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RHETORIC, ECONOMY AND THE TECHNOLOGIES OF ACTIVIST DELIVERY

By

James Ridolfo

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ABSTRACT

RHETORIC, ECONOMY AND THE TECHNOLOGIES OF ACTIVIST DELIVERY

By

James Ridolfo

This project locates new strategies for rhetorical delivery through a research focus on practices of activist delivery. The objective of this thesis is to begin to locate new strategies that may inform how the discipline of rhetoric understands delivery. Focusing on the intersection of technology, economic theory and rhetoric, this thesis locates new theories of strategizing the mass-distribution of writing through appropriation. In this sense the author locates a *kairos* applicable to contemporary digital networks, one that looks at how documents transverse the digital and analog through forces of economy.

Drawing on emerging work on circulation and rhetorical delivery from Porter, Miles, DeVoss, and Trimbur, this thesis theorizes new strategies for delivery emerging from the author's own observations of local activist campaigns. He then attempts a focused analysis on how changes in the means of production and distribution can impact future activist strategies. This development of delivery theory touches on areas related to areas as diverse as media consolidation and changes in labor.

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my father.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction: Rhetoric, Technology, Economics

The project of this thesis is to begin a conversation on how certain types of public writing are inseparably bound to practices of rhetoric. In particular my work looks at how the reception of and re-distribution of public writing may, in many public contexts, be impacted by how economies value particular texts. It is with a focus on practice in mind that I attempt to show how economic valuations exert an impact on how documents are produced and circulated. I will attempt to show how this understanding of economy and technology may help inform the rhetorical strategies of delivery for political activists.

For this thesis I will be focusing on certain types of public writing as activist writing. The range of issues these case examples cover are: war, the USA Patriot Act, sexual assault, the global anti-sweatshop movement, and the Free Trade Area of the Americas.[1] However, this thesis is not as much about these issues proper, but is more focused on rhetorical strategies and tactics of delivery used in certain moments of these campaigns. In describing these tactics it is not my intention to write anything of permanence here: what I reflect on in these pages are necessarily the strategies of the old, and the new is very much still in tomorrow. Activism, by its basic drive toward social change, thrives off of new theoretically informed practices.[2]

What I am looking at first is how economies function as networks of distribution. This focus is not new, but what is new I hope is my analysis in chapter three of how

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[1] I will be only focusing on certain types of activism. There are many types of activisms ranging from the smallest unseen acts to the broadest of sweeping social movements. This thesis will be focusing on certain types of campaign-related activism.

[2] Cushman (1996) points out that many types of activisms are "overlooked or underestimated with the emancipatory theories we currently use" (14). I agree.

1

changes in the digital impact the economic conditions of the media. Trimbur (2000) and Miles (1996) draw attention to how economics handles the circulation and distribution of texts. Miles examines how "curricular globalization is presented to students" through the circulation of textbooks, critiquing how the U.S. textbook industry falsely posits the U.S. classroom as a "producer" of writing, with internationals textually represented as "consumers" of writing (187). Trimbur argues that the "isolation of writing from the material conditions of production" is a problem. Trimbur argues against a conceptual separation between the canons of delivery and invention (189). What is new to this discussion is James Porter's (2005, April) examination of how the fifth canon of classical rhetoric, delivery, has a renewed *economic* importance for digital distribution.

But DeVoss & Porter's forthcoming (2005) article "Why Napster Matters to Writing: The New Economy and Ethic of Digital Delivery" is the most comprehensive article I've found to date on why issues of file-sharing, particularly intellectual property issues, should matters to rhetorical studies. DeVoss and Porter use the Napster controversy as a case example to argue for an "expanded notion of delivery, one that embraces the politics and economics of publishing: the politics of technology development as they impact production and distribution; the politics of information" (DeVoss & Porter, 25).

They define "delivery" as having an awareness of "the choice of tools for production, reproduction, and distribution of digital 'information,' knowledge of systems which govern, constrain and promote publishing," -- including economic models, and "awareness of the ethical and political issues that impact publishing practices" (DeVoss & Porter, 26).

In this sense I am working from two positions relatively new to rhetoric and composition studies, that (1) economics is a landscape for public writing that we can no longer ignore and (2) this landscape must be a renewed consideration of the neglected canon of rhetoric, delivery. In "Beyond Snap, Crackle, and Pop: Toward a Theory and Pedagogy of Multimodal Civic Rhetoric" (2005) David Sheridan, Tony Michel and I argue that in order to prepare students to effectively participate politically we need to be teaching the sort of multimodal literacies the New London Group (2005) has advanced.

From these two propositions I can conclude from Marx that a developed understanding of economics mandates an understanding of the means of production and distribution. To be short: looking at the current technologies of writing production and distribution are critical to developing effective strategies for delivery. In this sense I look at not only the emerging networks of digital production and distribution but also the interactions of the analog and the digital. I will argue and attempt to demonstrate throughout this work that a developed strategy of delivery should account for instances of analog delivery.

From these three working propositions follows my attempts to develop strategies for delivery that take into account the complexities of economic landscapes and their technologies of distribution. I believe that considering these two factors in inventive considerations for rhetorical practice point to the development of complex *network* strategies: strategies that include an understanding of how patterns of distribution ripple across a wide range of technologies.[3]

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[3] The drop of water must no longer be considered to only fall and ripple in a single liquid. Water flows across many surfaces, mixes with many other liquids, and has many ways of moving about.

Nancy Welch (2005) in her recent *College Composition and Communication* piece describes this sort of public writing as "living room writing." She refers to public writing as "living room writing" in the sense, I believe, that this kind of writing helps us create room to live (pp. 470-492). Ellen Cushman (1996) calls this (and activism in general) an acceptance of "a civic duty to empower people with our positions" (p. 14). Christian Weisser and Sidney Dobrin (2001) describe the sort of advocacy writing I will be talking about as ecocomposition, which they say must necessarily include a component of activism that moves writing beyond the classroom space (p. 7). My intention is to examine, specifically, some of the conditions that move texts along and help to make public writing not only available, but to move beyond referential ability to include effective strategies for delivery and distribution. As part of my project I will be examining rhetorical strategies that take economy into consideration the delivery, circulation and distribution of texts. Aristotle in book three of his *Rhetoric* states that, "delivery is -- very properly -- not regarded as an elevated subject of inquiry" (1404A). In the present context, today, I firmly disagree with Aristotle's abridged and dismissive treatment of delivery. In the age of mass-distribution it is politically essential to consider and develop adequate strategies and theories of delivery. From my own practices I believe that such strategies are absolutely essential to successful activist and public writing.

Simply put, I will be telling several stories about how writing is distributed. Beyond distribution, I will be talking about how *delivered* writing continues to circulate, particularly, as Kathleen Welch (1990) notes, now that rhetoric is electronic. In my mind, this notion of a process, this idea of a continuation of the initial act of delivery, *a part*

deux if you will, explores the ways in which a piece of writing can *continue* to work

politically. In this sense of delivery, there is present an *activism* component. In my

invocation of circulation, there is also the signification of economy. To look at the

economy of writing is, and I believe Foucault (1977) would agree, to talk about [written]

discourse as inseparable from the dynamic structures of information we draw upon to

inform the knowledge that helps determine *the next step* in a cycle, a cycle of present and

future knowledge-producing actions (pp. 210-237). A press advisory may help to

generate multiple derivative articles; a stencil may create innumerable representations of

its shadow; a digital film may be re-appropriated into countless other works.[4] And this

may all be seen as economic.

I will be using the term "economy" to explain how texts come to be valuated and

circulated. I am not using economy as a homogenizing term: there are many economic

systems, or *processes of valuation*. For the economy of the activist, the digital film has no

immediate cash value: its value to the activist is based on its effectiveness in raising

awareness on the activists cause. For the activist delivering content to the fellow activist,

the value of the thing will most likely have the same usage value for both parties.

It is this anticipation of economic valuation, this anticipation of networks of

delivery and circulation, where activist strategy may converge into economy and

delivery– this is the moment of a new *kairos* because it mandates the new consideration

of a range of complex economies and technologies:

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[4] Foucault notes the trend that…"the development of the disciplines marks the appearance of elementary techniques belonging to a quite different economy: mechanisms of power which, instead of proceeding by deduction, are integrated into the productive efficiency of the apparatuses from within, into the growth of this efficiency and into the use of what it produces" (219). Inductively speaking, then, Foucault is in part telling us that we need to re-examine how our everyday mechanisms operate in relation, specifically, to economy. This is relevant to this discussion in terms of how networks and composing moves forward.

Kairos is an ancient Greek word that means "the right moment'" or "the opportune." The two meanings of the word apparently come from two different sources. In archery, it refers to an opening, or "opportunity" or, more precisely, a long tunnel-like aperture through which the archer's arrow has to pass. Successful passage of a *kairos* requires, therefore, that the archer's arrow be fired not only accurately but with enough power for it to penetrate. The second meaning of *kairos* traces to the art of weaving. There it is "the critical time" when the weaver must draw the yarn through a gap that momentarily opens in the warp of the cloth being woven. Putting the two meanings together, one might understand *kairos* to refer to a passing instant when an opening appears which must be driven through with force if success is to be achieved. (White, p. 13)

To begin untangling what this means in terms of practical action (and activism), I look toward select casuistic examples in order to help understand how strategies of delivery may be understood in specific examples of activist rhetoric. I look at how the technologies of delivery and distribution are bound to an aggregate of strategies that exist in rhetoric, but are also bound to, as John Trimbur (2000) notes, the forces of economic circulation. I believe that theorizing these actions is helpful in understanding how these *patterns* of delivery work in networks of economy and distribution.[5]

Analytically, I find it difficult to make the concept of a 'network' into a simple topic. Such a conversation has never been particularly easy to discuss, especially when cables and wires are not the defining limiters of the definition. Historically, Samuel Johnson's fame among philologists is legendary for his obtuse 18th century definition of a network as "any thing reticulated or decussated at equal distances with interstices between the intersections." Johnson's definition is haunting, not because it's the worst definition ever constructed, but because, as William Kenney (1960) once pointed out, "no one has been able to come up with a definition more exact," and I find myself reluctantly

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[5] In *The New Economic Criticism* (1999), Mark Osteen and Martha Woodmansee ask two questions about economic (literary) criticism which I believe are salient for the discussion of public writings, too: "How do literary and cultural markets work and what determines their dynamics? And: "what is the relationship between economic practices, laws or theories – property, credit/debt, money and subjectivity" (p. 40).

inclined to agree with Kenney's conclusion (p. 103). When the circulation and delivery of writing are productively theorized as happening via economy as John Trimbur (2000) has suggested, then I'd argue that networks of distribution and delivery become an important component of complex rhetorical strategies of social change. But how do we begin to theorize these complex economic networks with not even a bearable definition of "network" at our disposal? I would suggest that we might proceed forward through a hermeneutic understanding, beginning with an analysis of how the pieces of our rhetorical actions ripple from one economy to the next. I believe that for leftist activists the economic lens of inquiry can be useful for not only understanding political economy, but also as a way to understand and actualize complex patterns of network delivery and distribution.

As the infrastructure of networks surrounding us becomes increasingly complex, as the very "immaterial" natures of certain [digital] writings have the abilities to resonate in ever more complex patterns, places and ways, I believe that rhetorical theory must begin to address the networked economies of rhetorical circulation and delivery, and it is my hope that this thesis is a positive step in furthering such conversation.[6]

In this spirit I start from my assumption that networks are becoming increasingly essential to understanding the rhetorical landscapes of networked *agoras,* and the political actions of the *polis.* There now exist networked marketplaces where packaged ideas are bought and sold nearly independent of physical location, and this strikes me as

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[6] I consciously use the term "immaterial" because the term economically distinguishes this change in technology and production from previous changes, such as the advent of the printing press. While a newspaper may be considered digitally produced, it has an analog product, the physical paper. It is my hope that focusing on changes in the site of production will shed light on how technology and economy are creating time-specific, *kairotic* opportunities for activists choosing to strategically engage the capitalist press.

an important proposition to begin a larger conversation.[7] What I shall be exploring, then, is how rhetoric relates to the project that critical theorist Manuel De Landa (1996) calls on scholars to pursue, to explore what it means when "small producers interconnected via computer networks... have access to different, yet as intense economies of scale" (p. 192) As part of my contribution to this project, I provide a number of activist scenarios that interface through economies of network and scale.

