"AMONG OURSELVES:" THE COLLABORATIVE RHETORICS OF NINETEENTH CENTURY LADIES' LITERARY SOCIETIES

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ABSTRACT

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As traditional conceptions of authorship have been problematized (Barthe; Foucault; Moi), collaborative composition has gained the interest of scholars, particularly those within the field of rhetoric and writing. Much of the resultant research has focused on student learning and academic or job-related productions of texts. Yet a large area of the field, historical rhetoric, has not yet reevaluated the assumptions concerning authors and production. For these reasons, this dissertation seeks to further understand historical, collaborative rhetorics, specifically those of large groups such as Ladies Literary Societies. Utilizing heuristics, I approach the discovery and understanding of historical collaborations by conducting research in the archives of three carefully selected and purposefully diverse Women’s Clubs from the nineteenth century: Boston’s Gleaning Circle (1805), Oberlin’s Young Ladies’ Literary Society (1835), and Boston’s Woman’s Era Club (1894). These societies focused on the improvement of their members’ intellects with regard to rhetoric, literature, and religion. Yet while these groups have been researched in detail by other scholars (Anne Ruggles Gere, Mary Kelley, Elizabeth McHenry, Shirley Wilson Logan), the dynamism of their collaborations has not been the focus of scholarly inquiry. Consequently, this dissertation investigates the ways these societies collaborated by looking at both their products and practices. This dissertation concludes with a multimodal theory of collaboration that recognizes a number of key factors as the determinants of the characteristics (and success) of any given collaboration. While Ede and Lunsford and Lindal Buchanan outline the modes of collaboration that
were utilized in my heuristics, the case studies revealed that nineteenth century women were utilizing a variety of these modes simultaneously dependent upon a variety of determining features. Recognizing context and stakeholders as the two primary determining features, this theory outlines six other factors that impact the characteristics of collaboration: need, purpose, process, time, size, and power. These factors all influence, then, the ways people collaborate with a variety of purposes (in contrast to most theories of collaboration which focus on collaborative writing). Consequently, when scholars look to study a collaboration or teachers look to develop collaborations in their classroom, they should consider all of these factors.
To the women of Boston’s Gleaning Circle, Oberlin’s Ladies’ Literary Society, and

Boston’s Woman’s Era Club.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

While it seems an enormous contradiction to write a dissertation about collaboration “alone,” and while this document will be filed under my name only, this dissertation is truly the result of many collaborations. Thus despite the institutional reasons for my name holding the lone-author space on the front page, this dissertation was not (and could not have been) written alone. A sincere thanks to Stacy Kastner, Kellie Jean Sharp, Suzan Aiken, and Kerri Hauman for their friendship and support; to Shawn Ramsey, Bret Bowers, Kent Lenz, and Krista Petrosino for being a wonderful cohort as well as great friends; to Alex Monea, Chris Barnes, Scott Obernesser, Nicole Sickinger, Matt Bridgewater, Nick Baca, Estee Beck, and Angie Fitzpatrick for their friendship and support; to Mary, Randy, and David Fredlund for being the best family I could ask for; to Scott Sundvall for his endless support and love; to Rick Gebhardt and Lance Massey for their instruction and guidance; to Liz Rohan for helping me first find the courage to dive into the archives.

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Speaking in 1895 to the first National Conference of Colored Women, Josephine St. Pierre Ruffin, founder of Boston’s Woman’s Era Club and Newspaper, addressed the importance of women’s clubs to African American women and their newfound ability to convene in large numbers:

It is only recently that women have waked up to the importance of meeting in council, and great as has been the advantage to women generally, and important as it is and has been that they should confer, the necessity has not been nearly so great, matters at stake not nearly so vital, as that we, bearing peculiar blunders, suffering under especial hardships, enduring peculiar privations, should meet for a ‘good talk’ among ourselves. (Ruffin)

As her words infer, these clubs had the capability to prepare women for public action and/or for public meeting. Women’s Clubs and Literary Societies provided a safe place for women to learn, speak, and discuss together. While prompting events and encouraging critical conversation among women, the goals of these clubs were primarily educational. Women convened in houses, churches, and elsewhere to read, write, and discuss topics ranging from “whether water has done more damage than fire” to “the preference for knowledge over ignorance” (Ladies 1850).

