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Becoming a Fan: Reinventing, Repurposing, and Resisting in First-Year Composition

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BECOMING A FAN: REINVENTING, REPURPOSING, AND RESISTING IN FIRST-YEAR

COMPOSITION

by

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BECOMING A FAN: REINVENTING, REPURPOSING, AND RESISTING IN FIRST-YEAR

COMPOSITION

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University of Nebraska, 2019

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This thesis explores the cultural and pedagogical potential of the fanfiction community. The

practices of recursive peer feedback, reinvention as invention, and production of subversive

narratives via repurposing posits the fanfiction community a democratic space where a myriad of

identities can react to, interact with, and disseminate information in a productive learning

community. During a time when socio-political interactions are so intense, it is necessary that

teachers of composition and rhetoric pay attention to learning communities where democratic

deliberation is promoted through the production and sharing of writing. Ultimately, this thesis

argues that reinvention and repurposing within the fanfiction community can be adapted for first-

year composition to produce an innovative and resistive pedagogy. This thesis comes in two

parts. First, it explores the histories and practices of women and/or queer writers within the

fanfiction community, giving particular attention to the compositional tools of reinvention and

repurposing. These tools give marginalized writers the space to share their voice as well as helps

them make meaning out of the collision of disparate narratives and identities. Second, it offers

ways that repurposing and reinvention, as well as the collaborative practices of works-in-

progress (WIP), gift-giving, and beta-reading, can be used within first-year composition to

produce a democratic learning space within the classroom. Rather than blindly assigning

fanfiction practices to fulfill these goals within then classroom, it outlines the ways the fan practices can be used to cultivate a learning community, thus providing an innovative pedagogy built on the convergence of theoretical composition backgrounds and fan practices.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. Introduction

Acafan is a slippery term, refined through years of discussion and collaboration between early fan scholars. Though he does not formally acknowledge its creation, Henry Jenkins has long been credited for coining the term. An *acafan*, or the plural *acafen*, is someone who declares themself as both a fan and an academic, often performing scholarly work with the fan communities in which they participate. This declaration signals a scholar's "own affiliations with and accountability to the communities they [are] studying" because they often studying fandoms that themselves are part of through the lens of their academic selves (Jenkins et.al). Though both the history and definition of acafan has changed with time, many argued for the term's necessity during its conceptualization –"We wanted to signal a dual allegiance - to treat our subcultural knowledge as part of what informed the work we were doing as scholars. We were not simply fans and we were not simply academics - we were acafen" (Jenkins et. al). When I first read the term acafan in 2016, I felt the same allegiance, understanding that my scholarly identity as shaped by the dual cultural knowledges of both academia and fandom. Prior to this, I thought of myself a solitary voice—the sole student who loved both fandom and academia and wanted to bring these two interests together. I imagined a struggle to find material, defending myself to peers and professors, and strenuous but victorious fights to prove the "legitimacy" of fanfiction. However, with a little initial research, I found decades worth of scholarly work on fandom. I was not alone in my academic zeal for fan studies; it was an experience simultaneously overwhelming, exhilarating, and slightly disappointing. I was not reinventing the wheel by exploring fandom in an academic context. For a moment, I experienced a wounded hubris, but it soon dissolved into the multitude of opportunities I found among fan studies.

Despite being decades old, fan studies is still a growing field. I continue my pursuit of fan studies because I want to demonstrate the ways that composition and rhetoric can learn from and engage with fan studies. Fandom is most often studied through historical and media studies lens; though fan studies have slowly trickled in writing curricula over the past ten years, there are still a myriad of literate practices within the fanfiction community that have yet to be used for their pedagogical potential. In is in this thesis, I am making my own claim as an acafan by engaging my identities of student, teacher, and researcher as well as my personal history with fandom to argue that practices from fanfiction community can cultivate democratic learning communities in first-year writing classrooms. Though none of my identities are inherently privileged over in the others, the pedagogical outcomes of this argument demand that I position myself as teacher first and foremost. I can only position myself in such a way by first introducing what the fanfiction community taught me.

Through a strange series of clicks, I found myself on *Fanfiction.net*. I was thirteen years old and I had just unwittingly discovered a community that would change my life. Much like acafan, *fanfiction*, *fanfic,* or *fic*, is a slippery term. Seen both as an act of textual poaching and as a transformation, fanfiction can be defined as fiction based on previously invented fictional narratives, written by a fan author rather than the original author (Coppa; Jenkins; Pugh). In some cases, this invention of narratives means borrowing from the present mythos; in other cases, it means inserting original characters into the narrative. The most prominent form of fanfiction comes from fan authors manipulating characters who already exist within the narrative, using fanfiction to fill in the blanks, rewrite, contextualize, and answer the "what if" questions the original narrative(s), or *canon*, never did. My teenage self was elated to stumble upon fanfiction, to find a storehouse filled with extensions of my favorite characters and stories.

I do not remember the first fanfic I ever read but I do remember feeling like I found a place both intimate and foreign all at once—I dived in without needing to take a breath.

For a while, I swam gently, reading a few fics a month and only occasionally leaving comments. This pace was short-lived. By my senior year of high school, I was swimming headlong upstream, managing upward of fifteen fics across three different websites, working as a beta-reader for five authors, and still finding time to post in forums, chat rooms, and more. Though my participation in the fanfiction community has waxed and waned over the years, there are consistent themes throughout - repurposing and reinventing existing texts as well as experimenting with identity in a democratic community. Though many scholars view fanfiction as a transformative act, and this reading has merit in and of itself, I posit fanfiction is an act of *reinvention* and *repurposing*. Here, I borrow from Jason Palmeri's notions of reinvention and Shari Stenberg's feminist repurposing; both offer ways to work with and against existing conditions to create something new. Fanfiction does exactly this, engaging with existing conditions (the canon) and using them for new, often more inclusive and radical purposes. Using these scholars settles fanfiction in terms more akin with composition studies by framing what fanfiction is *already doing* within the language of the academy. To me, reading and writing fanfic is a critical process of continuous questioning and creating, built through the permeable boundaries of pre-existing narratives. As such, the acts of borrowing, transforming, and inserting of characters, narratives, and plot are forms of repurposing and reinvention because they are mediated through the canon narratives. This process does not feel like "learning" at all, but rather like experiments in finding myself. Like the fics that I read and write, I am in a constant state repurposing and reinventing. Fanfiction's effect comes from its ability to teach me the ways of *being* within these liminal spaces while simultaneously reinforcing my identity. The pedagogical

potential comes from creating a liminal yet democratic learning community within the classroom, therefore offering students the ability to reinvent and repurpose new ways of being and writing.

In particular, the fanfiction community gave me the language to both address and affirm my queer identity. As a young adult, I was attracted to both men and women. This feeling of being in-between, of being neither gay nor straight, plagued me. At the time, there was little to no queer representation in the media and my conservative sex education veered far right of any topic related to identity politics. It was only in reading fanfic that I found the language to address how I felt. I am bisexual, a word I originally found upon in a *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* fanfic. It felt like the perfect fit; I cut my teeth on queer education through fanfic. I was not alone in this learning, as many young queer writers use fanfic as means of education and experimentation. Fanfiction allows queer writers the space to simulate aspects of their own lives, try-on different scenarios, and work with imaginative play (Hu). The anonymity of the internet, the democratic practices of the community, and the encouragement of this play posits the fanfiction community as an educational and experimental safe space for queer writers and other marginalized peoples.

In the same vein, fanfiction also taught me how to practice digital literacy in a democratic and productive way. Coming from a low-income background, I was often technologically behind my peers. The fanfiction community showed me how to navigate these technological insufficiencies, teaching me ways to communicate, compose, and mediate within digital spaces. In "Fanfiction Writing and the Construction of Space," Rebecca Black says, "fanfiction authors are learning to write in globally networked, pluralistic arenas where the convergence and divergence of different modes of representation, media, texts, languages, literacies, and perspectives is commonplace" (Black 387). Access to the internet gave me the luxury of

disseminating information among these different areas of convergence and divergence, heuristically augmenting my literacy skills to address the learning curve I had to overcome.

Here, I want to emphasize that cultivating these skills would not be possible without the community I found within fandom. The fanfiction community acted as my teacher outside of school by giving me space to compose, practice both giving and receiving feedback, and critically analyze preexisting narratives in a community built on the convergence of different practices, ideas, and identities. This was essential in informing who I was as an adolescent learner and how I act now as a graduate student, teacher, and scholar in academia. This thesis brings the secondary teacher of fanfiction *into* the classroom by looking at the pedagogical and rhetorical possibilities that are already enacted within the fanfiction community. Fanfiction has taught me the value of the in-between, of addressing my identity not as a singular but as plural. I enter this thesis as an academic and a fan, metamorphosed by decades of fan studies into an acafan. I enter this thesis a queer woman from a low-income background who is also white and college-educated. I enter this thesis as a student, both in academic classrooms and secondary classrooms, eager to learn. Finally, I enter this thesis as a teacher, who optimistically believes in pedagogy as a kind if repurposing itself. In "(De)Compose, Shape-Shift, and Suture: Toward a Monstrous Rhetoric of Fan Compositions," Sara Howe offers "I have found being a fan to be a kind of psychic, affective, and sensual or corporeal suturing—a binding of broken parts, a stitching together of self and other or/and self and object, a way of making sense of the disarray or composing out of chaos" (Howe 13). Fanfiction's ability to make sense out of chaos is founded in both reinvention and repurposing; making use of these practices in first-year writing classrooms privileges student voice, experimentation in ways of being, and provides an outlet for student writing to have purpose both inside and outside of the classroom.

Furthermore, it equips the students with the ability to deliberate in a time where demagoguery is the norm. I believe it is academia's job to dismiss demogogic practices and instead, encourage a democratic space where students can learn to address their own biases, identities, and motivations as well as react to and through converging points of difference. Made primarily of historically marginalized peoples who both cultivate and participate in a democratic learning community, the fanfiction community works as a valuable resource from which teachers of composition and rhetoric can mine from to resist demagoguery. Attention to the marginalized groups within the fanfiction community is important because academia historically sidelines these groups and as such, marginalized groups continue to face an onslaught of demagoguery. First-year writing classrooms, like the fanfiction community, function as spaces where diverse sets of voices, identities, and communities interact and learn from each other. As such, I assert an innovative pedagogy for first-year writing classrooms not only to add my voice to a long history of acafen, but also because I feel that fan practices can have a potentially significant impact on the way students participate in their lives both inside and outside of the classroom.

I present this thesis in two sections.

The first section unpacks the histories and implications of marginalized communities who use fanfiction as a space to practice imaginative play, educate themselves, cultivate dialogues, and find community among other marginalized peoples. Though this chapter is primarily concerned with female and/or queer writers, it does contextualize the ways in which fanfiction has a long history of giving voices to the voiceless and promoting safe, encouraging environments for all to speak. While addressing these histories of the fanfiction community, this section defines and gives examples of repurposing, reinvention, and other key collaborative processes in the fanfiction community.

The second section posits how first-year writing classrooms have the potential to function as democratic learning communities by making use of reinvention and repurposing. Rather than blindly assigning fanfiction practices to fulfill these goals, it outlines the ways the fan practices can be used to cultivate a pedagogy built on the convergence of theoretical backgrounds from both acafan and composition scholars. It also provides assignments grounded in reinvention, repurposing, and collaborative practices of the fanfiction community. The pedagogical potential of these assignments is outlined and annotated, describing how they work as a blend of fan studies and composition and rhetoric. Finally, it addresses the framework of teacher-student relationship and environment of this classroom.