Through my use of "case examples" I show instances that help to enhance my understanding of how writing may be rhetorically theorized, composed and delivered in a range of networked economies that each have their own models for circulation, production and distribution. In part I must start from the ground up to describe that make sense for writing. I look at specific heuristic examples of how the new material conditions encourage the conditions for the "appropriation" of texts.

Appropriatableness is an economic state in which a text finds itself after its production. The type of appropriatableness (if any) may be considered from two positions: positive appropriation and negative appropriation. Positive appropriation is *rhetorical*: it may be considered from the state in which the text *has been intentionally written to be productively actualized (by a third party) a relatively specific economic way*. I call this composing for *rhetorical velocity*.

In the inventive stages when delivery (particularly mass delivery) is a concern, rhetorical velocity is the specific set of reflections that involve thinking far and wide

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[7] In the ideas of circulation and delivery I will be referring to, Deleuze and Guittari's notion of the "production of production," or rather the creation of something creating something else may be a useful heuristic but will not be one that I find particularly accurate or helpful for a practical rhetorical strategy. The second section of *Capitalism and Schizophrenia* may be particularly useful.

8

through the possible distributions of a text. This includes considerations of economic landscapes and moments and places where textual appropriation may occur.

In the press advisory example I look at in chapter two, one thinks beforehand of publication deadlines, reporters material conditions (including how local reporters prefer to receive and process the text) and these considerations are calculated along side the rhetorical goals of the advisory writer. This equation that makes up the delivery and composition considerations of the writer in relation to future goals for reproduction and distribution is to approximate the rhetorical velocity of a text. And in this sense rhetorical velocity considers the future time (and particular moments) and place(s) of texts as part of a strategy for delivery.

This inventive act of writing a text for rhetorical velocity (positive appropriation) is in part an advanced theory of *kairos* because it looks toward the technology, economics, place and future moment where strategies of delivery may succeed.

The radical break in this work comes in chapter three, when I introduce a way to theorize changes in economy based on an examination of the changing means of production in which certain writing occurs. In my analysis I introduce the economic refraction of the rhetorical concept of positive appropriation: negative appropriation.

Negative appropriation is an outcome of *production* that is not intended by the original author. Negative appropriation involves the re-use or re-application of an "immaterial" thing for an economic gain on of a third party. The impact of negative production in certain instances is an economic formula where the originary labor force gradually suffers based on the negative appropriation of its product. As we will see, I call this "hyper-production" in chapter three. My justification for making the move toward

new economic theories from composition studies is to highlight future strategies for rhetorical delivery. In this sense I believe that looking toward the *future* material conditions of composing may shed light on possible activist strategies for distribution.

A strategy of delivery must look to the *future* of networks, which must include the foresight to see how complex economic and technological movements will interact with delivery in a particular *place and time*.

And this is an integral part of the electronic *kairos* of tomorrow.

Methodology

As I've already indicated, the methodological approach I use in this thesis is heavily reliant upon "case examples" from my own observations and practices. This practitioner-observer approach has its relative strengths and weaknesses. For the most part, I am practicing first, and observing my practices as case examples.[8] To analyze my practices I will be using the casuistic approach from Albert Jonsen and Stephen Toulmin's work (1990), specifically the *Abuse of Casuistry*. Jim Porter (2000) describes the use of Jonsen and Toulmin's approach as one that:

> takes general and conventional principles and then looks at cases (or develops them) that challenge the parameters of those principles. The aim of this principle is to develop analytically and analogically more flexible ethical principles capable of addressing the complexity of human action. Principles derived in such a way do not hold "universal or invariable" status, but they do have heuristic power in guiding ethical dimensions. (p. 20)

As a far left-leaning progressive, I've come to appreciate the creativity of how my compatriots and myself are challenged, day-by-day, campaign after campaign, to find

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[8] It's important to note that I am *not* talking about a case study, which invokes a very particular methodological approach. Rather, I am looking at "case" in the casuistic vein.

new ways to reach ever-changing audiences. Usually, this work is done with little or no available funding, and this is perhaps one of the most important features of grassroots activism from the left. As anti-war, alternate globalization activists working on local issues, we each individually take our positioned stances on issues as they arise and then organize and work on the local level to help affect, we optimistically hope, local, national and international change.

We do not have television stations broadcasting our messages, and we certainly don't have well-funded newspapers with mass distribution. What we do have is often a hat, passed around a room full of compatriots, with, at the end of the night, change and whatever dollar bills people can spare. What we have is, most importantly, each other and institutional resources such as university computing and cheap printing. We strategize rhetoric, and we strategize our resources and what money we have to be as effective as possible in making our message heard. For the grassroots left, understanding how we make use of what little resources we have is a deeply important process that necessarily includes an understanding of economy and networks of distribution in the rhetorical process of invention.

I find an intellectual and emotional strength in the retelling of chosen practices because I am also, at the same time, helping to narrate the stories -- the particular places, moments and people -- that have given me countless moments of inspiration. In this sense, I find *hope* and *possibility* in the retelling of these stories - the theorizing I do from these memories is a way for me to think of how future victories remain *a rhetorical* possibility. As one of my theory professors, Dr. Malea Powell, has said repeatedly in her

graduate seminars and hallway discussions, "theory is story.[9]" I agree completely. And in this sense I provide a single question at the beginning of each section in order to help connect each scenario to larger questions of rhetoric, economy, and technology.

It is not my intention offer absolute answers to the questions I pose. Instead, I seek in this text that these queries be considered, in part, not only by the stories I've provided, but also through the ideas and stories you, the reader may bring to the text. Future rhetorical practice is, after all, still yet to be determined.

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[9] Theory as a story is also an important point Malea Powell makes in her work titled "*Down by the River, or How Susan La Flesche Picotte Can Teach Us about Alliance as a Practice of Survivance.*"

Section Questions

Analog Delivery & Distribution: A Flyer in a Hand...

Question: how do I theorize my activist delivery?

Digital Delivery & Distribution: A Film in a File...

Question: how might emerging file-sharing technologies act as time-sensitive near-independent peer-to-peer communications media?

Between the Analog and the Digital: The Press Advisory

Question: how and when does one invent a text with the express intent of causally producing other texts?

The 'Digital Delivery' of Spray-Painted Stencils

Question: how do the analog and the digital co-relate, and co-participate in delivery?

Toward an Economic Lens for Strategies of Delivery & Distribution

Question: how is the digital economically different from the analog, and what does this mean for activist strategies of delivery?

Immateriality and Its Potential Impact on Labor Conditions

Question: how might the digital change labor conditions?

Understanding The Transition from Materiality to "Immateriality"

Question: how can an understanding of changing labor markets and modes of distribution be highly strategic to progressive activists?

CHAPTER TWO

Activist Practice: Analog and Digital Delivery and Distribution

In the weeks leading up to the invasion of Afghanistan in the fall of 2001, there was, it seemed to those of us on the campus left, no stopping either the drum beats of war or the congressional actions of reactionary "patriots." And in those weeks following September 11, just before the October attack on Afghanistan, it was clear to peace activists that war and the erosion of civil liberties through the USA Patriot Act were the final decision, leaving activists little time to make their voices heard. But soon after Afghanistan had been invaded yet another country was falling into the bombsights of the new neo-conservative leadership whose agenda, by that point, was written out quite clearly in the documents of the *Project for the New American Century* (see bib).

As an organizer during this lonely period of progressive politics in America, I was concerned – as any organizer of a fledgling body might be – with the number of activists, our ability to grow as a movement, and our ability to affect US policy. After the attack on Afghanistan, many of us on the campus left asked of each other what it was that we were looking to challenge and accomplish over the next few years on a university, state, and national level. We set our minds to the task of envisioning and thinking through the practical steps a movement needed to take in order to begin resisting the newly posited appearance of a homogenized America. We envisioned a resistance that would create spaces within institutions (our immediate institutions) where opposition would be visible, possible, productive, and reproductive (for our local organizing). This took the form of electing candidates to student government, the university paper, and advisory boards.

We needed to begin the long work of growing a movement: we needed to increase our numbers, our presence in all forms of local, national and international media. Most of all, our point of views needed to be present in as many sites of conversation as possible. In those early days of planning and carefully crafted actions leading up, unfortunately, to the Iraq war, something became clear to me from our political actions: we (the few) were not simply trying to "convince" the many (everyone) in some unstructured and vague manner: we were trying to create actions, documents, and expressions of ideas that would be adopted, mentioned, re-written, and re-spoken by others to others.

We were trying, desperately so, to understand replication, media, and distribution: the problems that remained so disturbingly unresolved after the political and theoretical upheavals of May 1968.[10] In practice, the written expressions of post-structuralism and postmodernity had left us with no step-by-step program for the type of organizing and actions we needed to do in order to counter effectively the range of rapidly deployed mass media formations.

I will not claim that what followed from the weeks of September 11, 2001 to the time of April 2003 was an example of successful grassroots action. And I cannot claim that the sequence of antiwar events was in any way part of a large scale revolutionary praxis, for the overwhelming majority of our actions between the Fall of 2001 to the Spring of 2003 were heavily impacted by the mass media's representation of our actions. What I know, from my experiences as an antiwar organizer, is that I needed practical theories of how a developed media culture and information society impacted my activist practices. We needed to know how the capitalist media could effectively represent (or not) our progressive positions because that was a major part of the *agora* where the case

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[10] See also http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/May_68

for war was being mass disseminated to the public. And there was not a lot of time to figure these things out. The antiwar movement had little more than a year to attempt to convince and dissuade a population that war was not the best answer. And in this year we needed to learn how to gauge accurately how the rhetorical ripples we as progressive activists created were impacting the rest of society, how these ripples were working toward or against our programme, our political *telos*.

What I believe came out of these experiences was a deeper understanding of networks, of how ideas move about and over people: how the individual has agency to affect what is considered by Gramscian and Frankfurt school scholars to be the "superstructure." One of the questions that we faced, one of the questions that I know activists still face, is deceptively simple enough: how does one maximize individual agency and efficacy within and outside the confines of an advanced media superstructure?

For example, consider the activist handing out flyers on the quadrangle of most campuses. Anyone who has ever done this will attest that it is terribly difficult to convince someone of the merits of an idea in the middle of a busy place. People are walking to and from somewhere, and the majority of the time people know where they will be walking and when they should be arriving: their watches remind them of this fact. The walker's predetermined allotment of time makes the distribution of flyers an often-daunting, if not deeply frustrating task. And perhaps the person does take the flyer: how close is the nearest trashcan? What are the odds that the flyer will be dropped into the trashcan without being read? How charismatic do I appear when I hand the flyer to someone? Is the flyer itself effective? Whose hand, exactly, am I handing the flyer to?

I remember very distinctly flyering close to the passage of the USA Patriot Act in the weeks prior to its signing into law on October 26, 2001.[11] I had a full-length 300-page copy of the bill, and I was handing out flyers with selected "highlights" from the full text. I implored, I begged people walking by to please, please read excerpts from the bill and call their legislators: "They're throwing out your civil liberties!" I would exclaim with urgency.

"Could you please take a moment to read what your congressman has chosen to support?" I'd timidly ask.

"No," the response almost always fell on a "No."

No. But what do I do with this "No?" How does this "No?" change my rhetorical practices? What does the trashcan full of flyers mean, exactly, and to whom does it signify? We can suppose, for the sake of discussion, that there was nothing wrong with the idea of civil liberties: that my assumption that my audience cared about civil liberties was not an incorrect assumption on my part: then, one must conclude that the expression of my idea and perhaps its delivery was problematic to the context in question, with emphasis on the time and place of the quadrangle.

I believe that it's moments such as this, moments where there is a dire need to inform a population unresponsive to the tried-and-true modes of delivery, when one begins to evaluate critically not simply their own modes of delivery, but all available modes of delivery. In my self-reflexive evaluation of the delivery of my flyers, I concluded that I had encountered a problem of appropriation: I wasn't offering something to be appropriated. In contrast when I saw a corporate promoter on the quadrangle, I

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[11] See also http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Patriot_act

notice the "gimmick," the free water bottle, the scrunchie ball – all of these things draped

with a corporate logo, functioning as complex rhetorical objects, things with use-value

permanently bound, to their corporate existence as an object of advertisement.

