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Ghostwriting as a Critical Lens: Authorship and Attribution in Professional and Academic Contexts

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Ghostwriting as a Critical Lens: Authorship and Attribution in Professional and Academic

Contexts

by

Charles Clifford Grimm

Under the Direction of Ashley J. Holmes, Ph.D.

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in the College of Arts and Sciences

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation exposes the inherent deceit within the practice of ghostwriting, considers ways that business applications of writing de-value the labor of writing, and, finally, argues for a composition pedagogy that moves past the emphasis on single-author documents so that students can critically view corporate authorship as an alternative. This dissertation engages in mixed-methods research that included surveys of blog readers and interviews of professional ghostwriters to include voices too often excluded from discussions about the impacts of professional ghostwriting. After establishing the layers of silence placed around the practice of ghostwriting, I then argue that perpetuating this practice de-values the labor of writing despite the integral role writing plays in creating value in our current world.

After discussing the ethical and professional implications of ghostwriting in corporate settings, this dissertation argues that students in First-Year Composition (FYC) programs occupy a role similar to the professional ghostwriter in terms of limited agency, pay-off, and potential. As with the context of professional writing, this study challenges the status quo of single-authored texts as assessments in FYC and argues for the benefits of students composing in digital genres such as wikis and social media to critique the benefits of single-authored, collaborative, and corporate writing in and out of the classroom.

INDEX WORDS: Ghostwriting, Authorship, Corporate blogs, Collaborative writing, Corporate writing, First-year composition

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December 2022

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my wife, Nancy. She always supported my desire to be a professor, and she shouldered the burden of providing for our family for years as I was a graduate student and later as a part-time student and full-time professor. If ghostwriters deserve accurate attribution for their contribution of labor to the projects they work on, my wife deserves accurate attribution for her constant belief in and support of me to make it to this point.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, I want to thank my wife, Nancy, and my kids, Audrey and Joshua, for their patience with me as I completed my Ph.D. At times, I had to be absent from fun events to get my dissertation written, but they never begrudged me that time. They also provided me all of the high points during the low times of writing.

Second, my sincerest thanks to my dissertation committee, who saw me through a rough transition from being a graduate teaching assistant to my current position as assistant professor at Georgia Highlands College. I appreciate their willingness to continue working with me on this project as I transitioned into a 5/5 teaching load and welcomed a new child in the time it took me to complete this dissertation.

I also want to thank my department and the librarians at Georgia Highlands College for the support they gave me as I wrote my dissertation. My deans and chairs helped me with flexible schedules to allow time to write, and the librarians were able to help me locate every text I needed with less than 24 hours passing before I had a response to a request, even securing me the last known copy of a recalled ghostwriting textbook from a remote library that surprised even the author when I discussed it with her.

I benefitted from peers like Josh Privett, Rachel Rupprecht, and Michelle Abbott, among others, who did multiple writing workshops with me over the past several years. I look forward to the day when all of us are done with our programs and can talk about anything else!

Finally, I want to thank my father, Dr. Marvin Grimm, my father-in-law, Dr. Ho Kim, my mother, and my mother-in-law for their continued support – providing advice, childcare, encouragement, and even funding for my regalia.

LIST OF TABLES

PREFACE

Setting the Scene

Corporate Needs

A Chief Financial Officer (CFO) at a growing start-up wants to make sure the company meets its series two funding by demonstrating the many successes they have accomplished in terms of growing headcount and identifying positive market penetration. He knows the content, because his staff of finance experts, accountants, and managers report to him dutifully, but he has always struggled with writing. With all the stress of the start-up and securing funding, he has missed several family meals this week and is in danger of missing his kids' school performance as well.

As a savvy business person, the CFO knows the limits of his skills and talents, so he decides a ghostwriter should write this collateral. He reaches out to the manager of marketing to hire a freelance writer and tells her what the basic message for an upcoming social media campaign should be, culminating in a blog post with his name as author. He then leaves the office, missing dinner but making the school performance. He will continue to watch the numbers and manage his workload and lead his teams, including mentoring the new hires he brought in as management. He will not, however, write the blog post – that has been done already by a freelance writer whose name will appear nowhere on the blog post. The CFO's LinkedIn account will automatically add his blog post to his recent projects thanks to the automation his marketing team uses.

Ph.D. Candidate Needs

A graduate student teaching full-time at a community college, making 50% less money than his daughter's elementary school teachers, is trying to push through grading to be able to

work on finishing his dissertation. He just finished grading all the final exams and late work for

his first 8-week course and filling out the course management software for the second 8-week

course that follows it. His Chair graciously makes sure he keeps at least 1 back-to-back 8-week

composition unit in his schedule so his 5/5 only has 4 preps at any given time in the semester. He

gets the kids up in the morning and has to get them from bus stops, after-school programs, or

daycare, depending on the day. His wife is working from home, burned out from years of being

the primary wage earner but thankful now her husband at least has access to benefits. The

expectation to finish the dissertation grows stronger as he joins writing group after writing group,

watching some colleagues fall away from grad programs and/or academia along the way.

He's educated enough to be bothered by his position but has so little agency that he

knows he has little recourse. He considers how maybe his buddy who just quit the Ph.D. program

on Monday could have co-written a dissertation with him according to the "CCCC Principles of

Sound Writing Instruction" including in their top three principles: "Sound writing instruction

recognizes writing as a social act." He wonders why so many readers interpret this principle

solely through a lens of collaboration in invention and editing stages. If writing studies is, at least

in part, about preparing students for the process of writing, then our leading programs could

provide more avenues of writing than are found in single-authored papers.

Student Needs

A student in college finds herself away from home for the first time. She has always

heard how college prepares her for the demands of real life, but the people saying this have a

different view of a "real world" than she does. She gets to college without a trust fund and

unwilling to saddle herself with tremendous debt; she found a full-time job to provide for her

needs and pay down as much of her college each semester as she can, and the overtime really helps make ends meet.

Of course, overtime also means that she has less time to focus on completing coursework. She has an active social life to keep her mental health up, but now it's the day before a 5-page paper is due, and she has not started. Out of frustration and with no network to vent to, she turns to social media to air her grievance of staring down a long writing assignment. She is not asking for help, but several hours later she checks her phone and sees 23 replies: one from a friend joking that she needs to get to work, but the other 22 replies are from accounts offering to "help" her with the essay. How nice it would be to pay someone to write this paper and just go be with friends and take care of her actual work without having to worry about writing a paper. It will be written for her and waiting for her in her inbox when it's done (see @1nyjhayy's tweet for an example of this fictionalized interaction).

What Does Writing Need?

The previous three scenarios share much in common: a writer faces a difficult task that is designed to demonstrate the writer's knowledge on a topic as well as their command of writing to a specific audience within a specific genre. Each writer exists within material conditions that make the actual labor of writing a sacrifice: performing the writing means giving up other activities while not performing the task would have a major negative impact on the writer. In each of these scenarios, the writer is aware that options exist that could lighten their burden by distributing the work differently in ways that, at least in theory, benefit everyone involved. When reading the literature regarding ghostwriting, however, only the initial hypothetical scenario resonates with audiences as a reasonable excuse to relinquish the duty of providing the actual labor of writing.

But what of the one who does perform the labor? Examining the term "ghostwriter" points to the conflict in the position. According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, a "ghost" can be inspirational ("an animating or vital principle" A.I.), strategically invisible ("rational being, of a type usually regarded as imperceptible to humans but capable of becoming visible at will" A.III.6.a.), morbidly haunting ("The soul or spirit of a dead person … typically as a shadowy, nebulous image" A.III.8.a.), criminally fraudulent ("a deceased or fictitious person registered in a system for the purpose of committing tax, welfare, or electoral fraud" A.IV.11.a.). Each one of these various definitions of "ghost" highlights elements of the ghostwriter's purview, too. The ghostwriter gives life and form to the ideas of someone who does not know how to write their own text, but they do so in a way that is largely invisible to the readers. These more positive traits are what can make ghostwriting a craft some pursue professionally as a fulfilling career, knowing they can help give voice to important documents even though they themselves do not hold the position of popularity or authority of the patron. The other two, however, point to the potentially sinister side of the practice. The person providing the labor of the writing is prevented from receiving proper credit for their labor, with an understanding that payment conveys full rights to the patron even though it is the writer's labor that shows through, and that the improper credit could mislead readers regarding skills and abilities, which likely informs the *OED* including ghostwriting as an entry under the next heading after the dead person's identity fraud.

During my back-to-back GTA experiences for my master's and doctoral programs, I had to supplement my income with several content writing and editing positions. One contract position to ghostwrite digital marketing collateral introduced me to having the labor of my writing published with my name nowhere in sight. After completing several web page edits and white papers, genres that typically belong solely to the company with no authorial information

provided, my manager appeared nervous when he told me my name would not appear on the blog posts I was writing. I thought I understood *ethos* well enough to know that, in a competitive, highly technical trade, an English degree carried very little weight, and perhaps a degree of my anxiety was from my own ego being denied recognition. Regardless, when I sent my wife the link to the first blog I wrote, I felt dirty: I had sold a portion of myself to the highest bidder, and I was conflicted by the monetary value I exchanged for the lack of recognition of my labor by potential readers.

This experience of my writing abilities becoming a commodity spurred me to begin researching ghostwriting, although I did not know exactly where the research would take me. Just like I tell my composition students, I began with a broad topic of ghostwriting and had to read broadly to identify research questions. As questions emerged, I found that some of the questions were already answered sufficiently for the field of writing studies. I had the good fortune of entering this sub-field of writing studies not long after Deborah Brandt published *The Rise of Writing* (2015) and John Knapp and Azalea Hulbert published *Ghostwriting and the Ethics of Authenticity* (2017). Both of these books emphasize the exigence of ghostwriting as a means of at best complementing or at worst disguising the lack of writing ability of powerful or famous people whose ideas or lives draw readers to the market. Brandt's and Knapp and Hulbert's books provided a backdrop of current research into a practice that too few people seem willing to view critically, but they also followed an unhealthy split between the academic and professional "worlds." Too often, I hear people speak about the college or university setting as somehow less "real" than an existence spent locating a job and working for pay, which is why I found myself intrigued by one of Brandt's research questions from *Rise of Writing*: "how might writing for hire complicate public understandings of literacy and its value?" (20). Because

"literacy" as an umbrella term can mean far more than corporate writing and FYC, my

dissertation only seeks to provide a partial answer to the specific issues of corporate writing for

hire in genres where authorship is attributed. The other issues surrounding literacy and writing

for hire in genres without attribution (such as web copy or white papers) and the discussion of

the inherent value of the student versus the value of the student's writing remain important

threads of inquiry, but they stray too far from the research questions of this dissertation to

presume to answer.

   This dissertation exposes the inherent deceit within the practice of ghostwriting,

considers ways that business applications of writing de-value the labor of writing, and, finally,

argues for a composition pedagogy that moves past the emphasis on single-author documents so

that students can critically view corporate authorship as an alternative. The first chapter lays a

foundation for conversations about authorship and ghostwriting, covering research on multiple

key terms and problematic concepts involved in current conversations around ghostwriting.

Chapter two details the study design for both the initial study design and the modifications I had

to make in response to the evolution of the project, advocating for the mixed-methods case study

and interviews that provide the data for chapter three. Chapter three traces the arguments specific

to writing in professional fields, first demonstrating how even the fields (like Public Relations)

that argue ghostwriting is an ethical practice hide the practice behind other titles and desirable

skills in job ads. After establishing the layers of silence placed around the practice, I then move

to argue that perpetuating this practice de-values the labor of writing despite the integral role

writing plays in creating value in our current world. Chapter four, the final chapter of the

dissertation, moves to consider how First-Year Composition (FYC) might rise to meet the needs

of students by de-centering the single-authored text so that students can see the value in the labor

of writing they will more likely engage in once leaving the FYC Classroom. The conclusion of

the dissertation ties together the professional and academic threads of my research and details my

future research plans for contributing to this largely un-discussed area of writing studies, as well

as what readers can do to help build our knowledge of ghostwriting's ethical legacies.

1   CHAPTER 1 – GHOSTWRITING: PROBLEMS OF AUTHENTICITY AND CREDIBILITY

Challenging the persistent claims that ghostwriting is not an inherently deceptive practice requires a solid foundation across ethics, authorship, and the visibility of labor. This dissertation begins this challenge by working with Aristotle's definition of ethos to explain how ghostwriting complicates artistic *pistis* by beginning with the subterfuge that the listed author wrote a piece of writing. If the author is not the writer, any reader has a reason to disbelieve the message because of a lack of virtue and good will towards the audience on the listed author's part. Each of the above terms, however clear they may initially appear, must be framed within their unique academic backgrounds before being fully incorporated into the broader conversation about corporate writing, both as an accepted business practice and as a viable option within English composition.

The most pressing relationships between ideas include how the "author" became associated with authority to profit from a piece of writing and not with authority typically associated with ethos in rhetoric, which was originally understood to increase the credibility of the message. In the following chapter, this dissertation works roughly chronologically to explain the messy and contested history of the author and how ghostwriting arose in relation to the shift in emphasis on profit rather than creation. Ghostwriting can only exist when the "author" is an "owner" of profit generated from the collateral the laboring writer creates, as with ghostwritten books, or attribution of the writing is given to someone who contributed little to none of the writing labor, as with corporate blogs ascribed to executives. As we will see in chapter three, in addition to deceiving their audiences by using ghostwriting, especially to mimic personal speech, the current practice of ghostwriting also harms the professional lives and futures of those

engaged in the labor of writing. Ghostwriting presents a specific choice on the part of those who engage in it: accurate attribution of labor as a collaboratively written piece provides the most ethical way forward to acknowledge the authority of those who approve messages without erasing the work of the person providing the labor of writing. While the academic conversation surrounding ghostwriting is not currently robust, this dissertation identifies several gaps in existing scholarship and argues that we need to expand the conversation beyond the public relations (PR) and marketing world to other scholars, including those in rhetoric and composition who have a clear stake in these conversations.

1.1   Ethos

"But since rhetoric is concerned with making a judgement (people judge what is said in deliberation, and judicial proceedings are also a judgment), it is necessary not only to look to the argument, that it may be demonstrative and persuasive but also [for the speaker] to construct a view of himself as a certain kind of person and to prepare the judge;" (Aristotle 39)

Because most pre-Socratic philosophers' written record consists only of fragments and references to their work in extant texts, Aristotle's *On Rhetoric* remains one of the most prolific intact works on early Western rhetoric (Cherry 386; Hyde 1). At the risk of being reductive or repetitive within the field of rhetoric and composition, this chapter starts with Aristotle's *On Rhetoric* to consider first what *ethos* is before locating it more specifically within the rhetorical situation of blogs and, more specifically still, corporate blogs. Many recognize Aristotle's definition of rhetoric as "an ability, in each [particular] case, to see the available means of persuasion" (37). Building on this definition, Aristotle includes both the unartful and artful means of persuasion: the unartful depend on existing speech or writing acts, and thus have a history or reputation preceding their use in an attempt to persuade. For example, in this project I am appealing to *On Rhetoric* as a text that establishes terms and opinions about rhetoric without having to re-argue Aristotle's arguments from the text. The artistic means of persuasion,

however, requires the speaker or writer to evaluate the audience and determine what combination of character, logic, or emotion will work best to persuade the audience at various points in the speaker or writer's delivery.

Kennedy yields ethos (ἦθος) as "character" in his translation, but notice how Aristotle, in discussing "character," must also touch upon the issue of power:

> [There is persuasion] through character whenever the speech is spoken in such a way as to make the speaker worthy of credence; for we believe fair-minded people to a greater extent and more quickly [than we do others], on all subjects in general and completely so in cases where there is not exact knowledge but room for doubt. And this should result from the speech, not from a previous opinion that the speaker is a certain kind of person; for it is not the case, as some of the handbook writers propose in their treatment of the art, that fair-mindedness [*epieikeia*] on the part of the speaker makes no contribution to persuasiveness; rather, character is almost, so to speak, the most authoritative form of persuasion. (38-39)

I have included this entire passage to illustrate the ways in which Aristotle viewed ethos as a method of persuasion, especially to examine the term in the last line: "authoritative" (Greek κυριωτάτην – "having power," derived from "κύριος" for "lord/master"). The English figuration of this term "authoritative" is fraught with the conflicting nuances of "authority" in terms of officials with an ability to establish order and "author" in terms of those who pen words or create ideas.

In choosing this translation, Kennedy uncovers much of the difficulty Aristotle has in explaining that ethos is not simply speaking as a well-known person, but that the desired

credibility must be a part of the speech or writing. As Halloran suggests, "in its simplest form, ethos is what we might call the argument from authority, the argument that says in effect, Believe me because I am the sort of person whose word you can believe" (60). Halloran continues, emphasizing the "sanction, approval" from the *OED*: "In contrast to modern notions of the person or self, ethos emphasizes the conventional rather than the idiosyncratic, the public rather than the private" (60). Later rhetors and philosophers continued to work with ideas of *ethos*, extending and modifying the relationship between the speaker or writer's moral character and the credibility of the corresponding message. Cherry summarizes the subsequent Roman handling of *ethos* as a shift away from the art that Aristotle described, moving away from the term ethos, although they continued to emphasize the necessity for virtue in the speaker to be credible (389). In this way, the Romans returned to pre-Socratic notions of ethos (Hyde 1). Rationalists, however, "attempted to minimize or eliminate personal considerations in argument" (Leff 302), removing *ethos* as a *pistis* and supplanting it with the *ad hominem* fallacy: focusing on the person avoids dealing with the reasoning in the message, and thus was disallowed as an important factor in persuasion. Later theorists would begin to mix ideas of *ethos* with persona, conflating an authorial presence with the *pistis* from Aristotle (Cherry 389).

Cherry summarizes work on *ethos* by acknowledging the origin and evolution of *ethos*: "Aristotle's systematic analysis of *ethos*, as well as most treatments of the ethical argument throughout the rhetorical tradition, focus on credibility, on the speaker's securing the trust and respect of an audience by representing him- or herself in the speech as knowledgeable, intelligent, competent, and concerned for the welfare of the audience" (389). Thus *ethos* comprises the writer's credibility in light of both how they represent themselves in the text and how an audience perceives them. This balance between the "I" and the "public" continues in

conversations about *ethos*, but this paper does not attempt to alter or re-interpret *ethos* in any

particular way. Instead, this paper seeks to explore the ways that audiences can trust the writer of

online, corporate content, especially a personal genre like a blog.

1.2   Authorship

"To develop their individual authority, authors not only continued to draw on their relationships with friends, patrons, and acquaintances but also had to work with members of the book trade and engage anew, unseen group of readers. Milton, I wish to argue, is important for our understanding of seventeenth-century authorship because his career allows us to trace the rising status of writers within the burgeoning culture of print" (Dobranski 3)

Returning to Kennedy's choice of translation around the term *ethos*, the term

"authoritative" (39) presents a peculiar problem: authority existed in terms of politics, but the

derivative term "author" was not part of Aristotle's rhetorical situation. To highlight the

problematic nature of this term, the *Oxford English Dictionary* carefully balances these nuanced

ideals in its etymology of "authority":

> Etymology: … authoritative book or passage of text (c1125 in Old French,
>
> originally with reference to Scripture), power or right to give orders, make
>
> decisions, and enforce obedience (second half of the 12th cent.), … credibility of
>
> an author or person to whom reference is made (1268), person or (especially)
>
> body having political or administrative power and control in a particular sphere
>
> (14th cent. in an apparently isolated attestation, subsequently from 1699) <
>
> classical Latin auctōritāt-, auctōritās (in post-classical Latin also autoritas) right of
>
> ownership, sanction, approval, resolution, advice, right or power to authorize,
>
> leadership, authoritativeness, weighty testimony, precedent, example, prestige,
>
> personal influence, esteem, repute < auctor author n. + -tās (see -ty suffix1;
>
> compare -ity suffix).

The earliest usage of this word stems from the power a person has from a written decree, especially from a religious standpoint with scripture, but the meaning evolves over time to include a credible witness and someone with rights to ownership in the 17th century.

This study requires two different and often conflated definitions of "author": the first, a general definition people are most familiar with as "creator of a written work," while the second is similar but more specific to the study of writing: "the person authorized to profit off of a written work." Because of the common equivocal usage of "author," this dissertation typically refers instead to writing or labor of writing as opposed to byline credit. The second understanding of authorship will be dealt with more fully in chapter 3, as it relates more frequently to corporate writing and ghostwriting. Chapter 4 will tease out more of the nuance between the definitions within writing studies and composition, which almost exclusively emphasizes the author as the solitary originator of a text and its ideas (Brandt 550, Wardle and Downs 289, 792, Grobman W177, Lunsford qtd in Kenned 171). To clarify these usages, chapter 1 will detail the opposing definitions as they get used in various contexts.

The shift to the "author" as a class of person came with the advent of printing technology. Because writing before printing was labor-intensive for scribes to hand-write texts, mass ownership of texts was not affordable outside of religious traditions of copying sacred texts. Even once books could be printed more quickly and efficiently, book printing and sales became an active, profitable trade owned by publishers and typesetters to be navigated by writers who wanted to disseminate their ideas (Rose 5). To claim ownership over profits from a printed work, words had to become the author's "intellectual property" in the legal code rather than their ideas being treated as a common or public good. Pamela Long charts the rise of "intellectual property" by focusing on Venetian glassmakers as a case study in how guilds' "craft knowledge" was

codified and ultimately protected by the rise of a patent system as early as the 13th century (875).

Broad governmental control of patents, as opposed to local observations of patents, began in

Venice on March 19, 1474 (Long 878). This regulation gave a monopoly of invention for ten

years to any person who presented the government with a new invention or technique. These

Venetian customs spread throughout Europe and England in the 15th and 16th centuries "on the

basis of authorship, at other times on the basis of possession of knowledge about particular

processes or mechanisms" (880). Long argues that the rise of the patent was a natural

outcropping of guild activity, but notes that it also marked a departure from a guild framework to

a more individualistic activity (880).

As individuals sought protection of unique rights of creation, notions of "intellectual

property" began to align with ingenuity, which ultimately led to contention over who initiated a

process or wrote a text first, the stakes of which increased "because new incentives (including

patronage and the printing press) had developed for writing openly about discoveries and

inventions. Further investigation should clarify areas of contention more precisely, as well as the

attitudes toward authorship and intellectual property that fueled them" (Long 883-884). Several

researchers have taken up this call for further investigation, including Dobranski's extensive

research into Milton's evolution from patronized writer to paid author.

Dobranski examines the attitudes toward the "author" as a class by focusing on the

creation, publication, and reception of Milton's corpus. While Milton likely played a role in

arranging some of the content of his first published collection of poems, the bookseller Moseley

claimed ownership of the printing and sales. Moseley borrowed on Milton's popularity by

arranging a portrait of Milton to be included in the text and listed a popular composer uninvolved

in the publication, "suggest[ing] that at least in some cases printers and booksellers may have

dissuaded readers' appropriation of literary texts by enhancing authors' symbolic status"

("Authorship" 7). To prevent book owners from touting their ownership of books or manuscripts

as their own independent authority, publishers added prefatory material to highlight those

involved in writing and creating a volume, as well as occasionally offering glosses to help

readers see a specific reading of a text rather than invite independent interpretation

("Authorship" 7). The Early Modern period thus marks a new age in contract agreements for

authors: Milton did not own the 1645 *Poems*, but the bookseller who commissioned the text

worked to prevent other claims to ownership that would contradict his own.

As the patronage system declined, authors turned increasingly to contracts for their

works. John Milton's *Paradise Lost*, for example, had a contract that now represents "the earliest

surviving formal agreement of its kind in England" (Dobranski "Authorship" 10), and it allowed

payment to Milton for three separate impressions. Dobranski points out the shift in ownership set

forth in this contract: "the printer was agreeing to pay for three editions of *Paradise Lost* at a

time when other printers and booksellers still assumed perpetual rights to publish writers' texts"

(10). Elsewhere, Dobranski demonstrates that this acceptance of authorship for the one laboring

to write presented a conflict to the printer who reserved the rights to distribute a work:

> Gradually, by fits and starts, the modern author would emerge within the English
>
> book trade: early in the century, for example, some stationers were already
>
> extolling the merit of their wares by claiming to publish an author's authentic,
>
> original manuscripts. But that more than half of the items published in 1644 and
>
> 1688 were printed without an author's name suggests that little value was
>
> generally put on individual authors' identities. (*Milton* 18)

In "A Tale of Two Copyrights," Ginsburg provides greater context to the historical moment Dobranski traces from Milton and his contemporaries. She states, "By the end of the ancien regime, much rhetoric proclaiming the sanctity and self-evidence of exclusive literary property rights had infiltrated the copyright debate, most of it propounded by publishers invoking authors' rights for the publishers' benefit" (997). This echoes Dobranski's statements about the difficulties Milton experienced arguing for authors' rights in *Areopagitica*:

> In contrast to Milton's practice of collaborative authorship, the Stationers explicitly rejected the concept of "community" because, they claimed, it "brings in confusion, and many other disorders both to the damage of the State and the Company of Stationers" – as well as to the "great discouragement" of authors.
> (*Milton* 107)

Both France and America originally created copyright laws to allow the most gifted scholars to contribute their knowledge to society: not for the author's benefit, but for society's.

Noah Webster especially became vocal in America's push for copyright notice at the turn of the 19th century: "A letter signed by professors at Princeton and the University of Pennsylvania sets the tone of the arguments in favor of copyright. After praising Webster's two works as 'very proper for young persons in the country,' the letter urges: … Men of industry or of talents in any way, have a right to the property of their productions'" (Ginsburg 1000). Webster appealed to multiple states in addition to Congress to have Copyright Law officially drafted and overseen, and in 1790 the first Federal Copyright Act was established (Solberg 49). As Lessig specifies, the protections in the original copyright law, and all following, avoided providing a monopoly to a company or industry, and instead granted "not to publishers, but to authors, 'exclusive Right[s]' 'for limited Times'" (1062).

For the next few decades, Webster continued to appeal Congress, politicians, and authors to join the fight to ensure that literary works would be viewed as the property of the author and their families after them, writing to Daniel Webster that "this species of property [be] on the same footing as all property, as to exclusive right and permanence of possession" (Solberg 49). Over time, however, the copyright law saw more use and became narrower in its understanding of the definition of "author." While Webster was never successful in gaining permanence, another of his bills submitted through William M. Ellsworth did, in 1830, double the first term of copyright and provided a right to renewal not only for literary works, but for other modes of artistic expression also (49). This revision in 1830 serves as the first revision to the Copyright Law.