This thesis demonstrates the ways that specific fanfiction community practices can be repurposed into a malleable and innovative pedagogy in first-year writing classrooms. By offering students fanfiction composing practices, I also teach the importance of a collaborative community, talking through differences, and practicing democratic deliberation (both in writing and in rhetoric) across all disciplines. In a world where ever-increasing demagoguery, I turn back to the place that first taught what it means to be part of community built on the convergence of multiple identities. By teaching through what I learned in the fanfiction community, I intend to provide students tools, frameworks, and understanding of self that better situates them in encountering the world both inside and outside of the classroom.

II. Queer Feminist Disruptions and Interruptions
2.1 Grandmother, Curator of Resistive Space

Many perceive fans to be unhinged, people so far removed from reality that their only way of making sense of the world is to immerse themselves into an unreal fiction. These fans are erratic, lunging themselves at their favorite celebrities or secluding themselves in their parents'

basements, communicating only through online forums.[1] Like all communities, fandom does have its excessive moments, but this impression of fans is one built primarily around media portrayals based on stereotypes. As Christine Dandrow says in "Fandom as Fortress: The Gendered Safe Spaces of Online Fanfiction Communities," "with fans being perpetually othered by society…fandom [works] as a way for marginalized groups to connect, interact, and express themselves away from the prying and often harshly judging eye of the public" (Dandrow 6). The draw of the community comes not just from the anonymity of the internet, but from the ability to find a support group, discussion community, and an inventive mission with those of shared interests. As the fanfiction community serves as a space for those who society has deemed deviant, its practices often reflect a resistance to the messages of mainstream media and conventional norms. Resistance is especially palpable through the reinventing and repurposing of canonical narratives, giving marginalized groups "a very necessary and important space where they can exercise a kind of agency that is lacking in their offline life" (11). This agency values voice and deliberation as the community is both made of and curated through the foundations of its participants' oft-silenced voices.

Though the fanfiction community is a refuge for many marginalized groups, I explore the participation of women and/or queer writers. In part, this inquiry is personal. As a queer woman, my interactions with the fanfiction community are often mediated through theses aspects of my identity. The consideration of these groups is also practical, because both women and those who identify as queer make up the largest populations within the fanfiction community. A 2013 census of *ArchiveofOurOwn.org* showed that 80% of fanfic writers were female, while 16% identified as other nondominant gender identities. 40% of fanfic writers identified as homosexual, bisexual, or pansexual while 32% identified as other nondominant sexualities

(*centrumlumina*).[2] Fanfiction offers these marginalized groups a space for resistant practices as well as allows them to participate in an intentionally democratic, self-sustaining community. Looking closely at the histories and practices of reinvention, repurposing, and smaller acts of collaboration within these groups can give a holistic assessment of what may be cultivated from the fanfiction community to produce innovative pedagogies of resistance.

Though the origins of fanfiction can be traced back for nearly hundreds of years, the modern-day incarnation of fandom began with fans of the science fiction television show, *Star Trek.* Francesca Coppa notes that the lack of positive *Star Trek* ratings pushed fans, especially female fans, to become "more vocal and participatory" than ever before (Coppa 44). In part, the female audience responded to the strong female characters and other marginalized groups represented by the *Star Trek* series. In *Enterprising Women: Television Fandom and the Creation of the Popular Myth,* Camille Bacon-Smith refers to the *Star Trek* series as "the granddaddy of media sources" (Bacon-Smith 4). However, a more accurate statement would come in calling the series the *grandmother* of media sources, as today's thriving fanfiction community can attribute its success to the hard work of these pioneering female fans. These women began producing fan works at a rapid rate, responding to the show in a way that was both creative and critical, despite criticism that *Star Trek* was just science fiction for nonreaders (Coppa 45).[3] Behind many of these fan activities were hundreds of women who actively cultivated a space where they could both use their voices and acknowledge the voices of others.

Some of the most notable fic produced in the *Star Trek* fandom was the slash pairing of Kirk and Spock. In these stories, the canonically straight characters were portrayed as a homosexual couple, effectively creating a queer-inclusive narrative (Coppa 48-9). Though these early slash pairings were primarily written by straight women, the stories themselves became an

invitation for queer writers and soon, the fanfiction community was home to a more diverse set of voices. Just as female writers used fanfiction to find voice and build identity via resistive practices, so did the queer community. Fanfiction provided queer writers an avenue where they had permission to be themselves. When fandom spilled over onto the internet in the mid-1990s, these activities multiplied tenfold. The fanfiction community was suddenly accessible to anyone with an internet connection, opening the door for a more diverse set of voices and identities. Built on a foundation of resistive, inclusive women, the internet gave the fanfiction community the stimulus to become a truly democratic space.[4]

Leslie Shade's *Gender and Community in the Social Construction of the Internet* comments on the communal aspect of the internet, saying "cyberspace is a metaphor for community," where "digital citizenship is a prerequisite for participation and engagement" (Shade 2). By existing on the internet, one enacts a digital citizenship where communication and production *only* happen if one is engaged within the cyberspace they occupy. In the early days of the fanfiction community transferring to the internet, women and/or queer writers functioned as "active agents in the construction of the internet," shaping the new ways that fandom could be encountered, disseminated, and enacted within cyberspace (5). This participation, collaboration and communication is multifaceted and self-directed, giving marginalized groups the opportunity to enact their digital citizenship by working as a resistive and communal force. In Bacon-Smith's account of early internet fandom, she approaches the fanfiction community with delight and joy, saying:

> A conceptual space where women can come together and create – to investigate new forms for their art and for their living outside the restrictive boundaries' men have placed on women's public behavior. Not a place or a time, but a state of being – of giving each other permission – in which each may take freedom of expression into her own hands, wherever she is, whatever else she is doing. (Bacon-Smith 3)

Her assessment is true in that this first incarnation of the fanfiction community invited anyone who was willing and had the means, to participate. These women were housewives, school teachers, librarians, secretaries, and more (3). The fanfiction community was built by the everyday woman, who worked as both maker and participant of this democratic community. This space was one that was inherently resistive, as these women both reinvented and repurposed canonical narratives often built on the same hegemonic boundaries that put them *in their place*.

By resisting in such a way, they claimed a space that was *theirs*. For many marginalized groups, the fanfiction community serves the dual purpose of allowing them to break the boundaries that had so long stifled their voices. They moved past the everyday terms that grounded them in a singular identity and instead, they unapologetically celebrated a multifaceted existence in a community built on shared interests, freedom of expression, and permission to be yourself. In the same manner that these pioneering fan writers were able to carve out a resistive space by enacting digital citizenship in a community that was *theirs*, I believe that first-year writing classes can challenge students to see themselves as both participants and curators of a democratic learning community during times of demagoguery. The critical skills enacted by the early women and/or queer writers in the fanfiction community are inextricably bound to those I found in my own fanfiction experiences – the convergence of diverse identities, increased literacy skills through the resistive practices of reinvention and repurposing, and active participation in collaborative acts of beta-reading, works-in-progress, and gift-giving. It is these very practices that can best transform the first-year writing classrooms.

2.2 From Reinvention to Repurposing

On a foundational level, almost all fanfiction works begin with the compositional tool of invention. In his article, "A Plan for Teaching Rhetorical Invention," Richard Larson poses a series of wh-questions that invite writers to "invent" throughout their writing process. These "who, what, when, where, why, and how" questions are rhetorical inquiries that allow writers to invent their own interpretations, arguments, and analyses. In the classroom, these questions are asked to stimulate discussion and help students invent via dissemination of a text. However, when a fic writer disseminates a canon narrative, they are working with *re*invention, a transformation of the traditional *in*vention. In "Re-Inventing Invention: A Performance in Three

Acts," Bre Garrett, Denise Landrum, and Jason Palmeri argue for reinvention as the making of something new out of chaos. Following Ann Berthoff's ideas of making meaning out of fragments, remembrances, and half-truths, they argue that "writers need to resist narrowing focus and coming to closure too quickly; rather, writers who learn the 'uses of chaos' (Berthoff 1981 p. 68) come to value the process of gathering and juxtaposing disparate materials in order to generate a 'new' idea." (Palmeri et. al).[5] Reinvention is not the traditional generation of new ideas, but rather a remixing of pre-existing, disparate ideas. As such, reinvention can better help students understand and work with the multiple ideas and literacies they are already bringing to the classroom.

Additionally, Palmeri et. al note the ways that this form of reinvention can be a multimodal, collaborative form of composing, saying "Collaboratively composing a text allows for an expanded invention site in which writers invent and compose individually and as a larger entity, learning from one another even as they disagree and question the unfolding text through repeated conversations…" (Palmeri et. al) In this way, reinvention allows a text to be expanded, disseminated, and undone between different collaborators. When composing a fanfic, a writer is piecing together preexisting narratives both through their own identities and the collaborative community in which this composing takes place. Kat Heiden argues that "Fanfiction writing is a powerful tool in discovering, shaping, and strengthening these multifaceted identities. It provides a creative outlet through which participants are free to explore and co-create identity through narrative" (Heiden 25). While this echoes Palmeri et. al's ideas of chaos, it is this very chaos that allows writers to better reinvent because writers have a wide array of ideas and identities to pull from. As such, fic writers continually exercise composing through a diverse set of ideas, producing reinvented narratives that work as continued sites of production. This reinvention is

simultaneously resistive and collaborative, encouraging both exploration of self and democratic deliberation through the unpacking of other ideas and identities.

For young queer writers, this exploration of identity via reinvention is vital in understanding self and surviving a world that fails to imagine us. In Jane Hu's "The Revolutionary Power of Fanfiction for Queer Youth," she posits the fanfiction community as a safe space in which queer youth gather and connect. Often, fanfiction does this by doing two things – giving queer writers an inclusive, supportive community and a space to practice imaginative play. Imaginative play gives young writers opportunities to "a low-risk way to experiment with characters, scenarios, and dialogue"" (Hu). As young queer writers reinvent a narrative, they use the tools of imaginative play to try on scenarios, experiment with sexualities and identities, and gauge where they culturally and socially belong. They can do this under the anonymity of the internet, which gives them a place where they can be "out" without being "outed" while they are still learning about themselves. In turn, this act of writing allows young writers to resist in a world that would otherwise not give them the opportunity to play with their identities. It also allows non-queer writers and readers to encounter queer lives through a medium they enjoy. Fics produced through this queer form of reinvention can be analyzed, disseminated, and discussed – leading perhaps to more moments of reinvention that produces more fanfiction.

A notable example of this form of reinvention can be seen in the previously mentioned slash pairing of Kirk and Spock from the *Star Trek* series. In these fics, the canonically straight characters of Kirk and Spock were written as a homosexual couple, thus producing one of the earliest forms of reinvention within the fanfiction community. *Star Trek* was notable for being quite inclusive for its time, but it still lacked in queer representation. When early fic writers

looked to the series and asked questions about what was missing (i.e. queer characters) they were working with Larson's rhetorical generating devices. Though these questions acted as the catalyst to produce slash fics, the actual writing of the fics worked with Palmeri et. al's ideas of reinvention because it acknowledged the many phenomena surrounding the canon narratives – the sexual revolution of the 60s, female desire (as the fics were primarily written by women), the need for inclusion and diversity within a narrative that was already pushing boundaries. The rampant popularity of the slash pairing between Kirk and Spock stemmed not just from asking the wh-questions from the narrative but in acknowledging the multiple, collaborative ideas, biases, and practices that surrounded the canonical narratives. As such, it serves as both a tangible example of early reinvention within the fanfiction community. This form of reinvention can be a powerful tool in the classroom because it allows students in first-year writing classrooms to compose through the questioning and acknowledging of the multiple ideas, biases, and practices that surround them. This can lead to better forms of self-exploration and democratic deliberation as they try to understand the ideas of others. Reinvention is a collaborative practice that gets students thinking not only of their own answers to Larson's wh-questions but to the answers of those around them. They acknowledge the chaos that surrounds them, giving them the ability to disseminate, interact, and deliberate with others to produce writing that thinks deeply about the multiplicity they encounter.

