appeals in your writing (ethos, logos, pathos).
- Your paper must be free of grammatical and spelling errors. If your work clearly has not been proofread and is illegible, you will receive a failing grade.
- All paperwork associated with your research paper must be turned in on time! This includes a References page or Works Cited and the appropriate parenthetical citations. Failure to properly document research is plagiarism and will result in a failing grade.
- Wikipedia is not a credible source and may not be used in this class. Avoid web sites that do not include authorship, copyright information, a ‘contact us’ tab, and/or information that can be verified elsewhere.

There are a variety of approaches you can choose from including (but not limited to):

- environmental issues (e.g. water contamination, industrial waste)
- corruption (Wall Street, government cover ups)
- social injustice (race, gender or class issues)

- conspiracy theories (Pearl Harbor, JFK, 9/11)
- terrorism, torture, or genocide (9/11, Guantanamo Bay)
- population control (eugenics, one-child policies)
- rape warfare
- domestic violence
- technological determinism (e.g. radiation testing on human subjects, drone warfare)
- war rhetoric

SUGGESTIONS:

*Start surfing the internet now to get ideas, and feel free to run them by me if you have questions or need suggestions. One place to start might be to watch various news programs to determine current topics of concern, but it might be better to look at international news sources to get a broader scope. There are many controversial issues that are not mentioned in our media system, and these are oftentimes the best topics to explore.

*Reading materials, PowerPoints, handouts, and discussion board threads will be available on Canvas to help students work through the stages of completing this assignment including understanding audience analysis, the research process, organizational methods and proper MLA & APA citing.

*Choose a topic of some substance or importance to you. Be creative, and look for ways to use your personal knowledge, experience, and background to your advantage. Think about what topics spark your interest or curiosity.

*You will be spending the entire semester working on this paper, then turning it into a multimodal (A/V) project. So once you have chosen your topic, start looking for images and visual representations right way.

*Get my approval for a topic before you start doing some hard-core research so I can make sure you are headed in the right direction.

MULTIMODAL PROJECT

"To be deeply literate in the digital world means being skilled at deciphering complex images and sounds as well as the syntactical subtleties of words. Above all, it means being at home in a shifting mix of words, images, and sounds."

-Richard Lanham

DIRECTIONS: The goal of this assignment is to demonstrate effective visual, linguistic, aural, spatial, and gestural communication in order to create a well-crafted proposal that takes into account various aspects of the rhetorical situation: audience, purpose, and context. Students are expected to build off of their Research Paper in order to accomplish this task.

All final projects are due by Friday, December 11th.

PROJECT/PRESENTATION REQUIREMENTS:

- For video or audio recordings, **your presentation should be approximately 3-5 minutes in length. Do not exceed the time limit.**
- Be sure to include ethical, logical, and emotional appeals in your project (ethos, logos, pathos).
- The format of a formal presentation and/or audio/video recording needs to include an introduction, body and conclusion.
- Your project must include oral or in-text citations.
- After you have completed and revised your audio/visual project, you must publish the final product on the internet. Make sure to choose a title that will make your project easy to access through any basic search engine (e.g. Google).
- You must provide a Works Cited with 5 scholarly sources (minimum) within the project (e.g. a separate PowerPoint slides, credits at the end of the video, or separate PDF or Word document etc.). **This is required!!** You may use sources from your Research Paper.
- Students who do not fulfill the research component of this project and do not cite their sources properly will not receive a passing grade.
- Please review chapter for in *Writer/Designer: A Guide to Making Multimodal Projects* for a better understanding of the best way to cite images used for A/V projects.
- Power Point may be used for graphs, charts, and pictures only. **NO BLOCKS OF TEXT!** Text usage should be done tastefully and effectively, but your slides should be primarily visual. Slides must help to clarify and enhance your argument.

- Do not just read your research paper and record it; create a very short "script" based on the ideas presented in your paper. This should be clear and concise, because this is a different medium of communication.

For the project, you may choose to incorporate any of the following audio/visual elements:

- Slide ware, images, graphs, maps, charts, or photographs
- Web sites or blog with audiovisual elements
- Video clips (interviews, documented footage, borrowed footage)
- Audio clips (sound effects, musical elements, sound bytes)

You may choose any of the following suggestions (but are not limited to these):

- A self-running PowerPoint slideshow with recorded narration
- A Prezi presentation converted into a video
- A podcast or short documentary video
- Web sites or blog with audiovisual elements
- A video recorded commercial or PSA (i.e. public service announcement)
- A radio advertisement or PSA (i.e. public service announcement)
- A "faux" newscast (satire/parody)
- A magazine or newspaper

The possibilities are endless, so have fun with this project, and *be creative!!*

SOFTWARE TO CONSIDER USING:

- Microsoft Word, PowerPoint or Publisher
- Prezi
- Audacity
- Windows Movie Maker, iMovie
- Adobe Photoshop, InDesign, or any web design program

HARDWARE YOU MAY NEED:

- Cameras
- Sound recording equipment
- Computer, lap top and/or iPad

IMPORTANT DUE DATES:

- **Storyboard - Due by:**
 - Read chapters 1-4 in *Writer/Designer: A Guide to Making Multimodal Projects* (Arola et al.) before completing this assignment.
- **Rough Cut - Due by:**
 - Read chapters 6 & 7 in *Writer/Designer: A Guide to Making Multimodal Projects* before completing this assignment.
- **Final Project - Due by:**
 - Review chapters 6 & 7 in *Writer/Designer: A Guide to Making Multimodal Projects* before completing this assignment.

Students will be assessed based on the following:

Rhetorical function: A target audience is identifiable; the purpose of the argument is clear; the context situates the project in a specific field while explaining the “gap” you are filling. Ethos, logos, and pathos are effectively established. The project evidences an obvious investment of time, energy, creativity and professionalism

For linguistic (spoken) communication: The speaker’s pitch, tone, volume, pronunciation, enunciation, and pace of articulation convey fluency of expression and suggest that the project has been rehearsed for a listening public. Word choice, organization of ideas, and development and coherence of ideas enhance the project.

For aural (sound) communication: Sound effects and/or soundtracks meaningfully contribute to the rhetorical effects of the project. This includes music, sound effects, ambient noise/sounds, silence, tones, volume, and emphasis.

For visual communication: Project represents a thoughtful application of design principles or, more generally, a design strategy. Key components of the project have a specific rhetorical purpose including use of color, layout, style, size, and/or perspective.

For gestural aspects of delivery: The speaker’s eye contact, facial expressions, posture, gestures, appearance, conversational style, confidence and competence will be assessed.

Overall: The project evidences an obvious investment of time, energy, and consideration of the target audience. The project demonstrates clarity, creativity and professionalism.

Here is a copy of the grading rubric for your consideration.

WEBSITE ANALYSIS

DIRECTIONS: Select a website that bears witness to an issue of great importance. Examine your chosen website and answer the following questions:

- How does the website capture your attention?
- What *need* does this advertisement appeal to? (See Maslow's Hierarchy)
 - A physical need (hunger, thirst, sex, rest and relaxation?)
 - A safety need?
 - A need to belong?
 - A need to feel important (esteem)?
 - A need to live up to your highest expectations (self-actualization)?
- How does the website make its appeal? (Re: ethos, logos, pathos)
 - What argumentative purpose does the visual text convey?
 - What do the creator and distributors intend its logical appeal to be? Are there any fallacies present?
 - What emotions does the advertisement evoke?
 - Who created/distributed this website? Describe the ethos of the author. What does the creator's attitude seem to be toward the argument?
- Address the visual and linguist modes of communication. How is the website composed in terms of text and content?
 - What is your eye drawn to first? Why?
 - What is in the foreground/background? What is in or out of focus? What's place high/low? What is to the left, in the center, and to the right? What effect do these placements have on the message?
 - Is any information (such as a word, object, person or scene) highlighted to draw the viewer's attention?
 - How are light and color used? How are font size, color, shape, etc. type etc. used? What effects are they intended to have on viewers?
 - What details are included or emphasized? What details are omitted or deemphasized?
- Look carefully at the image(s) and read the text several times. In what ways do the words and images interact with one another?
 - What is the effect of the visual elements by themselves?
 - What is the function of linguistic elements in relation to the visual elements?
 - What difference would it make if you saw the images without the text, or if you read the text first and were then presented with the images?
- What overall impression does the website create for viewers?

SOURCE ANALYSIS

DIRECTIONS: Read James Loewen’s “Watching Big Brother” and Howard Zinn’s “Government Lies.” Then, watch the clips from Joe Rogan’s “American War Machine” and John Perkins’ “Confessions of an Economic Hitman.” In small groups, analyze the credibility of these sources to the best of your ability. Please collaborate as a group, and write your answers on a separate sheet of paper.

Analyzing Sources:

- 1) Who is the author? (Ethos) – consider bias/slant
- 2) Who is the intended audience?
- 3) What is the context?
 - a. Timeliness (e.g. 4 year window)
 - b. Historical context
 - c. Field of study
- 4) General purpose:
 - a. To inform
 - b. To persuade
 - c. To entertain
- 5) What is the specific purpose?
 - a. What is the “crux” of the argument?
 - b. What are the overall goals of the work?
- 6) Which 5 key journalistic standards does the source fulfill? Which category does it fall into? (Jones)
 - a. Traditional, Tabloid, Activism, Entertainment
 - b. Accuracy, balance, holding government accountable, separation of news from editorials and ads, checks on profit
- 7) Supportive evidence
 - a. Truth – verifiable evidence; facts
 - b. “truths” – subjective truths; witnessing
 - c. Assumptions – verifiable?
 - d. Fallacies
- 8) Technical communication (multimodality) (Pathos)
 - a. How are events, ideas, etc. “framed”?
 - b. Visual communication: images, panning, zooming, sequence of shots, cropping, editing (cutting/splicing), angle of shots (e.g. aerial shot, close up, pull back shot, tilt shot etc.) focusing, lighting, etc.
 - c. Auditory: musical elements (crescendo/decrescendo, tempo, rhythm, tones [high/low], melody, bass, etc.)