And from these experiences of flyering I concluded that I needed to stop thinking

of a flyer as simply "text on paper crafted in waiting anticipation of an audience," but that

I needed to begin thinking of text as an object, of the object-status of the discourse. I

needed to begin thinking of how to transfer the object, how the object may be utilized,

built upon, re-exchanged, and re-produced.

In this sense, when audience is considered in particular instances of invention and

through the overall composing process, one at least implicitly invents with a concept of

delivery in mind, and this includes to varying degrees considerations of style,

arrangement, as well as a concept of memory that is intrinsic to the mnemonic *qualia* of

the chosen medium.[12] To write an article, for example, was in the past to necessarily

express the composition through the use of a script or typewriter onto a finite medium

such as leather, paper, cloth, etc. The productive understanding of such an action would

then be to create a *discrete and finite material instance of writing*: the product, an article

that, in the instance of the typewriter, is bound by ink and anchored to a physical page.

While the article may be orally read to an audience, the oral delivery of the piece is

initially theorized as an action of delivery situated in time and place: the finite production

of a speech-act eternally anchored and referenced to an equally particular place and

moment. And for the article to be read by an audience, in order for it to reach multiple

eyes at a concurrent instance of time, the article must be scribed, etched by hand or

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[12] As DeCerteau (1998) points out "Memory comes from somewhere else, it is outside of itself, it *moves things about*" (p. 86).

reprinted through a second, physically distinct piece of reproductive machinery: a printing press or a copying machine.

Already, one can begin to see that the immediate considerations for *mass-distribution* within the analog sphere *have been and still are* limited by the physical constraints of time, space, medium and economy. To create copies of the writing requires the expenditure of labor time on the part of someone, somewhere with *some pair of hands*: to begin to mass-reproduce the piece of writing requires the necessary physical transport of the writing across a material space, and these two considerations are both a part of the theoretical as well as the practical determinants the writer must work through when inventing and composing *into* and *for* an analog medium. In the analog medium there is a physical understanding that there is labor involved in the act of printing: that the printing press requires that its type be meticulously set, that the copy machine mandates that stacks of paper and cartridges of ink be continually fed into its metal body. In this sense the activist writer staring at a page full of ink understands that the writing is, at its very moment of creation, waiting for a second instance of physical movement to transpire before the piece may be transported to multiple, simultaneous places in time and space.

In the past, the same can also be said of photographic and cinematic production. Chemicals were required to be poured, film to be dipped into baths, and labor time, even with ever-increasing mechanical augmentation, was necessary expenditure in order to produce and reproduce the *image-event* for the purposes of delivery (DeLuca, 1999). And as we will see in the next two sections, strategies of delivery can be both partially digital and partially analog, hybrids sharing particular rhetorical benefits.

Digital Delivery & Distribution: A Film in a File...

Question: how might emerging file-sharing technologies act as time-sensitive near-independent peer-to-peer communications media?

On November 20, 2003, labor, students, and grassroots activists converged in the downtown of Miami, Florida to protest a meeting of trade ministers who had come to negotiate the next version of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), known as the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA). The corporate aims of the FTAA agreement are to expand NAFTA from Canada to the tip of Argentina. If enacted, the FTAA would provide no protections for fair labor standards, creating the market conditions for laissez-faire privatization and deregulation of local industries, natural resources, and labor protections.[13]

As activists gathered in Miami on the first day of the trade meetings, the Miami police department's strategy of pre-emptive action took the form of the calculated use of physical force on anti-FTAA demonstrators. The Miami police brutalized demonstrators from dawn on Thursday, November 20 well into the late evening, and then continued to terrorize demonstrators well into the next day. In Figure 1.1 I show a shot from my film where the police randomly rounded up union workers, many elderly, and shoved them to the ground pointing shotguns in their backs. This brutality was commonplace the week of the FTAA meeting. Independent media, or, as the police re-defined media on the streets media that was not embedded with the police, were also a target.

The city of Miami had vested interests in the outcome of the trade negotiations. Corporations in the Miami region had economic incentives to see that the trade talks went uninterrupted and, most importantly, were kept out of the public spotlight. As activists

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[13] **See also** http://www.stopftaa.org **and** http://www.ftaaimc.org

20

planned months in advance to gather in Miami to protest the secrecy and lack of public

access to the trade negotiations, it was clear that Miami would be different from other

alternate globalization protests. To make certain that activists' voices would not be heard,

the Department of Homeland Security successfully lobbied for $8.5 million from the

2003 Iraq appropriations to be allocated to the Miami police. This money was used to

create a force of over 3,000 paramilitary police. In addition, local and multinational

corporations, including the *Miami Herald,* the major local news agency entrusted to

report the event to the Miami public, had along with other local corporations provided

several millions of dollars to the Miami police for "event security."[14] If the FTAA were

to go through, the *Miami Herald* would be able to more easily acquire newspapers in the

central and southern Americas, creating larger media conglomerations.

From as early as November 13, 2003 leading up to the first day of the trade talks,

November 20, the Miami police used a strategy of pre-emptive action brutality and

extreme intimidation against protesters. After over six months of training, the Miami

police had been turned into a fully militarized police force armed with the latest in 'non

lethal' weapon technologies as well as armored personnel carriers, and helicopters, and

armor ware. In Figure 1 I show a shot from my film were Miami police shove peaceful

union workers onto the ground and stick shotguns and tazer weapons in their backs.

The camera shots the corporate media time and time again chose to frame and use

were either from behind the police lines, too short or abridged to understand the context,

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[14] As to be expected, broadcast media outlets would benefit from the FTAA, as it would drop the treaty restrictions and allow for increased media consolidation across national boundaries. The effect of this massive show of force by the State, combined with the media censorship of the trade negotiations and outside protests, was several days of non-stop, state sanctioned brutality by the Miami police. At the time of this writing, numerous lawsuits are pending by activists against the city of Miami.

or abstracted helicopter shots. The reporter's narrative and voice-over, then, became the dominant mode of understanding the broadcasted events. As the Indy Media documentary *The Miami Model* (2004) shows, the corporate media's "voiceovers" were often inaccurate, misleading, and in at least one outstanding instance, a complete fabrication of what had actually occurred on November 20 and November 21 (FTAA Video Collective). This strategy of embedded reporting, reporters reporting only behind police lines and being mediated through the police, allowed the State to strategically use live video feeds from embedded reporters to misconstrue the domestic coverage of events.

FIGURE 1. An image from my short film on the November 20, 2003 Miami FTAA protest

Since Miami, activists have come to call this combination of Statist tactics the "Miami Model": embedded reporters, combined with pre-emptive attacks by the police, equal an effective state-sponsored method for controlling media representations as well as simultaneous physical control through the violent State repression of demonstrators.

After my first day, November 20, 2003, I had fully used all of the battery packs and available film for my analog camcorder. When I saw the initial coverage of the protests from the perspective of watching a local television film crew shoot their evening broadcast story, I knew that any footage from that event was important (Houghton, 2003). In the streets there was an overt and deliberate war of cameras: the police aimed their "non-lethal" guns at anyone pointing a camera in their direction, the activists responding with their cameras aimed back at the police. In Miami physical space and safety were linked to various forms of multimodal representation: the falsified media representations allowed the police a certain false credibility in their Statist violence; activists cameras provided some reassurances that this chapter in globalization would not be forgotten the next day. And to a large extent this strategy on the part of the State was an effective way of suppressing certain, though by no means all, documented actions of police brutality and oppression as is shown in Figure 1. Regardless, it is clear that the images (such as Figure 2) that escaped the streets of Miami were able to help activists tell their story in the weeks and months that followed (Houghton, 2003).

As I watched this scene unfold in the streets and the television sets, I began to see how I could make my footage effective, how I could edit and compose my film with specific considerations of distribution in mind. I began to see the *kairotic* moment, the

23

audiences I needed to distribute to over the next three weeks. On the bus ride back from Miami to Michigan I began to see a strategic, rhetorical necessity in choosing to use the digital medium as a site of delivery and distribution. My footage wasn't much, but still I

FIGURE 2. A second image from the same film as Figure 1

felt that I had an ethical, civic obligation to offer counter-images to those that the broadcast media had chosen to render to the public.[15] When I returned to Michigan with tapes in hand, I began to do what dozens other activists across the country began to do: I took my analog video footage and converted it to digital video format.[16]

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[15] This points to a much larger conversation on *ethos.*
[16] As it states in my quotes to the reporter in the above referenced news article, I was originally intending on sending my tapes to the National Lawyers Guild, but I chose instead to opt for immediate mass-distribution. There would be time later to turn over tapes to attorneys.

Having over six hours of video, I had to quickly make a wide range of rhetorical choices for how I would compose, edit, and release my film. And this composing process had to happen in an extremely short time frame: for the broadcast media maintains and has the strategic advantage of immediate up-to-the-minute coverage. My digital response would, on the other hand, be fourteen days late and millions of eyes short. To even begin to compensate for this disadvantage of already being rhetorically positioned as a response, I had to think even more strategically in terms of delivery: I had to strategize a comprehensive plan for rhetorical distribution.

When I was editing my digital composition, I thought of my audience as activists from across the hemisphere. I wanted these activists to see my film and to speak of the event and its images with me in as many places as possible. In this sense my short-term rhetorical goal was the production of conversations, not conversations about my film, but about Miami and the FTAA conference. In the past such rhetorical goals may have been considered cliché, but in today's networked environments this sort of audience should be considered a theorizeable and necessary rhetorical aim: I envisioned someone watching my film and re-showing it to friends whose locations were more geographically removed than my imagination would allow me to conceive.

In considering the imperatives of time and its relation to rhetorical efficacy, I chose to edit and produce a short ten-minute documentary. After I had completed the editing of the film, I made it available on peer-to-peer file sharing networks. In composing the film for digital delivery, I conceived of the software one would use to *appropriate* the film or parts of the film. To help and encourage appropriation, I released the film in high quality, 300 MB full-format. I also took into consideration what might be

the ideal conditions for the file to be transitioned onto a CD-ROM, cut and *re-appropriated* into someone else's film, or redistributed on a strangers file-sharing client. I wanted the film distributed as far as possible, but I also wanted other activists to use my film as they saw fit: in other words, *I released the film with a rhetorical theory of positive appropriation in mind.*

Over the following two months, more than three thousand people downloaded my film off of file sharing networks. Parts of the film were positively appropriated in a larger documentary on the FTAA entitled *Not My Job: A Revolutionary Documentary on the FTAA & Miami* (RedTV Media Collective, 2004). The film also ended up being distributed, without my knowledge, on CD-ROM in at least one Infoshop. While I'd be the first to admit that my film was far from a perfect artifact, its pieces and bits of content managed to be timely and useful enough for it to be redistributed and re-appropriated by others. I present this as an example of how understanding economies matter for rhetorical delivery. For the economy of the activist, positive appropriation is a valuable and strategic strategy for delivery. By selecting the medium of file sharing, understanding *what I was distributing,* I came to the conclusion that appropriation of my work would be far more beneficial than not.

Similarly to handing out flyers on the USA Patriot Act shortly after September 11, this particular rhetorical instance was a major revelation to me as a rhetorician. From the composing and releasing of my film, I learned that thoughts of delivery, distribution and economy dominated my compositional considerations as an activist. I realized that my considerations of delivery, my ability to hand the flyer effectively to a stranger and my effectiveness at distributing a digital film across the hemisphere are paramount, nearly

identical rhetorical considerations. And from this, I realized that as a rhetorician I needed to understand how to effectively utilize these patterns that exist in the distribution of writings in network and economy.

Between the Analog and the Digital: The Press Advisory

Question: how and when does one invent a text with the express intent of causally producing other texts?

As part of a national campaign lead by United Students Against Sweatshops (USAS), Movimiento Estudiantil Xicano De Aztlan (MEXA) and Student for Economic Justice (SEJ) had been working at Michigan State for five years to convince the university to join the Workers Rights Consortium (WRC). Membership in the WRC allows for non-partisan oversight into the working conditions of companies that license the MSU logo. The WRC does routine investigations to verify that collegiate factories are respecting international labor and human rights standards. As an oversight body the WRC provides an important service for human rights campaigns in an era where the factory locations of goods are increasingly difficult to pin down.