Although reinvention is a critical practice within the fanfiction community, repurposing holds even more potential for the first-year writing classroom, particularly in resisting in an age of demagoguery. In Shari Stenberg's *Repurposing Composition: Feminist Intervention for a Neoliberal Age,* she defines repurposing as the "practice of locating and enacting imaginative possibilities for change and agency within – and often out of – prohibitive, and even damaging

cultural conditions" (2). While Palmeri et. al's notions of reinvention have some similarities in that the re- practice is in making something new out of existing, often disparate, conditions, repurposing, in Stenberg's conception, is about responding to damaging ideas and narratives. Often, fanfics are repurposing narratives in order to undo the damage a particular character or a particular idea might do to marginalized communities. Similar to Hu's imaginative play, another facet of repurposing is in invoking imaginative possibilities. When fanfic writers repurpose, they are enacting through the process of reinvention by examining the convergence of different conditions and imagining something new. However, repurposing pushes reinvention a bit further. While reinvention and repurposing could be synonymous, reinvention is about exploration while repurposing is about *intentional disruption*. Though both processes are grounded in feminist and/or queer histories of resistance, repurposing is the intentional undoing of damaging conditions that often oppresses these groups. Fanfic writers who work with reinvention undo damaging conditions by playing with their own identities, inserting a myriad of unconventional characters or conditions into a canon work, and/or collaboratively answering Larson's wh-questions to disseminate canon narratives. Fic writers who work with repurposing do the same but with the intention of disrupting conditions within canon works that trouble them. As such, while both reinvention and repurposing are acts of resistance, the intentionality behind repurposing better demonstrates the queer/feminist histories that the fanfic community was built on and can better be used to teach in an age of demagoguery.

The pedagogical potential of this intentionality is best seen in Stenberg's breakdown of repurposing. The first step in feminist repurposing is "highlighting and critiquing existing conditions" (10). When fanfic writers choose to engage with a canonical work, they are already enacting this first step as original narratives are the existing conditions. Even if a fic writer is

engaging with a story simply because they want to remain immersed in the world they love, by engaging with the work they are both highlighting and critiquing the existing conditions. The intentional disruption and resistance within repurposing comes from using that initial critique to make something new. Stenberg notes the next step in repurposing comes from "inquiring into and analyzing social context to consider where possibilities exist for working both within and against current structures, systems, and practices" (10). Like with reinvention, this step is grounded in acknowledging the possible biases, ideas, and practices of others within the chaos that surrounds the work. However, a significant difference here is in engaging with the chaos not only to create something new for purposes of play, but to work both within and against the system. This is where repurposing shifts away from reinvention, because it insists that whatever writers pull from chaos resists within current structures. Finally, Stenberg notes that repurposing "reclaim[s] what has been cast off or suppressed to be used for new ends" (10). The initial steps of repurposing can function as invention as a fic writes often use Larsons wh-questions to highlight and critique a text, while the attention to contexts surrounding certain conditions (i.e. canon works) uses Palmeri et. al's reinvention to disseminate a work. It becomes the act of repurposing when a fic writer transforms a narrative by acknowledging and undoing damaging conditions through resistive writing.

This type of repurposing can be seen most notably within the *Harry Potter* fandom, where the character Hermione Granger is often written as black instead of white. In the *Harry Potter* series, Hermione Granger is often discriminated against for being muggleborn, or mudblood.[6] Since the main plot of the series revolves around the oppression of muggleborns and moves to eradicate them, many readers saw parallels between this plot and real-world racism. As such, the purposeful imagining of Hermione as black makes an intentional commentary on these

parallels. Although many fic authors write Hermione's race in small, subtle ways, the best moments of repurposing can be seen in fics that make explicit connections between the allegories of racism and muggle-born prejudice. Ao3 user Vail's fanfic, "look to your kingdoms," does just this through a short series of reflective scenes:

> Even one of the founders of the school [Hermione's] about to go to was a wizarding supremacist. She flips through *Hogwarts: A History* and tries to understand why Salazar Slytherin wanted to make Hogwarts exclusive to purebloods. Of course, there had to be some worry, that muggle-borns might leak the secret of magic or that their families wouldn't take the news well…Still, she is *so tired* of being different. It's a thousand years later, and it seems very little has changed. When her parents ask her about what she's read over dinner, she only tells them about interesting household charms or the magical ceiling at Hogwarts, and not that they might be sending her to school where she still won't fit in. A world that will view her as lesser for the circumstances of her birth (Vail).

Although Vail does not explicitly talk about Hermione's blackness or race within this snippet, they show the parallel prejudices between both the wizarding world and the real world, with a young, black Hermione, already "*so tired* of being different," fearful of the type of prejudice she may face due to wizarding supremacy. The very phrasing of "wizarding supremacy" draws parallels between the very real and racist notions of white supremacy. Here, Vail is using reinvention to ask the wh-questions of the narratives, specifically, what parallels can be drawn between our world and the wizarding world and how can making Hermione black bring attention to this? Vail also addresses the existing conditions that surround the canon narrative because they are accounting for prejudices both inside and outside of the narrative. It is these very conditions that make this move more akin to repurposing than simple reinvention. By making Hermione

black and explicitly laying out supremacist tendencies between fictional and real worlds, Vail repurposes within their fic by intentionally disrupting the ideas of the canon narrative.

As Vail's narrative continues and finishes, this intentional disruption via racial commentary is even more explicit:

> Hermione hates that the first thing the shop clerk in the apothecary tries to sell her is a potion to "tame her hair." She likes her hair the way it is, curls and frizz, heavy around her shoulders. She thought the wizarding world would be different…a third year in a green and silver tie spits *mudblood*. It's not a word that she'll find in a book - it's not even a word she dares ask an adult for the meaning of - but the look on his face tells her enough…Hermione gets called *know-it-all* and *teacher's pet* and a dozen other nicknames meant to be cruel, but at least these are names that she has earned. None of them are as nasty as the alternative. Sometimes they're even muttered with begrudging admiration. She's making them acknowledge her for who she is and not what they assume based on her blood status or the color of her skin or the skirts she wears beneath her robes…At some point, Hermione decides that she's going to *make* things change. She's tired of being sneered at and not taken seriously, of books that aren't meant for her, of history repeating itself. The wizarding world will be a different place when she's done with it (Vail).

Throughout the fic, Hermione is first fearful of possible prejudices within the wizarding world, experiences microaggressions via her race and blood status, and finally, settles on changing the prejudices within the wizarding world herself.[7] In that final determined line, Vail posits the black Hermione as a character with the potential to enact new possibilities. This fictional Hermione intentionally disrupts the existing conditions of the wizarding world, mimicking the moves that

Vail makes in using a black Hermione to intentionally disrupt the canon narrative by calling attention to existing parallels. By writing Hermione as such, Vail follows Stenberg's three steps to repurposing: "attending to and challenging the habitual status quo" by asking questions about the canon narrative and Hermione's race, "drawing on and departing from these existing conditions" by looking at the parallels of existing ideas, and "moving to articulate and enact new purposes" by writing narratives with a fully-aware, determined black Hermione to make a cultural commentary on race (17). On a larger level, a black Hermione repurposes the canon narrative by offering better representation and agency to fans of color, literally creating a new purpose both within its existence and by promoting continued production of more repurposed fanfic.

Just as fanfic with a black Hermione can make a critical commentary on race, other moves in repurposing can be used to make critical commentaries on sex and gender. A notable example of this is in repurposing the canonical hero narrative by changing the gender or sexuality of the heterosexual, typically white, male hero. This form of genderbending or slash is particularly prominent with popular comic book heroes. In Ao3 user SilverRose42's fanfic, "We Hold These Truths (Listen to My Declaration)," they make a critical commentary on sexism and homophobia by transforming the canonically male character of Captain America into a female version of Steve Rogers—Steph Rogers. The story of *Captain America* follows the genetically engineered super-soldier through WWII, where he works as the rugged, manly face of resistance against a Nazi regime. At the end of the war, Steve Rogers (Captain America) is cryogenically frozen and woken up 50 year later. In SilverRose42's fic, this part of the canon narrative stays roughly the same outside of the gender change. However, the moment of repurposing comes when Steph Rogers wakes up 50 years later and is "pissed as hell that the dim view and

[restrictions] on what women should and should not do remains much the same" (SilverRose42).

Throughout the fic, Steph participates in the same events and plots that take place in the canon

version of *Captain America*, but also goes to protest rallies for women and LGBT+ rights,

continually tells male heroes to "take [their] sexism and bite her," and wears a "women owe you

nothing" shirt in public as frequently as she can (SilverRose42). In SilverRose42's fic, they are

repurposing Captain America as a hero that not only follows the canon plot but also as someone

who acts as a hero in smaller ways, making continual commentary on the sexist and homophobic

realities of our current world.

This is fic in one of many in a collection called "These Women Who Will Conquer," all

by SilverRose42.[8] In this series, SilverRose42 not only changes the gender of Captain America,

but also other popular heroes like Ironman or Luke Skywalker. In most of these fics,

SilverRose42 repurposes the hero to make commentary on racist, sexist, and homophobic notions

that exist within canon narratives but are largely ignored by the male characters. Like Vail, they

are using Stenberg's notion of repurposing to attend to existing conditions by noting the racist,

sexist, and homophobic tendencies of canon narratives, departing from these existing conditions

by changing the gender and/or sexuality of the main hero, and enacting new possibilities by

transforming the hero into someone who not only faces the evil forces within the narrative but

also acts as hero by making critical commentary on the biases and "-isms" that exist within our

own world. By using repurposing, these fics move to make larger cultural commentaries on the

worlds both within and outside of the fic.

Just like with reinvention, moves like this can better help students to think more deeply

on the disparate ideas, biases, and practices that they encounter. However, instead of simply

working with those ideas to make something new, they can make something new that also serves

a larger purpose. When effectively used together, the fanfiction practices of reinvention and repurposing can better help students explore their own identities and identities of others, practice critical literacy skills (critical thinking, analysis, dissemination, and discussion), and encourage resistance in a socio-political world that is becoming all too rooted in demagoguery. Borrowing from these larger practices within the fanfiction community can better cultivate a democratic learning space within first-year writing classrooms.

2.3 Collaborative Practices of Democratic Spaces

While the larger practices of repurposing and reinvention are the foundation of the fanfiction community, collaborative practices are what truly make it a democratic learning community. On a foundational level, a democratic community can be "characterized by or favoring social equality; egalitarian; capable of being used, accessed, or enjoyed by anyone" ("democratic"). Fandom is built on the egalitarian foundation that anyone who claims themselves a fan could participate. Fan websites do not exist behind paywalls, the content of stories is not censored, and nearly any fandom, besides those which have explicit copyright bans, is up for grabs.[9] Fanfiction is a place where the freedom of the internet allows anyone to navigate, collaborate, and participate in the production of creative and critical transformative works. Though the fanfiction community is largely white and middle-class, primarily due to the digital divide and lack of technological access in lower-income demographics, the community itself does not block any specific group or type of content. In short, the fanfiction community is a democratic space because it invites everyone to use their voice in an effective, collaborative effort toward inclusion.