These clubs, also referred to as Ladies’ Literary Societies, were not new nor were they exclusive to African American women. Rather, they had been adapted from male debate and literary societies that existed during the colonial period. Ladies Literary Societies began as early as the 1760’s while Literary Societies originally began with male-only memberships, which is not surprising considering the first known group was founded at Harvard over a hundred years before women were admitted into colleges. These groups generally voted members into offices
including the offices of President, Secretary, Treasurer, and Critic. The critic’s job was to act as a
teacher and point out flaws in argument and presentation. Yet while the critic took a role likened
to that of a teacher, this is not to say the societies were not democratic. Members all critiqued
and presented; most orations were followed by group discussion. These Literary Societies met
weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly, and at each meeting homework was assigned for the next
meeting. Sometimes fines were even distributed for absences (Gere).

For men these groups often complemented their formal studies; for women, however,
adult education often began and ended within these literary societies. Because they lacked higher
education opportunities, women had little choice but to educate themselves. In Learning to Stand
and Speak: Women, Education, and Public Life in America’s Republic, Mary Kelley calls such
groups “early precursors of the female academies that began schooling students in the late
1780s” (115). It was long believed that Ladies’ Literary Societies began in the nineteenth
century, online archives, however, have enabled Mary Kelley and others to dispel the notions of
earlier scholars, such as Theodora Penny Martin, who claimed, “Springing up from nowhere,
women’s study clubs spread across the American scene in the late 1860’s, gathering momentum
and increasing in number through the early 1890s” (1). Similarly, these clubs were also often
considered the result of Margaret Fuller’s Conversations in the 1830s; however, as Kelley
explains, “Fuller’s Conversations rather than being an exception, represented a culmination of
long-established collaborations in both the production and reproduction of knowledge” (114).
While Fuller encouraged the popularity of Ladies’ Literary Societies, she did not begin the
movement; she continued it.

At the turn of the nineteenth-century, these clubs increased in number and kind. Ladies’
Literary Societies and Women’s clubs became more diverse while members of each society
remained fixed by class, race, and age. Societies were composed of the wives of doctors and lawyers, the wives of professors, and the wives of working class men. Some were even composed of single women. These groups did not challenge class boundaries, but instead seemed to sustain them. Caucasian clubs also denied African American women membership, making race another way for these societies to be exclusive. As a result, the societies each represented very specific women and had different issues to confront. For example, the women of Boston’s Gleaning Circle were all of the upper class; many of their fathers were member’s of Boston’s Marine Society, illustrating just how similar the women who composed these groups often were.

Not only did these women face different kinds of scrutiny, these groups also had different purposes and needs based on their memberships (Kelley).

While diverse, these groups did have common ground; their memberships consisted of women who wanted to learn, and their methods were always collaborative. It was within these clubs and literary societies that many women of all different backgrounds began to educate themselves and others. Not only did they educate themselves, but some also attempted to make changes in the communities that surrounded them. In *Intimate Practices* Anne Ruggles Gere “show[s] how clubwomen enacted cultural work through their literacy practices” (2). While Gere’s book looked at the immeasurable contributions of the woman’s club movement, this dissertation looks to the products of these groups in order to understand their processes and practices. In other words, I discuss the ways these women effected the many contributions Gere discusses. I argue it was not only literacy practices that made these clubs so productive, but also the many ways these women collaborated to improve themselves and their opportunities, eventually using these collaborations as the grounds for a discussion of contemporary composition theories.
After the publication of Lisa Ede and Andrea Lunsford’s *Singular Texts, Plural Authors*, the field of rhetoric and writing has discussed collaborative writing and collaborative authors in great detail. Workplace collaborations were also studied in depth during the eighties and nineties by Ede and Lunsford and Greg Myers among others. Much of this scholarship has urged scholars to collaborate and teachers to facilitate student collaboration. Similarly, writing is now considered a largely social act. Despite these accomplishments, the field has more to learn about collaboration, as historical collaborations have not been researched in such great detail, likely because such collaborations are hard to identify in a printed text. While Lindal Buchanan’s *ReGendering Delivery* and Carol Mattingly’s *Appropriate[ing] Dress: Women's Rhetorical Style in Nineteenth-Century America* have both studied women and collaboration, large collaborations, such as those of Ladies’ Literary Societies, can help scholars further understand the role collaboration has played in women’s rhetorical history. Since there are already multiple definitions of collaboration, oftentimes contributing to confusion among scholars, teachers, and students, I rely on Buchanan’s definition of collaboration: “a cooperative endeavor, involving two or more people that results in a rhetorical product, performance, or event” (134).