VISUAL RHETORICAL ANALYSIS

PURPOSE:

- To fulfill the role of student *and* teacher
- To review/summarize and critique the reading material.
- To answer/raise questions of significance
- To demonstrate “active” reading

Part 1: Synthesis Statement

DIRECTIONS: In reference to this week's assigned reading material, address the following:

1. Write a synthesis statement that summarizes the central purpose and main ideas of these pieces. Indicate which ideas/concepts you think are particularly profound or useful and/or comment on points of agreement/departure between the authors. This section should be paraphrased and approximately 500-600 words. Be clear and concise.
2. Provide at least two significant quotes from each chapter.
3. Raise a minimum of three open-ended critical thinking questions for your peers.
4. Answer questions posted from at least two peers during this discussion.

Part 2: Application

DIRECTIONS: For the next exercise, examine each of the images on slides 24-29. Provide a brief analysis of each image by addressing the following:

1. The denotative meaning versus the connotative meanings. Decode/interpret the images to the best of your ability by referring directly to various aspects of the composition (symbols, color/contrast, foreground/background, subject matter, "framing" of the composition, etc.). Provide specific details.
2. The social, historical, and cultural aspects. Examine the ways in which meanings may have changed over time as well as the ways in which viewers from different regions of the world may respond to these images as a result of mass reproduction. Finally, consider the ways in which each of these images has become iconic.

NOTE: You may or may not be familiar with some of these images. If you are not familiar with the any of these images, interpret what you see based on the information available. No outside research is necessary for this writing exercise.

REQUIRMENTS:

- Provide two separate, numbered sections (e.g. Part 1, Part 2, etc.)
- Make sure that you address every component to the questions above.
- Make sure to be descriptive in your answers to peers by providing specific examples and/or direct references to the reading material.
- Terms and concepts need to be integrated throughout your writing to demonstrate your understanding of the reading material
- Make sure to cite the quotations you select for your post.
- No spelling, grammatical, or typographical errors.

Your work will be assessed as follows:

A/AB: A response that is exceptional. It demonstrates the student's ability to read, reflect, and provide specific examples. Terms and concepts are integrated throughout the response. All criteria for the assignment are satisfactory. The response is free of sentence structure, usage, and spelling errors. It may contain a few minor punctuation errors.

B/BC: A response that is solid and fulfills the assignment. However, some statements and/or examples are vague and underdeveloped. Terms/concepts only appeared in a few parts of the post. The response contains grammatical and structural errors but not enough to make reading difficult. It is free of spelling errors.

C/CD: A response that is adequate but not very effective in responding to the assignment. Parts of the assignment have not been addressed and/or ideas are not sufficiently developed. Terms/concepts were used sparingly. The response contains generalizations supported with one-sentence reasons or examples. Organization is discernible but may be difficult to follow. Reading is made difficult by awkward phrasing or sentence structure and/or grammatical errors. Nonstandard English may be present and the post lacks a maturity of expression. The response does not follow all of the criteria outlined on the assignment.

D A response that is difficult to read. It contains vague language and reflects little complexity of ideas. The post lacks examples and reads more like a summary than an analysis. None of the components listed on the assignment appear in the response. The student failed to apply terms and concepts within the post. It fails to develop or support a thesis. Nonstandard English and multiple grammatical errors are present. Clearly it has not been proofread. It lacks a maturity of expression.

F: All of the above, except this response has serious weakness in both content and mechanics.

PROPAGANDA RHETORICAL ANALYSIS

DIRECTIONS: Using basic concepts from this week's reading material, find an artifact that reflects elements of propaganda. This may be a documentary or narrative film, an advertisement, a photograph, a poster, a work of art, or any other multimodal artifact that you think might be appropriate for this assignment.

Examine the positive and/or negative aspects of propaganda by addressing the following:

- From Shabo's *Techniques of Persuasion and Propaganda*:
 - What are the persuasive functions of your artifact? Consider message design, either underlying or explicit; and, the use of persuasive appeal tactics (i.e. ethos, logos and pathos).
 - What are the overall goals of your artifact? Would these fall under the category of positive or negative propaganda, according to Shabo?
 - Who is the target audience?
 - What is the agenda of the creators? Consider the bias and/or slant presented.
 - Examine the use of fallacies (overgeneralizations, faulty analogy, faulty cause and effect, non sequitur, ad hominem, bandwagon, and/or appeal to authority) or emotional appeals.
- From an audio/visual perspective:
 - Examine the audio/visual components of these artifacts and the ways in which these serve an argumentative purpose. How is the medium composed to convey spoken, visual and auditory messages?
 - Consider different types of sound; the use of lighting and color; and, "framing." On what details does the artifact focus? What is emphasized, and what is omitted?
- In reference to the articles by Shabo and Huxley:
 - What arguments or critiques might these sources make regarding your chosen artifact?
- Pose a minimum of three open-ended questions for your peers to answer regarding your chosen artifact.
- Respond to at least two of your peers' questions.

Requirements:

- Your response should be written in paragraph format and include a minimum of 500-600 words.
- Apply terms and concepts from Huxley and Shabo in order to provide an in-depth analysis. The relevance of the sources will depend upon the artifact you are describing.
- Terms and concepts need to be integrated throughout your writing to demonstrate your understanding of the reading material.

- Pose *a minimum* of three open-ended questions for your peers to answer regarding your chosen artifact.
- Respond to *at least* two of your peers' questions.
- No spelling, grammatical, or typographical errors.

Additional questions to consider:

- How does the piece of propaganda capture your attention?
- What need does it appeal to? (physiological, safety, belonging, esteem, self-actualization)
- How does it makes its appeal?
 - What argumentative purpose does the visual/textual content convey?
 - What do the creators intend its logical appeal to be? Are there any fallacies present?
 - Who emotions does it evoke?
- Look carefully at the images/text. In what ways do the image(s) and words interact with one another? What is the effect of the image by itself? What is the function of the words that accompany the text?
- How are the visual elements composed?
 - What is your eye drawn to first? Why?
 - What is in the foreground/background?
 - What is in or out of focus?
 - What is to the left, in the center, and to the right?
 - How are light and color used?
 - How are font size, color, shape, etc. used? What effects are they intended to have on the viewers?
- What overall impression does the visual text create in viewers?

Artifacts for consideration:

- The Eternal Jew
- WWII Disney Propaganda
- Education for Death: The Making of the Nazi
- Nazi Propaganda posters
- Obama's "Yes we can" music video (c. 2008)
- Ronald Reagan campaign ad (c. 1984)
- George W. Bush campaign ad (c. 2004)
- Hillary Clinton campaign ad (c. 2008)
- Mike Huckabee campaign ad (c. 2008)
- World War I propaganda
- World War II propaganda
- Vietnam war propaganda
- Iraq War propaganda
- 9/11 propaganda

MEDIA AND PROPAGANDA

PURPOSE:

- To fulfill the role of student *and* teacher
- To review/summarize and critique the reading material.
- To answer/raise questions of significance
- To demonstrate “active” reading

Section One: Reading Notes

DIRECTIONS: For this week's discussion board, you will create reading notes that synthesize major concepts in order to apply these to two select films. Your notes must include two distinct sections: one for summation, the other for critique. Respond to the assigned reading material by writing two fully developed paragraphs.

1. The first paragraph should resemble an abstract where you will summarize the central argument, main ideas, and potential findings of the readings. This paragraph should be approximately 150-200 words.
2. The second paragraph can: be a critique of the readings; indicate why you think particular ideas/concepts are useful or not; call attention to points of agreement and/or departure among other readings. *Do not summarize the article or chapter in this paragraph.* Rather, analyze and/or critique the strengths/weaknesses readings. The most important thing is to demonstrate “active” reading. This paragraph should be approximately 350 words.
3. Include a minimum of three significant quotations from the text (include the author's last name and page #). *Be selective* in the quotations that you include. You may want to utilize these in order to raise questions or bring up major points of significance.
4. Include a minimum of three open-ended and/or critical thinking questions for class discussion.

Guidelines:

- Type your response using Times New Roman, 12 pt. font, and 1” margins. The document may be single or double-spaced.
- Include a heading with your name, the course, your instructor's name, and the date
- Keep your eye on the argument or central idea rather than the author's writing style.
- Consider the historical context out of which the writing is constituted. Be fair to the author.
- Find a “take-away” or two from the text.
- Take time to reflect upon the reading material before crafting your questions.
- Annotate as you read. This will save you time!

- Write in an academic style using the standard conventions of academic English. If your work clearly has not been proofread and is illegible, you will receive point deductions.

Part Two: Audio/Visual Source Analysis

DIRECTIONS: For the next exercise, review *Orwell Rolls in His Grave* and *American War Machine* by addressing the following:

1. Critique *Orwell Rolls in His Grave* and *American War Machine*. Refer to the 'Source Analysis' criteria that you will use to analyze sources as you prepare for your Extended Annotated Bibliography.
2. In what ways do these videos qualify as forms of propaganda? Use terms/concepts from Herman and Chomsky, Huxley and /or Shabo to analyze/critique the quality of these sources. Consider rational vs. nonrational propaganda, persuasive function, target audience, the agenda, use of faulty reasoning and/or emotional appeals. Also keep in mind the use of audio/visual elements to create an intended effect by the rhetors.
3. Raise a minimum of three open-ended critical thinking questions for your peers.
4. Answer questions posted from at least two peers during this discussion.

Your work will be assessed as follows:

A/AB: A response that is exceptional. It demonstrates the student's ability to read, reflect, and provide specific examples. Terms and concepts are integrated throughout the response. All criteria for the assignment are satisfactory. The response is free of sentence structure, usage, and spelling errors. It may contain a few minor punctuation errors.

B/BC: A response that is solid and fulfills the assignment. However, some statements and/or examples are vague and underdeveloped. Terms/concepts only appeared in a few parts of the post. The response contains grammatical and structural errors but not enough to make reading difficult. It is free of spelling errors.