In the spring of 2005 the anti-sweatshop campaign at MSU had undergone an important shift, in part, from a campaign of direct action and disruption to one of public pressure.[17] The action I will be focusing on took place on February 24, 2005. In the action students from MEXA and SEJ "took over" the first floor of the Hannah Administration Building on the main campus of Michigan State University. But the students did not simply "take over" the floor in the form of a sit-in. Rather they brought a boom box and danced to Salsa music for approximately twenty minutes. The action was designed to be *content* for reporters, from the very catchy concept of *salsa dancing in an administration building* to the visuals of police appearing.

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[17] This shift in tactic was due to the resignation of Peter McPherson, the 19th president of Michigan State. McPherson was a staunch opponent of the WRC. His successor Lou Anna K. Simon was more open to the prospect of Michigan State joining the WRC. At this new juncture in the campaign public pressure was critical.

One of the strategic aspects in organizing such an event, aside from the physical event itself, is the media work that convinces the press the event is worth covering. The experienced press advisory writer understands that there is an economic incentive on the part of the reporter to write her or his news story quickly and on deadline. In this sense the activist writer must acknowledge, as I attempt to show in Figure 3, *that the product of their work is a raw material for a second economy* – one that is for-profit, capitalist and organized around production schedules. The story is not simply an act of written advocacy by the reporter; the story is a very real part in an aggregate of stories that produce revenue for the market-driven capitalist media. And this is an economic lens critical for the invention and composition of the press advisory.

an economic lens for activist media composing

(1) invention ⟶ (2) *production* ⟶ (3) *re-production*

activist economy	economy of reporter	economy of media
compose for re-appropriation	by helping, for the reporter the **savings of her or his labor time**	so the for-profit media is able to produce and sell advertising and/or subscriptions

(4) to create media return for the campaign
***print?***   ***broadcast?***
online?
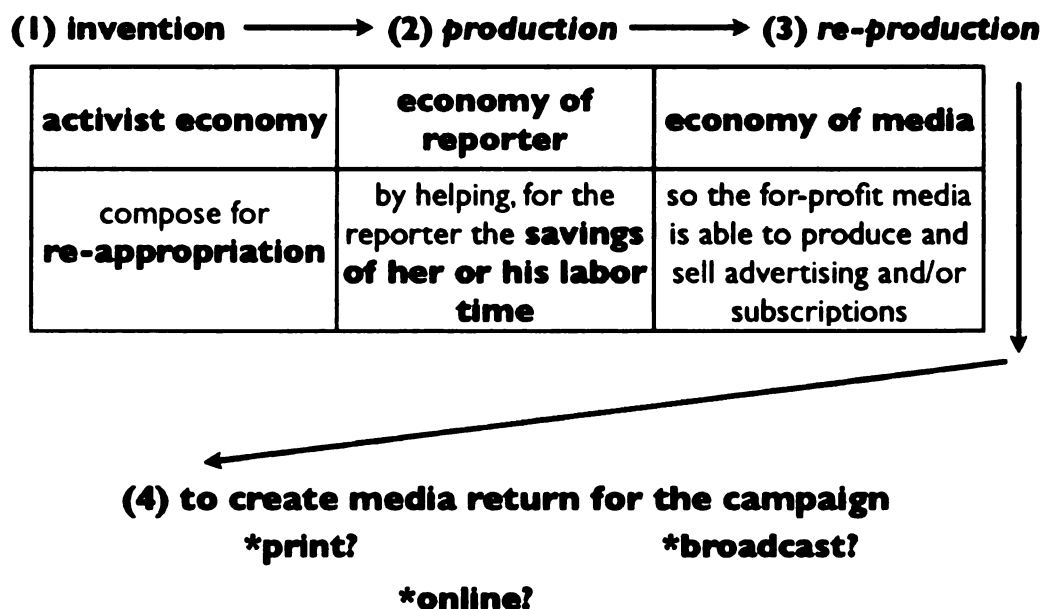
FIGURE 3

Looking through the lens of economy, the press advisory is composed and *delivered* with the rhetorical intention of maximizing the labor time of the reporter and to appeal to the economy of the for-profit media. The advisory is composed to include quotations, background information, event summary, titles and contact information. All of these units are modular and intended to be source material for a story. If sent through e-mail, the contents of the advisory, usually quotations, may be cut and pasted directly into the composition of a story.

From the perspective and economy of the reporter, the press advisory may be seen as a useful means in completing the necessary work needed in order to reach a publication deadline in a timely fashion. For the economy of the activist, the successful appropriation of the document by the media can be measured in terms of both rhetorical and economic success. If, for example, the position is covered effectively and redistributed to the liking of the activist, then the story can be substituted in a formula that calculates the cost of coverage in relationship to the cost that the activist would incur if the delivery of the piece were to be directly paid for in the form of an advertisement, plus the additional ethos and symbolic value that the writing is, in fact *not* an advertisement. This understanding of networks essentially amounts to an economic strategy of rhetorical delivery and distribution – a *kairos* where the writer is anticipating the ideal places, moments, and events for *positive rhetorical appropriation.*

Positive rhetorical appropriation is the appropriation of a work or part of a work by a third party that works toward the spirit of the author's original rhetorical objective. To *intentionally* compose for these moments of positive rhetorical appropriation is to

compose for *rhetorical velocity.* As I show in Figure 4, rhetorical velocity is a strategy of rhetorical delivery that views the appropriation and re-distribution of the work or a part of the work as a critical rhetorical strategy of distribution. Press advisories are, in this sense, usually composed using a strategy of rhetorical velocity. In theorizing rhetorical distribution the activist writer anticipates that the advisory may become appropriated as part of the body of a newspaper article or be read aloud in evening news broadcast. The advisory writer anticipates the moments and locations where appropriation may occur and composes the advisory *with an awareness* of these rhetorical (economic) landscapes.
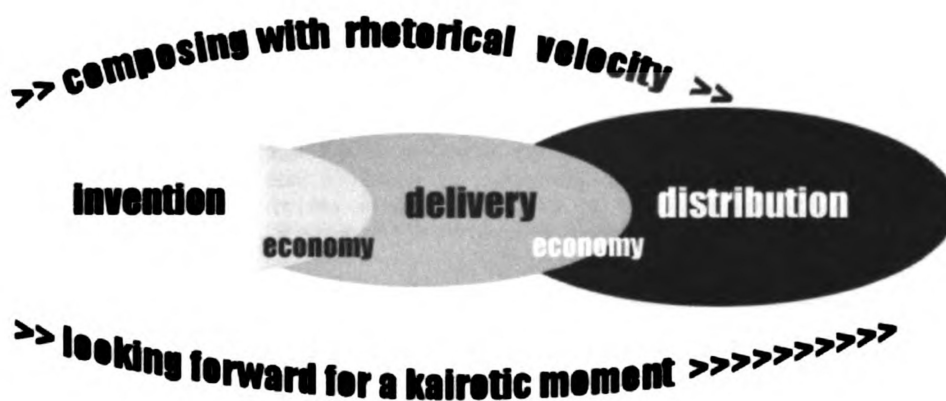
FIGURE 4. A diagram of composing for rhetorical velocity

In the example of February 24th, the advisory (Figure 5) is composed and partially appropriated by the press. The action received coverage by three print and online media outlets: *The State News* (Figure 6), *The Lansing City Pulse* (Figure 7), and *The Lansing State Journal* (Figure 8). The first two papers, *The State News* and *The Lansing City Pulse* sent reporters to the event. *The Lansing City Pulse* reporter John Stegmair

described the dancing he witnessed as "shake, strut, and salsa," and the news story was

carried in an

STUDENTS TO PROTEST INSIDE ADMINISTRATION BUILDING BY DANCING
MSU ADMINISTRATION HAS STILL NOT AGREED TO BASIC RIGHTS FOR WORKERS

East Lansing, MI — [illegible body text]

When: [illegible]
Where: [illegible]
Why: [illegible]
What: [illegible]

[illegible paragraphs]

For more information on the Workers Rights Consortium visit http://www.workersnghts.org/

FIGURE 5. A press advisory for the Feb. 24, 2005 WRC protest

32

Taking a stand

Students push MSU to support workers' rights

By JOSH JARMAN

The State News

As the first notes of the "Selena" soundtrack began, a group of about 25 students began cutting loose on the first floor of the Administration Building on Thursday. The group jived, bumped and boogied all while carrying signs proclaiming "Justice Now" and "Workers Rights."

The dancers were protesting the fact that MSU had not joined the Worker Rights Consortium, or WRC. The students said the university has stalled its efforts to sign with the WRC.

The WRC is a group of students and university administrators who work to make sure no university clothing is produced by companies that have violated human rights.

"We're trying to send a message that we are not going stand for this any longer," said interdisciplinary studies in social science sophomore Jose Villagran. Villagran is a member

MIKE ITCHUE · The State News

FIGURE 6. *State News* coverage of the Feb. 24 protest

33

FIGURE 7. *Lansing City Pulse* coverage of the Feb. 24 protest

Lansing State Journal

"They danced. Vigorously."

Published February 25, 2005

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Demonstrators shout, dance, urge MSU to sign code
Students protest for human rights

Lansing State Journal

EAST LANSING - About 25 Michigan State University students staged an unusual protest Thursday on the first floor of the school's administration building

source #1: advisory

They danced. Vigorously. To salsa music on a boombox

The students want the university to sign a "code of conduct" that will prevent it from licensing its logo to overseas companies that violate international standards of human rights

"We made our point." graduate student Jim Ridolfo, 25, said about the half-hour protest

"The university needs to be ethically responsible in terms of its purchases if it wants students to be ethically responsible after they leave"

source #2: phone calls

University spokesman Terry Denbow did not return calls seeking comment Thursday

Buy this photo

(CHRIS HOLMES/Lansing State Journal)
Dancing Evann O'Donell (center), a Michigan State University senior from Detroit, dances with David Mitchell, a senior from Quincy, as part of a protest Thursday inside the administration building Protesters want MSU to sign a "code of conduct" for licensing its logo

FIGURE 8. *Lansing State Journal* coverage of the Feb. 24 protest

35

online-only edition on March 2, 2005 (Stegmair). *The State News* reporter, Josh Jarman, described the dancing he witnessed as "jived, jumped and boogied" (Jarman). The article was published in print and online the following day, February 25. In these two examples the receipt of the advisory served as useful to notify the press of the time, date, location and description of the event.

The third paper, the major newspaper of the mid-Michigan region the *Lansing State Journal,* sent a photographer to the event but not a reporter. At 9:00 PM later that night I received a call from a writer assigned to the story asking for a quotation. The story was published in print and online the following day with no authors name attached to the story. In the advisory in Figure 6 take note that I describe the future protest dancing as "vigorous." In Figure 8, one can see that the Lansing State Journal positively appropriated the descriptive language of the advisory.[18] From the contents of the article I am able to conclude that the writer assigned to the story composed the piece based on the source material of the advisory, 9:00 PM phone quotations from me and the photograph from the *Journal's* photographer Chris Holmes.

Figure 5 is an example of an advisory that has been informed by considerations of rhetorical velocity successfully executed in a strategy of rhetorical delivery. But composing for rhetorical velocity is more complicated than composing through the lens of economy alone: the writer of the press advisory actively works to theorize the place (conditions) in which appropriation is most ideal: the place of composition (the computer of the reporter) the site of brainstorming (the press advisory in the notebook of the reporter) or the opportune moment (time) to reach the audience. This amounts to a

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[18] Vigorous dancing

concept of *kairos* that moves beyond the initial conditions for appropriation to *anticipate* the possible representations of the piece in other forms, places, and moments.