Like many democratic spaces, fanfiction also has the potential to be messy, unruly, and harsh. The community, after all, is full of human beings – easily fallible, conditionally agitated,

and oft defensive. Even within this democratic chaos, the community holds potential for participatory learning, as Paul Booth says in "Fandom in the Classroom,"

> Fandom can also be messy, and nasty, and filled with hateful speech; so too students must also learn where this speech is coming from, and why, and then how to safely and appropriately combat it. Teaching fandom isn't just about showing students how to appreciate media in a deeper and more emotional way; it's about discovering the ways fandom itself can change our perceptions. (Booth)

The participatory nature of the community encourages interaction, so that issues are addressed head-on rather than ignored. Though I would not posit conflict resolution as a distinctive attribute of the fanfiction community, I would say that the participatory nature of it encourages talking through differences rather than around them. Every person who engages with the fanfiction community knows that the community *only* exists because of their active participation. To seize, upend, or work against that participation would be to break the democratic foundations on which the community was built. The small, collaborative practices that make up the daily activities of the fanfiction community are what we need in first-year writing classrooms. If students see the classroom as a place they cultivate through small acts of collaboration, they can better understand how to be participatory, deliberative peoples in an age of demagoguery. In my own experiences, the fanfiction practices that most taught me how to be participatory and deliberative are gift-giving, Work(s)-in-Progress (or, WIPs), and beta-readings.

Though gift-giving, WIPs, and beta-reading are all similar and intrinsically connected processes within the fanfiction community, I begin with gift-giving to show how collaboration furthers the community. Gift-giving can be defined as reciprocal feedback given without expectation or reward; it can come in many different forms, including exchange of readers,

reviews, and recommendations. Chad Littleton's "The Role of Feedback in Two Fanfiction Writing Groups," says that "fanfiction communities are, in essence, self-sponsored writing groups...they are autonomous, unlike the nonautonomous groups found in a classroom setting" (Littleton 8). The autonomous nature of the fanfiction community demands that feedback must be consistently reciprocal as "writers [are] motivated by forces besides grades and tangible rewards," instead they "are built on trust" (8). In many ways, this communal trust fosters a more authentic, enthusiastic response than feedback delivered in a nonautonomous community, because participants only deliver such feedback when and how they want to do so. Fans do not have to compose fanfiction, nor do other fans have to respond to it – but they do. They reinvent, repurpose, and react to these transformative acts because they know that without their participation, their autonomous community will cease to be. Heiden says that gift-giving is "not so much that a fic writer gets a review in exchange for a reader, but rather that she has contributed something new to the community as a whole, just as the reviewer has, and just as someone who translates fics or maintains servers does as well" (Heiden 19). The practice of gift-giving also has the potential to work as an enthusiastic space for peer mentoring. This form of mentoring makes fic writers both generous in their role as reader as well as thankful in their role as writer. It also lessons the stakes of writing because writers know they will likely receive feedback. Gift-giving exchanges are authentic and ripe with learning opportunities, mediated not by some form of teacher, but writers themselves. In this form of reciprocal gift-giving, all members of the fanfiction community are acting as both student and teacher. As such, gift-giving has the potential to turn first year writing classrooms from non-autonomous to autonomous, where students participate not just to impress the teacher but to foster a collaborative community within the classroom.

The nature by which fanfiction is composed allows for this autonomous, gift-giving democratic space because fanfiction is rarely published all at once. Instead, most fanfictions are written as Works-In-Progress, or WIP, on a chapter-by-chapter basis. As Christine Dandrow says, "Most often, [fanfiction] is published in one or two chapters at a time, feedback is given in the form of comments, and then more chapters are published" (Dandrow 7). This feedback is generally considered as a writer continues to compose. Though fanfiction can be extremely brief and self-contained, fanfiction can also "constitute entire series of novel-length works comprised of hundreds of thousands of words each" (7). In some cases, the fanfiction community produces works that are much longer than the canon, both in words within the story and in time spent composing the story.[10] This chapter-by-chapter form of publication allows for consistent feedback throughout the writing process and develops fics based not just in authors' own intentions, but on the communal reactions of the members who read it. In a gift-giving community, this process is one that affords writers the ability to learn while they write.

In Kristina Busse's *Framing Fanfiction*, she says that fanfiction as a WIP advertises the story as one with an open status; "rather than a closed text with fixed meaning, the very form of WIP asks readers to collaborate in meaning production, either imaginatively by envisioning various narrative threads as they wait for an update, or literally by inviting feedback and discussions about the story online" (Busse 148). Just as many forms of media that fans consume (book series, television shows, film series) are serial, this serial form of WIP publication is familiar and easy to receive. However, unlike the canon media they enjoy, the WIP allows fans to quite literally contribute to the meaning-making of the stories they read. This implication is a twofold process; single-authored WIP fanfics function as means to cultivate meaning-making around the reinventing and/or repurposing canon works, while those who interact with and

disseminate a WIP fanfic contribute to meaning-making in that specific fic. It is a continuous, participatory process that allows fans to contribute to their fandom on multiple levels; WIPs serve as interactive texts that facilitate multifaceted meaning-making and learning, giving writers ideas and goals about their writing that change as they receive feedback from their readers.

Despite the communal practice of meaning-making that accompanies WIPs, this form is not without its challenges, just like many other writing endeavors. WIPs can be sloppy or hastily created or never finished. The attachment of WIP to a fic allows the writer space to stumble, make mistakes, or abandon their story all together. However, the fragmented, raw nature of the WIP that makes it such a powerful teaching tool. Bad writing in the fanfiction community never just *is*, as all writing in the community, especially the WIP, has the potential to improve in ways that an officially published story never could. The recursive motion of the fanfiction community comes from a near-constant exchange of feedback that continuously works to improve its members. WIPs are reminders that a text is *alive*. As Busse said, fanfiction is often not a closed text with an affixed meaning; it is a text that is alive and derived from multilayered levels of interaction and meaning-making. In this liminal WIP rests the potential for community building, collaborative processes, and pedagogical interventions.

Though gift-giving and WIPs are critical yet small practices within the fanfiction community, perhaps the most studied and most pedagogically-bound relationship is that of the beta-reader. In the fanfiction community, a beta-reader is a community member who reads through chapters of a writer's stories and gives feedback *before* they are published.[11] The level of feedback that the beta-reader gives can vary from technical and grammatical help to addressing larger issues in the plot and characters. Feedback provided by the beta-reader is generally more in-depth than the casual commentary left via gift-giving and thus, many active fanfic writers seek

out beta-readers to assist them.[12] Some writers and beta-readers work together across multiple fics, with relationships that potentially span years. Other relationships form for brief periods, as writers and readers work only on one fic. While the definition of beta-reader is relatively concrete, the specific role that a beta-reader plays throughout the fanfiction community varies from story to story, writer to writer, and reader to reader. The relationship between a writer and their beta-reader is one that is collaborative and recursive, affording more pedagogical intimacy than any other relationship in the fanfiction community.

In "I Write. You Write. They Write: The Literary Works of Fandom as a Factor of Integrating the Community," Agnieszka Oberc outlines the typical process of the beta-reader/writer relationship, saying:

> The relationship between the author and their beta-reader is that of cooperation. The beta-reader's task is to point out potential mistakes and problems, and to suggest solutions. The author attempts to take those into consideration, then the story is discussed again. The whole process bears resemblance to negotiations, and ideally, it should lead to creating a text both the author and the beta-reader deem good. (Oberc 68)

Through the sharing and collaboration on a work, where writers make themselves vulnerable by offering up a piece of reckless, oft messy writing and beta-readers offer critical, yet caring, feedback. This method of collaboration is usually transparent, as both writer and beta-reader are equally invested in the outcome of the fic. The beta-reader is not a cold editor (though, sometimes writers do request edit-only reads), they are an active participant in making a fanfiction possible. As such, many writers give their beta-readers ample credit and gratitude throughout authors' notes within a published fic. This relationship is a testament not only to the

collaboration that can be found within the fanfiction community but also of the power of dialogue across equally invested partners.

This investment leads to what I see as a form of pedagogical intimacy, where each partner works with their own identities to create a fic. Though the writer typically has the final say in the fic, the beta-reader still plays a significant role in its construction. I refer to this relationship as pedagogical intimacy because it "offers a different approach to the review itself, recommending a more holistic, social view than what we often assign in class" (Clemons, *MediaCommons*). Beta-readers and writers are not randomly assigned, instead, they come together over a shared project of interest. Rarely would a beta-reader or writer work with a fic that is not a product of the fandom in which they are both interested. This shared interest and knowledge of the canon cultivates a sense of intimacy because it drives equal investment in the work. In turn, both beta-readers and writers have the potential to learn from each other as they collaborate on a story. Like much of the feedback in the fanfiction community, betaing is a product of a democratic community. As a beta-reader and writer work together, they are contributing to the fanfiction community in a holistic way, by taking part in the recursive motion that continuously cultivates the community. Because the work that a beta-reader and writer do is often more comprehensive than the typical feedback, they partake a pedagogically intimate relationship that we should seek to cultivate in first-year writing classrooms.

Like the foundational practices developed in the fanfiction community, I seek to both reinvent and repurpose the practices that taught me so much. Long before school taught me to take my writing seriously, the fanfiction community taught me the different ways I could tame the chaos of my writing process. I approach these key practices (reinvention, repurposing, and the smaller collaborative acts) to unveil the pedagogical potential in each one. Mimicking these

practices in first-year writing classrooms is an easy task because many of these are already in use. Students are consistently encouraged to gift their peers with comments during workshops. Students frequently turn in drafts of their projects, WIPs not yet finished but eager for feedback. They can also partner up for peer review, acting as beta-readers for the day. The difference that I want to cultivate in the classroom by borrowing from fanfiction is the sense of community and collaboration that comes paired along with these practices. These fanfiction practices exist only because the community is a democratic space where its members know that participation is key to keeping the community intact. In the classroom, these boundaries are set by the professor in comfortable assignments that direct students toward best practices. Students have no investment in creating a democratic community because the classroom exists regardless of participation. I want to give students a hand in cultivating a democratic learning community as well as give them the power to make this possible and be accountable for the who, what, when, where, and why that they learn by grounding my class in the larger theme of reinvention and repurposing. As a student, I want to continue learn, unlearn, and reshape my identity. As fan, I want to keep swimming headlong in the community that has given me the muscles to face any waters. Finally, as a teacher, I want to take hold of these practices and transform them into a pedagogy that turns my classroom into a democratic learning community.

III. Repurposing and Reinventing the Classroom

3.1 A Pedagogy of Urgency

I develop pedagogies shaped by and evolving from fanfiction practices not only because of my own learning experiences within this community but also because I feel that not enough attention or urgency is typically present in current first-year writing classrooms. As practitioners of composition and rhetoric, I believe that it is our responsibility to account for the ongoing

social, cultural, and political factors that frame how students first encounter writing and other literate practices. In a world now overflowing with digital spaces where demagogic rhetoric runs amuck, we need to build pedagogies that allow students to enact writing practices both inside and outside of the classroom as well as resist demagoguery in an increasingly tense socio-political environment. Students compose outside of the classroom all the time – in shared digital spaces that foster community, not through proximity of a shared classroom, but through the convergence of similar interests. Composing in the digital age is built by the participation across continually shifting converging points of difference. Allowing students to work with these practices both inside and outside of the classroom fosters a multimodal and collaborative pedagogy. Promoting these composing practices can be best addressed through examination of the original online composers – the fanfiction community.

Fanfiction practices can be a vital pedagogical tool because they allow students to use the composing practices that they are already enacting outside of class and provides a collaborative, flexible pedagogy that accounts for the current socio-political climate. As Shannon Sauro says in "Looking to Fandom in the Time of Change," "we live in a time of change that requires flexible and creative approaches to the socio-political mandates and constraints imposed upon our teaching and scholarship" (*ssauro.info*). Digital technologies increase collaboration while impending demagoguery leads to conflict, breakdown of community, and promotion of in-groups and out-groups.[13] As teachers of composition and rhetoric, we must grapple with these moments of socio-political change by using a malleable pedagogy. As a community that continuously navigates change and embraces the ideas of liminality, the fanfiction community works as a learning community with a pliable sense of pedagogy. From its start, the fanfiction community promoted itself as a democratic safe space. This attitude is a byproduct of its founders, inclusive

communities of female and/or queer writers who cultivated democracy through acts of reinvention and repurposing. The fanfiction community has the history necessary to see its way through change while still advocating democratic principles. At the same time, the fanfiction community has the flexibility to address the changing nature of students composing processes as they become increasingly digital.