C/CD: A response that is adequate but not very effective in responding to the assignment. Parts of the assignment have not been addressed and/or ideas are not sufficiently developed. Terms/concepts were used sparingly. The response contains generalizations supported with one-sentence reasons or examples. Organization is discernible but may be difficult to follow. Reading is made difficult by awkward phrasing or sentence structure and/or grammatical errors. .

D: A response that is difficult to read. It contains vague language and reflects little complexity of ideas. None of the components listed on the assignment appear in the response. The student failed to apply terms and concepts within the post. It fails to develop or support a thesis. Multiple grammatical errors are present.

F: All of the above, except this response has serious weakness in both content and mechanics.

NAZI PROPAGANDA

PURPOSE:

- To fulfill the role of student *and* teacher
- To synthesize the reading material.
- To answer/raise questions of significance
- To demonstrate “active” reading
- To analyze an artifact by applying relevant concepts

Part 1: Synthesis Statement

DIRECTIONS: In reference to "Goebbels the Propagandist" and excerpts from *The Triumph of Propaganda*:

1. Write a *brief* statement that describes central concepts presented by Welch and Hoffman. Indicate which ideas/concepts you think are particularly profound or useful. *This section should be paraphrased and should not exceed 400 words. Be clear and concise.*
2. Provide *at least* 2-3 significant quotes from the articles.
3. Raise *a minimum* of three open-ended critical thinking questions for your peers. You may want to reference your chosen artifact (see Part 2).
4. Answer questions posted from *at least* two peers during this discussion.

Part 2: Application

DIRECTIONS: Find an artifact that reflects elements of Nazi propaganda (see **Tasks for Week 4**). This may be a documentary, an advertisement, a photograph, a poster, a work of art, or any other audio/visual artifact that you think might be appropriate for this assignment. Provide a short analysis by addressing the following:

1. Consider the persuasive functions of your artifact. This includes message design and persuasive appeal tactics. You may want to refer back to Huxley's "Propaganda in a Democratic Society", Shabo's *Techniques of Persuasion and Propaganda*, and/or the Principles of Rhetoric PowerPoint to review key terms/concepts. For example: What are the overall goals of your artifact? Would these fall under the category of *positive* or *negative* propaganda? Who is the *target audience*? What is the *agenda* of the creators? Consider the bias and/or slant presented. Examine the use of fallacies or emotional appeals.
2. In reference to "The Power of Nazi Propaganda" and the articles by Welch and Hoffman:
 - Which aspects demonstrate the goals of Hitler's and/or Goebbels' vision?
 - What arguments or critiques might these sources make regarding your chosen artifact?

3. Raise *a minimum* of three open-ended critical thinking questions for your peers. You may want to reference your chosen artifact (see Part 2).
4. Answer questions posted from *at least* two peers during this discussion.

REQUIREMENTS:

- Provide two separate, numbered sections (e.g. Part 1, Part 2, etc.)
- Make sure that you address every component to the questions above.
- Make sure to be descriptive in your answers to peers by providing specific examples and/or direct references to the reading material.
- Terms and concepts need to be integrated throughout your writing to demonstrate your understanding of the reading material
- No spelling, grammatical, or typographical errors

Your work will be assessed as follows:

A/AB: A response that is exceptional. It demonstrates the student's ability to read, reflect, and provide specific examples. Terms and concepts are integrated throughout the response. All criteria for the assignment are satisfactory. The response is free of sentence structure, usage, and spelling errors. It may contain a few minor punctuation errors.

B/BC: A response that is solid and fulfills the assignment. However, some statements and/or examples are vague and underdeveloped. Terms/concepts only appeared in a few parts of the post. The response contains grammatical and structural errors but not enough to make reading difficult. It is free of spelling errors.

C/CD: A response that is adequate but not very effective in responding to the assignment. Parts of the assignment have not been addressed and/or ideas are not sufficiently developed. Terms/concepts were used sparingly. The response contains generalizations supported with one-sentence reasons or examples. Organization is discernible but may be difficult to follow. Reading is made difficult by awkward phrasing or sentence structure and/or grammatical errors.

D: A response that is difficult to read. It contains vague language and reflects little complexity of ideas. The post lacks examples and fails to demonstrate "active" reading. None of the components listed on the assignment appear in the response. The student failed to apply terms and concepts within the post. Nonstandard English and multiple grammatical errors are present. Clearly it has not been proofread. It lacks a maturity of expression.

F:

All of the above, except this response has serious weakness in both content and mechanics.

WORLD WAR 2 PROPAGANDA

PURPOSE:

- To fulfill the role of student *and* teacher
- To synthesize the reading material.
- To answer/raise questions of significance
- To demonstrate “active” reading
- To analyze an artifact by applying relevant concepts

Part 1: Synthesis Statement

DIRECTIONS: In reference to "Goebbels the Propagandist," excerpts from *The Triumph of Propaganda*, and excerpts from *Dr. Seuss Goes to War*:

1. Write a *brief* synthesis statement that describes central concepts presented by the authors. Indicate which ideas/concepts you think are particularly profound or useful. *This section should be paraphrased and should not exceed 500 words. Be clear and concise.*
2. Provide *at least* 2-3 significant quotes from the articles.
3. Raise a *minimum* of three open-ended critical thinking questions for your peers. You may want to reference your chosen artifact (see Part 2).
4. Answer questions posted from *at least* two peers during this discussion.

Part 2: Application

DIRECTIONS: Choose one of the pieces of visual rhetoric we examined in class: a) *Triumph of the Will* b) *Education for Death: The Making of the Nazi* (Walt Disney) or c) any of the political cartoons from Dr. Seuss. Provide a short analysis by addressing the following:

1. Consider the persuasive functions of your artifact. This includes message design and persuasive appeal tactics. You may want to refer back to Huxley's "Propaganda in a Democratic Society", Shabo's *Techniques of Persuasion and Propaganda*, and/or course website to review key terms/concepts. For example: What are the overall goals of your artifact? Would these fall under the category of *positive* or *negative* propaganda? Who is the *target audience*? What is the *agenda* of the creators? Consider the bias and/or slant presented. Examine the use of fallacies or emotional appeals.
2. In reference to this week's reading material:
 - Which aspects demonstrate the overall goals of propaganda?
 - What argument might the authors make regarding your chosen artifact?
3. Raise a *minimum* of three open-ended critical thinking questions for your peers. You may want to reference your chosen artifact.

4. Answer questions posted from *at least* two peers during this discussion.

REQUIREMENTS:

- Provide two separate, numbered sections (e.g. Part 1, Part 2, etc.)
- Make sure that you address every component to the questions above.
- Make sure to be descriptive in your answers to peers by providing specific examples and/or direct references to the reading material.
- Terms and concepts need to be integrated throughout your writing to demonstrate your understanding of the reading material
- No spelling, grammatical, or typographical errors

Your work will be assessed as follows:

A/AB: A response that is exceptional. It demonstrates the student's ability to read, reflect, and provide specific examples. Terms and concepts are integrated throughout the response. All criteria for the assignment are satisfactory. The response is free of sentence structure, usage, and spelling errors. It may contain a few minor punctuation errors.

B/BC: A response that is solid and fulfills the assignment. However, some statements and/or examples are vague and underdeveloped. Terms/concepts only appeared in a few parts of the post. The response contains grammatical and structural errors but not enough to make reading difficult. It is free of spelling errors.

C/CD: A response that is adequate but not very effective in responding to the assignment. Parts of the assignment have not been addressed and/or ideas are not sufficiently developed. Terms/concepts were used sparingly. The response contains generalizations supported with one-sentence reasons or examples. Organization is discernible but may be difficult to follow. Reading is made difficult by awkward phrasing or sentence structure and/or grammatical errors. Nonstandard English may be present and the post lacks a maturity of expression. The response does not follow all of the criteria outlined on the assignment.

D: A response that is difficult to read. It contains vague language and reflects little complexity of ideas. The post lacks examples and fails to demonstrate "active" reading. None of the components listed on the assignment appear in the response. The student failed to apply terms and concepts within the post. Nonstandard English and multiple grammatical errors are present. Clearly it has not been proofread. It lacks a maturity of expression.

F: All of the above, except this response has serious weakness in both content and mechanics.

VIEWING THE BODY IN PAIN-PART 1

PURPOSE:

- To fulfill the role of student *and* teacher
- To review/summarize and critique the reading material.
- To answer/raise questions of significance
- To demonstrate “active” reading

Part 1: Summation

DIRECTIONS: In reference to Elaine Scarry's introduction to *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World*, address the following:

1. Write a *brief* statement (similar to an abstract) to summarize the central purpose and main ideas. Indicate which ideas/concepts you think are particularly profound or useful. *This section should be paraphrased be approximately 500-600 words. Be clear and concise.*
2. Provide *at least* 2-3 significant quotes from the articles.
3. Raise *a minimum* of three open-ended critical thinking questions for your peers.
4. Answer questions posted from *at least* two peers during this discussion.

Part 2: Summation

DIRECTIONS: In reference to Susan Sontag's article "Looking at War: Photography's view of devastation and death," address the following:

1. Write a *brief* statement (similar to an abstract) to summarize the central purpose and main ideas. Indicate which ideas/concepts you think are particularly profound or useful. *This section should be paraphrased be approximately 500-600 words. Be clear and concise.*
2. Provide *at least* 2-3 significant quotes from the articles.
3. Raise *a minimum* of three open-ended critical thinking questions for your peers.
4. Answer questions posted from *at least* two peers during this discussion.

NOTE: Terms/concepts for *both* of these articles will be necessary to complete the film analysis you will be working on next week. Make sure to give yourself enough time to work through these pieces. Scarry's piece in particular is *extremely* dense, so keep your eye on central ideas, and take excellent notes.

Your work will be assessed as follows:

A/AB:

A response that is exceptional. It demonstrates the student's ability to read, reflect, and provide specific examples. Terms and concepts are integrated throughout the response. All criteria for the assignment are satisfactory. The response is free of sentence structure, usage, and spelling errors. It may contain a few minor punctuation errors.