Thorvald Solberg, one-time head of the Copyright Office, provides perhaps the clearest detailed account of the treatment of copyright from the time of Webster to the early 20th century in a 1925 law review article, "Copyright Law Reform." Solberg traces all of the attempts of American authors and interest groups to obtain an international copyright law, specifically targeting Britain as both a source and purveyor of pirated material in the absence of reciprocal copyright laws, which is why he draws careful attention in his discussion of the 1830 revision to the lack of protection for authors outside the United States, which would not come until 1891, even with the passage of 8 other amendments (50). The bill that ultimately would be passed into an international copyright law, Chace's new copyright bill, came with not only the previous accolades of authors and publishers, but also of scholars and colleges. From that time until the early twentieth century, amendments would continue to plague copyright to an extent that Solberg found that the entire copyright law needed to be revised to be clear in phrasing and

provide full protections for "literary and artistic producers" along with others affected by copyright (62).

     Solberg's recommendation was struck down at the legislative level, but it was picked up by the Library of Congress, which led two conferences with professional groups that would be impacted. The resulting Copyright Statute was to be picked up by Congress upon completion, with President Roosevelt recommending this action be attended to quickly (63). All of this work was done parallel to international efforts to secure a copyright across multiple countries, working to protect the interests of individual authors wherever their works were sold, extending this protection to other creative artists as technology required (71).

     Noah Webster's work for securing a Copyright Law likely stemmed not only from his own desire to protect his books as his own property, but both Solberg (72) and Donner (376) argue that Webster and the young American government's desire for Republicanism, specifically the ideal of "promotion of individual merit" (Donner 376), informed the acceptance of and further amendments to copyright law. This treatment of authorship as property ownership continues into today's definitions within American copyright. Consider the following definition currently offered by the Copyright Office's website: "Under the copyright law, the creator of the original expression in a work is its author. The author is also the owner of copyright unless there is a written agreement by which the author assigns the copyright to another person or entity, such as a publisher." The earlier tenets of "intellectual property" Long details combine with the issues of John Milton as a prototype of the modern "author," Noah Webster's early example of advancing public learning, and America's evolution with technology to create multiple records of an artistic piece, resulting in a definition that entirely omits writing to focus instead solely on creation.

Lessig picks up the issue of the history of copyright in his Melville B. Nimmer Memorial Lecture, "Copyright's First Amendment." Lessig attempts to take a properly Federalist view of balance in analyzing the American copyright law, and he especially focuses on the 1998 Sonny Bono Copyright Term Extension Act. This act extended not only copyrighted original material to be the artist's lifetime plus seventy years but also "in the case of works made for hire, from seventy-five to ninety-five years" (1065). Lessig challenged this act on behalf of Eldred regarding works previously copyrighted under 75 years, arguing that the intent of the protection period was for progress, which did not apply to grandfathering timelines to the detriment of those who had counted on works coming into the Public Domain (1067). In discussing his opposition to this extension of copyright, Lessig argues "My aim is to get you to notice something odd about the character of the culture that copyright has become. My hope is to get you to see just a bit about how extreme our view of copyright has become; how unbalanced, how unmitigated" (1068). In other words, what had once been a decree to protect the individual's work as property to their benefit had become a stumblingblock to progress with increased years of protection for writing. The pendulum had begun to swing again to where it was in Milton's day, when the business interests of groups holding rights received greater protection than the individual's rights.

The following year, rather than invite another Constitutional scholar to deliver this address, they invited Mark Rose, a literary scholar who offers readings of the various metaphors used to discuss copyright in an effort to unpack what Lessig pointed out as an increase in thinking about content, especially online, as property rather than the separate class of "intellectual property." Rose picks up the ancient view of authorship as a type of paternity, a specifically male affair of parthenogenesis (4), and traces this through both Milton's

Areopagitica (5) as well as Defoe's essay in *The Review* advocating for the Statute of Anne (5-6). The claims of rights from fatherhood and a more focused allusion to property in Defoe's excerpt show the shifting, or mounting, desire from authors to own the works they create and profit off of them or sell them as necessary. Similarly, Rose examines the metaphor of writing as agriculture or real estate, which has a much clearer connection to property rights under John Locke's theory that "through labor, an individual might convert the common ground of nature into private property. Authors, they argued, created literary properties through their labor" (7). Rose then argues that the real estate metaphor provides the unconscious ideology for much of the undergirding of copyright: it provides a strictly utilitarian personal understanding of what was previously considered common. The owner of land and writing can permit or deny entry to outsiders, with trespassing and infringement as the corresponding crimes for violating property. Anything not specifically defended by a person as theirs through labor remains common property. The only difference lies in creating visual boundaries; where land can be set apart by walls and fences, writing must be set apart as original work (8). Rose acknowledges again his outsider status as a language scholar, rather than a legal scholar, but concludes with a plea for readers to consider the ways that the metaphors we use to consider and discuss copyright might help or hurt the progress of the nation or interfere with the balance that Nimmer understood as central to copyright.

The federal legal considerations of ghostwriting are not decidedly in favor of the copyright, however. In 1950 the Supreme Court heard Kingsland v. Dorsey concerning a patent lawyer who had been disbarred from bringing patents after other Supreme Court cases involving some clerks' patents were deemed misleading. Part of the decision involved the use of ghost-written trade publications in the suits for patents, which the Supreme Court found to be a form of

deceit contrary to the "highest degree of candor and good faith" (*Kingsland* Opinion) expected of

those bringing patent suits. In his dissent, Justice Jackson stated that the fault lay more with the

Patent Office for not requiring sufficient evidence – Dorsey exploiting this lapse in stringency

differed in no concrete way from lawyers presenting affidavits: "Nothing on the face of the usual

affidavit discloses the fact that the composition is that of the attorney; on the contrary, it

generally recites that it is the witness who "deposes and says . . . ." Is a different standard to be

applied to a trade journal article intended and accepted to serve the same end?" (*Kingsland*

Dissent). Ironically, even the Opinion of this case was written *per curiam* – no single author took

credit for writing the decision, but instead insisted on a collaborative writing attribution

regardless of whose labor of writing resulted in the opinion (even if it were clerks and not the

justices themselves who wrote it). Jackson judges these forms of concealing the laborer

performing the writing in the Kingsland v Dorsey case as problematic, going so far as to say

"Ghost-writing has debased the intellectual currency in circulation here and is a type of

counterfeiting which invites no defense. Perhaps this Court renders a public service in treating

phantom authors and ghost-writers as legal frauds and disguised authorship as a deception"

(*Kingsland* Dissent). Despite this lack of equivocation regarding the unethical aspects of

ghostwriting, Jackson states that the lack of punishments for the practice up to that point and the

questionable ability to punish anyone for the same acts later cause this not to be a proper

handling of the law.

Despite the opinions of Supreme Court justices in specific cases as the one above, the

government's attitude towards ghostwriting continues in the vein of Webster: publication

dictates authorship, including the publication of bought material. The United States Copyright

Office most recently published a circular that forces the distinction between writer and author by stipulating when an author can ask or require a different writer to produce a work on their behalf:

> To register a work with the U.S. Copyright Office, you generally must identify the author or authors of that work. In addition, you must identify the party that owns the copyright in the work. Ordinarily, the author is the person or persons who actually created the work you intend to register. "Works made for hire" are an exception to this rule. For legal purposes, when a work is a "work made for hire," the author is not the individual who actually created the work. Instead, the party that hired the individual is considered both the author and the copyright owner of the work. ("Works Made for Hire" 1)

While this definition seems sufficiently straightforward, the Copyright Office proceeds to differentiate between an "author" and a "creator" by offering a category of writing called a "work made for hire," which leads neatly into the next term this project must define: ghostwriting.

1.3   Ghostwriting

"Ghostwriting depends explicitly on the elaborate borrowing and lending of status, including the status of writing itself, and it is in the handling of these exchanges that both the effectiveness of ghostwriting and its controversies will usually be found" (Brandt 33)

In Aristotle's rhetorical situation, speechwriters and coaches helped citizens craft speeches for a legal Assembly. These outsourced words were not meant to bring compensation but to address or bring charges to protect the speaker's interests. Speech writers remain a commonplace to this day, but the modes of word crafting have expanded beyond the simple speech just as the methods of contacting ghostwriters has increased as well. According to historian Ernest May in the 1950s, historians did not witness so much dependence on ghostwriters until the 1930s and later (463). Bormann, a scholar in communications in the 1950s

and 60s, noted that any phone book lists ghostwriters if someone needing a speech did not know

to find their advertisements in literary reviews and book reviews ("Agencies" 20). Moreover,

Bormann argues that the theory behind the promulgation of ghostwriting undercuts the efforts to

teach speech:

> Most people, the ghost argues, are too busy doing other things to develop the
>
> mastery of language that it takes to write a good speech. … The alternative is for
>
> the speaker to take out time from the work for which he is suited and trained to try
>
> to write the speech himself. … If this premise is accepted then the premise
>
> underlying most speech courses in our schools must be rejected. ("Agencies" 22-
>
> 23)

Bormann builds on May's speculations about the cause of the rise in ghostwriting in a later

article, "Ghostwriting and the Rhetorical Critic," as he traces the connection between

ghostwriting and specialization. Bormann argues that corporate growth and the rise of mass

media, which privilege language that addresses people as a whole rather than attempt individual

communication, causes distrust from the average citizen. Upon hearing these generic speeches,

the listener more easily wonders who really wrote them. More troubling for those who study

rhetoric, however, is Bormann's assertion that as the public embraces increased ghostwriting of

public language the public will likely move further away from wanting to learn rhetorical

criticism (288) – perhaps prescient of our current political echo chamber devoid of analysis.

    As technology continued to shift further towards a mass consumption model from early

printing presses to industrial scale printing to digital publication via the internet, the "author"

became antiquated by the proliferation of "users" of social media and blogs. These forms of

digital writing in turn became part of large corporations' marketing strategies, despite the origins

of blogs and social media as tools for individual expression and knowledge sharing. Where once

May could argue that diaries provided reliable if not authoritative records because "diary entries

are usually too personal to be entrusted to ghost writers" (459), website content, including blogs

and podcasts originally intended for unique, individual expression, could mirror the form of the

diary entry on behalf of figureheads of a company to create content for the company, even

though much of the generated content gets produced by marketing and public relations

employees.

Baron gestures towards the digital shift in his analogy between the pencil and the

personal computer as emerging technologies (72-73): "The pencil may seem a simple device in

contrast to the computer, but although it has fewer parts, it too is an advanced technology" (73).

Baron surveys various modes of writing throughout history, pointing out both the unsupported

fervor of those in favor of advancing technologies and the often-unfounded opposition to

technological advances that culminate in a desire to provide authenticity (76). Finally, Baron

arrives at what remains in some ways a pressing issue while also being largely ignored:

"Electronic texts also present some challenges to the ways we attribute expertise to authors.

When I read newsgroups and electronic discussion lists, I must develop new means for

establishing the expertise or authority of a poster" (81). Baron provides an example of following

a bicycle group for information on the type of tire he should use as a novice in the cycling world

(81-82). This relatively simple example allows him to discuss not only the reader's difficulty in

ascertaining valid sources, but it also demonstrates the potential difficulty for writers looking to

enhance their ethos through sound sources and documentation (82).

Speaking from the relative comfort of single-computer usage back when the word

internet was still capitalized, Baron concludes "The computer has indeed changed the ways some

of us do things with words, and the rapid changes in technological development suggest that it will continue to do so in ways we cannot yet foresee" (82). Before the rise of Web 2.0 through social media and an increase in agility of servers and the further expansive changes ushered in by mobile connectivity, Baron simply knew that writing on the internet was a new phenomenon with multiple possible futures. What remains clear in his conclusion is that "We have a way of getting so used to writing technologies that we come to think of them as natural rather than technological" (83). This is certainly the case for computers, and even more so for text generated for websites by content creators, as we will see in chapter 3, but tracing the rise of Web 2.0 and its impact on digital writing establishes more clearly how ghostwriting has taken its current place in major digital content creation.

Returning to Baron, many of his predecessors and contemporaries held similar beliefs regarding the use of computing up to that point and its potential to impact writing. John Hayes, for example, revised his 1980 "Hayes-Flower writing model" in 1996, simplifying the image of the model while accounting for more variables, one of which includes the physical environment, focusing specifically on the medium for composition. The "word processor" stands out as an example of technology bridging the technological divide between the typewriter and personal computer, written about elsewhere (Rawnsley 31-32), but Hayes points to studies from the 1980s that demonstrated a decrease in planning and editing as well as variables such as monitor size impacting performance depending on size (178).

Baron and Hayes wrote articles that contributed to the current discussions of their respective times, which gained them acceptance into the *Literacy: A Critical Sourcebook* alongside seminal pieces like Bartholomae's "Inventing the University," Street's "The New Literacy Studies," and Brandt's "Sponsors of Literacy." Thus, while the information is certainly

dated, it remains as a testament to literacy studies, especially within the subfield of digital literacy. Hawisher and Selfe's collections *Global Literacies and the World-Wide Web* and *Literate Lives in the Information Age* offer more insight into the evolution of this digital literacy environment. In their introduction to *Global Literacies*, Hawisher and Selfe draw from a pool of voices to argue "the Web and the Internet have been touted … as a culturally neutral literacy environment" that allows authors, end-users, individuals, and corporations to disseminate and receive information" (1). This freedom gave many advocates of digital literacy hope that the internet would be "an environment that supports the related spread of democratic ideals and the expansion of world markets based on a global set of consumer wants and needs" (1). Hawisher and Selfe balance these optimistic views with the many critiques of the internet's assumed global scale or cultural influences affecting literacy practices before revealing the purpose of this collection: "[begin] the examination of such culturally specific literacy practices – authoring, designing, reading, analyzing, interpreting – on the Web" (3). As was demonstrated in the previous sections, authorship is indeed a cultural construct that changes over time and between cultures.

To achieve this goal, Hawisher and Selfe deconstruct the "global village" myth that populated much of the early discussion of the Web. They highlight especially the American notion that "computers have been continually refined in their design by scientists and engineers, committed to making technology serve the needs of human beings, and carefully legislated by a democratic federal government committed to looking after the best interests of citizens" (6). With this foundation, Americans easily assumed a democratic thrust to the internet that would eventually unify the world in a scientific whole: the "global village" (7). Despite this narrow view of the internet's beginnings, Hawisher and Selfe point out a significant concern with this

metaphor: "To citizens in these countries, the Web may seem less a neutral and welcome medium for global communication than a disturbing and unwelcome system for broadcasting western colonial culture and values" (9). To avoid taking sides, Hawisher and Selfe use their edited collection to offer "a vision of the Web as a complicated and contested site for postmodern literacy practices" (15). These literacy practices morphed from the more strictly controlled early days of "Web 1.0," when content was largely static and more closely resembled traditional print media, to the user-generated content of "Web 2.0," again popularly perceived as the answer to the early predictions of a democratized Web (Whittaker 1, 4). Whittaker, like Hawisher and Selfe almost a decade earlier, avoids using the problematic label of "democratisation of the web" because he recognizes the equivocation of "democratisation" and "consumption." Instead, Whittaker prefers the term "architecture of participation" to explain how "users would be authors as well as readers" (4), which returns us momentarily to issues of authorship. "Architecture of Participation" requires several changes to traditional ideas about authorship and copyright, with Creative Commons and Wikipedia typifying the Web 2.0 response to the traditional author/publisher relationship developed in Milton's time, codified throughout the centuries following his contract, and still attempting to arrest disrupting voices today (Whittaker 5).

Whittaker calls out two specific forms of Web 2.0 technologies: the blog and the wiki for their ease of content creation without knowledge of page construction previously required in Web 1.0 (7). More attention will be given to each of these genres in chapters three and four, respectively, but for now the most important aspect to mention is that both of these genres ideally have independent content creators sharing information informally. As these genres gained popularity, many corporations, wishing to keep the generic norm of individual authenticity to

promote their brand, began using paid but uncredited writers to generate authored content for executives' social media and blog accounts. In *The Rise of Writing*, Brandt discusses ghostwriting at length as a form of "workaday writing" for which writers are paid but not credited. Brandt touches on the crux of the issue: *ethos* depends on the credibility of the author, but ghostwriting undermines the reliability of the posted author's name. One of few researchers in rhetoric and composition currently addressing ghostwriting as a phenomenon, Brandt establishes ghostwriting as an economic product of current business practices: "In ghostwriting, this symbolic power is recouped for the interests of the employer/client: not only does the client save actual time by employing the ghostwriter but often still gets credit for having put in that time, at least from the psychological perspective of the reader" (39). Knapp and Hulbert, authors of *The Ethics of Ghostwriting*, also emphasize the time constraints that cause much of corporate and political ghostwriting (8, 57), but where Brandt largely avoids speaking about the ethics of ghostwriting, Knapp and Hulbert take the ethics of ghostwriting as their main concern.

Knapp and Hulbert focus specifically on issues of transparency for readers/hearers of ghostwritten work. By asking six questions about any particular practice of ghostwriting, they unpack the extent to which ghostwriting may mislead readers concerning whose authentic voice they are reading and the degree to which the cited author can thus be trusted. They acknowledge that ghostwriting as a profession poses a problem on either end of the spectrum of collaboration: either the cited author does not have the clear ideas or thoughts attributed to them or the cited author has great thoughts but is unwilling or unable to learn how to communicate them clearly (11). The major ethical issue Knapp and Hulbert examine concerns the authenticity of the written message, which they then challenge through several different writing-intensive disciplines to inquire whether ghostwriting is an ethical act in that broad context.

Knapp, Hulbert, and Brandt all base their conversations about ghostwriting in broader topics. Brandt is more concerned with dominant expressions of literacy, which she argues has shifted from reading to writing ability. Knapp and Hulbert concern themselves more with who should be considered an "author." In both of their texts, though, the conversation quickly elicits copyright law. To define "author," the American legal system has favored a specific view of ownership of text, which must be understood to argue about who owns the words a writer writes. In the eyes of U.S. copyright law, words can be sold as property, which has allowed the ghostwriting industry to flourish in our current age of digital print media; but the ghostwriters rarely get credit for the work they do, meaning that readers cannot be sure whether a piece demonstrates the skill or genius of the listed author or of a hidden "ghost" writing on their behalf.

The world of public relations, however, continues to identify the practice of ghostwriting as ethically ambiguous, although most results in this sphere point to ghostwriting as acceptable practice. In Patricia Parson's book on Public Relations best practices, she states "even within our field [public relations] we need to consider more deeply how we come to justify widely accepted practices" as she introduces her chapter on "Deceptive Authorship: Ghostwriting and Plagiarism" (121). In addition to consulting dictionary definitions of plagiarism to investigate this phenomenon, Parsons also consults the Modern Language Association, which she then handily writes off, saying it "does not apply in the PR situations to which we refer" (123). Indeed, as Parsons searches for an answer to the ethical dilemma, she moves further towards non-academic, highly generalized sites, which offer her an overly simplified definition of plagiarism as an "unauthorized" use of someone else's language. This shortcut allows her to conclude, "When a public relations practitioner is hired by an individual or organization to

express that client's message and then provides 'work-for-hire' as part of the service, the use of the words is clearly 'authorized', and in addition is expressing not the ideas and creations of the writer but those of the person hiring the writer" (123). Here the distinction between "author" and "creator" mirrors that of copyright law, which distinguishes between the two classes as a means of justifying the work of the ghostwriter.

The ethical repercussions of ghostwriting remain, however. Justice Jackson notes in his dissent in Kingsland v Dorsey that ghostwriting is deceptive in its nature, and Bormann concludes in "Ghostwriting and the Rhetorical Critic" that "As the public becomes more and more cynical about the authorship of speeches, the ethos of the speaker is undermined" (288). Parsons escapes this ethical conundrum through classification; not just the "author" of ideas versus the "writer" of words, but further by stating, "the person using the words isn't the PR person at all: it is the person hiring the writer to produce the media release, article, speech or book, for example. And this is not plagiarism *in the strictest sense*; it constitutes what has come to be called 'ghostwriting'" (123). Rather than shedding new light on the ethical issues at play, Parsons depends on the same linguistic gymnastics as the Copyright Act.

Oddly enough, though, an individual blogger who receives compensation in some form for advocating a specific product must still disclose this information: a blogger's words must be up-front about being paid or given a free product to represent it (Hwang and Jeong 528), while no such requirement exists for ghostwritten material on corporate blogs. Ghostwriting exists, then, in a legally liminal space with its own set of ethical issues. Often missing from these ethics, though, is the question whether readers can reasonably trust the credibility of a corporate blog. Because current research largely disregards the similarities under which both students and executives operate in terms of demands on their time, writing, and integrity of their messaging,

this chapter attempts to close the gap in the rhetorical situations to reduce the noise over who has the privilege to use a ghostwriter.

1.4   Collaboration

"You know how it can go. Joe gets an idea and sketches it out in a couple of pages. Mary says, hey, wait a minute -- that makes me think of…. Then Fred says, but look, if we change this or add that.... In the end everyone, with a little help from his and her friends, exceeds what anyone could possibly have learned or accomplished alone." (Bruffee "The Art of Collaborative Learning" 39)

Issues of collaboration and authorship coincide in multiple ways. Returning to Dobranski's review of Milton's 1645 poems, we find that "because editors of Renaissance drama had long accepted the collaborative nature of the theater, some of the earliest work on the complexity of authorial practices and the implications of printed attributions focused on dramatic writing" ("Authorship" 4). Love focuses on "scribal community" to describe "social groups that, even after the advent of print, exchanged handwritten texts as 'a mode of social bonding'" (qtd. in Dobranski 5), which highlights the popular notion that works of writing were not to be owned by the writer but enjoyed by a literate population.

To clarify what rhetoric and composition scholars bring to conversations of corporate ghostwriting, it is important to note that Bruffee's focus on socially constructed knowledge and attempts to extend collaboration beyond the classroom helped form an early concern with collaboration in the field (Forman 234-35). Bruffee, writing primarily during the turn to expressivist pedagogies in composition classrooms, discusses the ways in which collaboration fosters student agency in learning. He draws from studies that followed medical students in collaborative settings such as rounds and even his own experience helping colleagues with manuscripts to illustrate how knowledge is built by cooperative tasks ("Art of Collaborative Learning" 40). Elbow's *Writing without Teachers* expressed a similar concept, epitomizing an

approach that valued students' joint experiences writing communally above teacher-driven theme writing and grammar exercises.

Ede and Lunsford further analyzed collaboration, identifying two major styles of "collaboration" from among those they had observed: hierarchical collaboration, a linear approach to reach specific goals through a clear division of roles, and dialogic collaboration, a loosely structured approach with shifting roles that accomplish collaboration as a goal. The former defined the classrooms Bruffee and Elbow were attempting to leave behind, and the latter defined the classroom innovations that writing teachers began building to emulate more organic forms of writing and researching. Their description of a process that "travels in a rigidly linear way, through level upon level of bureaucratic authority" (236) closely resembles the way corporate ghostwriters interact with various departments before their work appears on a blog. In all of these pedagogical shifts, a drive to enact more democratic forms of knowledge-building efforts takes center stage.

Continued advances in technology have enabled more global pursuits of dialogic collaboration. While the originators of the term Web 2.0 pointed to the collapse of the ".com bubble" as a catalyst (O'Reilly), the increased availability of broadband internet also made internet access more widely accessible economically and geographically, pushing the internet model away from a static Web 1.0, where companies controlled access to information for passive consumers. Web 2.0 saw the rise of blogging, social media platforms, and wikis (Fox and Madden), all of which made users active producers of knowledge. The goal of this shift, according to Jenkins, was to allow users to be co-creators of content, collaborating with the various companies and platforms in a more democratic fashion (49). As we saw with authorship, though, the creation of content comes along with contests of ownership. In discussing the role

wikis play in fostering global collaboration, Sunstein states that collaboration through online resources is "inherently democratic," and points to the original wiki founders' assertion that security protocols are not necessary in a wiki "not because of economic incentives … It is because most people really want the process to work" (149). The quality of the data on wikis is generally high, surprising many researchers who have looked into Wikipedia especially (151), and the free access and lack of marketing directed at readers and authors perpetuates its popularity. Despite the large number of articles published within a wiki, "the concept of authorship is discouraged and, in a way, senseless" because the wiki is essentially a collaborative genre (Lundin 434, Sura 14). Blogging, however, developed in the opposite direction: blogs developed as single-authored pieces where authenticity is valued over collective knowledge production (see Blood for the evolution from initial link-driven weblogs and current diary-style blogs), which we will consider separately later.

In the university system, writing often remains a lonely venture. Lunsford describes "the traditional humanities view of textual ownership" as "the lone writer in the garret, struggling to compose an utterly unique text, marked with the author's genius, owned outright, and deeply protected by the web of intellectual property laws" ("Open Sourcery" 32). Despite this focus on the individually authored text among university officials, Lunsford also acknowledges the shifting attitude towards collaborative writing in terms of tenure and promotion discussions. Humanities in general, and writing studies more specifically, now accept multi-authored articles and books in top-tier journals, reflecting a shift in our values that was already present within our composition classrooms, where collaborative writing practices have been embraced since the 1965 Dartmouth Conference, at the latest (a history we will take up in chapter 4).

Within writing studies, scholars are taking up the practice of sharing the labor of writing to build knowledge. In our composition classrooms from the first-year writing course to graduate courses, collaborative assignments exist in multiple ways: peer editing papers, group presentations, inter-disciplinary endeavors, writing-across-the-curriculum, and writing in the disciplines. Daily writing practices in digital and mobile environments have displaced many previously held ideas about authorship. Yet, somehow ghostwriting continues unabated outside the university so that the name on a written piece can generate the capital the cited author or owner of the words needs through the words bought from a skilled writer. If users are comfortable and familiar with collaborative forms of production, then why does ghostwriting endure? One reason, according to Drezner, is to protect a company's or an individual's status as a "thought leader" to leverage that position into sales or other forms of value for the owner: "The emergence of the modern Ideas Industry has enabled for-profit thought leaders to have it all. Through their thought leadership, they can claim credit as a marketing device. Through their bespoke work, they can earn money as well" (169). To claim this thought leadership, though, Brandt argues companies must overcome time, skill, and knowledge deficits that make ghostwriting the most strategic way forward (*Rise* 38-39).