For the women of Ladies’ Literary Societies, collaboration utilized a variety of modes, whether recording the oral collaborations of their meetings, presenting a written essay at an event where one woman spoke while others supported her in a variety of ways, or collaborating on a small committee before presenting the findings to a large group and then voting as a whole society on the presented motion. Even within their meetings these women found a variety of ways to collaborate recursively. It is my intention to illustrate that it was the flexibility of these collaborations that allowed Ladies’ Literary Societies and Women’s Clubs to make the many remarkable accomplishments that Gere and other scholars have outlined. Consequently, this study
will focus on the archives of three nineteenth century women’s clubs: Boston’s Gleaning Circle, Oberlin’s Ladies Literary Society, and Boston’s Woman’s Era Club.

Not only did these women collaborate within their private meetings, but they also collaborated to produce rhetoric that would allow their societies to continue. Yet to study these rhetorics, it is first important to classify them with regards to rhetorical history. Of the many definitions of rhetoric, Aristotle’s is most appropriate as these women had no choice but to “[observe] in any given case the available means of persuasion” (181). Like the rhetorical women before them, the women of Ladies’ Literary Societies had to work with (and within) perceptions of proper female behavior to find ways they could persuade others to allow them to speak. For example, in 1850 Oberlin College’s “Young Ladies’ Literary Society” put on a public Anniversary meeting that invited their male professors as well as the male literary society from the college. At this event, the women began with music and prayer, displaying one of their club’s focuses: religion. This use of religion allowed the women to then read their own written essays aloud, an act they were not permitted to do at graduation or indeed at any other public event at the college. At the end of the meeting, the minutes for August 21st 1850 explain, “A vote of thanks was then tendered to the audience for their respectful attention and to the gentlemen who assisted in singing.” While likely done with good manners in mind, this thank you from the society as a whole also represents a collaborative rhetoric that was aware of the women’s rightful place at the male-run college, a place that required them to act graciously.

Studying such collaborative decisions, processes, and rhetorics means relying on what little archival evidence remains over a hundred years after these women met in person. The following three chapters will rely on archival research to discuss three diverse societies: Boston’s Gleaning Circle (1805), Oberlin’s Young Ladies’ Literary Society (1835), and Boston’s Woman’s Era
While, luckily, many of these societies kept minutes that recorded each meeting in varied detail, I still will not have access to the whole story. Instead, I will piece together the collaborations with the evidence I can find in minutes, essays, event fliers, newspapers, and group histories. To do this, I have developed heuristics that will allow me to identify the historical collaborations I am looking for. These heuristics will ensure that I am not, as Janice Lauer puts it, inventing “without any criteria against which to measure these methods of invention” (397). Instead, the heuristics were developed as a “series of questions or operations which guide writers to examine their subjects from multiple perspectives. Neither a set of mechanical steps nor trial-and-error searches, they are conscious operations that are useful in open-ended inquiry which seeks new meanings” (268) as Lauer discusses in “Toward a Metatheory of Heuristic Procedures.” The remainder of this chapter, then, looks from antiquity to the nineteenth century in order to identify possible historical collaborations. Identifying these possible collaborations will also allow me to identify the reasons they have been considered the result of a single author, ensuring that I do not make similar assumptions. I then use those historical collaborations to explain the heuristics that consist of four sets of questions that will help me identify and understand the collaborations of ladies’ literary societies and women’s clubs. After this section on historical collaboration, the chapter turns to a discussion of methods—explaining my approach to the subsequent three case studies.