B/BC:

A response that is solid and fulfills the assignment. However, some statements and/or examples are vague and underdeveloped. Terms/concepts only appeared in a few parts of the post. The response contains grammatical and structural errors but not enough to make reading difficult. It is free of spelling errors.

C/CD:

A response that is adequate but not very effective in responding to the assignment. Parts of the assignment have not been addressed and/or ideas are not sufficiently developed. Terms/concepts were used sparingly. The response contains generalizations supported with one-sentence reasons or examples. Organization is discernible but may be difficult to follow. Reading is made difficult by awkward phrasing or sentence structure and/or grammatical errors. Nonstandard English may be present and the post lacks a maturity of expression. The response does not follow all of the criteria outlined on the assignment.

D

A response that is difficult to read. It contains vague language and reflects little complexity of ideas. The post lacks examples and fails to demonstrate "active" reading. None of the components listed on the assignment appear in the response. The student failed to apply terms and concepts within the post. Nonstandard English and multiple grammatical errors are present. Clearly it has not been proofread. It lacks a maturity of expression.

F:

All of the above, except this response has serious weakness in both content and mechanics.

VIEWING THE BODY IN PAIN-PART 2

PURPOSE:

- To fulfill the role of student *and* teacher
- To summarize and synthesize reading material and audio/visual artifacts
- To analyze artifacts using relevant terms/concepts
- To demonstrate “active” reading

DIRECTIONS: In reference to Stephen Spielberg's *Band of Brothers* episode "Why We Fight" and Cynthia Ozick's "The Shawl," address the following:

1. Write a *brief* statement to *summarize* the central theme and plot of "Why We Fight." Consider such rhetorical dimensions as purpose, context, and audience as well as ethos, logos, and pathos. Compare to Ambrose's version of events in "Getting to Know the Enemy."
2. Write a *brief* statement that analyzes the formal elements of the film. In terms of audio/visual elements, examine the use of musical score, sound effects, lighting, color scheme, angle, focus, etc. that illustrate Spielberg's "framing" of events. What is the function/purpose of these devices? In what ways do these devices compare to Ambrose's version of events? Use specific examples to support your ideas.
3. Write a *brief* statement to *summarize* the central theme and plot of "The Shawl." Consider such rhetorical dimensions as purpose, context, and audience as well as ethos, logos, and pathos.
4. Write a *brief* statement that analyzes the formal elements of the short story. In terms of linguistic elements, examine the use of setting, character, symbolism, imagery, point of view, figurative language, etc. that illustrate Ozick's "framing" of events. What is the function/purpose of these devices? Use specific examples to support your ideas.
5. Finally, write a *brief* statement that *applies* concepts from Scarry, Sontag, and Zinn to reflect upon the effects, problems, and ethical considerations of producing these "frames" of World War 2. What are the potential emotional, perceptual, and somatic experiences of audiences when exposed to these very different "frames" of World War 2? Compare/contrast.

REQUIREMENTS:

- Your response should provide a well-developed paragraph for each statement. You may choose to number your responses, OR write a response in essay format.
- Review the following artifacts:
 - Steven Spielberg's "Why We Fight" (compare to "Getting to Know the Enemy")
 - Cynthia Ozick's "The Shawl"
- Apply concepts from the following references:

- Elaine Scarry's introduction to *The Body in Pain*
- Susan Sontag's "Looking at War"
- Incorporate one significant quotation from each of the aforementioned readings to support your ideas. Be selective! Your work should be mostly paraphrased; please do not just copy and paste "chunks" of the text into your writing.
- **Please cite the reading material using MLA or APA format. Failure to properly cite your sources will result in a failing grade for this assignment.**
- Examples and illustrations help to clarify your ideas
- Terms and concepts need to be integrated throughout your writing to demonstrate your understanding of the reading material
- No spelling, grammatical, or typographical errors.

Your work will be assessed as follows:

A/AB: A response that is exceptional. It demonstrates the student's ability to read, reflect, and provide specific examples. Terms and concepts are integrated throughout the response. All criteria for the assignment are satisfactory. The response is free of sentence structure, usage, and spelling errors. It may contain a few minor punctuation errors.

B/BC: A response that is solid and fulfills the assignment. However, some statements and/or examples are vague and underdeveloped. Terms/concepts only appeared in a few parts of the post. The response contains grammatical and structural errors but not enough to make reading difficult. It is free of spelling errors.

C/CD: A response that is adequate but not very effective in responding to the assignment. Parts of the assignment have not been addressed and/or ideas are not sufficiently developed. Terms/concepts were used sparingly. The response contains generalizations supported with one-sentence reasons or examples. Organization is discernible but may be difficult to follow. Reading is made difficult by awkward phrasing or sentence structure and/or grammatical errors.

D: A response that is difficult to read. It contains vague language and reflects little complexity of ideas. The post lacks examples and fails to demonstrate "active" reading. None of the components listed on the assignment appear in the response. The student failed to apply terms and concepts within the post. Nonstandard English and multiple grammatical errors are present. Clearly it has not been proofread. It lacks a maturity of expression.

F: All of the above, except this response has serious weakness in both content and mechanics.

FRAMES OF MY LAI: ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS OF ATROCITY-PRODUCING SITUATIONS

PURPOSE:

- To fulfill the role of student *and* teacher
- To review rhetorical "artifacts"
- To present a clear and concise argument
- To answer/raise questions of significance
- To demonstrate "active" reading

DIRECTIONS:

1. Write a 500-600 word *argument* that addresses the questions below. *This does not include select quotations; paraphrase.*
2. Incorporate *at least 3* significant quotations from various articles. *Be selective!*
3. Raise *a minimum* of three open-ended critical thinking questions for your peers.
4. Answer questions posted from *at least* two peers during this discussion.

In your response, address the following:

1.) Ethical considerations of soldiers' behaviors while engaged in atrocity-producing situations:

- What constitutes a war crime?
- Who should be held responsible for the My Lai incident? The soldiers? Their commanders? The U.S. government? The military industrial complex? Refer to PBS' *American Experience, Facing My Lai, Winter Soldier Investigation*, and John Kerry's *testimony* before Congress. For further reading, you may want to peruse some of the articles from *Vietnam War Crimes*.

2.) Ethical considerations of war photographers:

- What role should photographers play during an atrocity-producing situation?
- Do you agree or disagree with Haeberle's role in the massacre?

3.) Ethical considerations of mass reproduction:

- Describe the "**framing**" of the events at My Lai as these are presented in *LIFE* magazine. Consider rhetorical dimensions of this artifact.
- What are the effects of these particular "frames" of war?
- What are the benefits and drawbacks of photography as a form of "rhetorical witnessing"? (Refer to **Course Terminology** for further explanation of important terms/concepts.)

REQUIREMENTS:

- Your response should provide a well-developed paragraph for each section. You may choose to number your responses, *OR* write a response in essay format.
- Review the following artifact:
 - *LIFE* magazines coverage of the My Lai massacre
- Cite the following references:
 - Excerpts from *Facing My Lai: Bearing Witness*
 - *Winter Soldier Investigation*
 - John Kerry's testimony before Congress
- Apply concepts from the Course Terminology
- Incorporate one significant quotation from each of the aforementioned readings to support your ideas. *Be selective!* Your work should be mostly paraphrased
- **Please cite the reading material using MLA or APA format. Failure to properly cite your sources will result in a failing grade for this assignment.**
- Terms and concepts need to be integrated throughout your writing to demonstrate your understanding of the reading material
- No spelling, grammatical, or typographical errors.

Your work will be assessed as follows:

A/AB: A response that is exceptional. It demonstrates the student's ability to read, reflect, and provide specific examples. Terms and concepts are integrated throughout the response. All criteria for the assignment are satisfactory. The response is free of sentence structure, usage, and spelling errors. It may contain a few minor punctuation errors.

B/BC: A response that is solid and fulfills the assignment. However, some statements and/or examples are vague and underdeveloped. Terms/concepts only appeared in a few parts of the post. The response contains grammatical and structural errors but not enough to make reading difficult. It is free of spelling errors.

C/CD: A response that is adequate but not very effective in responding to the assignment. Parts of the assignment have not been addressed and ideas are not sufficiently developed. Terms/concepts used sparingly. The response contains generalizations supported with one-sentence reasons or examples. Organization may be difficult to follow. Reading made difficult by sentence structure and/or grammatical errors.

D: A response that is difficult to read. It contains vague language and reflects little complexity of ideas. The post lacks examples and reads more like a summary than an analysis. None of the components listed on the assignment appear in the response. The student failed to apply terms and concepts within the post. Multiple grammatical errors are present. Clearly it has not been proofread. It lacks a maturity of expression.

F: All of the above, except this response has serious weakness in both content and mechanics.

WITNESSING & BEARING WITNESS:

Recognition, Responsibility, and Response-Ability

DIRECTIONS: Your aim for this assignment is to synthesize concepts from Susan Sontag ("Looking at War" and *Regarding the Pain of Others* PowerPoint), Elaine Scarry's *The Body in Pain*, and James Nachtwey's body of work. This week, you will be focusing more on composing your ideas into an argument based on what you have already read. Consider the potential ways in which frames of war are *a necessary means of confronting evils* from which we are temporally and spatially removed.

The required format of this particular response will be more formal in nature in order to prepare you for the final draft of your research paper. I want you to practice citing paraphrased concepts and direct quotations using MLA or APA format.

In the introduction, present ideas about human perception and the ways in which viewers respond as a visceral creature when they are exposed to "frames" of a body in pain. In what ways do you experience particular "frames" of trauma and torture? What does it mean to "regard" the pain of others? Which images impacted you the most, and why? Draw from your sensory experiences when you gaze upon various images, and describe that process.