As such, attention and urgency to both changing socio-political tensions and digital composition can better help students become informed citizens who know *how* to contribute to a democratic space in an age of demagoguery. As Patricia Roberts-Miller says in *Demagoguery and Democracy,* "demagoguery isn't about what politicians do; it's about how we, as citizens, argue, reason, and vote. Therefore, reducing how much our culture relies on demagoguery is our problem, and up to us to solve" (Roberts-Miller 9). Like Roberts-Miller, I believe our job as teachers is to help students solve the in-group versus out-group mentalities that comes paired along with demagoguery. When these controversial attitudes go unaddressed in first-year writing classrooms, students learn to be passive practitioners of demagoguery. Demagoguery is a problem not centered around one politician or administration, but rather on the willingness of the people to buy into in-group versus out-group rhetoric, clinging to identity not multiple, but as an all-encompassing whole. Understanding identity as always partial allows people to think critically about what they say and do as an interaction between disparate ideas, bodies, and communities. First-year writing classrooms often work as foundational spaces where students learn to argue, analyze, and reason, often through encountering differences. As such, using fanfiction practices to form democratic learning communities in first-year writing classrooms can foster critical spaces for combatting and complicating demagoguery.[14]

Though no precedent is set across all universities, general education courses for all majors usually involve some form of introductory rhetoric and/or composition course, commonly referred to as the first-year writing classroom.[15] These classrooms are responsible for shaping student perspectives of university-level writing and giving them the tools to practice composition and rhetoric both inside and outside of the classroom. In Ann Biswas's "Lessons In Citizenship: Using Collaboration in the Classroom to Build Community, Foster Academic Integrity, and Model Civic Responsibility," she supports using learning communities as models in first-year writing classrooms, saying "by working collaboratively to form an academic community inside the classroom, students can model what it means to participate as honest, responsible, and respectful members of a civic community" (Biswas 10). A classroom that mimics the fanfiction community can challenge students to actively participate in generating and contributing to classroom knowledge, rather than allowing competitiveness or passive, bare minimum work to spur their motivations. Positioning the teacher as a community member on par with the students can also better foster participation. As Biswas says, "learning communities are a natural fit in the conceptual transformation of pedagogy from the teacher-centered to learner-centered paradigm" (14). Student-centered classrooms do not suggest that a teacher step down from their teaching role, but rather that they position themselves as a learner alongside their students. This would better suggest that all participants, not just the teacher, are responsible for knowledge and meaning-making within the class. Although some members may take positions as moderators or curators, there is no defined leader or teacher in the fanfiction community. In turn, the fanfiction community is an autonomous learning community where all members, from those who amply participate to those who veer toward lurking, have means to contribute to knowledge and

meaning-making. In the classroom, this informs pedagogy as it posits a decentered classroom, where active learning is fostered through a move away from hierarchies (14).

This move away from hierarchies can incentivize engagement from a diverse set of identities, bodies and communities. Jamila M. Kareem says that learning community models within first-year writing classrooms can foster a "rhetorical curriculum of response, engagement, and social action… [showing that] community engagement works as an effective resource for engaging and ideally retaining traditionally marginalized college students" (Kareem 63-4). Just as the fanfiction community provides a space for marginalized groups, the learning community classroom has the potential to offer that space for marginalized students to explore the relationship between voice and identity. As Kareem adds, "students have multiple voices, some that may have been historically silenced and continually undermined by sociocultural power structures, and they must learn how each of those voices contributes" to knowledge and meaning-making within the classroom (68). This position acknowledges the multiple voices and identities that students have, which are constantly overlapping, interacting, and reacting in the classroom setting. Classroom practices built around fanfiction practices invite marginalized students to continually use their voices in productive ways. In the same manner, students who belong to privileged groups can learn to hear more clearly and openly the voices of those who are historically marginalized.

Most importantly, this pedagogy is built on a sense of urgency, one that addresses and accounts for students composing practices and an increasingly tense socio-political world. A classroom based on fanfiction practices has five key characteristics:

1) Knowledge is produced by participatory and autonomous learning.

2) Classroom assignments encourage students to explore and express their own identities while regarding the identities of others.

3) Peer-review is based on transparent, collaborative efforts around subjects of students' own interests.

4) Classroom discussion is grounded in the ability to talk through differences and have productive disagreements.

5) Both students and teachers embrace the potential chaos of interacting identities and work *through* the uncomfortable, rather than around it.

I posit this type of classroom not with a starry-eyed optimism that all students will work together but with the realities that our responsibility as academics is to gives students pathways through which to become informed, engaged peoples. A classroom built around the practices of fandom is not a homogenous classroom, but a classroom where students are challenged to regard the voices of others as just as pertinent as their own. I want to produce an autonomous, decentered classroom where all students have the potential to contribute to knowledge making. Even with the best of intentions, I know that some students will maintain their prejudices, while other students, too familiar with being silenced, will fear speaking up. Despite this, I still believe that a classroom which repurposes and reinvents the practices of the fanfiction community has the potential to teach students different ways to reflect closely on their identities and the identities of others.

In a time where demagoguery has become the norm, even within the classroom, it is important to remember the work that first-year writing classrooms have set out to do. Though this work varies from university to university, it seems to me that the work of higher education is to produce a thoughtful, informed peoples. We are responsible for shaping students' perceptions

and interactions not only with all potential rhetorical and compositional experience throughout their academic careers, but also in all situations they encounter beyond the ivory tower of academia. Although such heavy implications seem like too much pressure to instill within first-year writing programs, most of which require only one or two classes for students with unrelated majors, it is a pressure I happily embrace. Perhaps part of me is that starry-eyed optimist, who believes that the general education, first-year writing classes that students usually take only to fulfill a requirement can make a significant difference in a student's life. In many ways, I see my position as teacher in these classes as one of critical passion, not unlike my engagement with the fanfiction community over the last thirteen years. This position is fully ingrained in the belief that I can make some difference. It is my hope, which I intend not to falter in, that composition truly matters in these seemingly abysmal circumstances. As such, I work with a reinvented and repurposed pedagogy, because at the very least students will have some form of exposure to a democratic community that values collaborative, inclusionary practices. I may not make a significant impact on a student's life as whole, but I can offer a meaningful, if ephemeral, experience in the first-year writing classroom.

3.2 Assignments, Environments, and Relationships in FYC

In this first-year writing classroom, I offer a sequence of three assignments built on the foundations of reinvention and repurposing. The first two assignments allow students to work with reinvention through exploring their own identities, the identities of others, and the cultural complications in between while the final assignment asks students to repurpose their previous work with new possibilities. When students are given these assignments, it is important that the teacher is transparent about the purposes of these assignments, telling students why they are being asked to do this work and how these skills can be helpful both inside and outside of the

classroom. In Gerald Graff's *Clueless in the Acadame: How Schooling Obscures the Life of the Mind,* he offers that too often there is a disconnect between teacher expectations and students' abilities because a lack of transparency hidden behind academic "jargon and specialized terminology" (Graff 2). As such, students should know that the class is grounded in reinvention and repurposing and be given explicit definitions and examples of these terms early within the class. Graff argues that "simplification is a necessary feature of even the most complex kinds of work" (10). Including students in the discourse, rather than excluding them by working under the assumption that they can find their own definitions of reinvention and repurposing throughout the semester, better positions them to have a shared form a classroom literacy from which to begin. Explicit dialogue early on also helps mend the gap between students from high or low-income backgrounds, or any other education disparities (8). As the students work on their assignments throughout the semester, the importance of reinvention and repurposing must be continually reiterated. Without giving students the language to address the purpose of their work, it would be difficult for them to do the type of thorough work in reinventing and repurposing that this class demands.

In following suit with many first-year writing classrooms, the first assignment of reinvention is a personal narrative. In this assignment, students will be asked to engage with a fandom they belong to, outlining the different ways they themselves interact with the fandom, how their chosen fandom interacts with the larger world, and how the cultural conditions of that fandom situate it in a larger context (i.e. outside of the classroom). Here, the term fandom can act in multiple ways – as a literal fandom surrounding a form of media, as community the student belongs to, or as a collaborative hobby a student participates in. Students will be allowed to choose whatever fandom they please, as long as it is a fandom they both actively participate in

and are passionate about exploring.[16] Allowing students to engage with their chosen fandoms makes the personal narrative all the more personal and ideally, produces the same type of fannish enthusiasm for this assignment that fans have in writing fanfiction. The personal narrative can be an early step in reinvention because it challenges students to ask Larson's wh-questions of their fandom and allows them to better understand self through disseminating this fandom. For instance, if a student were to go with a more traditional route and choose a television show fandom, their narrative may offer a story about how they got into this show, describe the specific parts of the show do they are most drawn to, say how their interest in the show represents who they are as a person, and identify places where the show may fail or succeed in interacting with the larger world. By working with the early steps of reinvention, this first personal narrative assignment asks that students do what fanfic writers do, engage with a fandom they are passionate about, demonstrate what this fandom says about their own identity, and culturally critique how that fandom interacts with the larger world.

This type of introspection can encourage students to take into the account the identities, bodies, and communities they are already bringing to the classroom, making their embodied selves the subjects of study, rather than arbitrary subjects that they have little to no interest in. In William Banks' "Written Through the Body: Disruption and 'Personal' Writing," he posits that it is critical that students engage with personal writing through their bodies, saying "I know the bodies of others by knowing my own body, and vice versa; I read into those bodies as I read into my own; I write those bodies as I write my own. Such writing does not come in neat linear progression, nor in stable, unquestioned fragments of meaning and understanding" (Banks 23). Palmeri et. al argue that reinvention happens when students work with the chaos around them to make something new. Very often, this chaos includes not only their identities, backgrounds, and

ideas but also bodies that exist within fandoms that students are part of. By asking students to engage with their fandom in a critical way, they can "use the personal to make sense of the world, as well as the other way around" (23). This assignment differs from the traditional personal narrative assignment in the first-year writing classroom because it does not direct students to a limited frame and prompt, rather it allows students to make their inextricably linked yet partial identities and interests the subject of study. Understanding of self happens best when students are challenged to engage with something in a fannish yet critical manner.

Though the personal narrative can work as an early step toward reinvention by understanding and disseminating self, this can be furthered by asking students to engage with fandoms outside of their own interests. Banks proposed that students not only read themselves but also those around them. In a follow-up assignment to the personal narrative, students will engage in a fandom that they feel they are not part of and write a narrative about it. This can be a fandom adjacent to what they previously wrote on or a fandom completely unlike their own. Depending on the variety of fandoms students choose within the first assignment, the teacher can ask that the students literally swap fandoms for the second assignment, creating potential for moments of collaboration through difference. In an ideal setting, this swapping option is the most valuable because it continues the theme of making the students own interests the subject of the class while fostering moments of collaboration when students engage with their classmates' fandoms. However, since we cannot predict how different or alike student fandoms may be within a classroom, there must be space to make this assignment not so bound by the first personal narrative.[17] Regardless of method, the goal here is to make them see outside of themselves, valuing extrospection as much as introspection was valued in the first assignment. In this second assignment, which I call an outsider narrative, students will ask the same wh-

questions and do research on something they are disconnected from, thus finding ways to account for the chaotic identities those outside of themselves and fulfilling the latter steps of reinvention.