Brandt locates the rise of writing as the preeminent form of literacy in the shift to a "knowledge or information economy": "As the nature of work in the United States has changed – toward making and managing information and knowledge in increasingly globalized settings – intense pressure has come to bear on the productive side of literacy, the writing side" (3). As America moved away from its labor-intensive production of goods, it took up a mantle of creating ideas. Thus, the driving force behind the need for clearly articulated writing is the desire to occupy the position of a "thought leader"; a role that indicates that a person or a company

controls the direction of the information. Sometimes this is as simple as accurately predicting market trends ahead of the market to invest in them first, but increasingly "thought leader" has become a corporate buzzword that approximates a more nebulous definition of "industry leader." Drezner, elaborating on the difference between public scholars and thought leaders, defines "thought leaders" as people who "develop their own singular lens to explain the world, and then proselytize that worldview to anyone within earshot" (9). Drezner does not dismiss the usefulness of this thought leader role, but acknowledges that thought leaders have a clear sales role that previous public intellectuals had not required since early days of patronage.

The emphasis on thought leadership is not new, though. Cummings argues that the shift to an information economy in the 1960s was a concerted effort by "advertisers, scholars and technology firms … promising that computing would result in greater efficiency and convenience for all" (2). Previous studies on blogs' influence have focused on "A-List Blogs" (Trammell and Keshelashvili), opinion leaders (Li and Du), and "influential bloggers" (Khan et al.). For the current economic dependence on ideas, Lee, in reviewing Drezner's book on the Ideas Industry, mentions the ubiquity of the idea: "Even the concept of 'thought leadership' is itself a buzzword, overused and increasingly devoid of meaning" (35). As Juettemeyer traces the history of the blog, however, its inception and rise lie wholly within the same time period as the supposed "ideas economy" that some argue has transformed the industrial work system in the same way the Industrial Revolution changed the modern world (119).

To position a person or company as thought leaders, then, they must have both the subject matter expertise to forecast accurately or pro-actively problem-solve, but they must also be able to communicate these skills in clear terms to stakeholders. Knapp and Hulbert, in their chapter on corporate executives' ghostwriters, acknowledge that thought leaders and

stakeholders possess expertise in areas outside writing. Thus, they contend, the kairotic charge of ghostwriting is one either of saving time for the capable writers among executives or supplementing a lack of communication ability in those who cannot write capably. Knapp and Hulbert do, however, note that for the latter group of executives, leaving communication skills at a lower level will ultimately harm them in their efforts to communicate their goals to stakeholders. If a thought leader cannot clearly communicate the vision of their company or their individual predictions, they will lose their place as leaders of their field.

While Brandt echoes this sentiment as well concerning the deficits that cause ghostwriting to occur as widely as it does (*Rise* 38-39), neither Brandt nor Knapp and Hulbert seem to turn the same thought process back on our own practices. Writing studies exists largely only in post-secondary educational contexts despite applications of our work being seen across each discipline. What would happen, then, if instead of acknowledging only the time or skill deficit in businesses and providing a service for only basic pay with no recognition, we instead saw that we are similarly poised to disappear as a profession if we do not gain the rhetorical edge of how our services are necessary for current business practices? As a field so closely aligned and allied with rhetoric and communication, we in writing studies ought to be able to advocate for the basic requirements of compensation, representation, and progression through a true professional pathway rather than be content to hide our services to our own detriment.

1.5   Ghostwriting: Limits and Applications

Throughout all of the conversations about the executives who use ghostwriting, few researchers interrogate how the practice helps or harms those engaged in the labor of writing. The "work for hire" does necessarily imply remuneration for writing, but it does not require ethically sourced labor that provides sufficiently for its pool of labor. By its very essence,

ghostwriting requires secrecy; how, then, does a ghostwriter move up in their profession? And does the assumption that words can be bought so that others benefit from the assumption they possess a skill they do not have weaken the entire field of writing studies? Brandt's interviews with workaday ghostwriters provide a wonderful example of how to begin gathering this information, but perhaps a more aggressive stance defending the value of writing would provide a return on our investment into teaching others to write clearly. So long as the status quo is upheld, the labor of writing will continue to be devalued and our skills will profit others more than they profit those who dedicate their time and energies to writing well.

Ghostwriting contains a large number of ethical considerations: from the work creating national and international copyright laws that legitimize writing as a "work for hire" to American Supreme Court justices asserting that ghostwriting is inherently deceptive; from the ubiquity of CEOs using other people's words in their own speeches, blogs, and press releases to the under-funding and elimination of humanities and writing programs due to lack of job preparation; from scientists listing prominent colleagues to increase the reach of their reporting to students going through academic dishonesty hearings for hiring someone to write a paper on their behalf. Further, the term ghostwriting can be thought to apply to any form of writing for another entity, or it could be restricted to writing where incorrect attribution is given, such as with novels or blogs or other traditionally single-authored texts that do not acknowledge the laborer and only list the authority. The current conversations about ethics and ghostwriting provide a starting point for further research, but the remaining research needs to explore more deeply how general reading audiences perceive or react to ghostwriting as well as how ghostwriting as a profession provides for its constituents.

The following chapters forward Bormann's hypothesis that "As the public becomes more and more cynical about the authorship of speeches, the ethos of the speaker is undermined" (288). This dissertation studies the ethics of ghostwriting through a mixed methods data set that includes a case study of blog readers' survey responses to an act of ghostwriting being exposed and one particular survey participant's categorization of ghostwriting as a "best practice." Once that claim has been sufficiently contested, interviews with ghostwriters allow this study to consider how ghostwriters exist within the current culture and context of ghostwriting. Before those results can be analyzed in chapter three, though, chapter two provides the methods used to gather the data and why those specific methods work best to answer the research questions that drive this dissertation's focus. In chapter four, the theories raised about ghostwriting in chapter three will then be applied to considerations of both academic honesty as well as corporate writing pedagogy practices that might allow us a better path forward to advocate for our professional value.

2   CHAPTER 2 METHODOLOGY

"The reason for this is that the ghost, writing for someone else, tends not to write as well as he can. The ghost has a tendency to be discreet and careful. He weakens adjectives and tones down the strength of statements. He knows the punishment for a misstatement or a careless word. He weighs and ponders every expression, and as a result, he dilutes the distinctiveness and strength and spontaneity of whatever writing talent he may have." (Bormannn "Ghostwriting and the Rhetorical Critic" 284)

2.1   Introduction

In my time as a "content writer" for a cloud solutions company, I was asked to write about a lot of topics on which I had little knowledge. In fact, one of the most fun parts about the job was that I got to learn about bare-metal servers, software as a service, distributed denial of service, and other ideas that never would have entered my British literature master's program or very seldom would have entered my heavily literacy-focused doctoral course work. To learn, I had to depend on the research skills that I had developed in those roles, though, and that included talking and listening to experts. Thankfully, the company where I worked was full of helpful people – the Vice President of Sales Engineering (VPSE) was my number one source of information, and much of my writing was taking a data dump or rough outline from him and trying to craft a story that would be a good read as a blog.

One of my favorites included the analogy of how to boil a frog. Perhaps because I grew up where "frog gigging" was not uncommon, I have never found this particular metaphor troubling, which is why I thought it was an engaging and folksy way to convey a company trying to control their online services and, over time, finding themselves in a dangerous situation because of it. I took the analogy and used multiple steps from the process as the headings, keeping a close comparison between the two as the VPSE had intended, and included Creative Commons images per my devotion to free online resources and my lack of access to their marketing department's cache of images. When it was done, I sent it to the VPSE, and he loved

it. It was exactly what he wanted, and after tweaking some technical aspects of what I had written we sent it to the new marketing VP. I felt incredibly accomplished: I had heard what the VPSE wanted, I had synthesized the information accurately with a common aspect of folk wisdom, and I had taken the initiative to use Creative Commons in a corporate system.

The next day, the VPSE and I were asked to attend a meeting in the VP of marketing's office. He was troubled by the images – he felt readers would not connect well to the images of a brightly colored frog in a pot of water heading towards its doom, and he wanted to use the analogy only as a brief touching point and then just be technical from there. This gave me interesting insight into corporate writing. Taking for a moment ghostwriting's typical vocabulary, the VPSE would be considered the Author, the one whose original idea created a brief list of points. I, as the ghostwriter, took those ideas and turned it into a story that used his voice and ideas effectively for the blog genre. Imagine, then, the interest with which I watched as the Author and the Publisher squared off in a fairly tense office meeting. Ultimately, they reached a compromise, and I re-wrote the piece to take into account the two perspectives from the meeting. After a few emails back and forth between the three of us, a very mundane blog post was born.

What I learned over time while in that position, and after being re-organized out of my contract position, was that marketing wants fast content, not necessarily engaging content. I could not include the frogs that the VPSE wanted to include, and we lost much of the structure that we had agreed made it stand out from other blogs. Perhaps that loss drives me here, in a methodology section, to include a personal story that typically would not belong. Far from being a simple act of rebellion or vicarious living, though, this story provides what Grabill describes as a stance necessary to understand the choices of method I have made: "in articulating a stance, a

researcher draws on these ways of thinking about research to create a position that researchers must develop in order to make wise decisions throughout a research process" (215). Unlike Riley and Brown, who espouse three hypothetical ethical approaches to ghostwriting to measure business students' (prospective insiders') reactions, I draw from my own experience as a laborer whose writing has been leveraged to consult both the writer and the audience of ghostwriting.

Similar to Grabill's call for stance, Creswell and Plano Clark encourage all mixed methods researchers to "include a paragraph that introduces the design when writing about a study in a proposal or research report" (97). As this is a dissertation and not a report or article, I am following the format they encourage within this section rather than in one paragraph: identify and define the specifics surrounding the mixed methods, state the design's intent, provide reasons for the design in question, and relate the design to the theoretical framework (97). This format allows the transparency required in ethical research, supports the readers in allowing them to adopt or adapt this study for further research, and lays the groundwork for Chapter 3's discussion of results.

2.2 Research Questions

This dissertation began with an ambitious set of research questions about the ethos of ghostwriting:

1.) To what extent does the general reading public accept ghostwriting for business executives?

    a. Do readers expect online content to be attributed to the one who engaged in the labor of writing?

    b. Can up-front attribution of shared authorship prevent negative press from ghostwriting practices being revealed?

2.) To what extent does the general reading public accept ghostwriting for education?

      a. To what degree do composition classrooms in colleges and universities adapt to teaching collaborative and corporate writing practices in addition to or in lieu of single-author papers?

      b. How do current conversations surrounding plagiarism impact ghostwriting practices within academia?

Throughout its history, as illustrated in Chapters 1 and 2, ghostwriting has existed on the periphery of ethical and legal writing practices. Surprisingly, many people justify its existence as a fact of business practice (see Chapter 3 for multiple such examples); others simultaneously call for its abolition from educational practices (Knapp & Hulbert 120; Claudia Suzanne personal interview), if they have considered that it exists at all. For that reason, the stakeholders of this research are not the companies who engage in the practice, but rather those who are consuming ghostwritten material, those who ghostwrite material, and those who are forbidden access to ghostwriting under the auspices of academic integrity. Each of these three communities, however, exist within systems of power dynamics that provide them little agency.

During the process of collecting data for this research, the research questions were honed to better capture the specificity of my inquiries. Rather than being able to prove a stance on the ethical impact of ghostwriting, this dissertation sought instead to explore possibilities for returning agency to stakeholder populations by pursuing answers to the following questions:

1.) Does ghostwriting constitute a "best practice" for every group faced with both a time and writing skill shortage?

2.) To what extent do ghostwriters have sufficient agency in their work to be considered a viable profession?

3.) What practices can First-Year Composition enlist to de-center the single-author paper so that students more clearly see the value in writing as a professional skill?

To answer these questions, I synthesized the existing secondary sources from and about those benefitting from ghostwriting and primary research from ghostwriters and those consuming ghostwritten materials. These mixed methods research techniques allowed me to gain insight into what is being ghostwritten, how professional organizations account for the work of ghostwriting, and, ultimately, to investigate why authorship is expected differently from a student population that faces challenges similar to the exigencies of current ghostwriting practices.

2.3   Method and Methodology

Answering the above research questions results in several problems on the surface: first, a good ghostwriter blends their work so seamlessly with the listed author's voice so as to be invisible, making sample collecting difficult for a corpus study—apart from memoirs written by ghostwriters. Second, tracking an audience's reaction to a message remains difficult as it depends on self-selection into a study and accurate self-reflection in the process, meaning that the effort of the audience to bestow credibility on an author or speaker goes largely un-researched (if not un-researchable). Authors and writers can reflect on their practices of establishing a singular voice and targeting audiences, but, without active measures to gauge interactions and engagements, this serves mostly as anecdotal evidence. Third, and finally for this project, ghostwriting frequently lies hidden by other titles such as "content writer" or "technical writer," or within required or desired skills such as "clear written communication" or "interpret complex ideas into copy." Few positions explicitly state that ghostwriting is the chief duty or admit that they engage in ghostwriting, instead using euphemisms to hide a practice that they often assert is a common and ethical practice, as we will find in Chapter 3. To address these

difficulties in research, this mixed methods study comprises two separate features: a survey of readers and interviews with professional ghostwriters.

Originally designed as a convergent research plan (Creswell and Plano Clark 65), mixed methods in this context offers both a quantitative element of researching a random sampling's response to ghostwriting, as well as a qualitative look at how a purposeful sampling of ghostwriters work to gain their readers' trust. By fusing these two disparate research approaches, this study sought to "compare quantitative statistical results with qualitative findings for a complete understanding of the research problem" (Creswell and Plano Clark 68) regarding ethos in corporate digital writing. One potential problem with this convergent research plan was the disparity in data retrieval – collecting 30 responses to a survey and aligning that data with interviews from five ghostwriters. As Creswell and Plano Clark mention, one of the major obstacles to mixed methods research is the difficulty for both the researcher and the reader of subsequent research in making suitable connections between such disparate material (72). The quantitative parts of the survey, however, did not gain enough answers to be statistically significant; therefore, they were not used in the reporting of data and analysis for this research. However, the open-ended answers gleaned from the survey became a second qualitative instrument; these survey responses were used in the analysis to supplement responses about reader buy-in from the interview data. The *Journal of Mixed Methods Research* categorizes multiple research questions and a combination of qualitative methods as "mixed methods" as well, though, so the study remains within the dynamic, if sometimes contested (Tashakkori and Creswell 3-4) field of mixed methods.

2.3.1 *Previous Survey Designs*

Previous studies in ghostwriting, especially with a view of ethics, took the majority of their cue from the professional circles that use ghostwriters rather than attempting to involve a live audience or include the voices of the actual ghostwriters. As far back as Bormann's "Ghostwriting Agencies" in 1956, we see a ghostwriting researcher appealing to a corpus of advertisements for ghostwriting services in newspapers (20-21). Bormann summarizes the majority of advertisements as a time-saving offer: the average person's best efforts at writing would be "crude and inferior" (22), which is why they should leave the difficulty of writing a clear speech or paper to a paid professional.

Going back to the 1950s and 60s may seem strange for research in the 21st century, but as Knapp and Hulbert note, "this matter is the subject of remarkably little empirical research" (20). One of the largest, though now dated, surveys of audiences regarding ghostwriting comes from Riley and Brown's 1996 article in the *Journal of Business Ethics*, in which they submit three common views of ghostwriting and create surveys to measure the effects of those schools of thought. They present an ethicist position (with Bormann, cited above, as the primary exemplar), which argues that ghostwriting is inherently deceitful, arguing this view bases its ideas on Aristotle, Cato, and Quintilian (712). The second position is organizational, which argues that a ghostwriter provides similar work for a CEO as that provided by accountants and other specialists the CEO hires (713). The third position is the speechwriter's position, which the authors note varies widely from those who believe they are actively involved in crafting policy and those with a more modest claim to wordsmithing (713). Riley and Brown note the need for this approach as due to its novelty:

The major positions previously presented on the ethics and nature of ghostwriting are stated as hypotheses for the purpose of constructing a research instrument. Lacking significant empirical evidence upon which to build a framework of foundation for developing a primary research instrument, we suggest that this study is by necessity exploratory and descriptive in nature. (714)

The survey was administered with 2,000 students enrolled in business classes at a southwestern university, with 180 useable responses. Four hypotheses were tested:

1) Audiences assume that an individual delivering a speech wrote the speech.

2) Audiences expect individuals of "position" to use speechwriters.

3) President [H. W.] Bush uses speechwriters because he is too busy to write the speech himself.

4) Using speechwriters in certain circumstances for certain individuals is "ethical."

Based on the sample surveyed, respondents show a clear difference between what their individual efforts at writing and delivering a speech would be versus what a CEO's and American president's efforts would be, meaning both hypotheses 1 and 2 were addressed with some statistical significance in the results. Students did assume that those above student status would use some form of help to compose some or most of a speech that a figure were to give, although many did not approve of non-attribution of the ghostwriter. Oddly, Riley and Brown conclude their findings with a celebration that "students hold themselves to high levels of ethical behavior when it comes to using ghostwriters themselves" (718) – admitting that students did see an ethical problem with ghostwriting on some levels.

Gallicano et al. published similar findings among public relations professionals: "Based on the support of 71.1% of the public relations practitioners in our online survey (total *n*=291), there is a general consensus in favor of undisclosed organizational ghost blogging" (1). Their study focused specifically on "organizational blogs," which are blogs clearly providing content from the company rather than from people who work at or for a company (2). Gallicano et al. even appealed to professional organizations such as the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) and the Federal Trade Commission, which advocate for disclosure to consumers. Gallicano et al. challenge whether this disclosure includes disclosing ghostwriting for executives or companies, however. Rather than looking outside their field, Gallicano et al. on behalf of PRSA, survey public relations practitioners regarding their view on ghostwriting organizational blogs.

In terms of methods, Gallicano et al. present multiple issues with finding dependable information regarding ghostwriting. Due to a lack of recent scholarship, the authors depend on various online outlets for public relations and marketing content. These digital tools offer insight into various areas of public relations' frequent dealings with ghostwriting, but they lack some academic rigor. For example, one source they cite, Shava Nerad's personal blog post "Blog Ghost Writing Amplifies Authentic Voices," was picked up by *Useful Arts*, a digital marketing resource page, but does not show signs of academic work. Within the article itself, Nerad's chief defense for the ethical use of ghostwriting is that it is prevalent among powerful people now and has been prevalent for quite some time. Once again, rather than reach out to audiences to gauge the degree to which they feel manipulated by the practice (a difficult endeavor, to be fair), practitioners assert their right to continue their trade based on their own word and sense of historical continuity. Even when appealing to other studies, like Terilli and Arnorsdottir, the

majority of content analyzed was written from the CEO or executive standpoint with no mention

of a ghostwriter – researchers only said that those without disclaimers of an editor or secondary

writer may have been written by the CEOs. Again, a ghostwritten piece should give this

impression, and inquiring into the issue becomes difficult both because some companies do not

want to disclose the use of a ghostwriter and because a CEO is unlikely to be available or willing

to discuss an issue like this. One interesting fact from their research, however, shows that

familiarity with ghostwriting as a practice was related to more acceptance of the practice: "In the

second test, a fairly substantial difference in perceptions of ghost blogging acceptability was

observed between those who engage in ghost blogging or work for an organization that engages

in ghost blogging (M=3.55) and those who do not (M=3.05)" (18). Gallicano et al., then, provide

a good autoethnographic look at content creation from the view of public relations specialists,

but they offer no proof in either direction that readers would be concerned by the practice of

ghostwriting.

The most relevant research exploring the effect of credibility on an audience is Chesney

and Su's examination into anonymity in blog publishing. They establish a gap in the scholarship

in 2010 that "None of the previous studies related specifically to blog content and no previous

work has explicitly and exclusively examined the impact on anonymity on the perceived

credibility of Web content, specifically blog credibility" (712). They then propose a test of

credibility that separates credibility between the blog itself and the blogger creating the blog. The

blogger credibility profile derived from several previous studies and focuses on "the extent to

which he or she was perceived: to be credible, to have high integrity, to have a positive

reputation, to be successful, to be trustworthy, to offer information of superior quality, and to

have a sincere interest in important affairs" (712). The study passed participants through one of

three experimental conditions of anonymity viewing a single blog post written from the perspective of a person suffering from a medical ailment. The first condition provided only a custom-created alias with no identifiable information in the blog banner. The second condition was considered partially anonymous by including variable additional information regarding age and sex in addition to a custom-created alias. The third condition was fully identifiable with a real name along with email address, age, sex, and a photograph included in the blog post. All three sample blogs were created as a screenshot to convey all this information accurately without providing a reader the ability to manipulate the site for other posts. Participants had one month to view the blog and respond to a questionnaire and were asked not to discuss the study with others.

Findings from the initial Chesney and Su study did not show an impact from anonymity, nor did a replication of the study in Singapore. A second study removed anonymity from the research to gauge credibility, using instead grammar and formatting errors in the blog as the control for audience credibility. In their discussion of the results of both studies, Chesney and Su state that bloggers who are wary of releasing personal information in fear that it will delegitimize their information with an online audience should show less concern for authorship information and more concern for formatting. The article ends with a call to further research within credibility of blogs, focusing on various demographic issues as potential sources of credibility differences, and, while the anonymity of blogs within their study did not show a significant impact on credibility, they admit that other factors such as level of knowledge/education could also have an impact in future studies (715-716). What I believe they could not easily predict at this point in 2010 was the proliferation of blogs for companies – a dramatic retooling of the entire genre to suit consumer models driven by bottom lines rather than desires to create online communities and disseminate information.

2.3.2   Survey Design

This dissertation originally sought to collect data that would combine a digitally distributed survey of blog readers with a small sample of personal interviews. In an attempt to account for selection bias in the survey, I chose to administer it anonymously through social media rather than use a selection of students (Riley and Brown) or a sample of professionals (Gallicano et al.), which was similar to my approach for recruiting interview candidates. Because I could offer no compensation for survey participants, and because it was targeting standard internet users and blog readers, the social media sharing limited participants to those in the author's own social media networks via LinkedIn and Twitter, along with any additional viewers from social media shares within my network. The survey consisted of three pathways, similar to Chesney and Su's, assigned at random but with even distribution across all three pathways. Each pathway asked for a consent form to be completed before presenting the reader with a generic blog post about a software service that would benefit a cloud-computing company's customers to mimic the types of blogs readers often encounter as individuals and as decision makers within companies. Pathways 1 and 2 included only a "Vice President of Sales Engineering" as author, while Pathway 3 credited both the VP of Sales Engineering as well as a content writer. Pathway 2 brought up a new screen once the first set of questions was answered, routing participants to a follow-up section that explained that the VPSE had not written the post, but that an unlisted content writer had. The reader then answered several further questions concerning whether this new information changed their opinion about the credibility of the post itself (See Appendix A).

The earliest released version of this survey included an error in the internal logic of the survey, which meant that, for the first two cycles of Pathway 2, readers were not taken to the follow-up question. This internal flaw, combined with the failure to reach the desired 30

participants called out in the IRB application, means that the ultimate goals of the survey were

not completed to provide an initial quantitative analysis. However, open-ended responses are

being treated as a part of the qualitative data, which may provide grounding for future studies.

Having read broadly within methods for other surveys on ghostwriting, Gallicano et al. describe

a similar limit on their study as I experienced with mine: "Because we did not have a high

number of respondents who engage in organizational ghost blogging, the sample was not large

enough to generate meaningful insights … and the current study contributes to preliminary

research about ghost blogging practices" (25). This dissertation's survey design followed

empirical research guidelines to be replicable and aggregable in view of Haswell's advice that

authors "deal with research imperfections" (203). While my data set is smaller than originally

intended, I will include the data as qualitative case study material with the hope that other

researchers may use the same instrument to provide more data to study ghostwriting as it joins

Gallicano et al.'s data as preliminary research.

2.3.3   *Previous Interview Designs*

In addition to the survey, this study involved interviews with professional ghostwriters.

While the survey was to provide the replicable and aggregable portion of this dissertation, the

interview allows researchers to view "the powerful, vernacular sense of what social change looks

like from the perspective of individuals in their own experiences and lives, in their relations with

other humans" (Selfe & Hawisher 36). As stated previously, ghostwriting depends on hiding the

writer's work behind the author's voice and style, which means that a successful ghostwriter

should remain virtually hidden. Interviewing ghostwriters from various fields and at various

stages of their careers helps bring ghostwriters forward with their own voices about their work.

But rather than stick to a "carefully planned and controlled [session] that unfolded along an

easily recognized and generally accepted *storyline*" (Selfe & Hawisher 38, italics original).

While this dissertation cannot go as far as Selfe and Hawisher in including additional authors

(40), an issue to which we will return later in Chapter 4, this study works within its set

convention of single authorship to allow as much collaboration as possible in creation of

meaning.

Previously published interviews with ghostwriters focus primarily on those ghostwriting

books for others. One of the largest qualitative studies included 72 ghostwriters and other

publication professionals whom ghostwriters recommended be included (Anteby and Occhiuto

1287). The initial interviewees were selected by their inclusion as contributors in the *New York*

Times weekly best-seller list over a period of five years, selected specifically from within the

memoir genre. To supplement this number of successful ghostwriters, Anteby and Occhiuto also

invited self-proclaimed ghostwriters from online trade journals and the ghostwriters these

interviewees recommended as well. Through a process of informed and blind coding, the

researchers were able to investigate their own interest in ghostwriters' "recognition

estrangement" (1287) – the results of being largely excluded from a publication despite

providing the majority of the work.

The Anteby and Occhiuto study provides useful insight into the growing world of

ghostwriters, theorizing that this industry is growing because of an increased need for "a form of

labor aimed at producing someone else's self, or what we label 'stand-in labor'" (1287).

Interestingly, their study avoids using the term "author" for the most part, instead referring to the

published name as "subject" or the "principal" and the writer simply as the "ghostwriter" (1296-

1297). For the purpose of my study, though, the scope of literary ghostwriters is both too small

and too far removed from the reality of the writing lives most of my college first-year

composition students will find after leaving my classroom. In terms of nomenclature, I will continue to use author to refer to the person paying to have the work done and writer or ghostwriter for the one performing the actual work of writing as a concession to current conventions.