For the body of your paper, examine the images from James Nachtwey's TED Talk. Using significant terms and concepts as a theoretical lens, choose images that impacted you in some way to analyze the following:

- The ways in which victims are "framed" in an image. Consider denotative and connotative meaning; social, cultural and historical implications; and, various aspects of the composition including foreground/background, point of view, focus, lighting, etc.,
- Regard the body a site of pain. What are the problematic aspects of assuming "the power of the gaze"? (See the course website.)
- What are the positive and negative impacts of "freezing trauma" in terms of the media and viewer response? (See the course website.)
- Address the ethical aspects of recognition and response-ability when viewers witness a body in pain. Are viewers culpable if they respond apathetically and/or choose to do nothing? In what ways do *you* have the potential to use your agency ethically and meaningfully as a response to these "frames" of atrocities?

In your conclusion, reflect upon the reasons James Nachtwey claims he devoted his entire life to what he refers to as "witness photography." What motivated him to become a war photographer? Why does he argue that war photography is "vital" in a democratic

society? What are the various purposes of documentary photography he describes? According to Nachtwey, what is the significance of his work? From your perspective, what do *you* think should be the function of war photography?

REQUIREMENTS:

- Your response should be approximately 2-3 double-spaced pages.
- Include an introduction, body, and conclusion.
- Use the following sources as "artifacts" for analysis:
 - James Nachtwey's "witness" photographs from his [TEDTalk](#) and/or [website](#)
- Use the following sources as the basis for your conceptual framework:
 - John Durham Peter's "Witnessing"
 - Key concepts cited in [course website](#):
 - [Seeing Pain](#)
 - [The Power of the Gaze](#)
 - [Glossary](#)
- You *do not* need to use outside sources, although you may refer to any other sources you have this semester that you feel are applicable to your analysis. The following concepts/sources might be useful for your analysis:
 - "Looking at War" PowerPoint by Susan Sontag
 - The "Introduction" of *The Body in Pain* by Elaine Scarry
- A Works Cited must be included at the end of your response!
- Incorporate significant quotations (be selective!) from each of the aforementioned readings to support your ideas.
- *Please cite the reading material using MLA or APA format.* You may want to reference the APA style guide of MLA PowerPoint if you struggle in this area.
- Please proofread for spelling, grammatical, or typographical errors.

YOUR WORK WILL BE ASSESSED BASED ON THE ATTACHED RUBRIC.

“My wish: Let my photographs bear witness”

Directions: Watch James Nachtwey’s TED Talk and answer the following questions to the best of your ability.

1. Describe the reasons James Nachtwey devoted his entire life to what he refers to as “witness photography”. What motivated him to become a war photographer?
 - What are the various functions of documentary photography, as Nachtwey describes it?

 - According to Nachtwey, what is the significance of his work?

 - From your perspective, what do *you* think should be the function of war photography?

2. Reflect upon the images from James Nachtwey’s TED Talk. Choose an image that impacted you in some way to address the following:
 - Which images impacted you the most, and why? Draw from your sensory experiences when you gaze upon various images, and describe that process.

- The denotative (literal) meaning an image (or images). How was the image “framed”? Consider various aspects of the composition including foreground/background, subject matter, point of view, focus, lighting, color, etc.

- Consider the connotative meaning (i.e. social, cultural and historical implications). What might this image mean in different contexts?

3. Address the ethical aspects of witnessing trauma as 2nd and 3rd person witnesses. What is our responsibility (i.e. ethics) as third-person witnesses to demonstrate our response-ability (e.g. agency)? In other words, what can we do? What *should* we do?

“Witnessing” Discussion Questions

1. What is witnessing?
2. What ‘modes’ and ‘layers’ of witnessing exist that are not described by Peters?
3. What is the exigency?
4. What is the goal of witnessing?
5. What questions are raised in the beginning of Peters’ article that illustrates the challenge of witnessing?
6. Why are photographs and video footage considered to be more acceptable forms of evidence as opposed to oral testimony?
7. What are the 3 domains of witnessing?
8. What does it mean?
 - To watch
 - To narrate
 - To “be present”
9. Describe the etymology of the term “witness” as both a noun and a verb.
10. Recall a moment in time when you experienced excruciating physical pain or a trauma. How would you describe it?
11. Do the problems with the veracity of testimony outweigh the exigency?
12. How do Psychological Aspect of “dissonance-reduction” illustrate problems with witnessing? How are these examples different from bearing “false witness”?
13. In terms of the history legal theory, what kind of people are considered to be “incompetent witnesses”?
14. Describe the correlation between pain (torture, punishment) and truth. How is pain wrapped up in the process of witnessing? What are the consequences of corrupt testimony (i.e. bearing false witness)?

15. "Witnessing is necessary, but not sufficient: if there are no witnesses, there is no trial, but witnesses do not secure a conviction or an acquittal. A witness is never conclusive or final despite the most militant attempts of martyrs or torturers to make it so" (713).
16. "One's responsibility to bear witness, Elie Wiesel argues, cannot be delegated: testimony is unique to the survivor. It is impossible for the witness to remain silent; but it is also impossible for the witness to describe the event" (713). Agree or disagree?
17. What does Peters mean by the "moral privilege" of the martyr/captive?
18. What do you think of the notion that the only "true" witness is a dead one?
19. What are the potential dangers of witnessing? (714)
20. Can testimony ever be objective? Consider various forms of testimony.
21. What is "the hierarchy of testimony"? (715)
22. What is the difference between an "objective witness" and a survivor? (716)
23. What correlations can be drawn between Herman and Chomsky's propaganda model and Peters notion of witnessing?
24. Describe the "veracity gap" in mass communication.
25. "Presence is fragile and mortal; recordings have durability that survives in multiple times and spaces" (718)
26. What distinction does Peters make between fact and fiction on page 721 to illustrate when "responsibility" is a requirement?
27. "The present is blind to what the future will value. We didn't notice the butterfly that started the typhoon" (722). The quotation perfectly encapsulates the "gaps" in witnessing. What other gaps exist in the witnessing process?

PROBLEMS OF REPRODUCIBILITY

PURPOSE:

- To answer questions of significance
- To demonstrate critical thinking and active reading
- To review course terms/concepts and re-examine "frames" of war

DIRECTIONS: Answer *each* of these questions to the best of your ability by referring to terms/concepts, examples, and illustrations provided in Patrick Hagopian's "**Vietnam War Photography as a Locus of Memory**," the course website, and any other material we have discussed this semester you may find useful.

1. Review your response from discussion board one. Examine each picture again from **slides 24-29**. Now, examine **the reproductions**. (Make sure to read the 'Notes' section on the PowerPoint.) How has your perception of these images changed over the last several weeks? How has your understanding of visual rhetoric, the media and propaganda, and practices of looking enhanced your understanding witnessing and the way distant suffering is "framed"? Describe what you have learned this semester.
2. Watch the following [Daily Show clip](#). What critique does Jon Stewart present regarding our media's depiction of violence? Make sure to distinguish between Stewart's satirical versus literal messages to support his central argument. What support does Stewart provide to make his points? Provide illustrations and examples from the video clip and the article to support your ideas. Do you agree or disagree with his position? Explain.
3. In John Kerry's testimony before Congress, he referred to the My Lai massacre as a metaphor for other Vietnam War crimes that were occurring overseas. In what ways does the photographic coverage of My Lai help us to understand the Abu Ghraib scandal? What can we learn from these incidents moving forward? Address the immediate and long term impacts of releasing photographic evidence into the rhetorical culture as well as the potentially harmful effects of reproducing these images. What are the politics of looking? How *ought* we to compose ourselves in response to trauma witnessed?

REQUIREMENTS:

- Provide numbered answers
- Each response must demonstrate "active reading"

- Be descriptive in your answers by providing specific examples and direct references to the reading material.
- DO NOT just paste “chunks” of the reading material in your writing. The majority of your writing for these exercises should be paraphrased (i.e. in your own words). Use direct quotations sparingly.
- Terms and concepts need to be integrated throughout your writing to demonstrate “active reading”
- **Please use proper MLA or APA format when citing reading material. Make sure to include the page number.**
- No spelling, grammatical, or typographical errors

Your work will be assessed as follows:

A/AB: A response that is exceptional. It demonstrates the student’s ability to read, reflect, and provide specific examples. Terms and concepts are integrated throughout the response. All criteria for the assignment are satisfactory. The response is free of sentence structure, usage, and spelling errors. It may contain a few minor punctuation errors.

B/BC: A response that is solid and fulfills the assignment. However, some statements and/or examples are vague and underdeveloped. Terms/concepts only appeared in a few parts of the post. The response contains grammatical and structural errors but not enough to make reading difficult. It is free of spelling errors.

C/CD: A response that is adequate but not very effective in responding to the assignment. Parts of the assignment have not been addressed and/or ideas are not sufficiently developed. Terms/concepts were used sparingly. The response contains generalizations supported with one-sentence reasons or examples. Organization is discernible but may be difficult to follow. Reading is made difficult by awkward phrasing or sentence structure and/or grammatical errors. Nonstandard English may be present and the post lacks a maturity of expression. The response does not follow all of the criteria outlined on the assignment.

D: A response that is difficult to read. It contains vague language and reflects little complexity of ideas. The post lacks examples and reads more like a summary than an analysis. None of the components listed on the assignment appear in the response. The student failed to apply terms and concepts within the post. It fails to develop or support a thesis. Nonstandard English and multiple grammatical errors are present. Clearly it has not been proofread. It lacks a maturity of expression.

F: All of the above, except this response has serious weakness in both content and mechanics.

HU 3800: READING NOTES

DIRECTIONS: For each class, you will create reading notes in order to prepare for discussion. Your notes must include two distinct sections:

Section One:

- Respond to the assigned reading material by writing two *fully developed* paragraphs. Be clear and concise in your writing.
 - The first paragraph should resemble an abstract where you will summarize the central argument, main ideas, and potential findings of the reading. This paragraph should be approximately 100-150 words.
 - The second paragraph can: be a critique of the reading; indicate why you think particular ideas/concepts are useful or not; call attention to points of agreement and/or departure among other readings. *Do not summarize the article or chapter in this paragraph.* Rather, analyze and/or critique the strengths/weaknesses readings. The most important thing is to demonstrate “active” reading. This paragraph should be approximately 200-350 words.
- Do not include quotations in this section; paraphrase ideas rather than using quotations.