By engaging with the identities, bodies, and communities of others to produce new understandings, students are doing the type of reinvention Palemeri et. al proposed. This can also teach students to talk through differences in creative ways as they "can benefit greatly by gathering a wide array of disparate materials and then taking the time to experiment with combining and re-arranging these materials in novel ways" (Palmeri et. al). In this second assignment, they are working with the early steps of reinvention by engaging with this outside fandom in the same way they engaged with their own fandom in the first assignment. Additionally, they are working with the latter steps of reinvention by developing an outsider narrative that accounts from an array of identities and bodies across different fandoms. This outsider narrative is quite literally a fanfic itself, because students are seeking to understand and deliberate with something that does not belong to them (or, in this case, a fandom that they do not belong to) to compose a narrative as if they were members of this outsider fandom. In a classroom where the fandom swap is possible, this outsider narrative can better help students talk through differences and deliberative as they research and mimic each other's fandoms. The outsider narrative enacts new possibilities for standard genres in first-year writing classrooms, both the personal narrative and the research paper, because it gives students the freedom to work with their own topics of interests and challenges them to engage with the interests of others with the same care. Paired together, both narrative assignments encourage better understanding of self and deliberation across converging points of difference, critical skills that many in the fanfiction community continually participate in.

Once students have reinvented within the first two assignments, they can use repurposing to approach these former assignments with more productive means in mind. Working within the standard genres of first-year writing classrooms, the latter assignment is a rhetorical analysis of an artifact from one or both communities they had previously written on. At is core, a rhetorical analysis asks students make sense of the rhetor(s), situation(s), audience(s), and message(s) of an artifact (*TheVisualCommunicationGuy*). While students will follow these conventions with whatever artifact they choose, they will also identify what their chosen artifact(s) say about gender, sexuality, race, class, dis/abilities, or any other aspects of culture. They will also describe how these socio-cultural messages within the artifact reflect the community that it was pulled from. Then in following with Stenberg's notions of repurposing, students will repurpose this artifact, suggesting ways to improve and make new any of the potentially damaging conditions found in the varying aspects of the artifact(s). Even if students to not find damaging conditions within the artifact, they may find uneven representation, complicated community histories, or lack of nuance in the artifact's argument. In repurposing, the students will offer an imaginative possibility to remediate existing conditions. For instance, a student using an episode of a television show fandom as an artifact may point out lack of representation within the show and suggest more diverse casting, outline controversial issues within the plot and offer solutions to how these issues could have been handled more delicately, or critique damaging messages the show portrays to its audience and rewrite the artifact (or episode) to alter that message. On the other hand, a student working with a community as a fandom may point out limitations on who gets to join that community and argue for more inclusivity, acknowledge the possible "-isms" that the community was built on (or still practices) and find solutions to undo these prejudices, or make note of and make new any other detrimental conditions within the community. Regardless

of how the students choose as their fandom, the artifact that they work with must be something that they are willing to culturally critique in a deliberative and explicit way.

By giving students a space to deeply analyze an artifact within the first half of the assignment, they work with the first steps of repurposing through investigating and disseminating existing conditions. When they suggest improvements in the second half of their assignments, they are work with the latter steps of repurposing by moving away from damaging conditions and proposing news ways that these can resist within institutions (in this case, the fandom that the artifact was pulled from). In this assignment, the student must give equal attention to both the analysis and repurposing portions of the assignment, and students must be pushed to find the damaging conditions within the artifact. Although students work with fandoms they have strong affections for and may resist the notion of finding damaging conditions, the ability to critique an artifact from the fandom they are part of teaches students how to be informed, engaged citizens because they are willing to disseminate and question that which they are passionate about. Culturally critiquing an artifact is not meant to lesson a student's affection for their fandom, but it does give them to ability to act as fans do, to engage with something they are passionate about by enacting new, imaginative possibilities for it – even if that means acknowledging damaging conditions within a fandom they are part of. If they are willing to leverage this type of critique at something they care for, then they can continually leverage this critique outside of the classroom, working as a more informed, engaged person. Scaffolding these three assignments allows students to work with reinvention and repurposing through ongoing inquiries into subjects of interest. It also allows students to better understand self, talk through difference between converging fandoms, and intentionally produce something new out

of this chaos. In short, students are afforded the opportunity to reinvent, repurpose, and resist in an age of demagoguery

      The ongoing themes of reinventing and repurposing can be used not only for larger assignments but also for the daily work within the class. In the Spring 2019 version of this class, students meet three times a week on a MWF schedule and work with a sequence of three categories: Concept, Practice/Models, and Repurposing.[18] On Mondays students are introduced to a concept relevant to their larger assignment, on Wednesdays students read models and/or practice this concept, and on Fridays students work in small groups and repurpose this concept to create something new. For instance, in Week 3 of the class (and soon after they are given the first personal narrative assignment) students are introduced to the concept of voice, watch a series of spoken word poets as models of voice and personal narratives, and then repurpose the genre of spoken word poetry to collaboratively compose poems that argue against existing conditions. Once the students have completed the repurposing activity, they "teach" other groups how they repurposed the genre. This same sequence is repeated throughout the semester, with concepts, practice/models, and repurposing activities relative to whatever unit and larger assignment students are working on at the time. Designing the syllabus in such a way allows the larger themes of reinvention and repurposing to be ongoing, continuous practices within the classroom, rather than just tools used for the larger assignments. The daily work of practicing also allows students to better prepare and compose their larger papers and creates a classroom where every aspect is bound by fanfiction practices. This can also be done by using smaller collaborative acts available within the fanfiction community as means for ongoing peer-review.

      As beta-readers function as the practice most often cited, studied, and referenced by acafen in composition and rhetoric, it is critical that they exist within this class. This practice is

less of a solidified assignment and more of an ongoing collaborative process between two students throughout the semester. Early in the class, students are assigned a beta-reader, another student whose drafts they read and vice versa. These pairs can be best assigned by having an activity early within the semester where students self-identify ongoing conceptual areas of interest and inquiry. The teacher may suggest some categories (books, films, video games, sports, politics, etc...) but the areas should primarily be provided by the students. Students with multiple, overlapping conceptual areas are more than likely to choose alike fandoms as their subjects of study. As such, and to best mimic that passion that both writers and beta-readers put into projects within fandom, beta-reader pairs within the classroom should be assigned so that students with similar interests are given the opportunity to work together. Just as beta-readers do, these students will collaborate throughout a period of time (the semester), during which they will give feedback, disseminate each other's work, and reflect on their relationships throughout the process. These pairings will be largely autonomous, as the pairs would only be required to meet during in-class workshops before major assignments, and at least three times outside of class. If we consider the above three assignments, the students work together a minimum of six times. Ideally, because of their shared interests and fandoms, students should make efforts to work together beyond the bare minimum requirements. Even so, meeting six times means that they will be working together for at least one-third of a typical fifteen-week semester. Though students will be guided on how to act as a beta-reader early in the semester, what they do within their meetings is entirely up to them. Their relationship mimics the typical relationship between a beta-reader and a writer because pairs comes together through similar interests, feedback can adjust to the needs of each student, can vary from assignment to assignment, and be freely determined by those within the relationship.

At the end of the semester, students will write a reflection on their beta-reader relationship throughout the semester. It will include reflection of their own progress on the feedback they gave, as well as give commentary on feedback given to them by their partner. Students will be encouraged to thank their partners for the efforts they made or critique partners who they did not feel put adequate effort into building a collaborative relationship. These final reflections will be graded, with the grade being determined by half of what the student said about themselves and half by what their partner said of them.[19] Although this form of grading seems manipulative, it further invests students in this relationship. Knowing that what their partner says about them determines half their grade, while reflection of their own efforts serves as the other half, seems like proper motivation for students to take this assignment seriously. Although this assignment seems like an ongoing peer-review, the difference here is the partnering of students with similar interests and the emphasis on building an autonomous relationship throughout the semester. This difference, founded on the students' shared autonomous passion, can better teach students how to communicate, collaborate, and talk through differences in a shared relationship that they should be invested in. It also teaches them how to better deliver feedback as well as thoughtfully receive feedback. In many ways, the assigned reader/beta-reader partner is much more beneficial to the student than the occasional peer-review session with a random reader, as it teaches them the ways of building a reciprocal relationship. By giving students the opportunity to engage with beta-reading in a way that veers far from the typical peer review, it teaches the value of ongoing, collaborative feedback and its role in producing writing. The shared interests and autonomous relationship between beta-reading pairs gives the students the ability to make feedback a part of the writing process that centers around their needs as student rather than the supplementary, teacher-centered peer-review workshop. If the success of beta-readers in the

fanfiction community proves anything, it is that this type of relationship is vital to participatory, collaborative composition.

Participatory, collaborative composition also comes in through WIPs and gift-giving. In a classroom setting, these two practices continuously work in tandem throughout the semester. Just as the larger assignments of the class are scaffolded, the smaller steps in those assignments are scaffolded as well. Students can compose their major assignments in pieces, working first with outlines and ideas, then of thesis sentences, introduction paragraphs, body paragraphs, and so on and so forth. Though this WIPs can work through the traditional steps of the composing process, students can determine what a WIP means to their writing process. This give the students the opportunity to use the WIP as something that works with their own composing process, just as fanfic writers determine the process of their own progress. In each week leading up to the due date of a major assignment, students will bring these WIPs pieces of their assignments to the class and share them with each other for feedback. This feedback would be less in-depth than the feedback given by a beta-reader, but it will serve as a "gift" given by their peers. Like within the fanfiction community, students will not be directed on how to gift their feedback to their peers nor will they be told which WIPs to gift with feedback. Instead, they will be allowed to comment on whatever form or subject catches their interest. To better organize these moments and mimic the fanfiction community, students will be asked to categorize their WIPs by either form (thesis sentence, outline, ideas, work paragraphs, etc...) or subject (using the conceptual areas of interest/inquiry they thought of earlier in the semester). Students will browse these categories in the same way a fanfic user may browse forums, tags, and categories and choose one WIP to gift with feedback. The logistics of this assignment may vary from class to class, but these moments of sharing WIPs and gift-giving would not work as in-class workshops, rather that would be

small moments, perhaps fifteen minutes to twenty minutes, where students are encouraged to act

as the fanfiction community acts daily. Although the teacher may step in to gift a WIP that may

not had been picked or assure that everyone is getting feedback, like the beta-reading pairings,

these moments would be autonomous and student-centered, with little to no teacher intervention.

Though this practice may seem like a lot of effort for students, in the fanfiction community,

WIPs and gift-giving are an essential part of building collaborative space. By having them so

openly share their WIPs, I hope that students would be more willing to accept their work as an

intentional process and not just a race to a finish line that is the final draft, or a process they can

complete in one night. In the same manner, I hope that gifting their peers with feedback and

receiving their own gifts will help students learn the value of their work and the work of others

throughout the process. On a holistic level, placing these two practices in tandem can

demonstrate to students that a classroom can be a democratic learning community.

      Although assignments, daily tasks, and ongoing collaborative work can be uncomfortable

as students must quickly react and interact to others unlike themselves as well as critique their

own underlying assumptions about their fandoms and the fandoms of others, the goal is to push

students out of their comfort zone. In an age of demagoguery, comfortable can sometimes be

synonymous with dealing exclusively with assumptions and ignorance. Aiming only for a

comfortable classroom eliminates students' abilities to face issues head-on. Howe offers that the

uncomfortable within the classroom is "something typically repressed and denied…however,

[the uncomfortable] often brings growth and transformation" (Howe 195). If teachers do not

allow the classroom to be an uncomfortable place, they may limit the potential for growth, and

certainly limit the students' abilities to engage with themselves and others by talking through

differences. The assignments outlined above have the potential to make students uncomfortable,

but I think the benefits of working through the uncomfortable better equips students to be deliberative, informed peoples. Most of these proposed assignments are based on pre-existing genres in first-year writing classrooms. By embracing the practices in the fanfiction community, it is possible to alter these genres to challenge students to do more than passive, bare minimum work and instead cultivate a learning community where their own interests and identities are the subject of study. This type of classroom closely follows the five characteristics mentioned at the start of this section, producing a malleable pedagogy that accounts for the urgency of our current socio-political structures by establishing the classroom as a democratic learning space.