2.3.4   Interview Design

Interviews required locating professional ghostwriters, four of whom I found from within my professional and educational networks and one who is a publicly self-proclaimed ghostwriter. These IRB-approved interview questions asked participants about the nature of their job, but the focus was largely on how they thought about their audience in order to be credible and what measures they had to verify their success in their writing endeavors. According to Grabill's idea of "stance," it is important to acknowledge that I know most of the interview candidates. Additionally, the personal and professional venues through which I know participants matter because, as Gallagher notes in "A Framework for Internet Case Study Methodology in Writing Studies," relational boundaries "[determine] who is included (the number of participants and who they are) as well as the rationale for why these people are included" (5). In the same way that my target of 30 respondents to the survey was to some degree arbitrary, as it is not statistically significant but would have provided a manageable cross-section for this study, the five interviews provide a baseline of writers at various stages and in various fields to keep a view of ghostwriting in general. Regarding the spatial boundaries, this study focused on the work each ghostwriter has done professionally, whether as a content writer, public relations employee, or an instructor of a ghostwriting course. Rather than ask for samples of their work for analysis, authors reflect on their own practices, including establishing voice, creating a portfolio, and feedback they receive (See Appendix B). The temporal boundary has less to do with the data and

more to do with the professional considerations of my own material reality as I transitioned out of a graduate teaching assistant position and into a 5/5 full-time teaching position just before Covid-19 brought a year of lock-down. All interviews were conducted within two months (September and October 2019), and the transcription, coding, and interpretation were completed in 2020-2021.

2.4   Participation Metrics

2.4.1   Survey Participation

Administering the survey through social media allowed for a greater distribution than I could have gained within my own social circle. After a couple of years trying to make my Twitter account, @GrimmProspects, work for me academically by live tweeting academic conferences and following colleagues and authors I encountered in my research, I was able to use it to further my academic project. My Twitter invitation to the survey got a total of 4,046 impressions (@GrimmProspects), meaning that my request for survey participants entered just over 4,000 news feeds on Twitter. Using hashtags like #dissertation and #blog allowed this post to go beyond my own followers on Twitter into the feeds of people searching for terms related to my research. From these 4,046 impressions, I gained 7 link clicks and 5 retweets among 10 other engagements. The link click number was lower than expected, but the retweet and impression numbers show that the survey did get distributed much more widely than possible within a listserv, professional organization membership roster, or a local community to which I might belong. At the time of analysis, the analytics no longer existed for the LinkedIn post, which had been shared by colleagues and was distributed to at least one professional group of marketers.

2.4.2   Interview Participation

Five professionals with ghostwriting as part of their job description or title consented to

be interviewed via telephone for at least a half hour interview. This research is not interested in

disaggregating data for equity research or reporting, so demographic information of the

participants was not collected. Only two of the three requested pseudonyms, but all names were

converted to initials for purposes of anonymous reporting. Questions were not given to the

participants ahead of time so that I could capture spontaneous responses, and I took notes by

hand in addition to recording the audio of the calls with Zoom. Calls were then hand-transcribed

into Word documents, and answers were collated into an Excel spreadsheet for comparative

analysis.

2.4.3   Coding

According to Keith Grant-Davie, coding constitutes an interpretive operation or way of

reading a text (272-273). Grounded theory informed the process of coding the data from the

survey and interviews. Results from the survey and interviews were recorded: the survey answers

in Qualtrics and the interview transcripts from Zoom recordings were later transcribed in

Microsoft Word. To help ensure a close connection between my research questions for the

project and the collected data, I employed structural coding. My initial step required repeated

readings of the survey and interview answers to form groups of evidence to analyze together, as

often as possible using tags (Saldaña 8, 23-24) to retain the unique voices of those answering my

questions. Some of the groupings and themes that emerged from the survey data included "best

practices" and "previous experience," while common themes from the interviews included

"attribution" and "brand/brand voice," among others. For example, when one survey participant

mentioned "best practices," I used that as a recurring code along with "previous experience"

when survey responses mentioned what conventions exist within corporate online writing. As another example, when several interviewees were asked about whose name gets credited as the author for material they write, many preferred the term "attribution/attributed to" rather than "authorship/authored."

2.5   Conclusion

The inclusion of previous study designs for the survey and interview apparatus serve two distinct purposes: first, to acknowledge that a body of research already exists centered around the practice of ghostwriting. Second, the details of these studies suggest some selection bias in many of the studies. Every researcher is situated in a different material reality with constraints on the available samples, and the current body of knowledge draws almost exclusively from professional fields that take for granted the ubiquitous or regular use of ghostwriting. Further, many of the interview questions for ghostwriters centered around technique and artistry rather than around their view of the ethics of their practice or the limits on their professional accomplishments. This dissertation addresses these gaps in the research by addressing general audiences specifically to verify to what extent they may find ghostwriting deceptive and by asking ghostwriters about the professional repercussions of mis-attribution.

As I coded the qualitative answers to the survey and interview questions, I was able to see trends that helped focus my research questions. This analysis helped form a theoretical premise for ghostwriting in business environments, which will constitute Chapter 3 of this study, and for ghostwriting in educational environments (especially First-Year Writing programs), which will conclude this study as Chapter 4. These initial theories are put forth alongside common examples already in popular or scholarly discourses to test their usefulness in each field.

3   CHAPTER 3: GHOSTWRITING IN CORPORATE ENVIRONMENTS

"As we will see, ghostwriting especially highlights power exchanges between writing and social structures and also illuminates assumptions about underlying reading and writing processes that enable such exchanges." (Brandt "'Who's the President?': Ghostwriting and Shifting Values in Literacy" 549-550)

3.1   Highlighting Assumptions about Ghostwriting

In Brandt's article "Who's the President?" and her volume *The Rise of Writing*, she provides careful analysis of the political, social, and economic history that informs the modern writing market. She uses all of this to introduce the argument that literacy has shifted from an ability to read to an ability to write, but she stops short of evaluating the writing practices' ethics, as they primarily lie outside the scope of her projects. My introduction to ghostwriting for a corporate entity, meanwhile, revealed multiple ethical issues inherent to the market that demands such services. I responded to a call for a ghostwriter sent to my PhD program's English department, but I did not hear back about the job for several months. When I did hear back, it was from the single person at the company who was left to generate leads for the sales department after a company downturn led to the entire marketing department, once almost an entire floor to itself in the company's skyscraper offices, being terminated.

I would not find out this material cause for my position until after I was hired, which occurred through a staffing agency a couple of months after my interview for the position. Having lost out on an opportunity to ghostwrite for a prominent megachurch pastor only a couple of months before getting this opportunity, I had become accustomed to overly long processes for hiring a ghostwriter – that previous experience had included 7 stages of interviews and testing. The constant need for writing to stay relevant in a text-heavy digital economy drives the need for hiring these positions, driven by the commodity "work for hire" approach to writing that provides little respect for the art of compelling writing as evidenced in the freelance and contract

work models so prevalent in the field. As Brandt concludes in *The Rise of Writing*, "When writing is a form of labor, access to instruction, opportunity, and reward are stratified as a matter of economic principle. Many of the workaday writers I interviewed found their literacy learning or opportunities to write halted by downsizing or buyouts, or by moving from well-endowed work sites to barebones ones, or by shifts in corporate priorities" (165). My experience embodied the common trend Brandt describes.

Not long after getting this position, the company went through another reorganization, and my former boss was put in a new role over the sales department before leveraging that change for a better position at a different company. The subject matter expert I worked with, the vice president of sales engineering, enjoyed working with me, and his good graces kept me relevant through this first reorganization, but the subsequent reorganization, only a couple of months later, saw my contract terminated as the desire for Thought Leadership posts had disappeared in favor of frequent social media updates that any automated list generator could create. I checked the blog for some time after the termination of my contract – the company had indeed given up on any thought leader content that took advantage of the affordances of a blog, and generic content such as listicles stood in their place with shocking regularity. The value of my writing, then, was too low to offer a full-time position with benefits, and, ultimately, it was too low to keep me on even as a contract writer to continue a common blog writing strategy for executives. In fact, the value of my writing was so low that I was not listed as an author or contributor, and my first boss, when alerting me to this, avoided eye contact while also saying that I could of course understand that readers would want to see it coming from an expert. But what do those readers really want from these corporate blogs, and how can I carve out a place for myself as a professional when my professional skills are so often invalidated?

My experience in ghostwriting and the data I gathered from my initial research into ghostwriting led me to this study's first two research questions:

1.) Does ghostwriting constitute a "best practice" for every group faced with both a time and writing skill shortage?

2.) To what extent do ghostwriters have sufficient agency in their work to be considered a viable profession?

As detailed in the first two chapters, previous studies have focused on members of professional organizations already engaged in ghostwriting (Gallicano et al.) or students enrolled in business programs as readers (Riley, Brown). To answer question 1, we need further research into a "general reading public" than this study can provide because of the abundance of claims in popular and scholarly works that people accept or expect communications from executives to be ghostwritten without any proof of the concept:

- "A citizen of the United States would need to maintain an aggressive level of ignorance to be unaware of the fact that presidents use speech writers" (Smith 419-420). Smith responds so strongly because he is countering claims Bormann made in one of his articles about ghostwriting as an inherently deceptive practice, but the statement of judgment rests on Smith's insider knowledge as a communications expert regarding the degree to which ghostwriting enters public discourse rather than a demonstrated knowledge from methodical research.

- "In view of the increasing frequency of references in the public press to the speechwriting profession, and the identification of specific persons as speechwriters for public figures, it surely cannot be said that the public is routinely and deliberately deceived on this matter, ... But it appears to me improbable that the man or woman in the street cares very much

about speechwriting aides or even ghostwritten speeches, one way or the other. They are

pragmatists" (Auer 306). The claim to pragmatism stands in the same light as novice

writers attempting to make broad claims based on "human nature" – it provides an easy

escape from the hard work of proving something. Without data behind the claim, this

claim depends on hasty generalization from those with sufficient knowledge about those

with an undetermined amount of knowledge.

- "It is assumed that the audience is somehow aware that the speaker has expert assistance

  in preparing his or her speeches (Smith, 1961; Auer, 1984). Because of the widespread

  understanding regarding the use of speechwriters, no audience deception is involved"

  (Seeger 501 internal citations original to the text). Here Seeger appears to be drawing

  from research based on the presence of citations from the previous two, but all these

  citations prove was the weak verb "assumed" given as Seeger's main verb. This citation

  in and of itself seems to be deceptive – letting the reader gain the impression that Smith

  and Auer have some evidence about audience awareness of ghostwriting. Instead, it

  perpetuates the generalization without further probing or critiquing the discourse. Seeger

  maintains the status quo.

- "Of course, he, along with most of the public, had to know that presidents, like other

  executives, rely all the time on speechwriters and other assistants to do their writing, just

  as we know that the book industry increasingly relies on the fame of national politicians

  and other celebrities to produce ghostwritten books that will boost sales" (Brandt *Rise of

  Writing* 31). The "he" in question is Kucinich, a presidential candidate who made a part

  of his platform the fact that he wrote his own book while other candidates relied on

  ghostwriters. Brandt, who masterfully situates literacy-related issues in socio-historical

contexts, but with the small prepositional phrase "with most of the public" she joins the discourse of the authors above who have made the claim without demonstrating the truth or probability of the claim. More to her point, though, Kucinich, as a published author, would understand the symbiotic relationship of the famous name to sell books that are written by people who can write convincing prose.

- "After all, ghostwriting for prominent leaders is so prevalent today that scarcely an eyebrow is raised on learning that a speech or other communication is the work of a hired writers" (Knapp & Hulbert v). In their book on the ethics of ghostwriting, Knapp and Hulbert appeal to how ghostwriting is "prevalent" as a commonly known fact, and they offer the most support for their claim, although it is anecdotal. The focus of this particular passage is about what happens when a book-length ghostwritten work attributed to a celebrity is found to be written by someone else. In those instances, a small uproar may occur, but the overall business continues unabated. This provides the closest attempt to corroborate the claims of an informed public.

- "I don't think they [consumers] care a whole lot about whether a co-writer is involved. After all, they're getting the story told to them from the subject's mouth. If someone else adds a little color, flourish or personality to the material, that's a good thing" (Edward Ash-Milby qtd. in Kaufman, "Fascinating Story"). Again the author honestly couches this insight in terms of "I think" rather than pointing to evidence to make a stronger case, but they quickly diminish the deception to highlight creative flairs that may be more entertaining. Notice, though, that in addition to providing no evidence, they also completely erase the labor of writing for a story "from the subject's mouth."

From each of these sources, one thing stands out: a lack of reference to studies that establish this knowledge, except as "assumptions" in the studies Seeger cites or news items from Knapp and Hulbert.

This dissertation's design includes two ways to investigate these assumptions: first, a survey answered by a general reading public. Until the readership response to ghostwriting has been thoroughly researched and documented, claiming ghostwriting as a "best practice" equates not to an assessment of effective techniques but to an uncritical resignation of practitioners to the status quo operation of paying for a "work for hire." Second, this dissertation sought feedback from various professionals engaged in ghostwriting across several job titles and industries, much like Anteby and Occhiuto's study of memoirists. The professionals engaging in ghost writing also have much at stake in discussions about the ethics and usefulness of their craft, and the responses to my questions often showed a conflicted response about originality, authorship, and attribution. I hypothesize that ghostwriting could be abandoned with no negative consequence to the current system of professional writing when substituted for accurate attribution.

The Brandt quote in the epigraph for this chapter provides a neat flow from the social structures that give rise to ghostwriting into the assumptions made about audiences reading practices further to the current modes of writing at stake. Following this flow of ideas, first I will discuss the power dynamic as it exists currently between market forces that depend on writing and the labor providing the writing. After reviewing the literature specific to the types of writing that often gets partitioned out to professional writers, I present and contextualize the data I gathered from my interviews with ghostwriters. The focus on market forces concludes with a discussion of the ways that employers disguise their need for ghostwriting despite their insistence elsewhere that ghostwriting is an acceptable (perhaps even preferred) practice. The

second section of this chapter focuses on how employers have historically viewed audiences, the ongoing argument over whether ghostwriting inherently deceives the audience, and how a "best practice" cannot be claimed without accurate data to support the practice. In the final portion of this chapter, I apply the ideas from the previous sections to argue more specifically why a blog should not be ghostwritten, not only from an ethical point of view, but also in regards to the genre and medium of the weblog. All of this constitutes the argument for writing to be treated as a true profession, an idea that will be attended to in its educational context in the fourth chapter.

3.2 Power Exchanges Between Writing and Social Structures

In "'Who's the President?': Ghostwriting and Shifting Values in Literacy," Brandt interviews a number of professionals who claim to do at least 30% of their day's work by writing "to show how the value of writing, its transactional flow within employee-employer relations, and the competing definitions of the author that this value brings into being, manifest themselves in ghostwriters' descriptions of their routine composing processes and their working relationships with client-employers" (558). The economy of ghostwriting, according to Brandt, depends on time scarcity, knowledge scarcity, and skill scarcity. Those who have too little time to write all that is required of them, those who have authority over more than they can be experts on, and those who have little to no expertise in writing often find themselves in positions with high loads of writing responsibilities. People in these positions of authority, rather than share publicly the burdens of writing, frequently hire ghostwriters to provide the writing for them. For her part, the scope of Brandt's work tracking this shift in literacy does not call for an address of ethical issues in ghostwriting; instead, she simply gathers the narratives from writers and situates them in a socio-historical moment to analyze shifts in literacy. She leaves further research into ending the practice of ghostwriting to other researchers, providing a fruitful gap in the

scholarship for researchers like me and those I hope will take up this work in future studies (*Rise* 46).

T.J. Fosko, however, opens his article unequivocally with "Ghostwriting represents deception" (165). The major problem Fosko presents regards the lack of "professional credit for authoring works" (165-166), going against all tradition regarding the "author" being the originator of an idea rather than the writer of the words. For a legal precedent, Fosko focuses on *Dastar Corp. v Twentieth Century Fox Film Corp.*, 539 U.S. 23 (2003), which limited the Lanham Act's section 43(a) protections of origin of concept to physical products so as not to overstep the existing Copyright Law. Fosko argues that this restriction creates a new problem: "With no other law generally prohibiting plagiarism or misattribution, this has led to the concern that the Court has denied authors and the public sufficient protection concerning the proper attribution of works" (172-173). To establish his case, Fosko has to demonstrate harm from ghostwriting, which he identifies as deception of the consumer, potential loss of life or livelihoods, election of unfit officials, lack of professional recognition, and false representation of expertise (173-174).

Fosko's addition, within the context of the legal discourse community, exists within what Goldschmidt describes as "often considered contemptuous or otherwise scandalous conduct" (1147) when undertaken by lawyers in the pro se cases Fosko mentions (177, 181-82). Goldschmidt starts with *Johnson v. Board of County Commissioners*, when the court did not allow a plaintiff to use pro se filings because "such undisclosed participation by a lawyer that permits a litigant falsely to appear as being without professional assistance would permeate the proceeding" (qtd. in Goldschmidt 1148). Interestingly, the court uses "authoring" to explain the lawyer's contribution in pro se filings: "having a litigant appear to be *pro se*, when in truth an

attorney is authoring pleadings and necessarily guiding the course of the litigation with an unseen hand is ingenuous to say the least; it is far below the level of candor which must be met by members of the bar" (qtd. in Goldschmidt 1148). The legal use of "author" does connote more of the "authority" than may be typical outside legal contexts, which is why members of the Bar are expected to keep their name on their filings. But if a client has the idea about why a suit should be brought or why a motion should be dismissed, the term "author" should appropriately be applied to the client under current notions of "authorship" as the originator of ideas.

Regardless, compared to the Public Relations Society of America's equivocal codes of conduct pertaining to disclosure and deception, the legal community has made clear that ghostwriting presents an undue influence because the writing done by a professional inherently differs from what a layperson can create on their own. The legal community fully acknowledges that this "help" gives the pro se litigant an unfair advantage in the court's decision and also allows the true writer to avoid responsibility up to or including hiding attacks on other members of the Bar (Goldschmidt 1150-51). In the same way that pro se litigants "enjoy the benefit of the legal counsel while also being subjected to the less stringent standard reserved for those proceeding without the benefit of counsel" (qtd. in Goldschmidt 1152-53), businesses employing ghostwriters, and especially executives assigned the by-line, gain undue benefit of writing acumen designed to sway an audience without having disclosed to the reader that such an effort was undertaken (Fosko 165). Readers have no reasonable access to information that could help them discern the genuine personal writing of the blog genre (which I explore further at the end of this chapter), especially from carefully marketed messages playing on feelings of closeness and belonging attracting them to a brand.

Despite Brandt's assertion that the "accumulated cultural association between literacy and intelligence, goodness, and deservingness is of incalculable social value" (561), ghostwriters are not treated as professionals in the same sense as accountants or engineers, trades that often get compared to ghostwriting in terms of selling a service (e.g., Riley & Brown 713, Seeger 501). And despite some 20th century optimistic attitudes about the growth of opportunities for "technical writers" who ghostwrite for professionals (Bankhead 99-100) and calls from speechwriting experts that "By publicly recognizing the speechwriting team, problems of deception are avoided" (Seeger 503), Anteby and Occhiuto point out that even for those who can find success ghostwriting professionally, the writers face "recognition estrangement" because they are unable to claim work someone else claims as their own "authentic" expressions (1287). Importantly, Anteby and Occhiuto interviewed "ghostwriters and publishing industry insiders" (1287) to gather their data. Just like readership is often under-evaluated, so too are the voices of the writers doing the actual work of ghostwriting. How ghostwriters perceive this imbalance varies, but the more ghostwriters can voice their experiences, the better their professionalism can be understood and advocated for.

To gather a sample of ghostwriters, I was fortunate enough to know multiple people in technical writing and public relations through my education at two different universities as well as a personal connection to the world of marketing and PR. My final interview participant was kind enough to allow me to interview them after having read a book they wrote on ghostwriting. My series of questions was designed to draw out opinions about the practice of ghostwriting from a reader's perspective, and I had anticipated that most of them would be resistant to acknowledging that ghostwriting is a deceptive practice. The responses I gained showed a variety

of ghostwriting tasks across several industries (HVAC, defense contractors, banking, editing,

etc.) and with varying backgrounds of education and job experiences.

Table 1 Interview Demographics

Initials	Current Title	Years of Experience	Writing Collateral
LA	Senior Manager, Digital Marketing	5-10 years	Corporate emails (internal & external), copy writing, presentation decks
CS	Founder of Wambtac Communications, LLC	10+ years	Ghostwrite books (only refuses to write for real estate or horror), create courses on ghostwriting
RC	Technical writer	5-10 years	Proposals, marketing campaigns, headlines, tag lines, resumes, cover letters, social media bios, white papers, technical manuals
RA	Technical writer	0-5 years	Blog posts, editing emails, white papers, instruction manuals, PowerPoint presentations, social media posts
CP	Senior writer strategist	0-5 years	Sales scripts, short creative paragraphs, email templates, social media bios, company stories, case stories

Among the common threads identified and analyzed from the interview data, we will see

that those with more authority were less likely to view ghostwriting as deceptive, were more

likely to view readers in larger groups rather than as individuals, and were quicker to assume the

average reader has a clear understanding of ghostwriting practices based on what executives

ought to be expected and able to achieve. Less experienced ghostwriters or ghostwriters with less

input on messaging and strategy were more likely to view ghostwriting as a potentially

problematic practice for readers, whom they believed knew very little about how much online

content actually was ghostwritten. The major moment at which most interview subjects

recognized their own vulnerability as ghostwriters was when discussing how they could develop

a portfolio to increase their professional status. Even the two who were not initially bothered by

a lack of a formal "portfolio" mentioned the ways that their work did depend on a knowledge of

their professional status, although one of them viewed this as a strength of a ghostwriter over a

contract worker or employee position. These findings will be introduced in more detail in the following sections.

3.2.1   *Writing*

While ghostwriting does inherently require the writer to sign over one's words to the listed author, the loss of the words poses another potential problem for those in ghostwriting professions. As Anteby and Occhiuto found in their interviews with ghostwriters, "Most ghostwriters we interviewed emphasized their desire to have their contributions made visible to the public. They often spoke about this desire for recognition in terms of their own earning potential. … This desire for recognition was particularly acute for ghostwriters who were beginning their careers" (1298). My interview findings support this same conclusion: almost all subjects answered the question "How do you build a portfolio if other names are on your writing?" with worries about how they could prove their worth in pursuit of future employment. Only LA found this question easy to answer, as their work in PR had not needed a portfolio up to that point. CS diminished the importance of their answer based on their reputation as a ghostwriter within the publishing world driving opportunities for future work (Personal interview), similar to what Anteby and Occhiuto found from more experienced ghostwriters (1298). CS places proper ghostwriting within the realm of being an entrepreneur and "not to be freelancers… not to be work for hire people, not to be employees … because freelancers are constantly in the one-down position, putting us often in the one-up business position" (Personal interview). All other interviewees acknowledged that establishing themselves as an experienced ghostwriter within corporate environments depended almost exclusively on previous employers' recommendations or the goodwill of potential employers in interview answers about their

previous writing experiences. In a world of competitive hiring, then, many ghostwriters find themselves at a disadvantage concerning their professionalism.

One prominent ghostwriter, however, strongly supports independent ghostwriting as a valid and advantageous profession: Claudia Suzanne. She runs the only known accredited ghostwriting program through her company Wambtac Communications, which confers a professional designation through the University of California, Long Beach. According to the bio on her website, Suzanne began as a professional drummer with a backup career in medical transcription. She wrote a book about music, which picked up some readership through a plug on MTV in its early days, but realized that music and authoring were not going to sustain her financially. Her writing about the book publishing industry led her to be published internationally, but more importantly she learned more about ghostwriting. Dick Cote labelled her as the 45th of 45 professional ghostwriters in America ("Claudia Suzanne"), and she began teaching others to ghostwrite due to a health scare. Over the years, it has grown into a university-backed credentialing program, and Suzanne remains one of the most vocal ghostwriters to this day.

In "The Good Life of Ghostwriters," Suzanne summarizes the difficulty of freelance writing: "since there are a finite number of publications and hundreds, if not thousands, of freelance writers pitching stories to each one on a daily basis, even getting noticed, much less contracted and paid, is an uphill battle." She continues by explaining why corporate writers are not much better off:

> the disadvantage to this pursuit, as I saw it, was the concept of working for a group of people, rather than an individual. Fees are less negotiable and have to be approved by committees, which can send out an impersonal termination notice if

someone else comes along with a slightly lower fee schedule or a personal

relationship with one of the committee members.

Beyond these two common forms of ghostwriting, Suzanne sees her program as a way "to do …

what used to be done in publishing houses. And that's where ghostwriting needs to go… It's all

about understanding the business so that you cannot just write a good book or a great book but a

marketable literary property" (Personal Interview). Even though she asserts so strongly that

ghostwriters should be independent and provide a vast array of services, she is equally strong in

her assertion of the byline as the author, claiming the importance of the initial ideas outweighs

the labor of writing, which at best would grant editor status rather than author status – that is her

Rule #3: "You are not the author" (*Secrets* 30).

Other professional ghostwriters view authorship and attribution differently. In Kaufman's

review of celebrity memoirists, she cites Elisa Petrini as stating "Cover credit is the prize" but

tempering this by acknowledging that some ghostwriters need the attribution to increase their

brand, while more established ghostwriters may not need the cover credit to get more

opportunities in the future. Kaufman clarifies that cover credit is negotiated by the publisher,

attributed author, ghostwriter, and the circumstances surrounding the content and cause of

writing. Attribution does not have to be cover credit; it can also come from being "listed on the

title page or given a shout-out in the acknowledgements," which matches what a science writer

told Deb Brandt in one of her interviews in *The Rise of Writing* (50) and my own personal

experience as a "substantive editor" for a political science professor. For some ghostwriters,

then, more is at stake than just compelling copy – they need a signal boost of their efforts to raise

awareness about their skills and services, but they do so to their own peril in the current social

structures of the writing economy. Further, the voices of prominent ghostwriters of book-length

works do not match the voices of the day-to-day ghostwriters I interviewed, whose lack of recognition stands as a potential barrier to their ability to grow professionally.