Section Two:

- Include a minimum of three significant quotations from the text (include the author’s last name and page #). *Be selective* in the quotations that you include. You may be asked to share these in class in order to raise questions or bring up major points of significance.
- Include a minimum of three open-ended and/or critical thinking questions for class discussion.

Guidelines:

- ✓ Type your response using Times New Roman, 12 pt. font, and 1” margins. The document may be single or double-spaced.
- ✓ Include a heading with your name, the course, your instructor’s name, and the date
- ✓ Keep your eye on the argument or central idea rather than the author’s writing style.
- ✓ Consider the historical context out of which the writing is constituted. Be fair to the author.
- ✓ Find a “take-away” or two from the text.
- ✓ Take time to reflect upon the reading material before crafting your questions.
- ✓ Annotate as you read. This will save you time!
- ✓ Write in an academic style using the standard conventions of academic English. If your work clearly has not been proofread and is illegible, you will receive point deductions.

Hard copies of your reading notes are due at the end of every class session. In the event that class must be conducted as a “remote access day” due to extenuating circumstances, students will be notified to post their notes on Canvas discussion.

PUBLIC COMMUNICATION: CAMPAIGN ANALYSIS

DIRECTIONS: Your goal for the final project in this class is to analyze a campaign using theories of communication. As this course has addressed how power operates in different contexts of communication, your job for the final project is to show how the campaign you chose is constructed to communicate meaning in a particular way: either as a reinforcing part of the dominant structures of social, political, economic, and cultural life OR as a challenge to such dominance.

1. Corporate PR campaign or a corporate social responsibility campaign (CSR):

Corporate campaigns can be current or past, but they must be PR campaigns (as opposed to advertising campaigns for products). A PR campaign is one that focuses on improving the corporation's image often in response to a crisis it is trying to manage. Examples of these kinds of campaigns include: The Real Walmart; BP's Beyond Petroleum; National Cattlemen's Beef Association's Consumer Confidence in US Beef, etc. CSR campaigns (sometimes also referred to as "cause-related marketing") involve a corporation's attempt to increase its revenue and enhance its social image while also contributing to the objectives of a non-profit organization. These kinds of campaigns include: Dove Campaign for Real Beauty; Levi's Go Forth; Exxon Mobil's National Math & Science Initiative; Working Assets Give for Change, etc.

2. Non-profit (government or non-government organizations (NGOs):

Non-profit campaigns are conducted by local, state, and federal government agencies or by NGOs (which are not part of government or corporate entities, although they may be funded by such entities). Government campaigns include: Bully Prevention; National Breastfeeding Campaign; Discover the Forest, etc. NGOs are civil society organizations that are most often associated with philanthropy, humanitarian work, or other specific social issues. Examples of NGO campaigns include: Media Literacy Project; Humane Society's Be Cruelty Free; Doctors Without Borders' Access Campaign; The Advocacy Project; Amnesty International; AmeriGives; Do Something; MSF, Water.org, etc.

3. Socio-political activism:

Activist groups are similar to NGO advocacy or may also be NGOs themselves, but they tend to derive out of social movements interested in radical change. While advocacy groups can be thought of as working within institutional power structures, activism often works outside dominant structures of power (e.g. organization of mass protests and demonstrations, physical occupation of public or private spaces, mass boycotts, etc.), and thus they are not as likely to label their work as a specific campaign. Activist organizations also range with respect to degree of radical change they seek and the degree of radical strategies they adopt, from mainstream outlets for messaging to law breaking as the most extreme. Examples include: Ban Bossy; Live Aid; Media Reform Movement; Food and Water Watch; Greenpeace; PETA; Earth First; Occupy Wall Street; End Citizens United; Anonymous, etc.

OBJECTIVE: Show select communication theories at work in specific real-world campaigns

REQUIRED: Project portfolio AND a 15-20 minute presentation

STEPS FOR THIS PROJECT:

1. Within your assigned groups, choose a type of campaign.
2. Brainstorm and decide on a specific campaign (**must be approved by 4/7**).
3. Do research: Examine a sufficient array of sources that together produce or construct a sense of what your campaign is about and how it works from a variety of perspectives (e.g. advocates and critics)
 - Do an initial Google search
 - Do a Lexis Nexis search (by major news, trade sources, company information, government documents)
 - Find specific examples of the campaign's public message(s)
 - Do an academic search to find at least one academic (critical) source on your campaign
4. Analysis
 - Political economy: What organization is behind the campaign? What is the organization's reason for existing (i.e. what is its mandate)? What is its objective? Is it responding to something happening in the business environment, the culture of everyday life, sociopolitical or geopolitically? What ideologies shape the organization's purpose? Does it work within or against capitalism? How do the frameworks of meaning that construct its sense of itself relate to dominant power structures in society (i.e. status quo)?
 - Representation: How does the campaign represent itself and its message to the public? Who is its target audience? How do you know? What messages are used to carry this campaign's objective and how do they invite understanding, identification, and acceptance? How are the messages effectively encoded to produce the preferred (dominant) meanings it wishes to convey to its intended audience? Who is left out? For what reason? What responses are there to this campaign among industry or organization insiders, popular audiences, and academics? How are others reacting to the campaign besides its intended audience?
 - Public communication: In what ways does the campaign work on public opinion or policy-making as a means of propaganda? Or does this campaign reflect democratic communication as part of the public sphere? If so, how? If not, how does it fall short? Is this campaign better thought of as operating in a counter-public sphere? If so, in what ways does it challenge dominant notions of power?
 - Mobilization: In what ways does the campaign (or organization) rely on a shared sense of collective goals to achieve its purpose? To what extent does the campaign professionalize its communication strategies? What strategies of connectivity does this campaign employ? Does it use mainstream or alternative or

autonomous media strategies? What problems with co-optation has the campaign experienced, confronted, or dismissed?

5. Produce Portfolio

- Includes a typed, detailed outline of the presentation in APA or MLA format. Cite your sources!
- Examples of campaign messages
- Works Cited or References page. Must include relevant sources from the course and **at least three outside sources, one of which must be an academic source.**

6. Prepare and practice presentation

- **Creatively** present your public communication campaign analysis using audio/visual aids. Video clips, PowerPoint, mock newspapers, Prezi, and other creative methods are encouraged. The aids should be mostly visual. No blocks of text! If you choose to use media clips, they may take up no more than 5 minutes of the presentation. Clips must be cued up and ready to go.
- **Describe** the campaign and provide an in-depth analysis using various communication concepts we have discussed throughout the semester. Define concepts by orally citing your research, then apply these to specific examples from the campaign. Provide several examples from the campaign as these relate to communication concepts to support your ideas.
- Use notecards with bullet points or key phrases to keep you on point. *Do not read to the audience!*
- Professional attire is appropriate. No hats, hoodies, jeans, t-shirts, etc.
- 15-20 minutes in length. Going under the time limit will result in point deductions, so practice!
- All group members must equally participate in the oral presentation.
- I will ask the group to hand in their portfolio just prior to their presentation. **All groups must present on their assigned day, or your group will receive a zero.** The entire group is responsible for the information inside the portfolio and in the presentation.

Some useful sources:

- Ad Council: <http://www.adcouncil.org/>
- Forbes: Most Imaginative CSR Campaigns: <http://www.forbes.com/2010/07/09/pepsi-macys-twitter-tide-levis-advertising-responsibility-cmo-network-imaginative-csr.html>
- NGOs: United Nations Rule of Law: <https://www.un.org/ruleoflaw/>
- NGO Monitor: <http://www.ngo-monitor.org/>
- Sources on media coverage: Free Press; Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting; Media Transparency; PR Watch
- Alternative media: Alternet; Counterpunch; Dissent; Gorilla News Network; Mother Jones; The Nation; Utne Reader

Philosophies on Ethics (Lecture Notes)

Rhetoric of Motives (Burke):

- Rhetoric is “the art of a good man”
- credibility; character; competence; morals and trustworthiness
- common ground (identification)

Nicomachean Ethics (Aristotle)

- *ethiké areté*- “excellent character”
- Right vs. wrong: moral judgments cannot be reduced to universal principles; there are always exceptions
- Virtuous or vicious: Are others suffering as a result of our actions?
- Moral conduct implies choice. Choice involves deliberation; the ability to act freely
- What does it mean to be a “good” person?
 - Requires compassion, empathy, and altruism
 - Someone who serves the greater good of mankind and engages in “other-centered” behavior.
 - The goal of a moral person should be “to achieve the highest human good” and inspire others to be good as well
- What makes a life “good”?
 - happiness, moral and intellectual virtues, pleasure principle right vs. wrong;
- Utilitarianism: “goodness” = happiness of sentient beings.