Holistically, the fanfiction community is an autonomous community, created and maintained by its own community members. Howe suggests that a fandom-based classroom is best created by making the classroom a liminal space where boundaries between student and teacher are softened, saying:

> Teachers should be encouraged to sit as students. This can be interpreted literally—as in physically positioning oneself in what is typically a student's seat—or figuratively—as in being open to taking on the role of a learner. Teachers should be comfortable knowing that their students can teach them. Similarly, students should become active participants in the development of the course—leading discussions, yes, but more radically, creating assignments, contributing to grading scales or rubrics, constructing components of the syllabus. (184)

In this type of learning environment, both teacher and student recursively learn from each other. In a more traditional classroom, teachers serve as both moderators and curators of knowledge, but in a classroom based on fanfiction practices all members have the potential to contribute to classroom knowledge. In this way, the classroom can be a much more open, though sometimes

uncomfortable, environment. This type of environment also challenges students to be more active participants in the class. Like the fanfiction community, students in this classroom must act as both creators and members of their community – the classroom.

This classroom is also liminal space because it erases the usual boundaries of the classroom and fosters a democratic space. Of course, institutionally and socially, the student-teacher dynamic will always be unequal, but the teacher can still curate an environment where all members work as active and participatory learners. Beyond the communal knowledge-making, this class environment teaches students to be responsible for their own learning, hold themselves accountable for their class participation, and acknowledge that their identities, bodies, and communities are a vital subject of study within the class. This liminal space also naturally gives way to the in-between, the messy reactions and interactions of identities, and the overlapping of diverse opinions. Though this may seem chaotic, it an environment that most closely mimics the fanfiction community. Mimicking this liminal environment in first year writing classrooms teaches students to take charge of their own rhetorical and compositional processes. Paired with the scaffolded assignments of reinvention and repurposing and the smaller collaborative acts of writing, a first-year classroom based on fanfiction practices can cultivate an innovative pedagogy based on the urgencies of our current world.

If the fanfiction community taught me anything, it is the value of transformation; with every year that goes by, I continually look for ways in which I can transform canon methods of teaching and learning. As the fanfiction community worked as my primary teacher outside of the classroom, it is only natural that I encourage transformation using the community that taught me to transform. As I continue teaching first-year writing, and hopefully, further teaching throughout my PhD, I want to always learn in tandem with my students. To me, the defining

factor of learning in the fanfiction community is learning in tandem with all the other members, who collaboratively produce knowledge in a democratic space. It is the best way that I learn, and I am coming to know, the best way that I can teach. I want to add urgency to current pedagogy because I want to continually transform, reinvent, and repurpose the work of rhetoric and composition to bring attention to our current socio-political situation. I also want to continually challenge myself in what I can do for my students and what they can do for me. I see this sort of teaching as a sort of ongoing becoming, that continuously accounts for current socio-political structures, the changing nature of students composing processes, and the ever-fragmented identities, bodies, and communities that we bring to each new classroom. It is only in becoming a fan that I learned to adapt in such a way, and it through becoming that I will continue to teach, learn, and be a fan.

APPENDIX 1: SYLLABUS EXAMPLE, SPRING 2019

Writing And Argument
English 151
Spring 2019

Keshia Mcclantoc   Office Hours, Andrews 101
Mailbox, 227 Andrews Hall   MWF 10:30am to 12pm
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English 151 Objectives and Expectations
In this class, you will be guided through developing strategies for writing and research, examining and analyzing arguments in unconventional ways, providing constructive feedback on peer writing, and sharing and cultivating your own unique scholarly voice. This class will give you a chance to explore your own interests and fandoms, identify the main arguments and messages of these fandoms, analyze both how and why they argue, and offer new possibilities for how these fandoms to interact in larger contexts. In order to become better writers and rhetors, we must critically think about the practices, messages, and arguments that we partake in. Introspection such as this can be challenging and uncomfortable, but it will help you become more complex thinkers. The English Department at UNL has made a commitment to viewing human differences as an intrinsic part of studying writing and rhetoric. This course will raise and discuss issues related to diversity, because it is only through seeking multiple and diverse perspectives that we can practice being informed, deliberative citizens. I will work to seek out and encourage diverging points of view so that we may understand how to respectively deliberate across converging points of difference. Although this means that we may broach some uncomfortable topics and people may disagree, it is working through these disagreements, rather than around them, that we grow.

Required Materials:
No textbooks are required for this class. All readings can be found either online or on Canvas. One college ruled notebook OR one three-pronged folder with college ruled paper for journal. One pack of 3x5 notecards for reading notes.

Course Requirements:
Attendance: This class is designed to participatory and only functions if we have students here to participate. This class is not a lecture hall -- we will focus on class discussion, in-class activities, and in-class writings. If you miss class or do not participate in these practices when you attend class, you will miss out on contributing to classroom knowledge. Try to be both physically and intellectually present. Per English department policies, students who miss more than 20% of the semester (more than 6 absences) may receive a failing grade.

Major Assignments: In this class you will have three major assignments -- a personal narrative, an outsider narrative, and a repurposing project. In the weeks leading up to the due date of each assignment, you will be asked to turn in Work-In-Progress (or WIP) pieces related to your

assignment. These will be shared with your peers you may be gifted with feedback as you compose. Each of these assignments will also be accompanied by a 1-page Author's Note, in which you will reflect on your writing process and self-assess by giving yourself a grade. Further details on the assignments, WIPs, and Author's Notes will be given early in the semester.

Concepts, Practice/Models, and Repurposing: The daily work in this class will be broken down into three distinctive categories: concepts, practice/models, repurposing. On Mondays you will be introduced to concepts relative to your larger assignments, on Wednesdays you read models of this concept and have an opportunity to practice these concepts, and on Fridays you will work in small groups to repurpose that concept for new possibilities. Repurposing refers to creating new possibilities out of existing conditions. This practice can better teach you skills in dissemination, critical thinking, and invention. Since these skills are built into the foundation of composition and rhetoric, repurposing will act an ongoing practice throughout the semester.

Classwork and Discussion: Class discussions will be the backbone of this class; you are expected to participate to succeed in this class. Throughout the semester, I hope that this class will become a community where you can share your interests, opinions, and voice. Discussion in this class is based on the idea that meaning and knowledge is not given by authority figures but developed by everyone. Your perspective is unique and valuable; sharing it with the class gives you the opportunity to add to the class's knowledge. Though discussion may seem daunting, it is a way to share your thoughts in a public forum. This helps you understand that your ideas have weight; you can develop critical rhetorical skills by practicing articulation and dissemination of those ideas.

Along with your class discussion, you will be asked to participate by bringing in reading notes and working with in-class writing. For each day with assigned reading, you will take notes on a 3x5 notecard (so one notecard per reading day) while you do your reading outside of class. These notes can be observations of what you read, questions you have about the text, or points that you feel are especially important. I will not take attendance in this class; instead, I will collect your reading notes at the start of each class and use them to take attendance.

We will also do in-class writing. Though we will not have in-class writing every single day this semester, when and if I assign in-class writing is up to my own discretion, so be prepared by bringing in your journal every day. In these in-class writings, you will be asked to write at least one informal page on a given prompt that will be related to that days' readings and upcoming assignments. These in-class writing assignments will generally take place during last half of class.

Together, your attendance and participation in discussion, reading notes, and journals account for 25% of your final grade. In this class, it is important to find and develop your voice. I hope that opportunities for discussion, critical analysis in reading notes, and low-risk writing opportunities via journals will give you the ability to do just that. Ultimately, these assignments will help you contribute to the class as we develop knowledge and meaning throughout the semester.

Beta-Reader Pairs and Profiles: In this class you will be assigned a beta-reader, a fellow classmate who will read through your drafts and give you feedback (and vice versa). Early in the semester, will we do a few activities to better understand our overlapping interests and identify pairs based off these interests. As a beta-reader, you will be required to meet with your partner

during in-class workshops as well as one time outside of class per major assignment. Since you have three major assignments, that means you will meet with your partner at minimum 6 times. However, I hope that your similar interests and perhaps, shared topics, will encourage you to meet more than the minimum requirements. At the end of this semester, you will write a short profile about your partner and the feedback you received throughout the semester. Further details about beta-reader pairs will be given throughout the semester.

Workshops: For each major assignment in this class we will have an in-class workshop. In these workshops you will share a work-in-progress draft with your beta-reader who will give you feedback and vice versa. If you fail to show up to workshop, do not bring a suitable draft, or provide little to no feedback to your peer, you will be counted absent for the workshop.

Conferences: During the 13th week of the semester, each student will have a twenty-minute conference with me during which we will discuss your progress in the class, what you feel you have done well, what you feel you have struggled in, and your thoughts on the final project. Classes will be cancelled during the week of conferences, so no one should have an excuse about not having the time to attend the conference. More information on conferences will be available later this semester.

Grade Breakdown:

Participation/Attendance	15%
Reading Notes/Journals	10%
Conferences	10%
Workshops	5%
Beta Profiles	10%
Project #1	15%
Project #2	15%
Project #3	20%

Grading Scale:

97-100 = A+	87-89 = B+	77-79 = C+	67-69 = D+
94-96 = A	84-86 = B	74-76 = C	64-66 = D
90-93 = A-	80-83 = B-	70-73 = C-	60-63 = D-
			0-59 = F

Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty: By enrolling in this course, you join a community that demands intellectual integrity. Plagiarism is copying or using someone else's work and failing to attribute your source. I expect that the work you turn in for this semester will be your own. Plagiarism or other forms of academic dishonesty will result in automatic failure of the course and will be reported to the UNL Student Judicial Affairs Office.

Writing Center and other Assistance:
Writing Center: The University of Nebraska-Lincoln Writing Center can provide you with meaningful support as your write for this class as well as every course in which you enroll. Writers coming into the writing center at UNL are not limited to academic writing, but can bring in cover letters and resumes, creative work, applications for graduate schools or scholarships,

and a wide range of other forms of writing. Knowledgeable peer consultants are available to talk with you as your plan, draft, write, and revise your writing. I encourage you bring major assignments from this class into the writing center. You can make both 25-minute and 50-minute appointments by going to www.unl.edu/writing or in person at Andrews 102.

Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS): Counseling and Psychological Services is a multidisciplinary team of psychologists and counselors that works collaboratively with Nebraska students to help them explore their feelings and thoughts and learn helpful ways to improve their mental, psychological and emotional well-being when issues arise. Contact them at 402-472-500 or the office at 550 N. 19th St.

Office of Academic Support and Intercultural Services: The Gaughan Multicultural Center continues the tradition of past UNL Culture Centers, providing a home away from home for underrepresented students, while welcoming all UNL students, faculty, staff, alumni and guests. Contact them at 402-471-5500 or the center at 1505 S.St.

Accommodations: Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD), located in 13.2 Canfield Administration Building, 34, provides individualized academic support for students with documented disabilities. Support services can include extended test time, textbooks and handouts in alternative formats (electronic texts, Braille, taped texts, etc...), classroom notes, sign language interpreters, and transcriptionists. SSD not only accommodates students that have visible disabilities, but also student with other varying types of disabilities that impact college life. If you have a documented disability that is impacting your academic progress, please call SSD at 402-472-3787 and schedule an appointment. If you do not have a documented disability but you are having difficulties with your coursework, you may schedule an appointment to discuss the challenges you are facing.

ACE Outcomes, Assessment, and Opportunities: This course is also certified as an Achievement Centered General Education (ACE) Outcome 1 course. Therefore, English 151 will help you meet the following general education outcome: "Write texts, in various forms, with an identified purpose, that respond to particular audience needs, incorporate research of existing knowledge, and use applicable documentation and appropriate conventions of form and structure."