3.2.2   Social Structures

I briefly mentioned earlier in the introduction to this chapter that I missed out on a ghostwriting position for a megachurch pastor. The entire experience was eye-opening about the paradoxical nature of the work – I was needed but was not to be seen, which is why I was applying for a "research assistant" and not a "ghostwriter" position. My experience interviewing to be a "research assistant" and published work as a "content writer" and "editor" matches what Bormann said in the mid-20th century about euphemisms for ghostwriting companies:

> While in some cities there are firms that frankly list themselves as Ghostwriter's Service, or a Ghostwriters Bureau, the great majority of the firms have more euphonistic titles. For every firm called Speeches Unlimited, The Speech Writers, or the Wordmasters, there will be several listed as literary, educational or research organizations. Thus, you will find ghostwriting firms listed under the following titles: Writers Service, Educational Research Association, Literary Service, Confidential Collaborating Counsel, Manuscript Service, Publishers Editorial Services, National Reference Library and Literary Consultants. ("Ghostwriting Agencies" 20)

For a field that ostensibly approves of and supports ghostwriting as a "best practice," the job titles and descriptions betray the employers' lack of desire to be associated with the actual practice. Based on the interviews conducted with five professionals who consider themselves to be or have been ghostwriters at some point in their career, ghostwriters go alternatively by titles such as "technical writer" (RC), "manager of digital marketing" and "director of

communications" (LA), "content marketing" (RA), and "writer strategist" (CP). The most

common skills sought by employers with these misleading position titles were writing (4),

marketing (3), editing (2), while the most common types of writing the interview candidates

claimed to do included emails (3), marketing (2), social media profiles (2), and headlines/taglines

(2). This variation in description may be inherent to the difficulty of a generic term like

"technical communication." As RC says in their interview,

> technical communication and technical writing is just… it's not just one thing.
> There's so many different avenues and different branches of it. And there's so
> many little requisites; like I've found technical writing positions listed under
> graphic designer. So, I mean, a lot of times I think employers have a hard time
> defining what the role is.

At the same time, however, the generic titles and wide-ranging requested or desired skills allow

for a writer to be charged with a multitude of writing tasks that betray the "skill scarcity" Brandt

identifies as a cause of ghostwriting (*Rise* 38-39), but, despite the scarcity of time, skill, and

knowledge, writing remains a devalued profession so long as it remains hidden.

The anonymity of the ghostwriter only protects the speaker. As Seeger points out about

corporate speechwriters, any incorrect fact or offensive remark can be passed from the speaker,

whose authority theoretically warrants being given the byline, to an unknown speechwriter or

research assistant (503-504). Shifting from speeches in the 1990s to online content in our current

context, Anteby and Occhiuto show that little has changed in that regard: "Such an imperative to

conceal the labor done by stand-in workers is apt to create a tension that these workers must

navigate – namely, the inability of workers to be recognized for their work" (1291). Under ideal

free market principles, those who possess the greatly desired but seldom mastered ability to write

clearly and convincingly ought to occupy a high rung on the socio-economic ladder, receiving

titles and compensation commensurate to the value they provide. Instead, we see a power

dynamic in which writers are asked for their writing often with misleading titles or are paid for

their writing without attribution that would allow for un-corroborated movement to competitive

positions or often even stable employment for freelancers and contract workers. These social

structures are based on a specific understanding of value, which, when writing is concerned,

touches on who is reading the words in question.

3.3   Assumptions about Underlying Reading and Writing Practices

As articulated in Chapter 2, the original purpose of this dissertation's survey was not to

produce a singular set of responses, but to begin research that could be aggregable for future

conclusions, similar to how Sweetser's approach set a precedent for my methods. A robust data

set still needs to be collected to establish more clearly how readers unfamiliar with the marketing

and public relations' ghostwriting practices view ghostwriting's impact on credibility, but the

survey data I was able to collect does offer some initial insights to help inform future research.

Several of the respondents to the survey indicated familiarity with corporate blogging, some of

whom indicated specific knowledge of ghostwriting practices. One response in particular stands

out: "Having the Digital Marketing Content Writer listed as an author is not a best practice. You

should usually just ghostwrite a piece and then give full credit to the subject matter expert who

has approved the piece. Having that author listed makes it appear more fluffy to me" (Path 3,

Q1.5 response 1). This statement matches the responses I got from my interview subjects to the

question about how much of the writing they do at work is under their name or at all attributed to

them:

> I don't know, I would say probably half of everything I do is linked to me. (LA)

The only time I get credit for my work is if I do a personal interest piece on the blog that is entirely written by me. It's my own idea, and they actually decide that they want to publish it. (RA)

But once it gets out of my hands it goes on a company's website, and it's considered theirs and it's attributed to them (CP)

I have in the past, and I don't know if this is helpful for you or not, but in the past I have written blog posts for a company where actually someone else's name was attributed to the blog post that I wrote … that was a short-term project that I did, but it was around a dozen blog posts that I did for them. (CP)

Based on the daily practice of professionals engaged in ghostwriting, it does seem that ghostwriting for blogs and other outward-facing materials is a common practice – but is it a best practice?

A "best practice" refers to "commercial or professional procedures that are accepted or prescribed as being correct or most effective" (OED). To establish a best practice, a governing or sanctioning body must have a body of evidence from which to make this recommendation. Within writing studies, for instance, one can look to the National Council of Teachers of English or the Council of Writing Program Administrators for best practices in the teaching of writing and reading. These practices ought not to consist solely of traditions, but consist of proven, researched experiences that produce replicable outcomes. Regarding ghostwriting, the lack of clear guidelines has frustrated some researchers at least as far back as Bormann, who, in his 1961 "The Ethics of Ghostwritten Speeches," began a debate with his colleague Donald K. Smith in *The Quarterly Journal of Speech* about the ethics of ghostwriting; echoes of this debate continue to this day.

Bormann's article draws from several different practices to think broadly about ghostwriting as a practice: a television quiz show scandal in which a contestant was given questions ahead of time (262), the English graduate student "who tutors the football team" (262), presidential speeches written by speechwriters (262), fraternity members sharing papers (263), and a reporter who went undercover as a ghostwriter and was paid to write college papers and even whole dissertations (265). In the course of these comparisons, Bormann directly calls out Smith's position that "a college president may use a ghostwriter but a professor should write his own speeches" (265) as a "double standard" in contemporary views of ghostwriting. Bormann crafts this all into a simple dilemma: if the speeches are too minor to be tended to by people in important positions, then the people in important positions should not waste their time giving those speeches; but if the speeches are too important to trust that the people in important positions will say the correct things appropriate to the situation, then the people in important positions probably should not hold those positions. Collapsing the issue away from power, Bormann concludes "If President Eisenhower ever did deliver a speech that was largely ghosted …, then [is he] not as liable to censure as the hapless professor from the southwestern university who paid to have his thesis made presentable?" (266). Bormann continues from here to address issues involving students, which this study will take up in Chapter 4.

Smith responds to this article in the letters section, which also carries Bormann's reply to Smith. The crux of the argument depends on whether or not ghostwriting is *inherently* deceptive. He begins, oddly enough, with "instances of such writing which are patently unethical, as in the case of the college student who turns in as his own work a paper written by a fraternity brother" (416-417) but does not offer evidence of the claim for being "patently unethical." Rather, he insists that Bormann's progression from this unethical act to other cases of unoriginal labor as

unethical is jumping to conclusions, and he uses as his primary evidence a patriotic disbelief that a founding father of American be "in the same net with a plagiarist" (417). He then proceeds to explain that the primary concern in ethics of ghostwriting ought to be the complexity of the organization over which the speaker stands: a college professor is rightly supposed to originate their material, but "administrators of vast and complex organizations cannot be expected to take the time to originate the manuscripts for all the speeches they may have to make" (417). Smith then compares Bormann's absolute position on ghostwriting to imprisonment and killing: unjustified by the individual but justified under the right circumstances by systems of power (417).

Smith moves on to address the existence of "speech writer" as an official job title within the government as a way in which the ghostwriting of presidential and other political speeches differs from the secrecy in which students submit other writers' words as their own effort. Further, he argues, as representatives of our nation on a global stage, we can fairly expect politicians to collaborate in forming policies, and that type of collaboration should then also be expected of their communications, especially as writing speeches would take time away from the more important aspects of their work. To shore up this argument, Smith insists that the average American must certainly know that the president uses speech writers, unless they have "an aggressive level of ignorance" (418). For Smith, the office of the president is more important than the acknowledgement of the labor of ghostwriters, and assumptions about the knowledge of speechwriters suffice to compensate for their use for those in positions of authority, but leaves open the chance to investigate further: "We would be wise, I believe, in attacking the problem of ghostwriting … to seek to examine the variety of contexts within which such practice occurs, to appraise existing practice against the full range of purpose and necessity which it reflects, and to

pinpoint our ethical judgements" (420). Bormann replies briefly in this letter section that Smith's letter mischaracterizes much of what he says by ignoring distinctions in the original article and elevating the president and historical figures to a height that does not match the realities of their positions.

At stake in this conversation between Bormann and Smith, then, is the same issue of what counts as deceit and what counts as corporate speech – speaking on behalf of or in the voice of someone or something else as in the case of presidents and CEOs or corporations or administrations. According to Terilli and Arnorsdottir's 2008 article in *Public Relations Journal*, out of the 45 blogs that purported to be written by CEOs, only 5 included any byline other than the CEO's, most often co-authored by another top figure in the company with no mention of any other input from content writers or public relations professionals. While Terilli and Arnorsdottir shared the detail about their findings regarding cowriters, they did not provide any further analysis of that finding. Sweetser's work examining the impact on relationships through unethical disclosure practices, however, draws from several professional organizations in public relations as industry standards of ethics: first and foremost, the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA), but with some secondary appeal to Word of Mouth Marketing Association (WOMMA) and Social Media Business Council (SMBC) as internet-specific organizations, and Federal Trade Commission (FTC) guidelines for ethical public relations and marketing laws. Sweetser's research indicates that "failure to follow the disclosure guidelines laid out by public relations organizations and governing bodies (PRSA, WOMMA, SMBC, FTC) has an adverse affect [sic] on how credible one's publics find the organization" (307). While Sweetser's study also invites further research, it provides an apparatus for determining credibility from a reader's perspective, rather than depending on industry experience.

Credibility and deception, then, remain vague concepts. The PRSA Code of Ethics, under "Disclosure of Information" contains not just the injunction to "build trust with the public by revealing all information needed for responsible decision making," which Sweetser examines in some depth, but also the member guideline "Avoid deceptive practices." The cited example for this includes hiring people to pose as volunteers at public hearings or for participation in supposedly grass-roots campaigns. Generalizing from these examples, the PR professional is not to hire someone to perform an action that is not authentic. Here again Bormann and Smith's argument requires analysis of whether ghostwriting is indeed implicitly deceptive, and Sweetser's study obfuscates who determines whether or not ghostwriting is deception. It remains, then, to gather information not only from those practicing ghostwriting and those hiring ghostwriters, but also to gather more information from the general public about the boundaries between open disclosure and deception.

In a similar vein of exploration, Kelleher et al. researched employees' attitudes towards CEOs ghostwriting of social media posts. According to their introduction, "readers did not protest upon thumbing a few pages" into books by Bill Gates, Sheryl Sandberg, or Howard Schultz and seeing that it was authored "with" another person. Leaving aside for the moment that these books give credit to their ghostwriters, Kelleher et al. assert that books carry less expectation of personal writing than "social media and internal communications" (2) because readers of those genres are more likely to expect the voice presented to belong to the person claiming credit for it, and research they draw on includes blogs as a form of social media (2). While Kelleher et al.'s research had internal public relations in mind, the paucity of research into reading publics brings their research into the broad context of reader responses. Kelleher draws from a body of research in public relations scholarship that connect the personal voice of the

blog genre with "relational outcomes such as trust, control mutuality, and satisfaction" (3). Further, their research considers the relationship between ghostwriting and transparency, finding that "on average, employees were neutral on the practice of ghost posting without disclosure and more tolerant of ghost posting with disclosure" (12). In concluding their research, Kelleher et al. call for the research that aligns with this dissertation: "Future research also may benefit from content analyses or other methods of direct observation of actual communication strategies and tactics compared to employee perceptions of those strategies and tactics" (16). This dissertation provides an apparatus to identify the ways in which readers evaluate ghostwriting, especially within corporate blogs.

One last element of audience consideration comes from the ghostwriters themselves. While much has been made of how ghostwriters take on a style or voice from the person for whom they are writing (Kakutcad 22, Kaufman), less has been written about how ghostwriters receive feedback from their audiences. Another fascinating part of my interviews with ghostwriters came from their views of audience perceptions. Suzanne, always an outlier in terms of comfort with the role of ghostwriting, cares less about audience and far more about markets: "the markets are informed by the BISAC subject headings. We find those before we start even doing anything else. … We write, keeping in mind that the average American, the average adult American reads at a sixth-grade level, but does not think at a sixth-grade level" (personal interview). Thus, for the professional ghostwriter, at least as trained by Wambtac, audiences matter less than markets – markets are more quantifiable and have a larger bearing on increasing marketability of writing.

Suzanne acknowledges that good ghostwriters understand that most manuscripts begin as writer-based drafts, and part of the job is to help edit it into a reader-based document, but she

argues it goes far beyond that to understand all the work of in-house style-guide editing, gaining

permissions, classifying properly, registering for libraries and sales, interior design, galley

proofs, embedding metadata, and other design issues that craft a "marketable literary property"

("3 Painful Reasons"). By taking this view, the ghostwriter Suzanne envisions need not concern

themselves with audience responses or feedback, because "Ghostwriters enjoy the intimacy of

one-on-one creation. We are not in the business of having to satisfy a faceless, impersonal party

or committee" (*Secrets* 27). Or, to put it more succinctly, Suzanne responded to the interview

question "How do you track who reads what you've written and their impressions of it?" with

"That's not my bailiwick. I'm a ghostwriter" (personal interview).

The other ghostwriters I interviewed held similar views to each other about targeting

specific audiences and to what degree they track audience reactions. Regarding how to target an

audience, they each operated in such different contexts that not a lot of parallels emerged, apart

from a focus on technological knowledge or aptitude, despite each working in different

industries. LA, who works in a field that has both mechanical and computerized elements that

require vast technical knowledge, said

> In one communication you might be talking to a building owner who's looking at
>
> the equation just largely from a cost perspective and making sure that it runs
>
> appropriately. Whereas, like, if you're talking to an engineer, they have a much
>
> higher level of technical understanding than the owners that you want to speak to
>
> sort of functionality at a much greater detail.

Their biggest concern is the degree to which the reader will understand the technical nature of

their products, and that picture is complex because a "building owner" and "an engineer" are

equally likely to be decision makers regarding purchases. RC also mentioned engineers as an

audience, but not their intended audience, whom she acknowledges is difficult to locate to gain

feedback from:

> I like to do usability studies if I can, but it's frequently pretty difficult… because a
> lot of the time you're not co-located with an end-user. So yeah, you usually have
> to run stuff by an engineer or someone who's a little too close to the subject
> matter, which is not good. Try to get as far away as possible.

RA shares LA's and RC's concerns about technical aptitude or knowledge, but the "audience"

seems to be further abstracted for RA, who was also frequently working with engineers:

> So mainly what I had to think about was what kind of knowledge would the
> audience already have? I think that about says it regarding audience. I'm trying to
> think if there was anything else I took into consideration; like the voice didn't
> change too much between audiences.

Finally, CP also focuses on technical knowledge, but also locates the reader as an individual as

opposed to a group (LA's "building owner" or RC's "end-user") or a broad "audience":

> I would read blog posts or industry articles to kind of understand the mindset of
> this person, specifically what's important to them and how technologically
> advanced they are. So that provides the framework: this person values saving time
> over the fanciest new technology and so I need to talk to them or use words that
> are simpler, or something like that. (CP)

All of these answers echo what PR and marketing depends on: the audience persona. These

generic constructions allow companies to target groups by keywords for better search engine

results or through social media algorithms, all of which feed into a company's business strategy

(LA and RC personal interviews). Once a reader has seen a piece of collateral, odds are that they

are now "in the pipeline" of a sales program, where progress and responses will be tracked and assigned to appropriate departments. Because the ghostwriter is only responsible for creating the deliverable, they often are excluded from any discussions about penetration of the message or return-on-investment of the individual blog or email or white paper they wrote.

This generic form of "audience" will be familiar to most writing instructors, as discussed in Chapter 4 of this dissertation, and that disconnect perpetuates the disconnect between the writer's true value and the writing they perform. When asked "How do you track who read it [your ghostwritten material] and their impressions of it?" again the corporate ghostwriters answered depending on their role within the company. Those who are part of PR teams, especially at management level, have more access to how a message is received, while content writers are more likely to leave the piece in the hands of the company or department who tasked them to write their collateral.

- There's a number of … monitoring services and that sort of thing, that kind of track the amount of pickup you get from a press release, and then, subsequently, they associate a number of impressions based on the news outlets that picked it up. … a lot of it is tailored now to search in the digital environment, because while somebody might not read the press release when it's initially launched, when they go to Google for a particular topic, if your press release has those words, then they might read it. (LA)

- In the past, it was handed out to trainers, people who were actually going to use it, and they edited it, or they said things about it, gave feedback directly back to my team. And then there was also an email inbox for the end user to email specific suggestions or what have you, and it was never used. (RC)

- Yes, web hits were often shared with me. In fact, web hits were kind of a big deal for us because it showed areas (pages, maybe) that don't get a number of hits … those were areas that we actually would target and look at adding content to or improving content on in some way, or perhaps reorganizing the website in general. … Social media posts that I knew I was responsible for? I could go on Facebook and see how many likes or comments it got. So even though the author was ultimately the company, I knew which ones I had a hand in writing and I could actually go and look at them (RA)

- I have little to no control over that … What I write gets put into a 100+ page PowerPoint that is presented to a board of executives … Sometimes that's as far as it goes; other times it gets put on a website and anybody can see it. Other times, a part of what I write has ended up on a t-shirt. So anybody anywhere can see that, depending on who is wearing it. So once it gets out of my hands … there's no control over who sees it or what they do with it. (CP)

These responses, although varying in terms of level of involvement with feedback, demonstrate the variety of ways ghostwriters operate – from press releases to user guides to web copy to t-shirt campaigns, much of the writing a company needs comes from un-attributed writers who are often disconnected from a real audience and the reactions to the collateral they write and create.

The answers to the two previous questions ("How do you target a specific audience with what you're writing?" and "How do you track who reads it and their impressions of it?") inform the answer to the final interview question: "How do you think readers would respond if they discovered that something was written by a content writer or other professional not listed as the author?" LA, who manages public relations for a large company, understands better than many

the ways that marketing uses collateral, both internal and external, and they extend their own knowledge to their readership: "I would like to think people understand the way the world works. I mean that most high-level executives, while the core of the message is probably their own, like the words around it have been strategically crafted to best land that message" (personal interview). With LA's writing more often leading to corporate email campaigns and PR press releases and less to ghostwritten blog posts, the stakes of the ghostwriting seem smaller for their readership.

RC, who has held multiple positions writing content for others more at the ground-level, holds the traditional view: "I don't know. Honestly it doesn't bother me, unless it's been presented as someone else and then I realize it's not that person … I think the way we consume information is sadly without discrimination, frequently." They proceed to question the originality of any piece of writing, a challenge to single-author status this dissertation will pick up in more detail in chapter 4:

> you might be able to have your name on [a piece], but frequently it's been a few people that contributed, you've interviewed, you know what I mean? Like, you didn't 100% write that by yourself, you know? I mean, you've interviewed someone or you have… there's excerpts in there from such and such person. Your editor looked at it, I mean, or changed something. … I never ever really think of it as just one. I think of novels and things like that being a one-person type operating situation. I don't necessarily think of things that, you know, blogs, journalism, you know, any of those kinds of things. I don't think they're independent, so I'm not mad. (Personal interview)

Listening to RC grapple with this question showed some of the interior struggle for the ghostwriter, as they try to keep clear what authoring is as opposed to writing, and how much of writing is a collaborative endeavor despite the "lone genius" picture often ascribed to writing (Ede & Lunsford 72). But within the answer about the reading public, RC concludes back with their own personal perceptions. The contact with the audience from previous responses remains incredibly limited, which perhaps provides the distance that a ghostwriter needs to avoid running afoul of Suzanne's "Rule #3: It's not my book" (*Secrets* 30).

RA, who held several ghostwriting positions while also completing a master of arts in English and a technical writing certification at an engineering-heavy regional college, holds the traditional line as well: "for me, that should be obvious. No, like in the corporate world, do you honestly think that these guys have time to sit down and write these posts?" (personal interview). Similar to RC, you see in RA's response a kind of push and shove of Bormann and Auer: "But I'm speaking from a great deal of experience, so depending on where the person's experience lies, they will either be completely shocked by this information, or already aware that it happens. Maybe there's no in-between" (personal interview). To conclude, however, RA focuses less on the possibility of a reader feeling misled by a single ghostwritten piece and instead unaware of the scope of ghostwriting: "but I would say that I think a lot of people would be surprised just how little that they actually see is written by the person that it claims to be written by" (personal interview). Again, the previous responses about frequent conversations with their department about uptake and engagements with web copy means that they have a good reason to view the broader scope of their work rather than any deception within a single post. Also, the content writing experiences were more related to website copy and mass email editing rather than blog post creation, with both of these genres having a stronger corporate structure than the blog.

CP, contrary to the other respondents, began answering by providing a generalization of explaining her career to outsiders:

> I've had a lot of discussions with people when they ask what I do for a living, and when I wrote a lot more web copy than I do now I had very, very many conversations where I would say things like 'You know when you go to a company's website and there are words there?' and they would say, 'Yeah,' and I would say, 'Well, I'm the person who writes those words.' They're like, 'Oh, I never thought about someone writing that or putting that there, that there's a person behind it' (personal interview)

Rather than conceptualize the "customer profile" that a PR or marketing professional would default to for audience cues or reflect on a personal corpus of work, CP was able to associate the uninitiated person in their life with the general reader to arrive at a conclusion about digital literacies: "I think just because there's a lot of illiteracy overall with people understanding where words on the internet come from, so I think if there was more awareness around copy writers and web copy writing in particular, that it would… I don't know, I just think that it would make people aware that it's a person doing that, and not just the internet doing that on its own" (personal interview). This reflection on literacy trends may result from CP's status outside of tech writing. LA, RC, and RA all had extensive education in public relations, marketing, and/or technical writing, whereas CP came from a Humanities and education background. At the time of this interview, CP also wrote more frequently for businesses indirectly as part of a presentation deck, but had also held multiple contract and freelance content writing positions in the previous couple of years. This initial outsider status may provide a better understanding of the lay-

person's view of online content, but it certainly reflects the experiences of the ghostwriter creating a worldview that includes this occupation.

Finally, despite Suzanne's lack of concern with audience interactions for her professional stance as a ghostwriter, she responds to the last interview question "most people A.) don't know and B.) don't give a shit. … What they care about is if the material was written by someone other than the author and the author wasn't involved" (personal interview). She bases this on the scandal of medical journals publishing papers written entirely by ghostwriters with no input from the academics listed as the authors, and she agrees with many others that academic works need to remain original works with only editing services provided (personal interview), a practice that I discuss more thoroughly in chapter four as a consideration of ghostwriting within academic contexts.

Within the trade of ghostwriting, then, readers are rarely tracked or approached for any impressions about practices other than tracking what leads a reader to enter the sales funnel for savvy PR and marketing departments. If the ghostwriter is not involved in the marketing strategy, they are less likely to have even that information, meaning that the audience remains an abstraction for them not unlike it remains for many first-year writing students. With more involvement in the marketing department, the audience exists largely as customer profiles that tracks with trends for search engine optimization. All of this writing, from beginning to end, exists within the Marketplace, which may be why readership is not often asked for their views on the practices that make the content available to them. Without direct feedback, professionals like the respondent on my survey can mistake a generalization for a "best practice," with a variety of assumptions about who the audience is, what they know about the inner working on digital content creation, and what the term "author" means, especially in light of ghostwritten materials.

3.4   Enabling Exchanges in Professional Writing

What Fosko and Suzanne both advocate for, although in different ways, is a rising professional status for writing and writers. This study does not attempt to dispute the time, knowledge, or skill scarcity Brandt presents (*Rise* 38-39) or her neutral cataloguing "work for hire" through interviews that refuses to "pass judgments on ghostwriting, good or bad" (33); this study does, however, depart from Brandt's by pushing back against her claim that "deception is not the goal" of ghostwriting (42). Instead, drawing from the findings of Sweetser and the ideas from Fosko, this study proposes that companies are best supported by providing a byline for the person doing the writing, even if alongside or subordinate to the more authoritative name of an executive or expert whose ideas drive or authorize the content. This small move would normalize the work of the writer, granting writing its proper professional status.

To help illustrate the ways in which accurate attribution would be in the best interest of the companies that engage in deceptive ghostwriting practices, I will analyze the corporate blog as a medium rich for making these changes in transparency based on the blog's generic conventions. The weblog's relative youth allows a narrower scope than an older business genre like white papers or letters to shareholders, and Carolyn Miller and Dawn Shepherd's *Into the Blogosphere* web text along with Tricia Juettemeyer's chapter in *Google Scholar and More* provide thorough accounts of the rise of the blog. To summarize, in the early days of internet usage, or Web 1.0, content could only be created by users with a working knowledge of HTML sufficient to format pages from scratch. Because search engines were not yet mainstream, direct links to web content provided the easiest access to online information, driving some users to catalogue links to useful or interesting information (Miller & Shepherd 6), and a well-kept web-log (blog) could help users stay up-to-date on the information that mattered to them.

In 1999, Blogger launched as "one of the first programs to provide the web-publishing interface that now defines blog software," although it was initially a computer program that formatted information into usable code but still required hosting on the user's personal domain (Juettemeyer 120). The early 2000s saw a surge of browser-based services designed to allow users to create and store their own blogs from pre-formatted designs, eliminating the need for coding knowledge, a personal domain name, or installing blogging software to a local computer (Miller & Shepherd 6, Juettemeyer 120). Google's acquisition of Pyra, which ran Blogspot.com, "helped to propel both blogging and the blogosphere to the masses" (Juettemeyer 121). From this point, blogs became part of Web 2.0, where users began creating the content online, and burgeoning social media platforms like Friendster and Orkut provided a medium to re-situate the home page, blog, and discussion forums in the new social media ecology (Herring et al. 22). In speaking of the future of the blog, Herring et al. acknowledge that blogs were likely to "be put to increasingly diverse uses" (23) and "blog software is being used increasingly for non-blog, including commercial, purposes, as predicted by our analysis of the weblog as a socio-technical format open to multiple uses" (25). Blogs continue to see use now, but especially as a marketing strategy for companies – companies can appear more humane through the informal tone of the blog, share content frequently to stay in their followers' social media impressions, and the price for this is significantly lower than previous print outlets.