Virtues (and their opposites):

1. Courage (cowardice)
2. Temperance (pleasures [taste/touch]; licentiousness)
3. Liberality/generosity (prodigality; self-indulgent)
4. Honor (ill repute; distrustful)
5. Magnanimity/noble (vanity)
6. Amiability (unpleasant; unkind)
7. Sincere/truthful (deceptive)
8. Humble (boastful)
9. Wit (boorish)
10. Patience (irascibility)

Intellectual virtues: = aimed at achieving the highest level of truth

1. Contemplatives
2. Calculative
3. Resourceful
4. Understanding
5. Jurisprudence
6. Consideration

Actions:

- voluntary (actions we initiate)
- involuntary (unintentional)
- non-voluntary

Justice:

- Unjust: unfair or lawless; wrongdoing
- Just: fair, equitable
- Gradations of misconduct (provocation; ignorance)
- Natural vs. civil law
- equity

Being and Nothingness (Sartre):

- Existential viewpoint; negates religion
- “God” is a term for the ineffable; predestination is a myth; humans are responsible for their choices
- Master/slave dialect
- Subject (subjectivity) vs. object (or “otherness”)
- *Being-for others* vs. *being-for-itself*
- *Being toward death*: you stare into the abyss, and the abyss stares right back → the human condition
- Alienation: we each experience *being toward death* individually which results in angst
- Bad faith: illusion that we do not have any choices; willing compliance or a state of false consciousness
- living authentically vs. living an inauthentic life
 - Inauthentic life: residing in bad faith; living within “the confines of the box”
 - We always have a choice to be an oppressor or not; the only way to live an authentic life is to remove yourself from “the confines of the box”

The Atrocity Paradigm (Card):

- Examines inexcusable actions; immoral deeds; intolerable harms
- Exists on a continuum: culpable ignorance or weakness [----->] deliberate evil
- Aims to explore ways for the government to respond to evil deeds without incurring further harm
- Considers the problem of inciting anger by examining this issue; critiquing government deeds can become a rallying tool/political club for creating civil unrest
- Real people are both victims and perpetrators; victims easily become perpetrators
- Difference between individuals who commit evil deeds and institutional evils

Premises on the Theory of Evil:

- Evils are inexcusable wrongs
- Evils need not be extraordinary
- Not all institutional evils imply individual culpability
- Evils are reasonably foreseeable, intolerable harms
 - Intolerable = normative concept; “what a decent life cannot include” (8)
- Not all evils are atrocities
- Irreversible
- Human, not demonic
- Urgent; life and basic quality of life are at stake
- Motives: greed, ambition, jealousy, others?
- Examples: abuse, premeditated murder, torture, terrorist acts

Atrocity:

- Produced by culpable wrongs
- Does not include natural disasters
- All atrocities are evil
- Examples: genocide, massacres, mass murder

Lesser Wrongs:

- An immoral action that does not result in an intolerable harm
- A morally justifiable act that may inflict harm
- Intentionality is a factor
- Lesser wrongs are not necessarily evil
- Examples: Petty theft, tax evasion, deceptive acts

Justifications:

- *Metaphysical excuse*: compulsion or ignorance; mitigates or removes culpability and/or responsibility
- *Moral excuse*: morally justifiable reasons for committing evil deeds mitigates culpability without removing responsibility

Three Myths Re: Concept of Evil:

- Evil doers are all monsters and cannot be reasoned with
- Humanity can be divided into two camps: good vs. evil (binary opposition)
- Evil is a metaphysical power or force that possess certain people

Assumptions:

- We are all capable of committing evil deeds
- “Evil men” who *qualify* as monsters are:
 - Made (Nurture)
 - Born (Nature)

Humane Responses (9):

- May include apologies, truth commissions, reparations, memorials, education (agency)
- “Inhumane response by government not only jeopardize the possibility of post-conflict peaceful co-existence but also rightly undermine the confidence of a people in the government that so response” (6).
- Transparency is key in order for a government to maintain its trustworthiness
- Secrecy jeopardizes accountability and procedural justice

Examples of Evil Deeds w/o Moral Excuse:

- Milgram – Obedience experiments (2/3 complied)
- Zimbardo – SPE (no directions given)
- Arendt – *Banality of Evil*
 - Examination of the Eichmann trial
 - Incapacity to think critically
 - Inability to consider perspective of victims

Questions:

1. What are defensible norms of “right” and “wrong”?
2. What distinguishes “evils” from “lesser wrongs”?
3. What kinds of evils are there and how are they related to one another?

4. How are evils perpetrated? Who is vulnerable to them?
5. What responses to evils are honorable? What is the best course of an action to an attack?
6. When are violent retaliations justifiable? Is it ever acceptable to engage in a counter-attack that results in the deaths of non-combatants?

Atrocity-Producing Situations (Lifton):

Militarily and psychologically structured to turn average people into criminal killers; the environment causes the atrocity

- Military Structure:
 - Counterinsurgency war in distant, alien environment
 - Basic training: racism; “otherness”; dehumanization of the enemy
 - “Faceless enemies”; can’t tell who the enemy is
- Psychological Structure:
 - Fear and helplessness due to military vulnerability (land mines, booby traps, free fire zones)
 - Anger and grief: deaths of brothers in arms
 - Hunger for retaliation
 - Dual role: victims and executioners
 - “doubling” : formation of a second self; psychic dissociation as a result of witnessing trauma; sub-self becomes autonomous in brutal circumstances
 - “In environments where sanctioned brutality becomes the norm, sadistic impulses dormant in us all, are likely to be expressed. The group’s violent energy becomes such that an individual soldier who questions it could be turned upon” (par. 10)

Questions:

1. Who is responsible when an atrocity-producing situation occurs?
2. What are the ethical and psychological lessons to be learned from My Lai?
3. How does Lifton define “bearing witness”?
4. What does he refer to as a “second witness”? Radical witness? False witness? (22-23)
5. Why is it important for us to bear witness? (24-5)
6. What causes an atrocity-producing situation?
7. What created the psychological context of the My Lai incident?
8. Why is the My Lai massacre considered to be a metaphor for the entire Vietnam

RHETORICAL ANALYSIS EVALUATION

	Exceeds Expectations	Meets Expectations	Does Not Meet Expectations
Focus and Unity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clearly articulates transitions throughout essay • Each paragraph has a clear, individual purpose that helps support that main point 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has a clear central point or thesis • Utilizes logical examples to support main point • Maintains topic within individual paragraphs for the most part • All paragraphs support main point 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Includes an unclear main point or lacks a main point altogether • Paragraphs may not maintain focus on the main point • Multiple topics present within individual paragraphs
Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Includes clear, well-articulated transitions between ideas • Essay structure is used to help convey essay content 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Includes clear introduction and conclusion • Paragraphs are clearly defined and focused • Entirety of the essay is a cohesive unit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paragraph divisions are unclear or illogical or lacks paragraphs altogether • Offers little connection between paragraphs • Offers a weak introduction and conclusion or lacks them altogether
Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effectively analyzes evidence • Uses a variety of detailed, specific examples • Comes to conclusion based upon examples and evidence provided • Includes original and non-imitative 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offers significant elaboration on main point • Utilizes examples to explain and support main point • Work on “engaging” your sources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offers little evidence of critical thought • Lacks examples • Includes examples that may not support main point • Conclusion may not be consistent with evidence
Tone & Style	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excellent academic tone and diction • Includes no repetition • Offers varied sentence structure • Is stylistically original and non-imitative • Includes visual elements, which enhances the overall content of the paper. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilizes a basic academic tone • Includes a little repetition • Uses adequate word choice for college-level writing • Has a little repetition in sentence structure or phrasing • Use parallel structure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilizes inappropriate tone and word choice for college-level writing • Writing is excessively wordy or awkward • Includes significant repetition in sentence structure or word choice • Avoid passive voice • Don’t end a sentence with a preposition • Avoid contractions

Grammar/ Mechanics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completely lacks major grammatical errors • Grammar and mechanics are nearly flawless 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generally lacks major grammatical errors • Sentences are clear and easily understood • Minor grammatical errors do not inhibit readability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A few errors with comma usage • Several comma splices. This is a type of run-on sentence • Includes many unclear sentences • Several errors in comma usage/punctuation
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ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

NAME:

/50 Pts.

NAME: _____ /75 points

**ANNOTATED
BIBLIOGRAPHY**

	Outstanding	Above Average	Average	Minimal Mastery/Poor
MLA or APA Format	One or zero mistakes	2 or 3 mistakes	4 or more mistakes	Completely incorrect format. See Turabian's text for
Guidelines	Perfect! Followed all guidelines and rules! -A mixture of primary and secondary sources used -1 book -2 periodical sources -2 scholarly sources -2 credible online articles -Other source type -Explanation/summary for each source is 50-150 words in length -Student used a combination of	-Incorrect heading; -Must use hanging indent -Labeling error -Must be in alphabetical order -Student used a combination of primary and secondary sources, but a few tertiary sources were used -Sources included an adequate explanation -Student included a summary of the source but did not identify the source	-Incorrect heading -Must use a hanging indent -Capitalize the first word in titles -Must be in alphabetical order -Something is missing from the citations -Sources did not include an adequate explanation -Other	-Incorrect heading -Sources did not include an explanation -Source types are not varied -Student did not use any primary sources -Student used only tertiary sources -Student used only used internet sites that were not credible -Student used Wikipedia -Late!!
Completeness	Perfect! Had a minimum of 8 sources	Had 8 sources but one or two of the required sources types was missing	Had 8 sources but more than 2 of the required sources types was missing	Did not have 8 sources – The bibliography is incomplete!

FORMAT	Outstanding	Above Average	Average	Minimal Mastery	Poor Mastery
11 or 12 pt. font, double spaced, Times New Roman with linch margins					

OVERALL ASSESSMENT:

	Outstanding	Above Average	Average	Minimal Mastery	Poor Mastery/ Incomplete: Revise and resubmit
	A	AB/B	BC/C	CD/D	F

Research Outline Grading Rubric

Name: _____

____/100 pts.

I. Introduction

- a. Attention Getter (the "hook")/Opening Statement
- b. TQS Established
- c. Audience Analysis/Common Ground Established
- d. Central Argument/Thesis
- e. Preview of main ideas

YES	NO
YES	NO
YES	NO
YES	NO
YES	NO
YES	NO

Outstanding Above Average Average Minimal Mastery Poor/Incomplete

II. Body

- a. 3-6 Clear Main Points
- b. Logical Organization of Ideas
- c. Each coordinate point has at least 2-4 subordinate points
- d. Ethos established
 - i. Defined and explained complex terms/concepts
 - ii. Cited sources in the appropriate places
- e. Pathos established

YES	NO
YES	NO
YES	NO
YES/	NO/
YES	NO
YES	NO

Outstanding Above Average Average Minimal Mastery Poor/Incomplete

III. Conclusion

- a. Provided a summary of main ideas?
- b. Restated/clarified argument?
- c. Reflection, observation or solution provided?
- d. Lasting Impression?