The possibilities for communicative acts of distribution beyond initial act of delivery may therefore be numerous and may also traverse mediums, moving back and forth between different analog and digital expressions. This traversing of medium is evident in Figure 9, where delivery occurs one way, and the later acts of media distribution occur across a range of mediums – from analog print to digital web site. As I attempt to show in the next section, an acute understanding of the oscillations between the analog and digital are important for emerging rhetorical strategies of networked delivery and distribution.
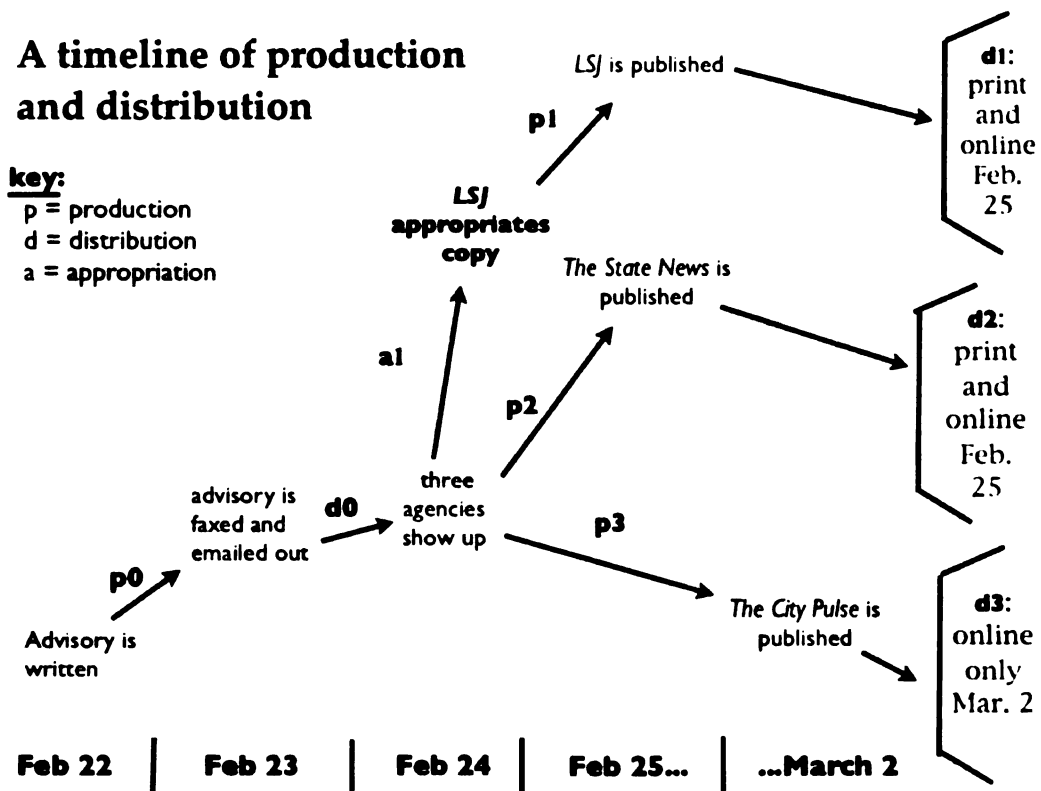
FIGURE 9. A diagram of composing for rhetorical appropriation

The 'Digital Delivery' of Spray-Painted Stencils

Question: How do the analog and the digital co-relate, and co-participate in delivery?

Through the analog technologies of cardboard stencils combined with the mass-delivery potentialities of digital distribution, complex strategies of stencil-delivery and distribution are now exponentially increased through the emerging possibilities of digital distribution. As Figures ten and eleven show, interoperability between the digital and the analog is as much a consideration for delivery in press advisory writing as it is for mass-stencil delivery and distribution.

Possible interoperability in delivery between the (D)igital and (A)nalog

(A)
handed to a
reporter

(D)
composed
on a computer

(D)
emailed to a
reporter

(A->D->A)
faxed to a
news desk

(D)
posted on a
website

(D/A)
broadcast
on radio/television

(D)
published on news
websites

DISTRIBUTION

(A)
printed on newspaper
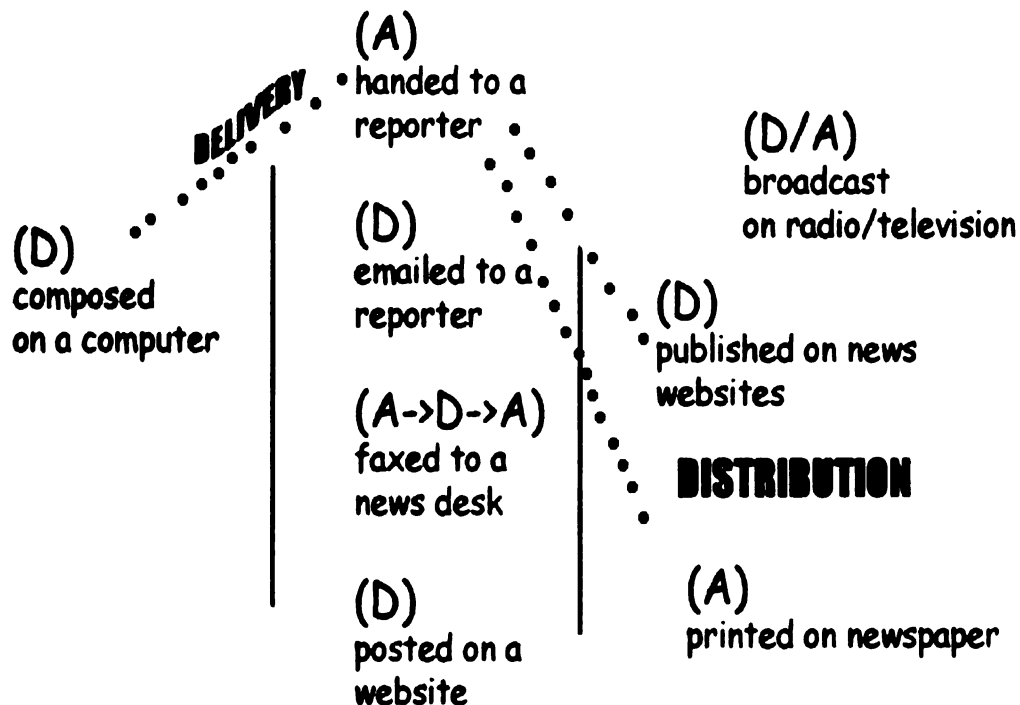
FIGURE 10. A map of digital and analog advisory circulation

DIGITAL AND ANALOG STENCIL DELIVERY

(1)
STENCIL
(D/A)

(2)
FILE SHARING
(D)

(3)
PRINT AND LAMINATED
(A)

(4)
WALL OR STREET
(A)

KEY
D = DIGITAL
A = ANALOG
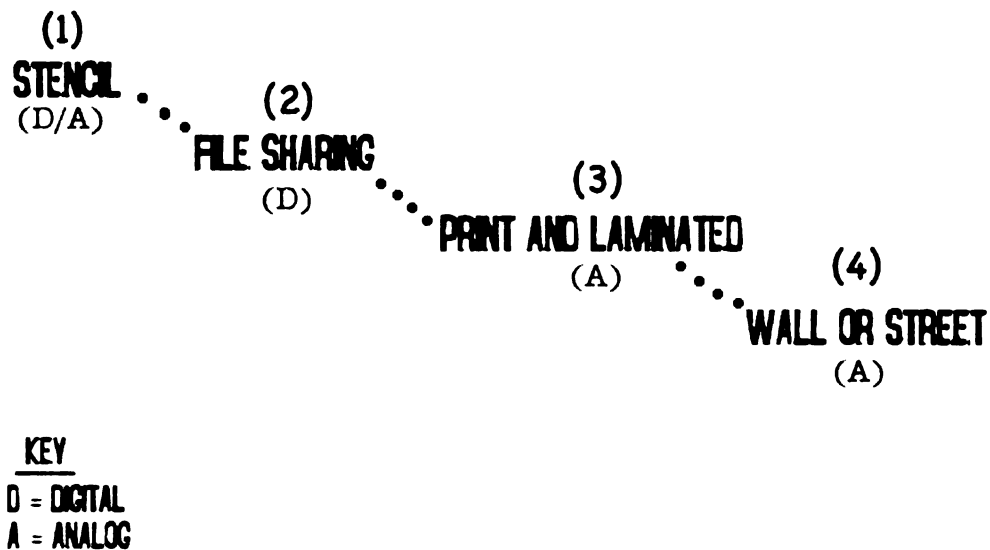
FIGURE 11. A map of digital and analog stencil distribution

But the author of the stencil may now, before delivering and wetting the stencil in paint, before inscribing the first instance of the stencil writing to a street or wall, create a digitized "copy" of the stencil. An example of a digitized stencil ready to be downloaded and printed out may be seen in Figure twelve. The stencil may then be distributed through the web or peer-to-peer file-sharing network such as Gnutella or Kazaa and be a source of *positive appropriation.*

This new sort of distribution allows activists from diverse and geographically removed locations to download the stencil templates, print paper copies, and then uniquely cut out, choose spray or paint colors, as well as the *location* of the stencil. The productive abilities of the analog stencil are then put into action, appearing on sidewalks, buildings, streets, restrooms, and across large geographic expansions of space. If one's

chief goal of rhetorical invention is to deliver a stencilesque message to as wide an audience as possible, the digital distribution of stencils may be a practical rhetorical consideration of delivery, taking into consideration the many benefits of positive forms of activist appropriation.

FIGURE 12. "Give Up War For Lent" stencil from protest-records.com

If the author considers the expression of the message as one that has appropriative potential outside of a specific place and time, then the choice of mediating and inscribing the message into and through a form such as a stencil may be an important consideration in determining the rhetorical strategy of delivery during the inventive process of composition. These considerations of delivery may have an express impact on how the stencil is crafted for distribution: for example, how easy is the design of the stencil to cut using an exacto-knife? Where is the message salient and to whom? What stylistic considerations may be important in the expression of the stencil by other "authors"?

For example, after a range of reported sexual assaults on the Michigan State campus in the fall of 2004, stencils appeared across over a dozen campus pathways. Figures 13 and 14 are examples of some of the messages that were quickly stenciled across campus (Phillips, 2005). This kept the issue visible on the paths and walkways of MSU for over a year. The same also occurred with the stencil in Figures 15 around the time of the 2005 election. These stencils were used as a way to keep the issue active, but they were also uniform design. There were two unique stencils, but their delivery occurred in dozens of locations.

As I will attempt to show in the next chapter, the crisis of production brought on by the historical introduction of the digital object also not only brings into the forefront considerations of how the digital object may be distributed, but introduces an economic framework for how the digital object may be positively appropriated and rhetorically distributed through economic strategies of delivery. In this sense when I speak of positive appropriation, I am speaking of a theory of delivery in which it is both beneficial and

within the realm of a strategy of rhetorical invention to theorize, anticipating possible

opportunities of cooption, plagiarism, and theft – practicing rhetorical strategies that

FIGURE 13. "No Means No," Fall, 2004

FIGURE 14. "Alcohol is Not Consent," Fall, 2004.

inductively predict these network conditions for the additional redistribution of texts. The press advisory, for example, takes advantage of positive appropriation and helps to foster derivative writings in newspapers, on the web, and in broadcast formats.

FIGURE 15. "Ashcroft is Watching You," Fall 2004.

To summarize chapter two: some factors that are important for a basic strategy of positive appropriation are an understanding of how economies of appropriation function and the properties of the mediums that help to facilitate appropriation. The latter will be a key concept for chapter three. While these two theoretical concerns are certainly nothing new to writing they become more of a necessary strategy to consider, as the Miami example illustrates, in the late age of print.

CHAPTER THREE

Toward an Economic Lens for Strategies of Delivery & Distribution

Activists choosing to use the capitalist media need to be aware of how labor conditions have changed and are gradually continuing to change.[19] In chapter two I attempted to show how strategies for economy are necessary for certain forms of rhetorical delivery and distribution, specifically with the activist press advisory example. In this chapter I will be talking about the economy being composed into, and more acutely how I theorize this economy to be changing.

With the advent of the digital, the physical limits of the familiar analog modes of production and distribution are collapsing or are not being re-expressed quite the same way in their digital counterpart.[20] Conceptual production and distribution are, in the late age of print, as interconnected and indistinguishable and interrelated as invention and delivery are to the processes of composing.[21]

These two sets of twos, invention-delivery and production-distribution, are seemingly disparate but share the undeniable conditions of both respectively 'being' the other in most economies of circulation. For example, when a student writes a paper for my first-year writing class, I conceive (and I believe most students have practitioner knowledge of this) that the student is both inventing-and-producing a product for distribution-and-delivery (to me) for the many reasons which accompany and surround the economic conditions and effects of academic circulation and political economy.