The prevalence of corporate blogs poses a problem, though. Blogs began initially and, to varying degrees, continue as a way "to either document the writer's life, or a topic that the writer has interest in" (710). Dennen explains that these personal stories are not written to tell the world anything, but rather to find a community that shares those interests (351). Krishnamurthy, analyzing Metafilter as a news blog, counts the personal nature of the blog as one of four criteria

for classifying blog types (qtd. in Herring et al. 5). Other writers agree on the core concept of

individual interest as a cornerstone of the blog, but they highlight this personal aspect with

various formal attributes. Miller and Shepherd, writing around 2004, use a standard from the

early days of blogging: "they [blogs] were chronologically organized, contained links to sites of

interest on the web, and provided commentary on the links" (6), but they acknowledge that the

young genre would continue to evolve. As online practices grew from Web 1.0 fixed content

created by HTML coders to Web 2.0 content creation by masses of users, the blog's genre

expanded to include "the option of adding comments and engaging with other readers online"

(Chua et al. 1). This particular change was viewed with great optimism: "Blogs represent a

democratic world, where people can freely express their views in blog posts. People can voice

their agreement or discontent by writing comments" (Khan et al. 66). According to Herring et

al.'s corpus analysis, however, the shift away from content blogs to the personal blog also relates

to a decrease in the presence of linking to outside content (16) and limited engagement with the

comments feature (15-16), providing an internally-focused blog exemplar that corporations could

easily mimic by attributing single authorship to blog posts, without allowing for outside content

to distract from raising brand awareness. While these formal characteristics can fit into corporate

blogging strategy to varying degrees, can a corporate blog truly be "personal"?

One important distinguishing characteristic that bars entry to the "corporate blog,"

however, is the focus on the individual author's opinions or inclinations. Herring et al. state that

blogs in their corpus analysis "share a common purpose: to express the author's subjective, often

intimate perspective on matters of interest to him or her" (12). Within all of the above

descriptions of the blog genre lies the assumption that blogging is a personal form of

communication: functioning as a "diary"; forming various communities of users through posts,

links, comments, and responses; posting personal stories; and comprising both public and

personal writing simultaneously. This personal aspect of blogging drove early blog readers to

perceive the genre as "honest and unbiased consumer opinions" (Hwang and Jeong 528). In fact,

the FTC views personal blogs as such a powerful tool for consumer information that they require

bloggers to disclose when they are receiving a product or compensation from a company to write

a "sponsored" blog post (Hwang & Jeong 528-529). As Trammell and Keshelashvili summarize

the blog and its author, "Whatever the type, purpose, or content of a blog, it remains a virtual

environment controlled by the author, where, unlike in face-to-face communication, a person is

only what is expressed in manifest content" (968). To enact this kind of personal writing,

companies must designate individuals as authors, often choosing people or titles of authority to

add credibility to their messaging.

Given the vast readership of blogs in the past couple of decades, companies of course

want to leverage the genre for their own benefits. The personal blog, one sub-genre of the blog,

provides a personal approach to communication – it includes an individual's interpretation of

information or events, it seeks an audience of likeminded readers, and the tone comes across as

far more personal than a static web page. The corporate blog takes advantage of this personal

approach to writing as a way to bypass audiences' automatic defenses to marketing messages:

- "While many blogs are posted by individuals and address areas of personal
  concern, a corporate blog is defined as one in which the CEO or a different
  representative speaks for the corporation to further its goals. Many corporations
  use blogs to reach out to their stakeholders with a more humane voice than the
  usual media." (Strother et al. 243)

- "Corporate blogs are expected to facilitate communication, knowledge sharing, and collaborative innovation within organizations." (Lu 285)

- "the influential bloggers are the representatives of the virtual communities, thus they are in a position that they can influence public views and opinions … An organization can target such bloggers for their marketing purposes and can save commercial organizations millions of dollars in marketing and advertising expenses." (Khan et al. 65)

- "Blogs also provide readers the option of adding comments and engaging with other readers online; it is this interactive feature that makes it most appealing within a business context. Maintained by employees posting explicitly – or implicitly-endorsed information by the company, the commenting feature within blogs fulfils an increasing need to engage with consumers online." (Chua et al. 1)

While all of these descriptions include a company that oversees and/or benefits from the blog, several variations remain: CEOs blogging on behalf of a company (Wyld), employees blogging on employer-owned servers (Luo et al. 57), employees blogging even on public servers (Ahuja & Medury 93), and blogs run by a company's PR or marketing team (Chua et al.).

Concerning the genre constraints, Khan points out that being "spontaneous, raw, and controversial," elements of the personal blog that corporate blogs claim to want, are "not typically associated with corporate success" (174). As we have seen, many ghostwriters, marketers, and PR firms assume that readers will understand that corporate blogs are not produced by the writing labor of the CEO whose name appears on the post. That means someone else is providing a unique voice, one that mirrors company imaging policies and the style and voice of the listed author. For all of Khan's optimism that by 2017 CEOs would regularly blog in

informal, personal ways that go against the grain of dry PR press releases, instead, as Chua et al. explain, "companies are not equivalent to social actors (human), they may be perceived so within corporate blogs, hence helping to improve their transparency levels" (3). Along with Bormann, I would challenge the appeal to "transparency" in this intention to deceive readers by substituting a single voice on behalf of a company in a space where readers expect an individual's voice.

If it were true that readers assume blog posts to be written by copy writers or PR professionals (claims, as seen earlier in the chapter, not backed by any amount of research yet prominently featured in academic or trade publications I have found), then no harm is done to the message by adding a by-line for the actual writer. Then, if a CEO does take the time to create a post in the personal blog style Khan details, the reader will have the full effect of proximity to that specific person whose ideas they are reading. If, however, readers are not assuming blogs to be written by someone other than the by-line indicates, then providing accurate attribution prevents any negative response to a company's image and can be touted as actual "transparency" in their communications strategies.

3.5   Conclusion

I will certainly credit the first boss I had as a content writer for his desire to provide thought leadership, even if he expected it as a result of heavy substantive editing or ghostwriting. His understanding of the power of the original personal blog genre allows for discomfort, and a fair body of evidence supports that readers respond well to this (Fosko 174, Johnson 203, Sweetser 296). Alas, my second boss embodied what Bormann says about political speeches that are reviewed by committees and written by pools of writers: "What emerges from this process, no matter how talented the individual writers are, is a sort of grammatically correct, innocuous prose, not well suited for artistic criticism" (288). Blogs, though, exist within an expressive genre

of inter-personal communication, where writers are expected to be giving personal opinions on a topic or an interpretation of an event that invites dialogue to build community. Even though some people within public relations consider it a "best practice" to assign blog authorship to a more credible source other than the person providing the labor of writing, the benefits of accurate attribution provide not only transparency for the corporation, it also extends professional recognition to the few people with the requisite skills to craft the messages benefitting the employer. Chapter 4 will conclude this study by looking at the ways that education has participated in devaluing writing in ways that capitulate to market trends while also advocating for ways that corporate writing can be taught effectively for students in first-year composition programs.

4   CHAPTER 4: AUTHORSHIP PRACTICES IN FIRST-YEAR COMPOSITION

"We write among other people who also write. This is a simple and obvious state of affairs yet its implications are historic and profound. Learning to write with other people who write (Rather than from authors who address us abstractly) is a new condition for mass literacy development." (Brandt *Rise of Writing* 162)

4.1   We Write Among Other People Who Also Write

In the previous chapter, I shared a response one of my interviewees RC gave to a question about authorship where they acknowledge that everything we write, personally and professionally, comes into contact with the multiple people and voices in our lives: teachers, students, coworkers, editors, bosses, etc. In giving this response, RC corroborates Brandt's claim in *Rise of Writing* that we write around others who write (162) and that this simple fact has far-reaching consequences. Chapter three focused on the consequences of ghostwriting on the professional stance of writers, depriving writing of the value it would otherwise carry due to its scarcity (Brandt *Rise* 38-39). Chapter four moves this conversation from the professional purposes of writing to the academic pursuit of writing studies, because I believe one of the best chances to instill in writers the value of their own writing presents itself in general education writing courses like English composition that reach almost all majors. This chapter takes up the third research question: What practices can First-Year Composition enlist to de-center the single-author paper so that students more clearly see the value in writing as a professional skill? Until students can articulate the benefits of clear writing in multiple genres, they will not likely be able to advocate for the compensation their writing abilities deserve. Of course, this idea depends on a view that students are capable writers – a view that I believe the interventions in assignments I suggest later in the chapter will bear out.

Brandt focuses the majority of her attention on professional and personal writing in *Rise of Writing*, but she connects the low status of academic and professional writing: "Writing is a low-prestige enterprise within the cerebral liberal arts, where canonical texts are adulated and writing instruction, where it occurs, is forced to fit into reading's regime" (163). In the next paragraph, Brandt moves back to the low status of the majority of writing in the professions, providing a potential connection between the first-year composition student and the work-a-day writer that I lay out more fully later in this chapter:

> Among the most precarious foundations is the location of mass writing in the employment sphere, where traditional associations among literacy, democracy, and freedom of speech are inoperative and where people's civil rights and literacy skills must bend to the rules of labor and contract … That so much writing literacy is trained on these endeavors gives mass writing a weak civic tradition. (163)

When writing in schools and in work continues to occupy the lowest rung of the ladder, the liberatory power of writing cannot be enabled. To change this state of affairs, we must reconsider much of what we thought about literacy education, such as the tradition of treating first-year composition as a training ground for devalued and largely irrelevant academic styles of writing, as we work to help our students learn to write and think clearly and critically about the power of their words and their ability to wield them strategically.

When I first began researching ghostwriting and issues of authorship as a possible dissertation topic, I would frequently come across articles about the plight of student writing, plagiarism, and "paper mills" (companies that offer to write students' papers for a fee). For example, National Public Radio published a piece of social media collateral on Facebook on

April 10, 2019 entitled "Contract Cheating: Colleges Crack Down on Ghostwritten Essays."

Couched within the topic of that day about celebrity parents getting their students into colleges

outside the traditional application and admission process, this article includes a student's self-

assessment of their over-worked status: "'As soon as I finish some big assignment, I get assigned

more things, more homework for math, more homework for English. Some papers have to be six

or 10 pages long. … And even though I do my best to manage, the deadlines come closer and

closer, and it's just … the pressure'" ("Contract Cheating"). This segment also acknowledges the

availability of plagiarism detection services, which should serve as a deterrent to seeking

ghostwriting: "In the cat-and-mouse game of academic cheating, students these days know that if

they plagiarize, they're likely to get caught by computer programs that automatically compare

essays against a massive database of other writings. So now, buying an original essay can seem

like a good workaround" ("Contract Cheating"). Given the ubiquity of plagiarism detection

sources, it should come as no surprise that students also face the ubiquity of ghostwriters

available online: when the student they interviewed tweeted their frustration with a writing

assignment, a bot-generated message appeared as a response: "'I can write it for you,' they

tweeted back. 'Send us the prompt!'" ("Contract Cheating"). The article continues on in a

predictable pattern: school spokespeople talk about the difficulty of detecting some forms of

academic dishonesty that don't borrow language available to search engines, and the segment

attempts to remain neutral on the topic.

The comments, however, show a clear leaning towards viewing ghostwriting academic

papers as plagiarism. One comment read quite simply "Just for the record, yes, turning in

ghostwritten essays is plagiarism." (Fazende-Jones) To be fair, I love how tidily the user who

posted this comment sums it all up, but I believe we do have more to consider – so, in one of my

replies I countered: "Plagiarism is 'the practice of taking someone else's work or ideas and passing them off as one's own.' If you pay a ghostwriter, you legally own that document and it is your work." My response set off several conversations about academic writing, authorship, ownership, plagiarism, and academic dishonesty that expose the double standard of expectations between professional and academic writing. Students write among others who write – but do students author?

This chapter begins with a consideration of how student writers are treated in composition courses, which provide the broadest exposure of college students to writing studies. While many composition instructors and curricula refer to student writers as authors, students are also deprived of authority and agency in ways that relate directly to how ghostwriters provide labor without adequate attribution. After covering the various barriers to authorship in theories of composition, pedagogy, and academic honesty, this chapter moves to challenge the status of the single-author paper as the primary expectation from student writing. The primary means of challenging traditional, single-authored papers is not to recreate the genre with multiple authors, but to move student writing into spaces where live audiences can interact with the writing in the most dynamic ways. Digital genres such as wikis and social media allow for this more dynamic form of writing with feedback and with different expectations of voice and authenticity. Once students are allowed more agency in their writing, they can better understand the value of clear writing to specific audiences and advocate for the value of their writing in corporate environments that currently de-value writing as a profession.

4.2 A Simple and Obvious State of Affairs

In *Rise of Writing*, Brandt states the fact that we write among others is "a simple and obvious state of affairs yet its implications are historic and profound" (162). This final chapter of

my dissertation seeks to merge the simple and obvious with the historic and profound in at least one context by comparing the status of the ghostwriter and the status of the college composition student. As we saw in the previous chapter, ghostwriters produce valuable writing for their employers that is simultaneously undervalued by their employers as it lacks a true professional track for the writers long-term. Similarly, FYC students produce texts that have value for the professor's job and the program's assessment by accrediting bodies, but that provide the student with very few immediate benefits and only questionably provide long-term benefits. Professional ghostwriters and first-year composition students lack the status in academia and the workforce that leads their writing to be overlooked altogether or used for someone else's benefit. Joseph Harris calls attention to this phenomenon by critiquing the ways compositionists use student texts in publications: "Student texts thus turn out to be a peculiar form of intellectual currency. We establish our bona fides as compositionists by quoting them, but we seldom revisit student texts quoted by others" ("Using Student Texts" 669). While we have already looked at the history of ghostwriting in the previous chapters, it remains to see the parallels in the history of English composition as a field of study in American colleges and universities.

Susan Miller's 1991 monograph, *Textual Carnivals*, touches on many issues within composition's history, including the rise of composition alongside science as we currently figure it. She argues that composition quickly became a feminine field so that "teaching native language would not contaminate the 'hard' sciences of Latin, Greek, and mathematics … this gender bias has had an enormous part in defining the politics of composition" (26). Much of her focus is the wide scope of 19th century English education all the way to late 20th century English, providing a survey of the rise of composition. Michael Harker's *Lure of Literacy* provides a narrower scope by focusing on 20th century histories of composition excluded from common

histories of the call to end FYC. Harker thus privileges sources other than those typically

appearing in the mainstream debates over abolishing first-year composition (38), providing a

closer focus on the various perceived literacy crises from the times when abolition arguments

appeared the most vocally. Miller and Harker both see much of the history of composition as a

defense of an ideal of education, and they both criticize this ideal in different ways. Miller

focuses more on a feministic critique of composition as a feminine remediation that infantilizes

lower-performing students, often set against the literary programs for students who place out of

composition courses (25-26, 29). Harker, meanwhile, argues that the continued cycle of claiming

a crisis and raising a literacy program to address the crisis will self-perpetuate until the literacy

myth driving both the crisis and theoretical solution are critically evaluated by students and

teachers, and he proposes a first-year literacy studies course as a solution to allow students to

perform this criticism (113-117). Both Miller's and Harker's studies situate the FYC classroom

in a mostly theoretical role – being instructed by professors and instructors who set the

curriculum or course for students without as much focus on the student's role as writer.

     In *A Teaching Subject*, Joseph Harris provides a history of FYC that focuses on the

impact of classroom teaching on student writing rather than trace a theory's impact on a course.

American and British English scholars met at Dartmouth in 1966 under the sponsorship of the

American MLA and NCTE as well as the British NATE to discuss how to move English studies

forward, but both groups were coming from differing backgrounds that colored their desire for

motion. American colleges were seeking acknowledgment among the sciences, while lower

schools were focused on practical life applications of English. This attempt by American English

scholars to place English among the hard or objective sciences brought scientific research

methodology for English to the forefront for Americans at the conference, while the British

contingent was seeking to escape the previous elitism of the British university system and focus on growth models of personal expression (Vee). Harris follows the focus on growth from 1966 to the field in 1997 when the first edition of *A Teaching Subject* was published, and Harris updates it in 2012 to note the changes in the field and respond to criticism of the original copy.

For the first couple of decades after the Conference, Harris states that personal development and authentic experiences took an unhealthy precedence: "in the twenty years after Dartmouth, the study of writing took a strong individualistic turn in the work both of teachers concerned with helping students find their authentic voices and of researchers interested in documenting the mental processes involved in composing texts" (*Teaching Subject* 21), but he also acknowledges that this focus pushed the limits of what could be considered academic research within English (*Teaching Subject* 21). John Brereton, in an email exchange with Vee about the Dartmouth Conference, states, "There's no doubt that one thing that arose from the 1966 Dartmouth Conference was a greater emphasis (and confidence) on students doing their own thinking, with less stress on parroting a teacher's lectures. There's also a connection between valuing what beginning students could do, at a relatively low level, as long as it was real […] writing" (*Dartmouth '66 Seminar Exhibit* "Introduction"). Vee notes that the ripples from Dartmouth are decreasing as we get further distant from the Seminar in time, with only a few of the original attendees available to help fill in archival gaps when Vee, McIntyre, and Hardcastle published their account of Dartmouth with the WAC Clearinghouse.

Harris, though, traces much of the emphasis on growth, voice, process, error, and community in student writing back to the conversations that caused or occurred at the Dartmouth Seminar, dedicating a chapter to each of those ideas. He sets Elbow, Bartholomae, Shaughnessy, Rose, and other major scholars from mid- to late-20th century writing studies within a context of

the debate between American and British scholars at Dartmouth. While Harris sees potential problems with some of his current approaches to teaching FYC, he does appreciate the way Dartmouth set the path for writing to be something that could be studied (21), although he does not come out strongly advocating for composition to provide a content focus like Wardle and Downs on writing studies or Harker advocating for a literacy-focused first-year writing course. Harris bases this reservation on the limited number of qualified instructors from graduate programs specifically in writing studies and points out that teaching students for general college-level writing is not far removed from abstracting "academic discourse communities" that many students are not attempting to join (138-140). What Harris comes back to, time and again, is the fact that the way we use student writing is too often writing about students and generalizing types of writers in ways that elevate academics but do not give dignity to the writers and their often-non-academic pursuits. Even if we were to cite student texts as freely as we do authors in our academic journals, students' writing often exists solely within the scope of a single course with no anticipation that it might go out of that classroom. As I explore later, much of this irrelevance of writing stems from requiring students to mimic academic forms of single-authored texts wholly divorced from a real and reactive audience.

Student writing, much like work ghostwritten for companies, exists due to a separate authority soliciting the writing and giving the laborer a nominal remuneration in a grade earned. This writing provides the content for the advancement of those who hold the power: professors in academia and executives in the business world. What do I as the researcher have at stake in this conversation? First, I exist within an academic ecosystem that focuses the majority of its attention and advertising on Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) but depends on while simultaneously dismissing its dependence on English. Second, if I argue that

ghostwriting should be dropped as a practice to see writing skills properly valued with accurate

bylines that demonstrate the necessary level of professionalism, I cannot in good conscience

participate in a system that treats students with the same lack of basic respect afforded

ghostwriters currently. I cannot remain content with the "simple and obvious" state of affairs;

instead, I must advocate for the "new conditions" of literacy education that de-center the single

author focus of composition and allow students to engage active audiences when possible.

　　　　Regarding the status of writing in American education (and especially higher education),

U.S. News & World Report, which offers its own ranking of colleges and universities to a general

population of American readers, pushes STEM as the field for high achievers: "With strong

industry growth predicted by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, and high-paying STEM majors

topping the chart in the National Association of Colleges and Employers Winter 2019 Salary

Survey, career options are abundant and wages are promising for graduates" (Moody). The

movement in this direction is reflected in the most recent National Center for Education Statistics

report on college major choices from the 2018-19 academic year. According to these records, in

the previous 10-year period the "number of bachelor's degrees conferred increased by 22

percent" and among the six most popular majors, health professions degrees increased by 94%

and computer science increased by 124%, while business only increased 9% and social science

decreased by 7% ("Most Popular Majors"). The push towards STEM is certainly not a new

problem for English studies, as Miller has detailed in her accounts of the rise of English

composition. The value of STEM is indeed high for our technologically enhanced age, but many

people overlook that the ideas needed to develop STEM fields are encoded in and consumed

primarily through language.

As both Brandt (*Rise* 27) and Drezner (*Ideas Industry* 215) argue, we exist in an ideas industry predicated on digital literacies in America in the 21st century. To continue to make breakthroughs in any of the STEM areas, the arts must be present, and writing as the chief cornerstone. Despite the necessity of writing as a service to these disciplines, the Humanities in general and writing specifically get downplayed at increasingly perilous stages. Take, for example, the fall 2021 scandal of Purdue's English graduate program being accused of going over budget and virtually being shut down for a few years as a result. Despite the department facing budget cuts within Humanities and finding the required money to fund positions from outside sources to make up the budget deficit, and despite the fact that most students learn about Purdue first in English classes through their well-respected Online Writing Lab (OWL) that is staffed by the graduate students in this program, Purdue felt justified in pushing a STEM curriculum to the detriment of the writing program and threatening the end of the OWL as a result (Flaherty; Murley & Shekar). Writing, at Purdue and many other schools, stands in a precarious position as a skill necessary to create value yet simultaneously undervalued in terms of professional status even within academia.

Perhaps one element behind the undervaluing of writing is the disconnect between the types of writing often engaged in English courses and the type of writing that students will need outside of our classrooms. The gold standard of academic writing remains the single-authored argument paper, even though, as a field, writing studies has increased its focus on collaboration and multi-modal assignments. From the Harvard entrance writing exam detailed in Hill's "An Answer to the Cry for More English" (48-49) to the more recent push against standardized essay writing for the SAT from scholars like Les Perelman ("The BABEL Generator"), composition has frequently focused on a single-authored text, often written with further restrictions on time

and/or topics. Soliday and Trainor address the ever-increasing restrictions in their 2016 article where they refer to the "Literacy Machine" of bureaucratic layers built around access to literacy that leads to an "audit culture" of constant vigilance to ensure literacy is accessed through the appropriate channels (126). Against this backdrop, writing studies has explored various pedagogies aimed at liberation: "In sum, we have long debated the relationships between regulation and liberation, disciplinary constraint and individual choice, explicit teaching and implicit learning—dualities that we negotiate every day in our classes" (127). The history of guarding against plagiarism to ensure high standards of work follows all of us into today's classrooms, largely buttressed by the idea that the individual student should engage in the Herculean effort of lone (and lonely) composition.

As another example of how persistently the lone writer trope endures, Bormann expressed his view of the damage ghostwriting did to academia in the 1960s when he mentioned how prevalent it was from institutional sources, like the good speech that "was actually written by the graduate student in English who tutors the football team" ("Ethics" 262), the A paper taken from a fraternity file and expected to receive an A the second time as well (263), or ghostwriters being paid to write projects from term papers all the way to dissertations (265). All of this leads to Bormann's excoriation of an editorial that explained why ghostwriting speeches was permissible but academic ghostwriting was not: "'College degrees,' said the editorialist commenting on the New York scandal, 'are taken to represent honest, independent academic ability and achievement.' Apparently, speeches by businessmen, governors, and the president of the United States are not to be taken as representative of honest, independent ability and achievement" (265). Bormann continues to examine the double standard:

> There would be little wisdom in telling students of speech that for now they must
> write their own speeches but when they graduate they can hire assistants, public
> relations men, and speech writers to do the job for them. The student who is
> supposed to be learning research techniques in preparing a speech can be expected
> to do more gathering of factual material than the executive who will be
> extensively briefed by aides and presented with memoranda and reports. (266)

Rather than reinforce the double standard, and fully aware of the benefits a corporate or government leader has in terms of access to information, Bormann expects a leader "will have his own program of reading, discussing, and deliberating; he is a thinker, something more than a voice publicly reading statements of others" (266). In other words, if education is actually preparation for how students ought to conduct themselves after school, then the expectation on those who have completed their education ought to be raised significantly so that the student is not held to a higher standard than those whose discourses they seek to join.

Perhaps Bormann was correct, at least in speech-making and public relations. Finding information about ghostwriting in PR and marketing is not necessarily difficult. In Chapter 3 of this dissertation, I pulled quite a few articles from marketing and communications journals, but a direct address of the ethics of the practice is harder to find. In a textbook on ethics in PR, though, Parsons says the following:

> Plagiarism is a term we [public relations professionals] tend to think about most
> often in terms of college or university essays, and lately in journalism. We are
> exhorted from early on in our careers as 'paper writers' to refrain from such
> behavior at all costs or suffer the academic consequences. Students, however,

often have difficulty understanding what the term really means and exactly how to avoid it. (Parsons 122)

While this passage seems to indicate an exploration of potential problems in PR concerning intellectual property, instead it turns into a discussion protecting PR from charges of plagiarism by putting plagiarism more squarely within academic rather than professional contexts. Knapp and Hulbert's *Ghostwriting and the Ethics of Authenticity* spends two chapters discussing academic applications of ghostwriting, first focusing on students' use of paper mills for assignments, the high stakes of admissions that drive ghostwriting for especially international students, and the exposure of various college sports teams in ghostwriting and cheating scandals. Knapp and Hulbert, though, do acknowledge that while plagiarism refers to an unauthorized use of language, ghostwriting is exempt from this charge because the writer knowingly signs over their right to the words they wrote (87). Regardless of this admission, they insist it is academic dishonesty because the overall expectation of academics is that a single student produce all of their own labor without allowing a practice that "provides an unfair advantage to one student over another" (86), despite arguing for the ethics of ghostwriting in other contexts. This traditional approach to education as a solitary endeavor appears frequently in conversations about plagiarism – that a student writing on their own, while not owning sufficient authority to be an author, must not run afoul of another writer's authority.