YES	NO
YES	NO
YES	NO
YES	NO

Outstanding Above Average Average Minimal Mastery Poor/Incomplete

Additional Questions:

*Did the student include citations in the outline? YES/NO

****If not, the student has plagiarized**

*Did the student incorporate a minimum of 8 sources in the outline? YES/NO

*Outline Format:

-Includes an introduction, body and conclusion? YES/NO

-Student used the proper outline labels (I, II, III, A, B, C, 1,2, 3...)? YES/NO

****Every main point (e.g. A, B, C) should have at least 2-4 subordinate points (e.g. 1, 2, 3...)**

-Written out in full-sentences? YES/NO

-Typed used the proper heading, running header and title format for APA or MLA YES/NO

*Works Cited YES/NO

-Correct format (heading, 1" hanging indent, alphabetical order, etc.) YES/NO

-All sources listed on References page are cited in the outline

****If not, this is "padding" the bibliography, a form of plagiarism**

OVERALL ASSESSMENT:

Outstanding	Above Average	Average	Minimal Mastery	Poor Mastery/ Incomplete: Revise and resubmit
A 93-100 points	AB/B 82-92 points	BC/C 72-81 points	CD/D 60-70 points	F 0-59 points

COMMENTS/SUGGESTIONS:

RESEARCH PROJECT EVALUATION

INTRODUCTION

	Exceeds Expectations	Meets Expectations	Does Not Meet Expectations
Attention Getter			
Audience Analysis			
Purpose Established			
Central Argument			
Preview of main ideas			

BODY

	Exceeds Expectations	Meets Expectations	Does Not Meet Expectations
Focus and Unity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clearly articulates transitions throughout essay • Each paragraph has a clear, individual purpose that helps support that main point 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has a clear central point or thesis • Utilizes logical examples to support main point • Maintains topic within individual paragraphs for the most part • All paragraphs support main point 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Includes an unclear main point or lacks a main point altogether • Paragraphs may not maintain focus on the main point • Multiple topics present within individual paragraphs
Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Includes clear, well-articulated transitions between ideas • Essay structure is used to help convey essay content 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Includes clear introduction and conclusion • Paragraphs are clearly defined and focused • Entirety of the essay is a cohesive unit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paragraph divisions are unclear or illogical or lacks paragraphs altogether • Offers little connection between paragraphs • Offers a weak introduction and conclusion or lacks them altogether
Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effectively analyzes evidence • Uses a variety of detailed, specific examples • Comes to conclusion based upon examples and evidence provided • Includes original ideas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offers significant elaboration on main point • Utilizes examples to explain and support main point • Work on “engaging” your sources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offers little evidence of critical thought • Lacks examples • Includes examples that may not support main point • Conclusion may not be consistent with evidence

Tone & Style	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excellent academic tone and diction • Includes no repetition • Offers varied sentence structure • Is stylistically original and non- imitative 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilizes a basic academic tone • Includes a little repetition • Uses adequate word choice for college-level writing • Has a little repetition in sentence structure or phrasing • Use parallel structure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilizes inappropriate tone and word choice for college-level writing • Writing is excessively wordy or awkward • Includes significant repetition in sentence structure or word choice • Avoid passive voice • Don't end a sentence with a preposition • Avoid contractions
Grammar/ Mechanics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completely lacks major grammatical errors • Grammar and mechanics are nearly flawless 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generally lacks major grammatical errors • Sentences are clear and easily understood • Minor grammatical errors do not inhibit readability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A few errors with comma usage • Several comma splices. This is a type of run-on sentence • Includes many unclear sentences • Several errors in comma usage/punctuation

CONCLUSION

	Exceeds Expectations	Meets Expectations	Does Not Meet Expectations
Summary			
Solidify Argument			
Reflections/ Observations			
Lasting impression			

ARGUMENT QUALITY

	Exceeds Expectations	Meets Expectations	Does Not Meet Expectations
My these fulfills the "so what?"			
Persuasive Appeals			
Each reason I provided in support of my thesis is <i>fully explained</i> with research, logic, and/or examples			

WORKS CITED

	Exceeds Expectations	Meets Expectations	Does Not Meet Expectations
MLA or APA Format	One or two mistakes	Three or four errors	Completely incorrect; see Turabian's text
Technical Proficiency	Perfect! Followed all guidelines and rules! -1 book -2 periodical sources -2 scholarly sources -2 credible online articles -Other source type	-Incorrect heading -Must use hanging indent -Labeling error -other:	-Capitalize the first word in titles -Must be in alphabetical order -Something is missing from the citations -Source types are not varied -Sources listed were not cited in the paper. This is "padding the bibliography," which is PLAGIARISM!!
Completeness	Perfect! Had a minimum of 8 varied sources	Had 8 sources but one or two of the required sources types was missing	Did not have 8 sources – The Works Cited page is incomplete!

RESEARCH

	Exceeds Expectations	Meets Expectations	Does Not Meet Expectations
Source integration and MLA, or APA Parenthetical Citations	Perfect! -Correct format -Included all necessary research components -In text citations were written out -In text citations had proper parenthetical -Direct quotations were introduced -Proper paraphrasing -Sources were engaged	Good; One or two errors -Title page/heading is missing or incorrect -Running header is missing or incorrect -Italicize the titles of newspapers, magazines, books, etc. -Citations were missing a p.# -Forgot to explain one or two quotations. -Missing page #/year in citations	Poor; multiple errors -Format of parenthetical citations incorrect -Did not include any in text citations or parenthetical citations -Did not explain my quotations -Poor paraphrasing: maintained the same sentence structure and/or word order; or did not follow the 3 word minimum rule

OVERALL ASSESSMENT

Outstanding	Above Average	Average	Minimal Mastery	Poor Mastery/Incomplete: Revise and resubmit
A	AB/B	BC/C	CD/D	F

UN 1015: Multimodal (A/V) Project Rubric

Overview: A successful multimodal (A/V) project is a prepared, purposeful presentation designed to increase knowledge, to foster understanding, or to promote change in the listeners' attitudes, values, beliefs, or behaviors. Written, spoken, audio, and visual communication abilities develop through an iterative process of drafting, storyboarding, rough cuts, and editing.

Levels are cumulative; Level 4 assumes Levels 1-3 competences.

Multimodal Comm.	What is being assessed	Beginning 1	Developing 2	Proficient 3	Exemplary 4
Rhetorical Function: Content and Development	Primary message is memorable, explicit, and supported throughout the presentation; content is appropriate, relevant, and shows knowledge of subject; conclusions are well-supported, credible, and reasonable	Is simplistic or not explicit with little content development	Is recognizable , but underdeveloped	Is clear and demonstrates understanding of subject	Is compelling and development shows subject mastery . Project demonstrates
Rhetorical Function: Supporting Material	Information in the form of explanations, examples, illustrations, statistics, analogies, quotations from relevant authorities; used to support speaker's claims and analysis; establishes speaker's credibility on the presentation topic, including oral citations.	Is insufficient and minimally supports speaker's arguments and credibility	Has little variety and partially supports speaker's arguments and credibility	Has sufficient variety and generally supports the speaker's arguments and credibility	Has interesting variety and enhances the speaker's arguments and credibility
Spatial: Organization & Arrangement	Clear, consistent and recognizable structure (specific introduction and conclusion, sequenced material within the body, use of transitions). Application of arrangement, organization, and proximity between text and/or objects	Is not recognizable	Is intermittently recognizable	Is clear and consistent	Enhances the content

<p>Linguistic: Language Choices</p>	<p>Effectiveness and appropriateness to audience; choices support the effectiveness of the presentation. Technical terms are defined and explained with a general audience in mind</p>	<p>Are unclear and not appropriate to audience</p>	<p>Are mundane, commonplace, and partially supportive</p>	<p>Are thoughtful and generally supportive</p>	<p>Are imaginative, memorable, and compelling</p>
<p>Linguistic: Spoken Communication</p>	<p>Vocal expressiveness (volume, rate, pitch/pace, silence, pause, fillers, and enunciation) conveys fluency that suggests project has been rehearsed for a listening public.</p>	<p>Detracts from the understandability of the presentation or speaker appears uncomfortable</p>	<p>Makes the presentation understandable or speaker appears tentative</p>	<p>Makes the presentation understandable or speaker appears tentative</p>	<p>Makes the presentation compelling and speaker appears polished and confident</p>
<p>Gestural: Delivery and Composure</p>	<p>Posture, gestures, eye contact, appearance; impression of composure, confidence, and professionalism.</p>	<p>Detracts from the presentation or speaker appears uncomfortable</p>	<p>Makes the presentation understandable or speaker appears tentative</p>	<p>Makes the presentation interesting and speaker appears composed</p>	<p>Makes the presentation compelling and speaker appears polished and confident</p>
<p>Visual: Design Strategy and Principles</p>	<p>Visible, attractive, and comprehensible visual display materials Visuals support major points or themes; appropriate to situation; design and handling add to effectiveness of presentation and speaker's credibility</p>	<p>Poor design choices detract from the overall content of the project.</p>	<p>Design choices are mundane and commonplace. Lacks a thoughtful application of design principles.</p>	<p>Visual strategy enhances the overall content. Project displays thoughtful application of design principles.</p>	<p>Visual strategy increases the effectiveness of the presentation, adds insight to central message, and augment's credibility.</p>
<p>Aural: Sound Design</p>	<p>Sound effects and/or soundtracks meaningfully contribute to the rhetorical effects of the project. This includes music, sound effects, ambient noise/sounds, silence, tones, volume, and emphasis.</p>	<p>Does not support content and/or detracts from the purpose of the presentation</p>	<p>Minimal contribution to effectiveness of presentation</p>	<p>Makes the presentation interesting and demonstrates a thoughtful application of audio elements</p>	<p>Sound design increases the effectiveness of the presentation, adds insight to central message, and augment's</p>

Overall Preparation:	<p>Student provided a created proposal, storyboard, references, and digital copies of all audio/visual media. The project was professional, revised, and fell within the 3-5 minute time limit. Preparation was evident as demonstrated by polished delivery and smooth transitions. It is evident that the student spent a significant amount of time and effort designing the various multimodal elements of the project.</p>	<u>Poor</u> mastery	<u>Minimal</u> mastery	<u>Average</u> mastery	<u>Outstanding</u> mastery
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ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

NAME:

/150 Pts.