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[19] Charlotte Ryan (1991) notes, "In 1982, 50 corporations controlled the US media. By 1990, that number had been halved – 23 corporations dominated the U.S. media business" (p. 118).

[21] From Corbett's (1971) breakdown of the rhetorical canon in the first section of *Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student.* (Pp 1-43)

These include the present, and of course, the future implications of the economic acts which help to comprise the individual and overlapping economies of the student, myself, the university, the market economy etc.

What I conclude from this is that these two pairs, rhetoric and economy, converge in this instance of expression. In the past, this could be said to be occurring in and delimited by a material thing having the properties of extensionality (as I will talk in more detail about later) but in the present age and, to introduce the crisis and place its condition, economies of circulation now utilize and increasingly take advantage of sites of expression, production, and distribution which are for all intents and purposes immaterial – and these are what come to now exist in production as digital. I theorize that the productive conditions for intellectual production have begun to shift in certain contexts into "immaterial" sites of production. Consequently, the available modes of "immaterial" digital reproduction offer many more sites to consider when looking at complex rhetorical strategies for the delivery and distribution of texts (see Figure 9). This includes strategies that include the digital's reach into the geographically bound analog, such as print-based newspapers, but must also include the often-concurrent Internet reproduction of such texts.[22] For rhetoric, the activist writer has many more options in theorizing complex strategies for network delivery, strategies that may even include dialectical theorizing of how the rhetorical object of production may be appropriated as both a strategy and practice of delivery.

But while there are indeed clear advantages to understanding the implications of such economy and production for rhetoric and rhetorical strategy, I believe that the new

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[22] In figures 3 through 9 I showed how the productive chain of activist-delivery and capitalist press redistribution spanned several mediums, including online reproduction and print distribution.

45

and emerging acts of producing into the "immaterial" digital may have clear disadvantages for certain types of labor. One clear area at a sharp disadvantage is the conditions of labor for the producers of "stock video" footage. Media consolidation is a problem, a problem identified and articulated quite well by Sasha Polakow-Suransky (2003) in "Why Corporate Media Giants Call the Shots: How New Rules for FCC will Squeeze Out Community". Polakow-Suransky show trends where local broadcast media are becoming consolidated by larger national and multinational news agencies. In order to increase network profits, local news broadcasts are either downsized or integrated and possibly replaced with content or programming from national broadcasts (pp. 2-5). In 2005 the Project for Excellence in Journalism published its "State of the News Media" report where it identified ten key points. One of the most salient for this discussion is that there are "now several modes of journalism and the trajectory increasingly is toward these which are faster, looser and cheaper" (p. 6). And in particular for local newsrooms, the report notes that "news people are required to produce more hours of news and for more platforms than ever before" and this is occurring when newsrooms are "behind where they were four years ago" (p. 21).

This trend is indicative of how broadcast communications are gradually changing the way stories are composed, reported, and disseminated, and this will necessarily change the labor pool of those working for the capitalist press. In the 1950's at the beginning of television news broadcasts, there was no such satellite technology available to allow corporations to consolidate local news broadcasts. But over the past forty years, satellite communications have made it possible to send a single broadcast simultaneously to locations across the globe. Before such satellite technology, the market economy could

not cheaply consolidate media broadcasts from across broad geographies. Satellite

technology, however, allows for the trend of the cost-effective redistribution of content.

Two points can be discerned from the PEW report, the Polakow-Suransky's piece and my

example: (1) Media consolidation and labor reduction appear to be inseparable from the

capitalist process of reducing the costs of the reserve army of labor and (2) changes in the

modes of production and distribution have an affect on the conditions of labor (Marx, p.

187). In the latter case, changes in the modes of distribution have allowed for media

consolidation to be a technological possibility before it needs to be reified through CEO

decisions and stockholder demands (Glasner). In the age of the digital, it's simply easier

to retrieve archived materials and make use of their productive abilities. Taking this into

consideration, I believe that we must consider the long-term changes inherent in the

future of writings produced in immaterial, digital contexts. If the activist audience for

these texts is, as I have attempted to show in Figures 5/6/7 and 8 the capitalist press, then

these long-term changes are important to consider when looking at future strategies of

activist delivery.

Immateriality and Its Potential Impact on Labor Conditions

Question: How might the digital change labor conditions?

> When viewers in Flint, Mich., tuned into the Fox 66 'News at 10' last Thursday
> night, the news station's resident firebrand, Mark Hyman, was at the ready to serve
> up some passionate punditry.
>
> 'Black, Asian and Hispanic seniors are graduating from colleges this spring in
> ethnically themed ceremonies that are out of bounds for whites,' Mr. Hyman, the
> station's commentator, inveighed. Before passing the camera's attention back to his
> colleagues on the Flint news team, he added, 'Segregated ceremonies have no
> place in America's college campuses.'
>
> If Mr. Hyman's tan looked out of place in central Michigan, or if his commentary
> seemed ill suited to a city with a large population of minority groups, there was
> good reason. Mr. Hyman was actually in a studio just outside Baltimore, not
> sharing a set with the Flint news team. As he does most nights, Mr. Hyman also
> addressed audiences of local news programs in cities across the country, including
> Pittsburgh, Oklahoma City, and Rochester, from right where he sat in Hunt Valley,
> Md (Ruttenberg and Maynard, 2003).

Over the past two decades, many regional news stations including local Fox news

affiliates have been downsizing their film crews and news teams (Ruttenberg and

Maynard, 2003). What was once the job of three -- the anchorperson, the cameraman, and

the broadcast-editing producer -- is often now the job of an individual. The cameraperson

is now the one responsible for creating the "product" that will be broadcast on the

evening news. The product being produced *has not in itself changed*: it is still a story that

functions as a portion of content for the evening news program. Based on the average and

anticipated ratings the program receives, as well as the relative popularity of the program,

the cost of advertising space is calculated.

Consider a cameraperson assigned to shoot a story for the six and eleven o'clock

evening news. The cameraperson, in shooting the story, takes slow panning footage of

several buildings in the vicinity as well as a number of close-up shots of the office

building that is the setting for the story. Initially, this footage is edited in the truck as a story for the evening's news. But what happens to the footage after the story has been produced? Most likely, the footage becomes file footage stored in the news stations stock video library. But what if six months later a news story breaks about the same building or, perhaps, the building next door? Perhaps instead of dispatching a film crew or, as we now are left with, a cameraperson to the scene of the story, the story is produced using the file footage from the stock video library.

On the surface this example is not particularly fascinating. The recycling of footage in cinematographic settings has been around since sixteen-millimeter film was first cut into reusable pieces. What is interesting about this particular example, however, is the reconsideration of the labor from the angle of due compensation. In the circumstance I have outlined, the labor compensated for was the labor that went into the shooting of the footage for the immediate production of the evening's story. The reporter was probably not, for example, considering how the file footage she or he produced would come to compete against the future labor costs for the benefit of the employer and to the detriment of how the cameraperson's labor is proportionally valued.

> Sinclair Broadcasting Group, based in Maryland, distributes to all its 62 affiliates a program called 'News Central.' A one hour mix of local and national news News Central leads with a segment produced locally and then follows with national and international news, sports and weather pieced together from other Sinclair affiliates or CNN and anchored in Maryland. News staff at the affiliates have been trimmed by about a third. Half of Sinclair affiliates currently have no news staff at all. Unfortunately, this is the norm for the industry. About half of the Fox affiliates and only a handful of Warner Brothers (WB) and UPN affiliates produce local news. In fact, several top 10 market WB and UPN stations don't air any local news. (Starr, 2003)

In effect, the re-purposing of the stock video footage for the purposes of future production content – content that did not require a cameraperson to shoot any new

footage – is the labor of the past (the story produced in the past turned into stock video footage) competing with the labor conditions of the future: the lack of any need for the cameraperson due to the availability of the already-produced footage. What I have outlined is and was, of course, technologically possible to certain degrees of use well before the advent of the digital. However, the "immateriality" of the digital and the technological changes in the mode of production – the transitioning from film and video archives to data havens, the shift from the 16mm camera to the digital camera – encourages this sort of repurposing as a cost savings in the same fashion as satellite broadcasting and broadband have certainly encouraged the technological conditions for specific instances of media consolidation.

Looking at the direction of media broadcasting technologies, advertising-insertion software (nCube, 2005) and the rapid advancement of video libraries seems to make this sort of "occurrence" a problem for the media public as well as a problem of labor. If the corporate media, in attempts to save filming costs, begin to choose to produce stories based more and more on file footage and the resale and purchasing of file footage, then the public is put at a disservice because the evening news is less likely to be composed of fresh material. This behavior is not far off from composing a story physically removed from its events: from a press advisory, phone call and photograph. From my five years of experience with the press I've learned that news stories are not selected solely on the informative value of their content to a viewership, but are placed in a more strict economic rubric based on possible expenditure of labor versus the savings of no longer producing original footage. This is an example of what I will call "hyper-production." Hyper-production is essentially the ability of the product, in this instance stock video

footage, to participate in the labor conditions traditionally presumed to be determinate on the available human labor at the time. Hyper-production is a 'crisis' of the material nature of the product *in relationship to* the reserve army of labor *tomorrow*. It's simply the production of something that itself is able to compete on some level via its own appropriatableness, in the future valuation of the producer's labor time.

For the activist seeking coverage for a story, it's important to know how the local news stations choose and produce their stories. Any trends that adversely affect the selection of news stories, in particular even the most gradual trends of labor and (consequently) production are important to understand when writing for appropriation. In this sense an understanding of hyper-production maps into a larger strategy of activist delivery and distribution.

Understanding The Transition from Materiality to "Immateriality"

Question: How can an understanding of changing labor markets and modes of distribution be highly strategic to progressive activists?

I am proposing the development of a theory of economy and product that can begin to account for the production of intellectual property in the "immaterial" realm. As I have alluded to in the previous section, I believe that if activists and public writers are producing with certain (economic) audiences in mind, then it is strategically necessary to look and theorize over the long term labor trends changes in the mode of production will bring, particularly to the labor forces with which activists and public writers engage. What I am talking about is predicting how gradual technological change will impact the means of production, and how this will adversely impact and force an economic rearrangement of the labor forces of capital.

For example, if I know that my local news affiliates are purchasing new systems for the digital retrieval of content, or if I know that the major broadcasting corporations are purchasing digital library materials, or, as I have alluded to in chapter two, doing considerably less on-site investigative reporting and engaging in the direct appropriation of press advisories, then it is strategic for me to look at the long term trends.

This first sort of knowledge brings me back to technological changes in the material base. In this section I will be theorizing how gradual technological changes may potentially re-organize, over a long period of time, the applied labor needed to generate profit from the material base. This is, I believe, useful in terms of how activists and public writers choose to position themselves in relationship to the capitalist press. If a particular region's local news continues to be de-valued, outsourced, and its workforce

52

visibly diminished, and if this can be strategized as a long-term trend, then seizing the

future *kairotic* moment for independent media, not-for-profit press may then become part

of a theorized, long-term anticipated and strategic position for future political change. In

this section, then, I choose to use the term "immaterial" instead of simply digital because

I am talking as much about the labor of production (which is flesh and blood) as I am

about the site of production (which in terms of writing may or may not be digital) as I am

the modes of distribution and delivery (which may or may not be digital).[23]

I theorize that a crisis of "immateriality," in certain forms of production, creates

the conditions for a 'crisis' in how the productive abilities of labor are conceived and re-

valued.[24] To begin to explain the formation of these emerging conditions of production in

more precise language, I will use an Aristotelian model of material causality as a

heuristic to help specify the particular point of departure from the wholly material realm.

After triangulating this condition of production, I explain how this departure from

the material has implications for how labor is potentially revaluated in relationship to the

"immaterial" product as this creates the context for a reconsideration of the productive

capacities of intellectual labor.

As a materialist philosophy, traditional materialist notions of 'production' have at

work an operating idea of material causality. From Aristotle's work in the *Metaphysics*

and *Physics*, this can be broken down into a process of causal relations that can be easily

grafted over a process of labor production. Aristotle theorized that there are participating

causes in how, say, a basket comes to exist: a formal cause, a material cause, an efficient

cause, and a final cause. The formal cause is the idea for the basket as it comes to exist in

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[23] For example, in the case of the stencil, it is difficult to wholly disconnect the digital production
of the original stencil from its digital (downloading) and analog (spraying) forms of delivery.

the mind of the basket weaver: the inventive process for theorizing the production of the object (Aristotle, 415b10 & 194b30). The material cause can be thought of as the material from which the basket is made. The efficient cause is the hands of the basket weaver applied to the material: the efficacies of controlled force and movement. And the final cause is the basket itself, a discrete object made from a material substance of straw and fashioned into the form of a basket.