Certainly, academia remains the focus for issues of plagiarism and academic dishonesty related to who wrote a paper. Bormann's contemplation on academic dishonesty above was written before "plagiarism detection" software was even feasible, much less a reality. As computing improvements provided increasingly broadened access to written messages, students could easily copy and paste a more knowledgeable paper. To answer this problem, academia

looked to industry to create search engines and databases of student writing against which to search student papers to identify where or to what extent information is copied. Turnitin has become one of the better-known plagiarism detection services, which propelled it into articles analyzing its usefulness and/or drawbacks. The drawbacks often focus on its monetization of unpaid student labor (Vie 5), the inability of the search to differentiate a correct citation from an uncited usage (Vie 5), its general attitude towards student integrity (Vie 8), among other issues. With the history of authorship firmly on the side of the party that can be paid for the work, Turnitin's legally upheld claim to have its profit off of unpaid student labor protected under "fair use" comes across as obtuse at best, although that lies beyond the scope of the current focus on student authorship. Thus, even in the service of protecting intellectual property from theft, services like Turnitin profit off of the work of all the students who have been required to submit papers to Turnitin's database but who receive none of that profit (Howard 5). Howard also points out that the availability of access to texts in the current storm of "mass literacy" reveals the disdain for the average writer: "A great deal of what is published today is of the intellectual weight of *People* magazine. And each new mechanism of mass-distributed text occasions a new round of anxiety and resistance—as is evident in the deluge of scholarly and media publications challenging the value and credibility of weblogs and wikis" (6). The specific inclusion of the blog should sound familiar from the previous chapter, and later in this chapter the wiki will come into clearer view as a strategy to de-center the individual author. The assumption Howard exposes, though, is that without the proper authority from outside the writer, the reading or literate public should be wary. Again, the student writer seems to occupy a position akin to that of the average ghostwriter, lacking agency, authority, and credibility on their own.

Beyond the issue of intellectual property, though, services like Turnitin stem from and shore up an ideological stance that, because many students claim in surveys to have copied material previously, the problem lies only with the students making these choices. The problem lies in small part with the programs' inability to show correctly what is inaccurately or insufficiently cited borrowing. These programs create a "similarity score" that is wildly inaccurate for students who did cite correctly or at least conscientiously, especially in light of the literacy crisis language Howard locates behind Turnitin as its own "means to assuage the fear that they peddle" (8). Over-worked instructors or under-prepared graduate student teachers can use the score itself and the attached similarity score report uncritically to bring academic dishonesty charges against students whose only guilt was citation, even if missing only a small piece. Perhaps, though, the biggest problem with plagiarism detection services lies with the schools and instructors making broad use of them. The marketing implications of "plagiarism detection" software create, as Vie echoes from Howard: "a false binary … that establishes a 'good' group, usually instructors who demand nothing less than honesty and veracity from students, and a 'bad' group, frequently depicted as students who, not caring about the consequences, dare to appropriate someone else's work as their own and hand it in to the unsuspecting teacher" (Vie 11). With so much labor invested in catching and disciplining plagiarism and institutional money invested in implementing these programs, the ideology of the single author becomes increasingly visible: one student is meant to write one paper wholly on their own, regardless of the circumstances of either their personal lives or the context of the course in which they are writing. Vie, unwilling to play into this particular discourse, encourages her readers to have students review the materials and websites of these plagiarism detection services to view the situation critically – to develop or enhance types of digital literacy skills that

will serve them well even after leaving the classroom, similar to Harker's proposal to impact the perpetual literacy crisis by introducing students to a critical examination of literacy.

Vie's approach directly cites Howard's "Forget about Policing Plagiarism. Just Teach." article in *The Chronicle of Higher Education* from 2001, and the shared responsibility for plagiarism in college courses gets repeated in multiple publications since then as well. For example, James Lang's *Cheating Lessons* sets forth a daunting proposal in explaining why instructors should focus on providing opportunities for intrinsic motivation: "I am hoping to convince you that modifying the conditions of your course to reduce cheating will also increase the amount that your students are learning" (38). The rest of the book consists of ways to help change assessment practices in ways that will engage students further so that they either see lower stakes and feel less pressure to cheat for a high grade or have more personal choice in what assignments they can complete to make the grade of their choice. Similarly, John Warner's *Why They Can't Write* argues first for the ability of current students to write but also acknowledges the instructor's role in creating meaningful courses: "We have to question what we ask students to do in school and why we ask them to do it" (16). Within this framework, the entire context of the course comes into clearer view – the student is not a lone scholar researching in a vacuum, unconnected to courses, sources, or other aspects of academia. Students write to prompts provided to them, and they constantly assess the prompts as useful, rigid, productive, or obstructive. How an assignment gets situated within the course (its weight to the final grade, the amount of time given to complete, the presence or absence of scaffolding, etc.) informs whether a student views an assignment as possible and worthwhile or impossible and worth handing off.

Regardless, challenges to the single-author-only approach in educational circles bother even the strongest proponents of ghostwriting, as seen in my interview with CS:

you may recall … there was this whole big scandal about the fact that all of these

MDs specifically who were publishing journal articles, medical journals, or the

closest articles without ever, you know, they just handed it out: 'Write me an

article about whatever,' and they never even looked at the article. They had no

input on the article. That was fraud … That kind of ghostwriting is indeed fraud.

(personal interview).

As demonstrated in Chapter 3, C-Suite executives are supposedly granted great leniency on their

lack of time and paucity of writing skills because they take responsibility for larger-scale issues

or are otherwise skilled. In sight of the law, these professionals own the piece of writing as a

"work for hire." Academics, including students, however, seem to exist in a separate space where

they must produce original writing despite similar demands on time and potential lack of skill

level. Copyright language, which allows for "work for hire," no longer applies to educational

language, where schools and outsiders expect students to turn in their "own work" in terms of

labor rather than ownership.

4.3   Historic and Profound Implications

Joseph Harris explains that writing studies scholars ideally look at students in the same

light as "authors" whose ideas influence their thinking (23-24), and the popular first-year

composition textbook *Everyone's an Author*, now in its third edition, claims to "introduce

students to the joy and power and responsibility of authorship, that would present writing as it

really is today—multimodal, multimedia, multilingual, and deeply digitized" (v). Miller,

however, exposes the difficulty inherent in this move by explaining how English has frequently

lifted authors up as lone geniuses whose ideas separate a genteel from a vulgar social class (64).

That is why viewing students as "authors," while seeming to grant them authority and status as

thinkers and writers and perhaps even peers, cannot work in our current educational context without a convoluted and unnecessarily complex extension of the metaphor where teachers serve as editors – but even then, who is the readership? Miller best explains the unnatural context of the composition course when she says, "Students were writing only for a surface gentility, only about 'personal' experiences that immediately exposed their genteel or more humble origins to their teachers, and only in the form of the modal 'theme,' which has its only life in English courses themselves" (Miller 61). Similarly, Perelman has gone to great lengths to point out the same about the writing encouraged by mass-market testing agencies that has set much of the tone for secondary education in English:

> Yet mass-market testing practices and organizations, especially when assessing writing, have whole-heartedly embraced bullshit. … First, the timed impromptu essay not only invites students to bullshit, it encourages the practice. Second, the distortion of holistic scoring practiced by most mass-market organizations, with its reliance on conformity and reliability at the cost of ignoring intellectual content is, itself, a form of bullshit. (427)

The single-authored papers that students write in English courses and assessments rarely live outside that particular course, so the writing that students produce in FYC more accurately resembles the day-in and day-out writing most of them will produce in the course of their employment outside academia (Brandt *Rise of Writing* 16-17). The majority of white-collar jobs requiring extensive writing is, after all, why Brandt asserts that writing is now the hallmark of literacy (*Rise of Writing* 17). While *Everyone's an Author* acknowledges the work Brandt has done (vi), it still conflates "authorship" with writing. I point this out not because I think Lunsford et al. would be unfamiliar with this topic, as Ede and Lunsford's *Collaboration and Concepts of*

Authorship shows a commitment to understanding and problematizing various forms of authorship; all the same, it illustrates how easily even experts can transgress the lines between writing and authoring.

The focus on single-authoring a paper persists, and it persists at multiple levels. Jacobs et al., librarians writing about information literacy, provide a useful frame of reference for the default single-authored stance when they refer to a "Gollum-like possessive mentality" over protecting "individual contributions" (609) that endangered their collaborative writing efforts. Academics working to publish together still fight their default allegiance to their own solitary efforts. Ede and Lunsford have gone further, stating that "'Writing teachers err if, in envisioning students' professional lives upon graduation they imagine them seated alone, writing in isolation … struggling in a professional garret to express themselves' (72)" (qtd in Stratman & Zee). Stratman and Zee, after summarizing much of the history of collaborative writing quite briefly, provide a wonderful analysis of student responses to collaborative essay writing assignments. The responses they provide from students who chose not to collaborate center the idea of the author concerning a single person's ownership of writing, which Stratman and Zee propose may be either a response to or disagreement with the social constructivist view that supports collaborative learning and writing. Students from their experimental group who opted to collaborate on writing their essay, however, "did not need the theoretical grounding in collaboration to understand some of its key benefits and tenets–they discovered these through their own collaboration." The initial implementation of Stratman and Zee's research on collaborative writing showed them that students may benefit from direct teaching of collaboration as a theory and practice, because their composition students lacked the instruction

many compositionists have in collaboration and thus cannot picture its benefits or practical implementation in their own writing process.

As highlighted by several of my interviews, ghostwriters rarely work alone in corporate environments, even if they write up to 100% of the content on their own. LA, a manager for marketing, referred to building relationships with the subject matter experts and those who would be attributed the by-line. RC, however, pointed more to using style guides created by the marketing team and having peers read for voice. RA worked more often from a substantive editing role, turning bullet points or a data dump into a readable format as requested, or determining which old collateral could be revisited on social media. CP, who more often built sales materials for her company to pitch to clients, worked heavily with subject matter experts and her team to create a "brand voice" as part of their pitch. In each of these scenarios, from each of these professionals who say that writing takes up 50-85% of their daily labor, the "lone genius" model does not apply. Writing, as RC points out, is never 100% individual: "you might be able to have your name on [a piece], but frequently it's been a few people that contributed, you've interviewed, you know what I mean? Like, you didn't 100% write that by yourself, you know? I mean, you've interviewed someone or … there's excerpts in there from such and such person" (personal interview). Writing studies is, of course, aware of the social construction of knowledge that RC describes, but much of the work seems to resemble single-authored work even if multiple people are listed on the by-line.

For example, much of the scientific community's publication record consists of multiple-authored articles, often reflecting principal investigators and their team(s) of researchers in laboratories. As Jacobs et al. clarify, "Coauthorship has traditionally been more common in the sciences, where research models often necessitate team or lab-based projects and publications.

Although it has not always been the norm in the humanities, collaboration has become more common in digital humanities work" (606). In some cases, this listing of authors can result from "back-scratching, political, advancement, citation, and other interests" (Robbins "Ethics of Authorship"), but it does emphasize the ways in which students outside of writing classes may encounter collaborative writing. Lunsford and Ede's *Singular Texts/Plural Authors*, perhaps the most well-known book-length work on collaboration, includes interviews with multiple writers similar to Brandt's methods in *Literacy in American Lives* and *Rise of Writing*, and Lunsford and Ede write early in their text that "The scenes of writing that we have described thus far clearly and powerfully challenge that conventional image of the writer working alone in a garret, a well-appointed study, or a library. The writers we interviewed may have private offices … but their scenes of writing are peopled, busy—full of the give-and-take of conversation and debate" (42). My interview with RC reveals the same obvious but often unspoken truth of the collaborative nature of most professional writing.

Lunsford and Ede spend an entire chapter on dismantling the commonly held view that authorship is "not only commonsensical but also somehow inevitable" (76-77) by looking at historical models of writing as well as current writing practices that destabilize the Romantic idyll of the single author. While they purposefully omit ghostwriting from their focus because they instead choose to examine a more indirect challenge to authorship in attribution by librarians of various printed materials without single listed authors (93), they start by looking at medieval views of writing, which focused on the object of the writer's attention and not the writer himself (78). Lunsford and Ede rehearse much of the same information covered in Chapter 1 of this dissertation: the rise of the author as a class separate from and with specific monetary demands distinct from the printers of early literary works and the rise of copyright law to protect

the interests of the person originating the written work, but they add that some opponents of early copyright law held that "ideas, once expressed, belong to all" (83), an idea still held in many cultures. They also spend more time tracing the rise of the Romantics' view of the written work representing "individual genius" that would prevent a competing view of "collaborative genius" (85). Beyond the history of the literary work, Lunsford and Ede also include literary theory from Foucault and others critics from feminist and Marxist backgrounds, all of whom undermine the idea of a single author that denies all the shared experiences that produce a work even from a single person laboring to do the writing. They end by looking at corporate writing from a librarian's perspective – that the job of classifying and categorizing multiple genres for collections means admitting that writing is done by far more than one solitary figure bent over a notebook, typewriter, or keyboard. Surprisingly, though, rather than continue to theorize about authorship and writing, Lunsford and Ede spend their last chapter considering the pedagogic implications of their questioning of authorship up to that point.

Developing single-authored writing exclusively deprives students of the experience they will need collaborating in writing tasks: "Put simply, teachers should teach collaborative writing in some way because students will likely need to write collaboratively someday; failing to teach collaborative writing is on some level willfully neglecting an often-necessary life and career skill" (Stratman & Zee). As Brandt says in the epigraph to this chapter, we write among others who write (162), and this simple fact is demonstrated through much of the Web 2.0 digital writing through apps and websites, but it also leads to some new considerations for writing pedagogy if writing studies wishes to remain relevant.

4.4   A New Condition for Mass Literacy Development

With much already having been said regarding collaborative writing and co-authorship, we move into newer frames of writing that may also help students see the lived tension between writing and authoring: corporate writing. Lunsford and Ede conclude their book *Single Texts/Plural Authors* with a consideration of pedagogy as the natural response to sustained theoretical research because "Just as many of the theorists we discussed in chapter 3 fail to articulate and examine the pedagogical implications of their theory, so many teachers of writing fail to articulate the theoretical implications of their practice" (139). Uncritical adoption of new methods or ideas will most likely "yield merely a disguised version of the same old teacher-centered, authoritarian theory of learning" (140), so, as an emerging teacher-scholar, I move in the end of my dissertation to consider how the issues laid out about ghostwriting, authorship, and single-authored texts might affect how first-year composition can be taught to provide a liberation similar to what I hope to see happen with ghostwriters currently denied professional status and its proper benefits.

Before explaining my particular approach, though, I want to highlight similar projects by other writing studies scholars who are answering Lunsford and Ede's call to view our practices and technologies critically as we resist the lone-genius model of authoring that often limits our FYC students. For example, Krista Kennedy argues for having students frame information in digital formats as a discrete and marketable writing skill often omitted from "authorship" approaches to first-year composition: "However, as our attention to the many modes and mediums in which writing happens has grown, we have remained primarily concerned with recognizable essayistic writing, whether it be in a status update, a Vine, or a collaboratively written website" (Kennedy 176). Kennedy clarifies the ways that composition often claims to be

digital but largely re-contextualizes "essayistic writing" – expository, argumentative, linear, and mostly single-authored texts that just happen to be written or published in digital spaces. She argues that this limited view of digital writing excludes "the small and often invisible writing skills" necessary to navigate and create meaning in the current "information ecologies" that face most people in their professional and leisure activities (176). In other words, she is stating that composition studies, but especially first-year writing, needs to address writing beyond what academia privileges as writing.

To make this case more persuasively, though, we must appeal to those who control the purse strings. Kennedy makes this case with the kairotic element of job preparation: "In order to prepare students for successful careers, we must continue to move toward including what Lunsford (2005) called '*all* the resources of a full range of media' in digital writing classrooms by finding ways to look beyond standard single-authored or small-group unit assignments that focus on essayistic digital products" (Kennedy 187). Kennedy's plan to create a First-Year Composition course with alternative forms of writing works well as a departure from what she calls "essayistic" assignments, and the rationale she presents for it translates to my own separate attempt to re-define, or at least re-situate, "authorship" for FYC writers.

As Grobman has argued, "Essentially, writers who view themselves as scholarly authors see their voice as one among multiple others and together create knowledge" (W179), but what of the students who do not dare to rise to that level of knowledge creation? Grobman seems to echo what Miller wrote previously: "we need to look more closely at the problematic relation between an act that is thought of as 'merely writing' and engaging in 'authorship,' the privileged creation that everything about composition appears to oppose or negate" (64). Grobman proposes that authorship be viewed as a continuum rather than a binary so that the subtle changes in the

writer's position through experience and education and a writer's place in disenfranchised groups can better be expressed without denying them authority to speak (W180). Much like Harris in "Using Student Texts in Composition Scholarship," Grobman elucidates specific problems with the current state of faculty/student co-authorship by examining specific examples. Grobman argues that, as a field, writing studies needs to agree on how to treat student authority (W185) as well as on what best practices faculty/student should adopt for co-authorships (W186), for faculty supervising independent student work (W187), and, finally, writing studies needs to inform student scholars about the complex nature of their status as authors with questionable authority (W187). When students publish in academic journals, their authority is often derived from their professors or other authorities outside their own work. In asserting all of this, Grobman returns her focus to first-year composition students who occupy various levels of privilege depending on whether they are deemed "basic" or were privileged with "honor" status – all came to college to be scholars, which in itself should grant them a level of authority, even if early or novice scholars (W188). This invitational rhetoric again mirrors what Joseph Harris has detailed in articles and books, but this expansive view inviting students to academic discourse communities has another potential road block I have not seen spelled out very often: the divide between those teaching the majority of the courses and the minority publishing research about composition.

Authors are the privileged class, and perhaps this explains why many adjuncts, graduate students, and instructors at teaching-oriented (often also access-oriented) institutions that do no place the same weight on research struggle to view entering academic research discourse communities as a useful or even viable goal. The material reality of the tenured R1 English professor is dwindling in potential opportunities, and with it goes the cultural capital of academic

publishing as a commonplace for student writers. Brandt acknowledges this shortcoming in *The Rise of Writing*: "To the extent that writing teachers of any kind are associated with vocational practice, they occupy lower rungs in the liberal-arts university; so in that way, we can say that writing masters continue to be marginalized by the 'common' school" (Brandt 110). Harker expresses the same idea in a different context when he clarifies Fish's critique of pedagogy relies on treating literacy as a "skill," which limits the types of writing that professors and students engage in (111). In my current context, the majority of my students arrive at Georgia Highlands College looking for non-academic careers and opportunities – how are they served by being taught to write like academics?

If knowledge creation exists as the primary academic concern, teachers and students in FYC will rarely enter into academia's focus. How, then, do we prepare students for the careers that provide endless mundane writing tasks that have extremely limited audience or exigence as Brandt describes throughout her interview subjects' responses in *Rise of Writing*? I argue that one potential "invisible skill" (Kennedy 176) in the FYC toolbelt should be corporate writing – requiring students to lose their personal voices as they write from the perspective of a collective. Corporate writing such as I detail below demonstrates how students will, at times, need to push past the desire to have a unique voice in some writing contexts to pick up a shared identity. When this focus on unified voice exists alongside assignments that welcome students into diverse discourse communities that call attention to their word choice and style, students will develop a critical view of voice that allows them to identify their writing situations' expectations to use their individual voice or appropriate a collective voice.

Gold et al.'s 2020 article in *College Composition and Communication* shows that a surprising number of first-year students had not been assigned any form of digital writing (9). In

fact, several sources point to a lack of critical engagement with digital writing from a generation often assumed to be "digital natives." Holly Hassel teaches her first-year composition course as an information literacy course, heavily relying on students to engage in writing for and subsequently editing wiki entries, as well as receiving authority from the broader Wiki community of editors rather than have students inhabit a locus of power inappropriately in the class – all of this, she argues, adds to a student's ability to use technology critically (*16 Teachers Teaching* 136-139). Wiki Education, an academic non-profit, claims that wikis help "students gain 21st century skills like media literacy, writing and research development, and critical thinking, while content gaps on Wikipedia get filled thanks to students' efforts" ("About Us"). Yet, as Gold's study exposes, digital writing included in a student's education is most often blogs, which students self-report as the least likely type of digital writing they engage in recreationally.

Some of this corporate writing approach stems from my research during graduate school into having students write in wikis. The wiki exists as a distinct digital genre that allows every user (analogous in a wiki to an "author") to write and edit any page with attribution visible only on the edits history page that details all the changes made to a single page. Students are not necessarily looking to create a brand-new argument in working on a wiki, but instead create a larger body of work from a collaborative effort that extends beyond even the individual classroom. Lundin describes this affordance of the wiki as a "networked activity": "By viewing writing as a networked activity, students focus on the connectivity and complexity of rhetorical situations rather than understanding writing as the decontextualized product of a single, isolated worker" (432). One key aspect of this decontextualization stems from "notions of authorship that confound composition's tendency to insist on, and assume, a single author" because each user

can edit any page, meaning authority is equally distributed to all readers and to the greater wiki

rather than any specific version of a single article or page (438). Previous iterations of wikis

allowed for signing additions to texts, but the software used by Wikipedia removed this

particular feature (Hunter 44). Because most people are only familiar with *Wikipedia*, the wiki as

a type of author-less digital writing exists in many other applications as well, but the focus has

always remained on providing crowd-sourced and peer-editable content.

One such benefit of using wikis in my classroom was to allow students to create and edit

style guides rather than passively comply with them. I took advantage of the editing privileges as

a chance to discuss style guides in a more meaningful way than I could in a traditional essay-

based classroom. Lundin explains how wikis "offer an important, and complicating, feature that

the other technologies [of writing] do not: a near-complete lack of preexisting structure on an

empty page or between pages" (440), but wikis often end up with a basic structure of content that

takes shape over time as users continue adding and editing. In my classroom, students were

introduced to the wiki by being tasked to research other wikis to get a sense of how they are

formatted and organized before creating or editing the existing style guide of the wiki itself.

Students began to see how the style guide helps writers know what to include on a page and how

to format rather than confusing readers as they see too many different pages – the similarities in

formatting allow a closer connection of ideas once they begin inter-linking pages. Each student's

individual aesthetic preference had to be tempered by an appeal to the readers of the wiki and

what would best allow the readers to access and add information in the future. Students came to

understand that, while the page they worked on may contain specific arguments, the overall

voice and tone of the wiki lies beyond the individual.

Similarly, the wiki opens up a student's writing to be revised actively – something many students are unprepared for. When I first began my wiki project, it was a single wiki themed around Death, the topic of my English 1102 course at Georgia State University, where I was completing my Ph.D. coursework. Two students had chosen the same basic topic of hip-hop references to death, but I only allowed one page to exist for each topic. That meant two students who had never met in a class had to negotiate the constant edits as users distanced geographically and temporally from each other. As Hunter explains, the ability to edit someone else's work should be conducted in a collegial way with comments, if available on the platform, explaining the reason for the changes – although, at times the bulk of editing does not permit the time to address mistakes at such length (48). At times, it got heated in my classroom as the students would vent about the changes being made, and for a moment the revision history page took on a Pink Panther cartoon element of constant changes and reversions to the previous version. Finally, they realized they had a comments section to address each other, and they worked to a resolution in a medium that I did not suggest, much less require.

The inescapable truth, though, is that no technology can be a panacea for issues with engaging students in meaningful writing; instead, as Hunter argues, "writing gets done as a result of affordances and constraints of writing technologies, as well as social practices that impact and revolved around them" (44). Lundin details the lengths to which she went to have students respond to each other's content after it did not happen organically, ultimately requiring a type of forum curation assignment to push students to engage critically with content on their class wiki. She summarizes this difficulty in eliciting student involvement in the same breath as praising the wiki for opening up new lines of communication: "Although wikis open space for unusual assignments (like the undirected journal response), teachers will not necessarily be able to depart

completely from students' expectations for a course" (442). Students will expect, for example, a grade with clear guidelines, assignments within their zone of proximal development, and they will expect a teacher to mediate in the event students' arguments evolve beyond their own control. Lundin concludes that wikis do permit a different view of writing from the student standpoint that would "complicate the already-tangled relationships between teacher and student authority, encouraging us to purposefully rethink and negotiate those relationships" as more socially involved than single-authored texts allow (445). Sura points to this and other features as the benefit of the wiki in composition: "it may be time to embrace the fact that wikis work in multiple capacities. This fluidity as well as the rhetoricity of wikis as public or semi-public spaces make them exceptional tools for introductory writing courses" (23). In my time using a wiki in composition, I found the same things to be true, and I only stopped using the wiki approach when my preferred wiki server ended services abruptly. Since then, I have not found a wiki server that allows full features of the wiki in a free version, otherwise I would continue to use this approach, because the contrasting approaches of traditional academic research and wiki creation and editing work well to show the breadth of application of audience-aware and researched writing.

I have, however, found another form of corporate writing that I believe helps prepare students for several types of writing they will engage with outside the composition classroom. My current iteration of corporate writing does not leverage wiki technology to focus on the multiple author approach; instead, it "offers students a chance to engage in public writing … [and] encourages students to analyze concrete audiences with attention to civic discourse that is manifested through building ways for those users to access information" (Kennedy 186). To de-center the single-author essay or research paper for a portion of my English composition course,

I now require students to engage with a course social media account on Twitter (@FreeChasGrumm). Students begin by analyzing social media posts from the platform(s) of their choice to think about how the messages are constructed to reach specific audiences before creating a three-post social media campaign for the course Twitter account, complete with an explanation of how the content is designed to drive impressions and engagements (See Appendix C).

What this assignment loses in terms of the close attention to social construction of knowledge in Lundin's wiki assignment is made up for in terms of a real audience with measurable impact. Miller explains the futility of voice in single-author academic texts in composition classrooms by critiquing the lack of a real audience: "their most vocal representatives claim that writing will develop a 'personal voice' that speaks to no one in particular, in no particular settings, and to no particular purposes. If one's 'voice' is developed to be 'heard' only among a peer group, its range and volume are more modulated than unexpected situations and their power relations will tolerate" (Miller 103). Despite my earnest pleas with students in my composition courses to the contrary, the majority of what they write will inevitably be written to or for me as the single audience member. I can require that they specify an audience for single-author texts (which I supplement by bringing in links to freelancing websites where they can see active communities soliciting texts) and corresponding reflections on how their papers meet the needs of that audience, but they have less "skin in the game" in that setting.

With social media, especially Twitter, analytics are easily gathered and provided back to students for a much clearer reflection on how their techniques do or do not pay off. Miller's painful but accurate critique that "Almost every attempt to make student writing more 'relevant'

to experience outside the classroom undercuts itself by denying that the actual test of power (or 'effectiveness') from a piece of writing is how visibly it accomplishes precisely stated purposes among those who do not know its writer/author from immediate interactions" (103) requires thinking about how ethos can be taught without an audience beyond the classroom. Because I teach first-year writing to all pathways, requiring pitches to publications lies too far outside fair assessment of my students' writing. Situating some of their work within social media, however, allows me as a professor to embody the recognition that "there are other Englishes, tied to other contexts or communities, that are not simply underdeveloped or less-public versions of academic discourse, but that work toward different ends and whose use may express a competing or oppositional politics" (Harris *Teaching Subject* 119). Students are welcome to create posts to target any audience they desire to reach with any message relevant to the course theme of the literacy crisis, and, as they address specific discourse communities, they must engage with the specific lexis that comprise that discourse. Students have done this through addressing financial literacy to their peers, medical literacy to lay people, and even slang literacy to older generations.