To help you achieve this outcome, English 151 will provide you opportunities to draft, receive feedback on, and revise three extended writing projects, composed for different purposes and audiences. You'll have a chance to integrate outside sources into your texts, which you'll document in conventions appropriate to the form employed. You'll also be invited to draw and reflect on your own existing knowledge, using the writing process to your experiences in new ways. At the end of the term, a few randomly selected students may be asked to provide samples of their work (the final version of each major project) so we may assess the course's overall effectiveness in helping students to achieve ACE-1 requirements. Please let me know if you have any questions about the collecting process.

Tentative Class Schedule: this schedule is subject to change throughout the semester, you will be notified by me email/Canvas if this happens.

Date	*Topic*	*Readings*
Week One Mon. Jan 7th	Introduction to the Course.	
Wed. Jan 9th	Syllabus Day.	*Read over syllabus. Follow instructions on Canvas for "Syllabus Questions."*
Fri. Jan 11th	Understanding writing, class discussions, and expectations.	"Why I Write" (Canvas) "I Take Your Point: Entering Class Discussion" (Canvas)
Week Two Mon. Jan 14th	Concept: Communities and Fandom	"Fandom and Participatory Culture – Main Page" (link on Canvas)
Wed. Jan 16th	Practice/Models: Anthropology of Fandoms	"Body Rituals of the Nacerima" (Canvas)
Fri. Jan 18th *	Repurposing: Understanding Repurposing	"Repurposing the University" (Canvas)
Week Three Mon. Jan 21st	**NO CLASS- MLK DAY**	*WIP #1 – Fandom Defense Due on Canvas by 3pm today.*
Wed. Jan 23rd	Concept: Voice Practice/Models: Poets	"Ain't So/Is Not: Academic Writing Doesn't Always Mean Setting Aside Your Own Voice" (Canvas) "The Kind of Man I am at the DMV," "Advice from a Provincial," and "Ode to Women on Long Island" (links on Canvas)
Fri. Jan 25th	Repurposing: Narratives to Argue	*No Readings.* *WIP #2 Due.*
Week Four Mon. Jan 28th	Concept: Reflection and Beta-Readers	"A Short Guide to Reflective Writing" (Canvas) and "How to Get Started as a Fanfiction Beta-Reader" (link on Canvas)
Wed. Jan 30th	Practice/Models: Essays	"Bad Feminist" and "Magical Dinners" (links on Canvas)
Fri. Feb 2st	Repurposing: Digital Essay	*No readings.* *WIP #3 Due.*
Week Five Mon. Feb 4th	Concept AND Practice/Models: Peer Review	"How to Read Like a Writer" (Canvas)

Wed. Feb 6th	In-class workshop	*No readings.* Bring a draft (3 FULL pages minimum) for in-class workshopping.
Fri. Feb 8th	**NO CLASS.**	*Personal Narrative - turn in via Canvas by 3pm today.*
Week Six Mon. Feb 11th	Concept: Encountering Different Fandoms	"The Danger of a Single Story" (link on Canvas)
Wed. Feb 13th	Practice/Models: Talking Across Differences	"How I turn Negative Online Comments into Positive Offline Conversations" (link on Canvas)
Fri. Feb 15th	Repurposing: Arguments to Deliberate	*No readings.*
Week Seven Mon. Feb 18th	Concept: Academic Research	"Finding Evidence" and "Evaluating Resources" (Canvas) *WIP #1: Outsider Defense due by 3pm on Canvas today*
Wed. Feb 20th	Practice/Models: Library Research Day	*No readings.* *Meet in Love Library and be prepared to research.*
Fri. Feb 22nd	Repurposing: Annotations	*No readings.*
Week Eight Mon. Feb 25th	Concept: Empathy	"The Baby in the Well" (link on Canvas)
Wed. Feb 27th	Practice/Models: Experiments in Empathy	"A Radical Experiment in Empathy" (link on Canvas)
Fri. Mar 1st	Repurposing: Empathy vs. Endorsement	*No Readings.* *WIP #2 Due.*
Week Nine Mon. Mar 4th	Concept: Cultural Critique	"Cultural Criticism and The Way We Live Now" (link on Canvas)
Wed. Mar 6th	Practice/Models: Unboxing Ideologies	"Unboxing Playlist" (link on Canvas) *Please self-select 4 videos from the playlist to watch as your "readings" for today*
Fri. Mar 8th	In-class peer workshop.	*No readings.* Bring a draft (3 FULL pages minimum) for in-class workshopping.
Week Ten Mon. Mar 11th	Concept: Rhetorical Analysis	"Rhetorical Analysis" (Canvas)

		Outsider Narrative - turn in via Canvas by 3pm today
Wed. Mar 13th	Practice/Models: Essay Analysis	"What Should Colleges Teach" and "Should Writers Use They Own English" (Canvas)
Fri. Mar 15th*	Repurposing: Language	*No Readings.*
Week Eleven Mon. Mar 18th-Fri. Mar 22nd	**SPRING BREAK. NO CLASSES.**	
Week Twelve Mon. Mar 25th	Concept: Visual Rhetoric	"Rhetorical Criticism (Overview)" and "Visual Rhetoric" (link on Canvas) *WIP #1 - Artifact Defense due on Canvas by 3pm today*
Wed. Mar 27th	Practice/Models: Art and Analysis	*No readings.* *Meet at Sheldon Museum.*
Fri. Mar 29th	Repurposing: Visual Rhetoric and Social Media	*No Readings.* *WIP #2 Due.*
Week Thirteen Mon. Apr 1st	**No class, conference week**	*Show up during the time you signed up for. Final list of times posted on Canvas.* *You will need to bring WIP #3 to this conference.*
Wed. Apr 3rd	**No class, conference week**	
Fri. Apr 5th	**No class, conference week**	
Week Fourteen Mon. Apr 8th	Concept: Repurposing (Again)	Excerpts from "Feminist Repurposing in Rhetoric, Composition, and Pedagogy" (Canvas)
Wed. Apr 10th	Practice/Models: Advertisements	"Kate Upton - Carl's Jr. and Hardees," "Heineken, Worlds Apart," "Welcome to Hell," and "Contouring 101" (links on Canvas)
Fri. Apr 12th	Repurposing: Damaging Ads and New Possibilities	*No Readings.* *WIP #4 Due*
Week Fifteen Mon. Apr 15th	Practice/Models AND Repurposing: Positioning Trailers	"Elf Recut as a Thriller" and "Mrs. Doubtfire Recut as a Horror Movie (links on Canvas)

Wed. Apr 17th	In-class peer review workshop.	*No readings.* Bring a draft (5 FULL pages or 5 slides) to class for in-class workshopping.
Fri. Apr 19th	**NO CLASS – Independent Work Day.**	*Use this day to work on your papers and presentations for next week.* *Beta Profiles – turn in via Canvas by 3pm today.*
Week Sixteen Mon. Apr 22nd	Repurposing presentations.	*No readings*
Wed. Apr 24th	Repurposing presentations.	*No readings.*
Fri. Apr 26th	Repurposing presentations.	*No readings.* *Repurposing Papers due the day you present!*

Notes:

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[1] These ill-willed fan perceptions are further discussed in Lynn Zubernis and Katherine Larson's *Fangasm: Supernatural Fangirls.*

[2] As a whole, the fanfiction community is so disparate that to perform a complete census would be impossible. This 2013 census was performed by an individual user of *ArchiveofOurOwn,org*, who surveyed *AO3* users via Tumblr. In total, the census yielded 10,000+ responses. Although these numbers reflect only a margin of the fanfiction community, as one of the largest archives of fanfiction online (second only to *Fanfiction.net*), these limited numbers work as a sample size of the typical fanfiction community's populace.

[3] Coppa says that this "nonreader" note was a particularly sexist jab at the female fans, whose passions for science fiction literature were frequently doubted (45).

[4] Although the anonymity of the internet means that people can choose to take on whatever identities they please, various surveys and studies throughout fan studies have shown that fandom is primarily made up on white, middle-class, educated white women. Although the accuracy of these studies may vary since the internet gifts anonymity, it still suggests that not "everyone" can participate in fandom as there are a myriad of class and literacy issues that may limit participation.

[5] Further reading on this form of invention can be found in Anne E. Berthoff's *The Making of Meaning: Metaphors, Models, and Maxims for Writing Teachers.*

[6] In the *Harry Po*tter universe, muggleborns are people wizard or witches born to non-magical parents. Mudblood is a discriminatory and crude term used to address muggleborns.

[7] These short snippets are just brief examples of Vail's racially aware narrative. The full version of "look to your kingdoms" can be found here: https://archiveofourown.org/works/8210656

[8] The full collection of "These Women Who Will Conquer," including "We Hold These Truths (Listen to my Declaration)" can be found here: https://archiveofourown.org/series/266635

[9] As long as fanfiction has existed there have been authors who have challenged it as plagiarism and as such, several authors have "banned" production of fanfiction based on their stories. Though larger websites like *FFN* and *AO3* make it impossible to produce banned fic within their sites, there is very little control over small, personal websites and is hard to irate authors to catch. When they do find fanfiction of their stories, they generally send cease and desist letters, which can have varying levels of success.

[10] Ironically enough the two longest pieces of literature in the world are fanfictions. "The Subspace Emissary's Worlds Conquest," and "Ambience: A Fleet Symphony" both have over 4 million words each. The former began in 2008 while the latter began in 2014; both are still ongoing. These stand as a testament to the pure passion that a fan can put into a fic, often dedicating years of their lives to one story.

[11] The fanfiction community adopted the term from the word "beta-tester" in computer programming; beta- testers would test working but incomplete software to check for quality, efficiency, and stability (Oberc 68). In the same way, a beta-reader in the fanfiction community tests a story before it is published.

[12]Most fanfiction websites contain forums where writers may post requests for beta-readers. Sometimes, authors request a beta-reader via an authors' notes throughout a chapter. Other times, fic readers notice a writer struggling and offer to be a beta-reader.

[13] Roberts-Miller defines the in-groups and out-groups as another form of the us versus them mentality. In this line of thinking, anyone who is part of the in group (the us) is always right while anyone who is part of the out-group (or the them) is always wrong. This demagogic way of thinking makes it impossible for either side to hold an unbiased view (Roberts-Miller 33-35).

[14] Of course, this notion becomes complicated because many marginalized groups have little access to higher education. Even when these groups do find access to higher education, they're often blocked with walls of academic language and knowledge that does little to help these groups succeed. Learning communities cannot undo these institutional problems within academia as a whole but they can provide an outlet to alleviate some of blockades that marginalized groups may encounter.

[15] For instance, my own university, University of Nebraska-Lincoln offers both English 151 ("Writing as Argument") and English 150 ("Writing as Inquiry") as forms of first-year composition. Both of these courses fulfill general education requirements at UNL. However, first-year writing classrooms come in a variety of course numbers and names, many of them fulfill the same purpose across universities.

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[16] Though very little limitations will exist on what fandom students can choose, they will not be allowed to write about fandoms that have a history of hate and/or violence.

[17] For instance, in my Fall 2018 English 151 class, many students within my class had chosen to use the Greek Life organizations they were members of as their fandom. Since such a large majority of the class had similar fandoms, it made it difficult for them to swap fandoms and engage with a fandom outside of their own. The same can be said if a multitude of students engage with the same form of media and so on and so forth. To account for these variables, the swapping option, while ideal, cannot be the only option for the outsider narrative.

[18] The syllabus for this class acts an appendix to this syllabus.

[19] So, for instance if Student A says that they performed well as a partner but their partner, let's call them Student B, says that Students A was not helpful in anyway, Student A's grade would be negatively affected. Or vice versa.

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