[1] formal (idea)

\|/

[2] material (tangible)

\|/

[3] efficent (thought)

\|/

[4] final (product)
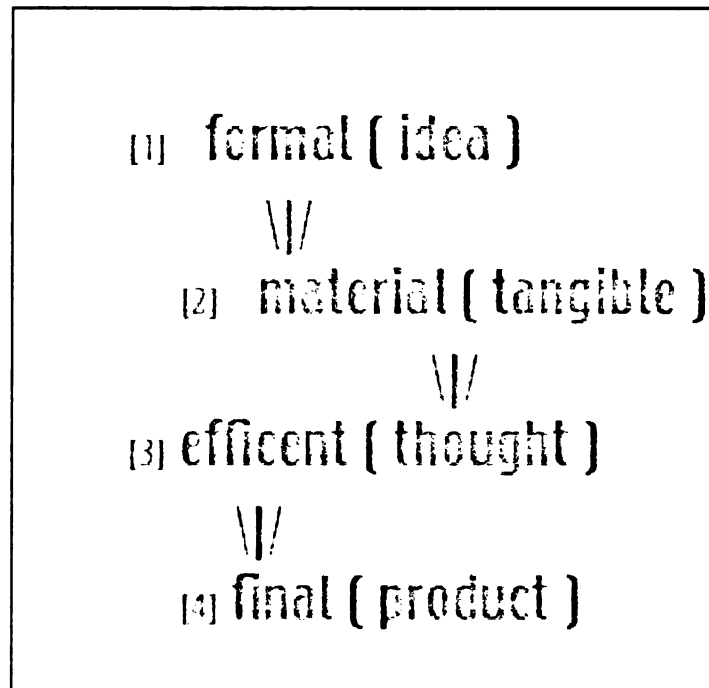
FIGURE 16. Aristotle's four causes

However, there is an emerging situation in present times -- perhaps most immediately visible in software production -- where the Aristotelian notions of causality, when applied to certain forms of intellectual production, begin to create the conditions for a "crisis of labor" as the material expressed through departs from the materially finite and

moves into the digital.[25] As I outlined in the previous section, this crisis has to do with

two factors: the "immateriality" of the medium of production and how the labor time of

the producer comes to be valuated based on the emerging conditions of the products'

increased abilities to re-participate in future cycles of production. This may be, in short,

attributed to the crisis of the "material" cause and consequently a crisis of the "final"

cause.

Consider, for example, a computer consultant who is contracted to create a piece

of software for a client corporation.[26] The programmer has an idea for how to create the

piece of software: the formal cause. The programmer then expresses her or his idea, over

a period of compensated labor time, into an electronic medium that in this example

comes to stand in for the material cause. The act of the programmer expressing the idea

into the computer and compiling the program is the efficient cause. "Finally," the

programmer submits the compiled program and computer code to the corporation. But

what is the status of the final cause? What has changed in the process of causal

production between the two contexts of basket weaving and programming? I would argue

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[25] When I invoke the term "crisis" in my discussion of "immaterial production" I do not intend to signify a 'crisis of capital' or any totalizing, historic crisis of economics or dialectics. I invoke the term 'crisis' in similar spirit to how Lyotard in his work *The Postmodern Condition: A Report On Knowledge* (1984) invokes the notion of a crisis of epistemology within modernity— or, as we have come to understand Lyotard's thinking, the condition certain instances of knowledge finds itself in at a later epoch of Modernity. Lyotard's crisis is a strain, an occurrence in a larger system, and in this sense my use of the terminology of 'crisis' is meant to describe a localized instance in a larger structure: an instance where things are somewhat *different* or *less stable* than the larger macro-structures.

[26] I am talking about software here, which in terms of examples is a radical break from the rest of my examples, because the *organizing* means of distribution are now caught up in this sort of production. The software industry, and the tech sector in general, is no stranger to deskilling and labor reductions. It is strategic to begin to look at this industry as a site of future labor activism, particularly when one considers how radically diffused many manufacturing production have become.

that, based upon this causal model, the "finitude" of the product is, for all intents and purposes, in quotations.

Wage scales can be based, in part, on two finite factors: (1) an idea of the time that went into the production of the basket, and (2) the closed-ended *teleological* nature of the productive act: *there will only be one basket from this productive act, from this period of time*. And, if a second basket is needed at a later date, then more time and labor is required: the need for a second basket would mandate a second, if not nearly equal, productive action on the part of the basket weaver. In terms of how labor is valuated, two factors, the closed-endedness of the basket's production and the discrete amount of measurable time necessary for the production of the basket are important factors to consider when we look at production and products in the "immaterial" realm.

Barring possible contractual stipulations on the part of the programmer, the computer code may be re-appropriated by the corporation at any time. And as the programmer completes the contract and moves forward to a future contract, the product of the programmer's labor remains in an "immaterial" state in which the company may re-use or re-tool components of the programmer's labor for future production cycles. This possibility of the "immaterial" is what I call negative appropriation and, simply put, negative appropriation is when the for-profit appropriation of texts has an adverse impact on the future value of the very labor that posited the thing. Negative appropriation may be understood as a state of "immaterial" production that creates the conditions for what I've called hyper-production. David Harvey (1982) notes "technological change exists... as the prime lever for furthering the accumulation of capital through perpetual increase in the value productivity of labor power "(p. 133). In short, the technological changes of

"immaterial" production will eventually affect the armies of labor that generated the change.

Prior to the advent of the digital, the production of tangible analog objects was a relatively closed-cycle of production. In this analog mode of production, compensation for labor time is directly related to the profitability of the finite product or measured labor time expended through the provision of services. But in the digital mode of production, the parameters entered into the formula used to compute the relationship of labor time to product creation face an emerging change, or, as I have come to call this change, a crisis of production. This crisis is brought on through the intersection of how labor is valued in relation to historically recent changes in the available modes of production, specifically the new and emerging economies of digital creation that are now available and at use for intellectual production and distribution.

The photograph is composed, taken, and developed and perhaps ten prints are produced and concurrently circulated. The article is written, sent to a newspaper, and perhaps four thousand copies are reproduced and circulated in the Thursday edition. But after each of these initial actions of invention and subsequent delivery, the question arises: what next? Instigating this question of the "what next?" is more specifically a question of how, where, through what physical expression will it manifest and most importantly through whose labors will this "what next?" be mediated and made possible?

The question is daunting and borders in most analog contexts on the unknown: the theoretical delimitations of delivery in analog contexts are necessarily physical and are thus mediated through labor time and material. Photography, film, and writing all have a temporal and material constraint to delivery in the analog sphere. In some contexts this is

how value is ascribed: that there is *a specific number of the thing*. I'd argue, however, that in the case of the Miami film, for example, material restraints are not valuable in the immediate rhetorical strategy that takes into consideration timely mass distribution and re-appropriation.

From my experiences I've found that in order for me to begin to theorize from my deductive physical knowledge, I must begin to make inductive predictions on how the work will be received across spans of time and space: I need to anticipate stacks of press releases in fax machines at news desks, assignment times, and broadcasting schedules. Indeed, *a priori* the initial circulation of the work *is in my mind, at the very least a passive question of economy*. The subject of economy helps me brainstorm certain parts of the inventive process in relation to my rhetorical goals: how many film canisters might be purchased? To actively theorize the invention of a product for one of these analog mediums is to predominantly theorize a product that has at its essence discreteness. How many prints might potentially be made? How many copies of the paper may be produced? And after such an instance of initial distribution, reception, and circulation, what will happen next? Delivery may continue to actively occur: it may subside for a spell and resume again or perhaps its circulation may cease entirely.

Cessation, on some mediums such as newspapers, may be an inherent expectation in the mind of the composer. The Thursday edition of the paper will most likely be thrown away by Sunday, and the audience will be expected to move on to reading other pieces of writing in the next edition of the paper. But in instances such as the Miami FTAA film example, further circulation of the text is the first rhetorical objective: the

purpose of the film not profit, but rather it is intended to be seen and considered by as many viewers as feasibly possible.

The analog materiality, however, still remains a ceiling to theorizing future usages and delivery within the inventive process: to theorize a product for one of these particular modes of creation is largely to theorize a product that would be of a discrete nature in the respective medium chosen. This is not a problem for all rhetorical instances and intentions, but this does present a pressing problem for the activist attempting to circulate her or his ideas as widely as possible.

With the emergence of the digital, several new and now permanent potentialities have been introduced into the process of inventive production. As we have seen in the previous sections, in the past the theoretical considerations for future delivery were limited to an extent by the immediate economic physicalities of labor in space and time. And, most importantly to a theory of appropriation, these considerations necessarily pertained to expressions within a restrictive material substance such as paper, film, stone, etc. With the introduction of the digital, however, the potentialities for future deliveries are now no longer strictly limited to the strategic considerations of mass-reproduction. On the contrary, the object of digital production is, for better or worse, free from most concerns of physicality. We are, however, not free from where the digital is *not* – which points to the massive digital divide in this country and the world. But in terms of the medium itself, space, time, and the labor in space and time incurred through past modes of analog reproduction are no longer strictly hard limits in their digital counterparts.

In practice, it may be politically useful to speculate inductively on future instances, conditions and circumstances of hyper-production, particularly for activists

producing into such economies, as I have hoped to show in Figures 5 and 8 and in chapter

two. It is my hope that this sort of theoretical paradigm may offer more advanced

instances for future conceptions of delivery in relationship to shifts in production in labor,

and may begin a broader conversation on production, economy and delivery in the field

of rhetoric and composition studies.

CONCLUSION

I've attempted to address three shifting areas of overlapping interest to rhetoric: economics, technology and activist strategies. What I've attempted to bring to the forefront with a conversation on economics is a series of observations regarding audience and medium. How does a particular institution see the utility and value of the writing? How much doe a specific medium cost in terms of labor and medium? I believe that the answers to these questions are critical for consideration in the inventive stage of composition.

But economics, understanding what writing is worth, does not seem to be a whole rhetorical picture. There are new analog and digital technologies at work that have created new and complex networks of circulation and distribution. The electronic in these networks may not simply circulate the file *only through digital networks*. The analog in these networks may not simply lift the poster off the ground, fly and deliver it half way across the globe. For in the case of the file and the poster, these examples for each are short snapshots of the text in a particular moment and time. A new rhetoric of delivery must account for the printing of the file, the scanning in of the poster and countless other actions *after* the initial, *and very traditional*, conception of rhetorical delivery. In this sense the canon of delivery must be expanded to account for its new electronic status (Welch) and its necessarily economic status as something of value (Trimbur; Porter). Delivery is certainly no longer something that can be, as Aristotle once suggested, ignored. As scholars and rhetoricians, I believe that our role should be in part to look for ways in which we may seek out strategies to help effectively reach disparate peoples, places, and moments with messages focused on positive social change.

But it is not the object of this thesis to comprehensively address the canon of delivery. What I've offered instead are case examples of how considerations of rhetorical delivery may be theorized to operate against landscapes of digital and analog networks and a multiplicity of economies. For while there are networks of roads, there must be a utility or reason to travel the roads. And we may find utility in paying closer attention as a field to the economics that motivate the circulation, appropriation, and mass-distribution of texts.

My reason, and the reason that has prompted me to write this thesis based on these case examples, is the type of progressive activist work that I do. In fact I've found nothing in my studies of rhetorical theory that focus on strategies of delivery – and yet there are many types of activism that *do* focus on this sort of theory. In this sense this thesis has been a place for me to begin to theorize my particular activist strategies through the lens of rhetoric. This has in turn led me to theorize and expand on strategies and tactics that sit, I believe, under the umbrella of rhetorical delivery.

From my examination of the means of production and distribution I've found a strategy of delivery that's viable for contemporary rhetorical delivery. I've called this strategy rhetorical velocity, which is the inventive act of composing for the future positive appropriation(s) of a text as a complex strategy of delivery. Rhetorical velocity takes into account rhetorical theory, but it also includes an analysis of the various economies of analog and digital networks. There is limitless potential for the exploration of strategies for rhetorical delivery. I see this as an area where rhetorical studies may do well to investigate.