In each case, my students are learning what Halloran clarifies as "why the concept of *ethos* is important" with specific strategies analyzed previously applied to their efforts and judged by data generated by the social media platforms, to better understand their own rhetorical choices and their repercussions (Halloran 63). By choosing to include an image or a video, they increase the likelihood that their post will be featured on a follower's feed, and if it is a video the user will likely have to click the content, further driving engagement. By using a relevant hashtag, they are increasing the likelihood that someone interested in that tag will see their post, driving up their impressions. Further, according to Nicotra's concept of "Folksonomy," the use of a hashtag brings back the idea of socially constructed knowledge: "Tags, produced by

multiple users, thus function as tools for invention. … the process of invention through tagging results from interaction between multiple users who are unknown to one another" (W272). When students view the engagements with a post, Twitter breaks the actions down to specifics: how many clicks to expand details (often for posts with images or larger elements that get compressed for easy scrolling), clicks on the username to view the profile, and clicks on the hashtag. A click on the hashtag then frames their individual post within a much larger discourse, where the reader can see how others are using the same tag to contribute to a larger body of knowledge or shared experience.

In other words, what I have taken a few pages to do in synthesizing ideas from disparate authors and even decades between Miller, Harris, and Halloran, a social media post can mimic in a single post of 240 words or less. Miller's objections to composition's focus on audience without providing a real audience, Harris's reminder that multiple types of discourse exist beyond the academic, and Halloran's insistence that ethics means too little in FYC without a real audience all find some remedy in a social media assignment. My social media writing activity focuses the student not on discovering a new and unique contribution to an academic topic that mirrors a format only useful within academic circles, but asks them to disguise or lose themselves in the class social media account to speak as our entity to a targeted audience interested in the course, not in the individual doing the labor of writing.

One final useful component of this Social Media assignment comes in the form of speaking corporately. Requesting students use their own personal SM poses several potential problems: 1.) not all students are materially able to participate in social media, 2.) students who have curated their SM meticulously would then be working counter to their previous work by introducing content related to literacy, and 3.) the engagements and impressions are not shared

content. The last problem is the least important – likes and retweets demonstrate an amount of engagement with a post to corroborate numbers, but in a work environment that content will most likely be owned by their managers or bosses and only distributed as necessary to the writers creating the content. By having students reflect on their SM campaign by reacting to the numbers their posts generate, students learn that access to those numbers does matter for their successful creation of content – if they want to improve in a work situation, they will need to request access to this content, demonstrating a rhetorical aptitude for SM posting that will hopefully set them apart.

The biggest reason I do not have students use their own social media is the first one enumerated above: not all students have access to social media. As Gold et al. warn in their study, "To do so [to invite students to engage online writing more], however, may require more research examining why students choose to write (or not write) in various spaces, their perceptions of the purposes of these spaces, and their technological proficiency with these spaces" (12). A student's choice to avoid specific digital writing spaces may take multiple forms, varying from the tech-savvy but disinterested student to the housing-insecure students who cannot depend on regular access to online services when they are not on campus. Teaching at an access-oriented institution has made this lack of access a larger concern for me, as have recent studies into college student housing ("Community Colleges" and "Housing Barriers" HUD) and food (Payne-Sturges et al.) insecurity. The assumption that our students are in some way privileged (or even "entitled") "digital natives" omits the lived reality of many students struggling to stay fed and housed, even if these same students did have an opportunity to develop digital acumen in their previous schooling. Exposing these students who face the same expectations from future employers to be digitally savvy to the basics of digital campaigns

cannot be considered "democratic" in an efficient manner, but it gestures towards ways education at colleges and universities can make efforts at equipping students with material means to succeed.

The second reason I enumerated above acknowledges the students' right to their own speech: my class activity will not add pressure to them in an environment they curate to use language from my discourse community or have to explain their choices in lexis to me. I do allow students to "signal boost" if they want to: @FreeChasGrumm is not a protected account, so anyone can like, comment, or share the posts as they feel inclined. Beyond that, though, I want to allow students a chance to think about what it means to speak corporately rather individually. I am not asking that they write posts as if they were in my voice, but rather to think about what tone the class should take towards their topic and audience. In the reflections I have students complete on this assignment, this aspect of the project seems to be the hardest to communicate: most students answer that they were writing for my social media, so they used my voice, despite my attempts to explain that @FreeChasGrumm is not me. For future work, though, many of my students will need to write as a member of their organization and not as an autonomous individual. Learning the skills required to lose one's personal voice may be just as difficult and useful for some students as it is for others to learn to embrace their unique voice as part of their writing process.

By exposing students to a corporate writing practice with explicit focus on the lack of individual voice, I want students to understand what I introduce in their first major paper, a literacy narrative. I ask students to write a narrative about a time they wrote something important to them, and I go to great lengths on the assignment sheet to demonstrate that "writing" does not mean "writing done for school." I always include the following pre-writing questions as part of

their brainstorming to help illustrate what "writing" can mean in addition to what they assume I mean as "writing-in-education":

> Did you ever find a word, phrase, picture, or symbol significant enough to have it tattooed on you?
>
> Did you ever write comics, cartoons, short stories, or other creative fictions?
>
> When did you first begin texting or using an instant messenger? How did it help you communicate with others?
>
> What websites, message boards, blogs, etc. informed your early digital writing practices?
>
> Did you ever get in trouble for writing something?
>
> Did you feel that you had correctly responded to a prompt, only to have a teacher or other critic state that you had not done so?
>
> Have you ever written a "Dear John/Jane" letter? (keep in mind that if you, like I, have actually done so, most audiences are not likely to be sympathetic to you!)
>
> If you have not written anything important to you, why has none of what you have written up to this point been important to you?

After writing this narrative and reading Brandt's "Sponsors of Literacy," Swales "The Concept of Discourse Communities," and a couple of chapters from *Bad Ideas about Writing* focusing on the idea of the "digital native" and critical views of including digital writing in FYC, students develop a view of writing as far more than the five-paragraph essay and the types of formal, researched writing usually prominent in college programs. I hope that students take this knowledge out of the classroom and notice the types of writing they do for work, but, more

importantly, I hope that they learn to value their writing in ways that will allow them to advocate for the worth of the practice.

As one last opportunity to reinforce this transferable skill, my students must write a discussion post critiquing the SM campaign assignment: they must clarify whether it is situated carefully within a broader plan of study that aligns with course goals or if it is "digital writing for digital writing's sake." As Sura claims about technology use in the classroom, the instructor brings ideologies to bear on technology choices and the technology and students can be shaped by these ideologies (15). To complete my unit on digital literacy, then, students have been led through a rhetorical analysis of social media posts in their own SM orbits; composed a miniature SM campaign related to readings from our literacy-focused composition course; read a couple of chapters that equip them with some terms and ideas to critique digital assignments; and, finally, are challenged to implement those tools to critique the course. The ideology supporting this choice is one that hopes students will carry their critical view outside the classroom and outside the college and into any workplace where they are required to write.

This dissertation is predicated on the idea that labor should not remain hidden. Just as Chapter 3 probed the weaknesses of ghostwriting as a profession and the resulting negative effect on writing studies, Chapter 4 has outlined the difficulties in attempting to re-create junior writing studies scholars in first-year composition with the emphasis on single-authored texts deprived of the authority necessary to occupy the role of the author. First-year composition began as a remedy to a perceived lack of writing ability, but it can evolve beyond the deficit model. Corporate writing can prepare students not for some nebulous iteration of "college-level writing" but instead for advocating for the worth of their writing and viewing all writing practices with a critical eye.

5   CONCLUSION

This dissertation began with three hypothetical writing situations where ghostwriting could easily factor in, and I would like to close with an amended version of those scenarios in light of this study: the Chief Financial Officer will still get to watch his child's play, but instead of leaving his marketing manager to find a free-lance content writer, he will contact the technical writers on his team to provide them with an assignment that aligns with their key performance indexes, one of which is by-lines on marketing collateral. The Ph.D. student, once he serves on the various committees of the faculty and college for service in his new role, will push for his department and school to acknowledge the best practices of writing studies concerning collaborative work and pioneer collaborative capstone assessment models that equip students to do inter-disciplinary or multimodal work. Finally, the student whose social media was bombarded with offers to write a paper on her behalf will understand that the skills that her writing labor is shaping in her writing course and her ability to work collaboratively outweigh the cost of a per-page potentially being caught violating student code of conduct.

Perhaps the final hypotheticals are too idealistic, but Chapter 1 provides a history of authorship that highlights the constantly changing interests of the "author" of a work. While originally a writer wrote to the praise of a patron before shifting to a small payment by the publisher who printed and distributed the work, eventually the person whose ideas were being printed assumed ownership over the words and ideas themselves. This history proves that, at some points, Western culture has valued the laborer who writes over the others who might benefit off of the laborer. The continued amendments to American copyright have swung back in the direction of giving ownership to the one who pays for writing rather than giving the pay to the one who writes, but the precedent for correct attribution exists as a goal even before America

entered the ideas industry. With the current level of writing required in most jobs, a return to valuing the laborer providing the writing would better fit our current context. While it may seem strange to mix both professional ghostwriting and student writing in FYC, I believe both sectors are required to address the disparity in pay and professional paths for writers. The currently published and as-yet outstanding research to establish best practices in attribution of corporate blogs and other works with attribution will fall to professionals in the field as well as to researchers whose careers allow them sufficient time to plan and execute a study that eliminates as many biases as possible. In the meantime, FYC presents a unique opportunity to interact with a large number of college students to help them develop critical skills with which to view their writing practices in the classroom and for their professions.

This dissertation models how this process of research and training might be done, with Chapters 3 and 4 reaching out to business writing and writing studies, respectively. Chapter 3 offered qualitative data to challenge the unsupported and pre-conceived notions about ghostwriting that prop up the status quo, beginning a necessary conversation about the role of writing in professional contexts. The study mechanism detailed in Chapter 2 lays the groundwork for developing a larger body of knowledge concerning audience reactions to ghostwriting if any "best practice" is ever going to be asserted for public relations and marketing professions. Chapter 2 also focuses a spotlight on the career progression of several ghostwriters rather than provide a simple snapshot of a specific job or avoid a critical view of ghostwriting. Other researchers have full access to the survey and interview protocols to replicate and aggregate data related to audience attitudes towards ghostwriting as well as related to ghostwriters' access to a viable career.

Similarly, First-Year Composition instructors can draw from the survey apparatus to help students engage in a critical view of authorship early in the FYC sequence. Most FYC programs have some standard regarding citation practices, and students inevitably end up needing to cite a source (often a website) that has no clearly listed author. When students run across this situation, FYC instructors can raise the question of what an "author" is in relation to corporate texts like websites, white papers, court cases, etc. that do not follow the typical financial-interest definition of authorship. By making students aware of the work of writing that goes unattributed, students can then engage more fully with the imbalance of power many writers face while also grappling with which genres of writing may benefit from no attribution. In this respect, this dissertation has taken the risk of splitting its attention between two very siloed audiences in professional writing and academic writing studies in the hopes that mutual understanding and research can remove some of the silo walls.

Chapter 3 analyzed the preliminary findings from my survey and interview samples. The survey findings were sufficient to highlight the term "best practice" as it relates to ghostwriting corporate blogs, as no industry standard has yet produced a list of best practices complete with research detailing how these practices were measured and tested. The interview data demonstrates a variety of approaches to ghostwriting based on the time spent in the field as well as the proximity to the decisions that determine what collateral will be authored by which individuals, but it also highlights the precarity of employment as a ghostwriter. Ghostwriters depend on the good graces of previous employers to continue giving them work or on editors to pass on their name and credentials to stay in work. The overall approach to ghostwriting (concealing the practice under other names or skills, failure to retain ghostwriters visibly on staff, refusal to make ghostwriters benefits-eligible, etc.) undermines the trade's insistence that

ghostwriting is an ethical practice, and the continued mis-attribution of the labor of writing

denigrates writing as a profession and an area of study.

Finally, by using my theory about the denigration of writing in professional contexts as a

lens through which to view first-year composition pedagogy in Chapter 4, I demonstrate the

similarities between the ghostwriter in professional contexts and the first-year composition

student in academic contexts regarding value and agency. Providing ample opportunities for

first-year composition students to engage in criticism of various approaches to authorship, but

especially by de-centering the single-author paper as the "gold standard" of writing, equips

students with the requisite knowledge about writing to demand more from their education and

future employers in terms of recognizing the power of their writing. At the same time, like any

comparison, the similarities are not perfect; my assertions may need to be tempered by further

conversations about the conflicting values of the student writer and the benefits of their writing,

just as easily as the ghostwriter's dichotomy between inherent worth and value from their

words.As I teach my first-year composition students, a good conclusion does more than just

provide a summary of what has been said and provides an invitation to the reader to take an

action. Reading Brandt's *Rise of Writing* led me to want to join her in answering the question

"How does a societal shift in time and energy toward writing affect the ways that people develop

their literacy and understand its worth?" (3). By sharing her interest in the topic of writing as the

dominant form of literacy and the implications that had on ghostwriting specifically, Brandt

sparked in me a curiosity about my own experience with ghostwriting and teaching composition.

I hope that the research questions that drove this dissertation inspire a curiosity and a criticism of

my claims alongside those I have detailed in this study and any of which I was unaware or that

develop after this dissertation is defended. Writing is, after all, a collaborative act. Even though I

have performed my own labor for the writing of this dissertation, I had friends and colleagues willing to take part in my research, willing to read and offer revisions, and I have a committee whose knowledge and personal styles impact my own. In that sense, while my dissertation is now complete, I intend for the conversation to continue in articles, research, and reflection of those involved in ghostwriting as well as those who wish to train thoughtful and careful writers.

APPENDICES

5.1   Appendix A: Survey Mechanism

5.1.1   Group 1: Control

Title: White Hat or Black Hat, If It Slows You Down It's a Bad Hat

Author: Reginald Fairfield, VP of Sales Engineering

This summer, I saw an article about a hacker deciding to take [vengeance on a scam call center posing as the IRS](#). The hacker uses a phone system Distributed Denial of Service (DDoS) attack: flooding the call center with more calls than their phone system could handle so that other callers cannot get through and the call center had no available lines for outbound calls. The embedded video gets painful to watch after a while, but as a viewer I enjoyed thinking about how someone could write code to arrange 28 calls/second to prevent a malicious call center from defrauding people. These so-called "white hat" hackers help the common man through specialized skills, but what about the "black-hat" hackers who use DDoS attacks for personal gain?

Sadly, malicious DDoS attacks are far more common. By overwhelming an app or a server with multiple requests, one coder could potentially do serious harm to any business, whether an established tech giant or a mom and pop operation with a simple website. To help clients fight against this type of malicious attack, Company 1 is offering DDoS protection through Company 2.

Perhaps you don't think that you would be a target of an attack like this, but according to [Digital Attack Map](#), DDoS attacks occur over 1,000 times per day and cost as little as $150/week to set up. Company 2 offers industry-leading, cloud-based protection from DDoS attacks from the website-level all the way to the infrastructure-level, ensuring that no matter what size business you are, your services experience the least possible interference. In fact, an Industry Leader in Software Testing found that Company 2's DDoS blocking software outperformed many of its competitors due to its scaled and adaptive response to established and emerging DDoS threats, inherently speeding up your server's response time and processing power.

Company 1 values your security while also acknowledging that different business levels have different defense needs. We are offering multiple levels of coverage based on the volume of protection you want (in Mbps or Mpps) and the scale of protection (from an app to an entire Class C Subnet) in always-on or on-demand formats to provide maximum security. So, if you are concerned about your level of protection from DDoS attacks, contact Company 1 today to see how we can help secure your place in the Cloud.

Survey Questions:

1.) How credible do you find this blog post? (Scale 1-4, 1= Very credible, 4=Not credible at all)

2.) Do the author's/authors' credentials affect the credibility of this blog post? (Yes, No, Indifferent)

3.) Does Company 1 appear to care about its readers[1]? (Yes, No, Indifferent)

4.) What about this blog post makes you inclined to believe the message? (Open answer)

5.) What could this blog do differently to make you believe the message more? (Open answer)

5.1.2   Group 2: Reveal Set

Title: White Hat or Black Hat, If It Slows You Down It's a Bad Hat

Author: Reginald Fairfield, VP of Sales Engineering

This summer, I saw an article about a hacker deciding to take vengeance on a scam call center posing as the IRS. The hacker uses a phone system Distributed Denial of Service (DDoS) attack: flooding the call center with more calls than their phone system could handle so that other callers cannot get through and the call center had no available lines for outbound calls. The embedded video gets painful to watch after a while, but as a viewer I enjoyed thinking about how someone could write code to arrange 28 calls/second to prevent a malicious call center from defrauding people. These so-called "white hat" hackers help the common man through specialized skills, but what about the "black-hat" hackers who use DDoS attacks for personal gain?

Sadly, malicious DDoS attacks are far more common. By overwhelming an app or a server with multiple requests, one coder could potentially do serious harm to any business, whether an established tech giant or a mom and pop operation with a simple website. To help clients fight against this type of malicious attack, Company 1 is offering DDoS protection through Company 2.

Perhaps you don't think that you would be a target of an attack like this, but according to Digital Attack Map, DDoS attacks occur over 1,000 times per day and cost as little as $150/week to set up. Company 2 offers industry-leading, cloud-based protection from DDoS attacks from the website-level all the way to the infrastructure-level, ensuring that no matter what size business you are, your services experience the least possible interference. In fact, an Industry Leader in Software Testing found that Company 2's DDoS blocking software outperformed many of its competitors due to its scaled and adaptive response to established and emerging DDoS threats, inherently speeding up your server's response time and processing power.

Company 1 values your security while also acknowledging that different business levels have different defense needs. We are offering multiple levels of coverage based on the volume of protection you want (in Mbps or Mpps) and the scale of protection (from an app to an entire Class C Subnet) in always-on or on-demand formats to provide maximum security. So, if you are concerned about your level of protection from DDoS attacks, contact Company 1 today to see how we can help secure your place in the Cloud.

Survey Questions:

1.) How credible do you find this blog post? (Scale 1-4, 1= Very credible, 4=Not credible at all)

2.) Do the author's/authors' credentials affect the credibility of this blog post? (Yes, No,

Indifferent)

3.) Does Company 1 appear to care about its readers[2]? (Yes, No, Indifferent)

4.) What about this blog post makes you inclined to believe the message? (Open answer)

5.) What could this blog do differently to make you believe the message more? (Open answer)

5.1.3 Group 3: Experiment

Title: White Hat or Black Hat, If It Slows You Down It's a Bad Hat

Authors: Reginald Fairfield (VP of Sales Engineering) and Chas Grumm (Digital Marketing Content Writer)

This summer, I saw an article about a hacker deciding to take [vengeance on a scam call center posing as the IRS](). The hacker uses a phone system Distributed Denial of Service (DDoS) attack: flooding the call center with more calls than their phone system could handle so that other callers cannot get through and the call center had no available lines for outbound calls. The embedded video gets painful to watch after a while, but as a viewer I enjoyed thinking about how someone could write code to arrange 28 calls/second to prevent a malicious call center from defrauding people. These so-called "white hat" hackers help the common man through specialized skills, but what about the "black-hat" hackers who use DDoS attacks for personal gain?

Sadly, malicious DDoS attacks are far more common. By overwhelming an app or a server with multiple requests, one coder could potentially do serious harm to any business, whether an established tech giant or a mom and pop operation with a simple website. To help clients fight against this type of malicious attack, Company 1 is offering DDoS protection through Company 2.

Perhaps you don't think that you would be a target of an attack like this, but according to [Digital Attack Map](), DDoS attacks occur over 1,000 times per day and cost as little as $150/week to set up. Company 2 offers industry-leading, cloud-based protection from DDoS attacks from the website-level all the way to the infrastructure-level, ensuring that no matter what size business you are, your services experience the least possible interference. In fact, an Industry Leader in Software Testing found that Company 2's DDoS blocking software outperformed many of its competitors due to its scaled and adaptive response to established and emerging DDoS threats, inherently speeding up your server's response time and processing power.

Company 1 values your security while also acknowledging that different business levels have different defense needs. We are offering multiple levels of coverage based on the volume of protection you want (in Mbps or Mpps) and the scale of protection (from an app to an entire Class C Subnet) in always-on or on-demand formats to provide maximum security. So, if you are concerned about your level of protection from DDoS attacks, contact Company 1 today to see how we can help secure your place in the Cloud.

Survey Questions:

1.) How credible do you find this blog post? (Scale 1-4, 1= Very credible, 4=Not credible at all)

2.) Do the author's/authors' credentials affect the credibility of this blog post? (Yes, No,

   Indifferent)

3.) Does Company 1 appear to care about its readers[3]? (Yes, No, Indifferent)

4.) What about this blog post makes you inclined to believe the message? (Open answer)

5.) What could this blog do differently to make you believe the message more? (Open answer)

5.2   Appendix B: Interview Questions

Opening script: "From this point forward, all responses will be recorded. Please do not give any identifying information that would expose your or anyone else's identities in the course of your answers."

Demographics:

What is your chosen pseudonym for the reporting of results?

What is your current position title?

How long have you held this position?

What title did you apply for, if different than your current position?

What skills were requested for the position on the job description?

[Follow-up] Can you send it to me, if you still have it?

Professional:

How much of your daily work consists of writing?

What types of writing do you do?

Ghostwriting:

Are you listed as the author of your own work?

[If applicable] What percentage is published under your name as opposed to the company or an executive?

[If applicable] Who is listed as the author of the work if not you? How is this decided?

[If applicable] How do you build a portfolio if other names are on your writing?

[If applicable] When writing for someone else, how do you account for their voice?

[Follow-up if needed] Do you spend time reading their work, listening to their speeches, etc. to get a feel for their voice?

How do you write to a specific audience?

How do you track who reads it and their impressions of it?

How do you think readers would respond if they discovered that something was written by a content writer or other professional not listed as the author?

5.3 Appendix C: Teaching Materials

5.3.1.1 *Bad Ideas about Writing*

This is a free textbook that approaches writing studies by allowing authors to write about bad ideas about writing that bother them. Keep this in mind when reading the chapter titles! When you read "African American Language is Not Good English" as a chapter title, the author is not trying to prove this statement - they are taking exception with an idea they have seen or heard expressed about writing.

For the in-class discussion, I want you to read two chapters of my choosing ("The More Digital Technology the Better" and "Digital Natives and Digital Immigrants") and any one chapter that interests you.

5.3.2   ENGL 1101 – Social Media Analysis

- 5% of the final grade

Purpose: This assignment asks you to view Social Media (SM) posts as a rhetorical activity – this means that instead of reading for entertainment or content, you will think about how and why social media posts were written the way they were and how they were meant to affect you as the reader. While this is a useful skill for the following assignments in class, I also hope that you will practice this kind of criticism of SM

Task: For this portion of the assignment sequence, I want you to write a short paper (2 pages) that begin by explaining what SM platform (Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, Tiktok, etc.) you chose to analyze and how you selected the 3 posts you selected to analyze. The body of this paper should discuss the rhetorical aspects of the three posts:

- How does the author establish credibility? (ethos)

- How does the author try to get an emotional reaction from the reader? (pathos)

- How does the author choose words/hashtags/images/videos/links/etc to make their point clear to the reader? (logos)

- What is the context for these posts – personal, professional, pop-culture, political, etc.? (kairos)

It is up to you whether you analyze each post separately or take all three as one "corpus" (body of work/selection of texts) to analyze as a whole. If you are using someone's personal account, you might choose individual analysis. If you are choosing from an activist hashtag, you will likely use the "corpus" approach.

After you complete this assignment, you will move on to the Social Media Copy assignment to create Twitter material for our class SM presence, @FreeChasGrumm. If you are not a regular consumer/producer of SM, you can analyze posts from this class account.

Grading Criteria:

For a B on this paper, turn in an MLA formatted (unless agreed on otherwise) full 2 page paper that cites all sources both in-text and in the works cited page. The paper identifies a social media platform and selection criteria in solid terms and analyzes basic rhetorical concepts identified on this assignment sheet. Close attention to Be Verbs and Passive Voice will set this apart from previous writing, but some issues with these mechanical aspects will still be present. Paper will show basic, thoughtful editing for the reader to have an easy reading experience.

5.3.3   ENGL 1101 – Social Media Copy

- 5% of the final grade

Purpose: To practice writing in an in-demand genre with attention to raising readership levels on a major Social Media (SM) outlet. The copy for these posts will require you to practice using the voice of the class rather than your own personal voice, which will likely be required of any writing you do for future employers.

Task: For this portion of the assignment sequence, I want you to create three unified SM posts concerning the value of literacy for an assigned text from this class. While you do not have to include quotes from these texts in the posts, your introduction to the posts will explain the connection for me.

Use PowerPoint (no .docx or .PDF files allowed – you all have access to Powerpoint through Office 365 via GHC) to create a presentation containing the following slides:

Slide 1: Introduction – What text were you assigned?

Slide 2: Readership – Who do you think will read this? How did you target this audience in your writing?

Slides 3-5: Copy for Tweets 1-3 – only include the text, images, etc. exactly as you want them to be copied and pasted (for text) and inserted (for media like images)

Slide 6: Timeline – when do you want each post to go live? Why did you choose that timeline?

Slide 7: Reflection: How did this writing experience differ from the analysis assignment?

Slide 8: Reflection: How did you create the "voice" of our course as distinct from your own voice?

Slide 9: Reflection: How does writing within 240 characters per post impact your writing experience? How is this different than the challenge of meeting page lengths for papers?

Grading Criteria:

This is a completion grade – you either get 5 points or 0 (with a chance to revise if this happens).

For an A on this assignment, turn in a Powerpoint file that includes all the requested slides with clear, specific information.

5.3.4   Discussion Post: Is a SM Campaign a "Bad Idea" for English Composition?

Think about the chapters I am assigning from *Bad Ideas about Writing* in terms of the Social Media assignment - is it perhaps engaging in any dangerous assumptions? Do you feel that this writing assignment is somehow "less real" than a typical English paper or essay?

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