And as I've explained in chapter three the opposites of positive appropriation are instances of negative appropriation. While negative appropriation may be theorized rhetorically it may also be seen economically. A rhetorician's work that is directed toward the ethical, but is instead used for the unethical is an example of negative appropriation that is rhetorical. But with the introduction of the economic framework and close analysis of emerging means of production one may now see negative appropriation as a condition of labor, too. Negative appropriation may not only be a rhetorical problem, but as I've attempted to show in chapter three, its very condition may also be a problem to the future labor valuation of the rhetorician, programmer, reporter, technical writer, etc.

In this sense an understanding of positive and negative appropriation is strategic for rhetorical studies and activist practices. If we as rhetoricians begin work at seeing writing as not simply a process of invention and composing, but as part of a broader and equally important process of delivery and distribution, then we are actively working to widen our understanding of infrastructure, labor, economic and technological change. And this is a unique intersection where our field may create critical theory that may be of use to inform our local rhetorical actions.[27]

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[27] I have attached a syllabus located in the appendix for a course I have designed that I believe will begin to address these issues.

APPENDIX

Sample First-Year Writing Syllabus

General Information

Instructor: Jim Ridolfo
Office: Bessey Hall Room 298
Office hours: TBA
E-mail: ridolfoj@msu.edu

In this course we will be looking at how writing is conceived of (invented), composed (produced) and distributed (delivered) in 'radical' political contexts. Simply put, we will be looking at the ways political writings function as public writing. Most importantly -- and as this is first and foremost a course on writing -- you will, in addition to writing and presenting on a major analysis project due in the first half of the semester, be required to reflect on a significant amount of "live" activist writings written with real public audiences in mind. This sort of public writing takes the form of a number of genres, from press advisories, posters, digital films, position statements, leaflets etc.

We will begin our semester-long investigations into radical political thought by examining how radical writings have worked from historical to contemporary political contexts. To study the recent past we will be using the tools of rhetorical analysis to investigate the essays, manifestos, flyers, leaflets, posters, documentary films and new media from the turn of the century to present. Many of our public texts will be coming directly from the local MSU Library's American Radicalism archive, which over the course of the semester you will be expected to spend a considerable amount of time researching and investigating. This local archive provides us with a unique opportunity to

look first hand at and engage a range of documents from a wide range of groups and causes.

To be clear in what to expect from this course, studying how writing works is considerably different from studying what writing means. In other words, this course will be considerably different from a high school English class. We will not be reading novels, poetry or plays to investigate the meaning of texts. We will however be looking at a range of political writings, films, and pieces of public writing to understand the contexts "radical writings" are conceived, produced, and distributed. In short, we will be looking at what these texts do.

We will be investigating how these writings work and do by looking at how writing functions rhetorically. We will attempt to analyze how these texts composed with a purpose and audience in mind, and how these texts are strategized in terms of delivery. In this sense, this writing course is deeply situated in what is known as rhetorical theory, and this makes our practical, analytical approach to writing considerably different than the traditional literature course many of you have experienced.

We will be focusing our on how radical writings are constructed to work in their particular place and time: that is, we will be looking at how the writings are composed with the intent to do something, and this is how we will begin to construct rhetorical understandings of the texts. We will be analyzing as much at the events in which the writings are composed as much as the writing itself. In this sense, we will be looking at how writing connects to place and time, the *kairos* of the writing. In this course *kairos* will be a key term for our class discussions and analysis. It's a term useful for describing how writing is composed for particular moments, places and audiences. Throughout the

class we will be looking at how network technologies -- the digital -- are adding, changing, and, sometimes, subtracting options for activists in how they organize around and distribute their writings. And what does this change mean? In order to acutely investigate this question, we will be studying everything from advanced network literacy techniques, file sharing, articles on 'data mining', and various essays, documentaries, cell phone usages as well as the contents of a white-paper trash bag. From all of these exercises, you will be expected to produce a considerable amount of writing in this class ranging from short reflective pieces to longer scholarly writings.

To compliment your archival readings and research I will be providing many recent materials from my own scholarly and activist work. This includes short films, press advisories and releases, as well as websites and new media materials. To help shed further light on these genres and draw from local expertise in the community we will also have at least four distinguished local and national activists visiting the class to share their own work and workshop projects with you in peer review sessions.

This course is woven with its subject matter to help prepare you for other college and professional writing contexts. Much of the writing we will be doing in this course, such as press advisories and releases, are materials well suited for a professional writing portfolio. Leaving this course, you will not only have your very own national media contact list, but you will also have a broad range of writing strategies to help you, if you choose, begin to put your knowledge into practice.

Course materials

1) Hacker, Diana,. *Pocket Style Manual*, 4 rd ed. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2003.

2) Crowley and Hawhee's *Ancient Rhetorics for Contemporary Students*, 3 rd ed.

3) Ability to read online articles available in HTML & PDF (University computing account).

4) A three-ring binder or online portfolio for keeping track of your work.

Course requirements

Reading. Reading is an important part of learning in this class. You must - both to enable your own learning, as well as to contribute to the learning environment of others - come to class having done the assigned reading.

Conferences. You are required to meet with me for two conferences during the semester - one at_____ and one at _____. The function of these conferences is advisory (we'll talk about how you're doing) and developmental (I'll help you with projects you're currently working on). Further instructions to follow.

Peer workshops. Since this course assumes that good writing develops with revision, we well spend time in class working on drafts of essays. On days when you see "workshops" on the syllabus, be sure to bring a draft of your essay for revision work, along with enough copies for everybody in your group. We will be having local activists coming into the class to workshop with you on your work.

Online postings. You will be required to respond to the readings on the online message board for this class. Posts responding to the reading are due the same day the readings are due. So, for example: if a reading is assigned for next Monday, the post responding to the reading is also due that Monday.

Class participation. In order for the course to sustain energy and remain interesting and useful to all, everybody needs to participate. Participation includes many

forms of engagement from taking part in class discussions to arriving at class on time. The ideal participant (someone who would earn a 4.0) speaks often, is always prepared for class, is helpful to others, listens attentively to what's going on, comes to class on time, and is generally a good citizen of the group.

Attendance. Attendance is critical to the learning environment of the course, so you should try to attend every class if possible. Because this isn't always possible (in other words, because S.H.) you may take up to 4 days off without penalty, no questions asked. After you use your S.H. allowance, however, you'll have .5 shaved off your final grade (so, for example, a 3.5 will become a 3.0). This means that you'll have to plan your time carefully - for instance, save absences for days when you're really sick or when you know you'll have other commitments.

Tardiness. Coming to class late is distracting to your fellow students and really annoys your instructor. Excessive and/or disruptive tardiness will be treated as absences at the discretion of the instructor. Do not test this policy.

Papers. All paper writing done in this class is to be shared with the class, both conceptually and physically, throughout the semester. This sharing will occur in peer revision exercises and talking about the paper structurally with the rest of the class. Therefore, topics that (to you) warrant a high degree of privacy are probably not appropriate writing subjects for this particular class.

Late papers. Because S.H., you may submit one paper (except for the final project, which is due during Exam Week) up to one week late with no questions asked. After you submit a paper late, though, you will receive a penalty on each additional late paper half a letter grade per week.

Revision. You can submit revisions to papers one two after they've been returned with grades -- within certain constraints. 1. Opportunities for revision will be time-limited -- that is, you must submit rewrites for papers 1-2 on or before the last month of the semester, and for short writing assignments you will have one week to submit your revisions; and 2. You must discuss your plan for revision with me before you proceed; and 3. You must include your graded and commented-on original version of the paper along with your revision.

Plagiarism. Plagiarism is the act using language and ideas from published sources without proper attribution (see your Spartan Student Handbook for policies on Academic Honesty, pp. 76-77). I expect that the work that you will be doing in this course is your own work. If you are working on a project with a classmate, you should be prepared to tell me what you've contributed to the group project. We will also be talking in class about what counts as plagiarism, why it's considered inappropriate, and how best to avoid it.

Grading and policies

Grading. All work will be assigned a grade consistent with MSU's 4-point grading system: 4.0 (A); 3.5 (A/B); 3.0, (B); 2.5 (B/C); 2.0 (C); 1.5 (C/D); 1.0 (D). Grades will be tallied as follows:

Major writing projects:

(20%). Paper one: rhetorical analysis of historical materials.

(20%). Paper two: rhetorical analysis of a local political event.

(10%). Class presentations (two total - 5% each).

(10%). Class and online participation.

(20%). Final project.

Short writing assignments:

    (5%). Analysis report of the contents of white paper trash bags.

    (5%). Ethnographic research using cell phones.

    (5%). Press advisory and press release.

    (5%). Media contact list.

    (100%). Total points.

P1. Rhetorical Analysis of Historical Documents. Due October 13th

Your first project of the semester will be based on your original research into the under-utilized radical collections archive. You will be doing a clustered analysis of a major period for one of the collections, and look at how the posters, flyers, leaflets or documents are intended to function rhetorically. What is the audience of the documents? How effective are the texts? What is not effective about the texts? How do the texts utilize printing technologies and visual images?

Your second objective for the first project will be to, after developing a rhetorical understanding of the documents you have selected, find a range of supporting historical materials outside the collection to contextualize your work. If you are looking at the flyers for the Communist Party USA in the 1920's, you will be required to do a thorough rhetorical analysis of the documents based on our assigned out of class readings from Crawley-Hawhee's third edition of Ancient Rhetorics for Contemporary Students.

P2. Analysis of a Local Political Event. Due: TBA

For project two, which will be assigned the third week of the semester, you will have the difficult task of locating a political protest or controversial political event some time in the middle to early latter half of the semester. Your primary assignment will be to, in this order, (1) anticipate, locate, and attend a protest, or speaking event (2) collect as much available writings generated either before, distributed at, or created after the event and (3) using your Crawley-Hawhee book, write and visually graph out a final five to seven page rhetorical analysis of the event and all of its accompanying writings.

For example, if you locate a flyer for a speaker, an economic justice protest, an anti-war protest, you will save the flyer, attend the protest and take copious notes about the display and delivery of the event. Who is the audience for the event? Who is the event effective for? Who is the event not effective for? How do participants and observers react to the event? What writings are available at the event? This may include signs, posters, leaflets, flyers, banners, etc. After the event, what media is created based on the event? For example, what media is generated from the event online, in the print press, or on broadcast television? How does the event fit into, work against, or work to reform a larger political structure? After you have collected all of your available information, composed and handed in your report, you will be presenting to the class on your rhetorical observations and analysis.

Project two may be the most challenging project of the semester because I am asking you, in your analysis to identify how your event fits into a larger rhetorical and political picture. For example, if you are looking at a union protest, how does that

particular event fit into the larger overall structure of the campaign? Why and how are is day, and those documents important to how the rhetoric of the campaign over time? This project will require you to submit a short proposal to me in advance of the project as well as meet with me either one on one or, if you choose, in groups of two to discuss your findings before or after your analysis. The time in which you meet with me will depend on a number of variable factors, including your level of need to consult with me either before or after your initial analysis. As always, you are more than welcome to seek multiple consultations during office hours or by appointment, however I will only be requiring one meeting.

P3. Final Project. Due: End of Semester

For your final project this semester, you will be addressing the question of how network technologies, the emergence of the digital, are changing the ways certain activists organize, work, and communicate their documents and materials. Specifically, I want you to relate your arguments back to a place, space, and a struggle: in this sense, I want a rhetorical analysis of how a particular new technologies changes considerations of delivery, and ultimately activist composition.

For example, if you choose to look at a technology such as 'file sharing' you will need to single out how the distribution of a single song has been effective (or not, and if so why) in a larger, structural movement or particular struggle. I want you to look as much at the 'bigger picture' as much as the strategies that fit into the 'smaller picture' of the particular composition and its delivery. For the delivery of your final product to myself and the class, you may choose to compose your piece using a range of new media

technologies, including a digital short film, a flash piece, a website, a print publication, or a traditional scholarly essay. By allowing this broad of a delivery option for your final composition, I expect that you will be able to justify your choices of mode and medium.

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