**Historical Collaborations: From Antiquity to the Nineteenth Century**

It is often assumed (by both scholars and readers) that canonical texts were composed by individual authors. Despite this, there are reasons to question these assumptions, especially when it comes to females such as Aspasia and Hortensia and atypical males such as the Sophists. While representations of women’s rhetoric from antiquity are lacking, Aspasia’s rhetoric has
been presented in Plato’s *Menexenus*. In this work, Socrates explains, “For [Aspasia] had been
told, as you were saying, that the Athenians were going to choose a speaker, and she repeated to
me the sort of speech which he should deliver—partly improvising and partly from previous
thought, putting together fragments of the funeral oration which Pericles spoke, but which, as I
believe, she composed” (Ritche 3). The idea that Aspasia composed Pericles’ speech did not end
with Socrates, but has reappeared in contemporary scholarship, specifically in Cheryl Glenn’s
*Rhetoric Retold*. This contemporary view of Aspasia as a rhetor followed a long period in which
Aspasia was discredited (perhaps due to the exclusion of women from the rhetorical canon).
Scholars often consider examples such as this (where one person delivers and another composes)
collaborative. Yet these recognized collaborations are often between two women and are
therefore uncontroversially deemed collaborations as such a means of production fits within
women’s ways of knowing (as illustrated in the work of Belenky et al.).

While Aspasia may have composed this speech, or at least part of it, Pericles adapted it
and delivered it to the public (an act not permitted of Aspasia). So while this oration was
considered the work of Aspasia by Socrates and the work of Pericles by later scholars, it could
also have been a collaboration between Aspasia and Pericles. Cheryl Glenn writes, “Aspasia
surely must have influenced Pericles in the composition of those speeches that both established
him as a persuasive speaker and informed him as the most respected citizen-orator of the age”
(39). More than influence him, if she were the great rhetor whom Socrates, Plato, Xenophon and
others imply, it is possible that she and Pericles worked together to compose the orations he
would later perform publicly. Unfortunately, when one person delivers a speech and another
composes it, the composer is often forgotten. This is not true in the case of Lindal Buchanan’s
study of Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton, in which it is recognized that the
individuals involved in the production and delivery of the text collaborated. However, this nineteenth century example is one of the few such recognized collaborations. For this reason, it is important to consider the many processes of composition when looking for historical, collaborative works. Because this is not always possible as products are often all that exists, it also becomes important to look at what the composer’s contemporaries have said about the text and author. As this example of Aspasia and Pericles displays, the rhetor who delivers a text is not always the sole composer. Consequently, it is important to look for other references to the text and its production.

Accounts of textual production are not the only clues that can indicate collaboration. The “Dissoi Logoi” is attributed to an anonymous author during 403-395 B.C.E., yet Patricia Bizzell and Bruce Herzberg explain in their introduction: “numerous scholarly speculations have been put forward concerning the author’s identity” (47). The fact that many authors have been connected to this work, leads to my theory that this could have been a collaborative text. This idea can be further complicated when Bizzell and Herzberg explain, “Since the text appears to conclude at the end of section six, some scholars have argued that it is a disjointed assemblage of unrelated observations” (47). These “unrelated observations” could also be a set of notes compiled by different authors, which would explain not only the disjointed text, but also the change in tone in the concluding sections. As the text I refer to is a translation, the translator perceived these stylistic changes and transposed them accordingly. For example, in a translated version of section 8 the “author” wrote, “I consider it a characteristic of the same man and of the same art to be able to converse in brief questions and answers, to know the truth of things, to plead one’s cause…” (Bizzell and Herzberg 54). Yet in the following section, these words are presented: “A very good and most attractive discovery that has been made for the way we live is
memory” (55). While it is of course possible that these words were written by a single man, the change in tone and style could indicate an alternative of separate authors working together.

Context may also indicate that multiple Sophists collaborated to develop this work. In *ReReading the Sophists*, Susan Jarrett explains, “Though the various individual thinkers classed as "sophists" differ in the emphasis of their works, the major commentators agree that they shared goals, techniques, and outlooks and can thus be spoken of as a group” (XX). Consequently, even if multiple men did not write this text, multiple men surely impacted it. The fact that the text represents sophistic thought and practice indicates that the “Dissoi Logoi” could have been the result of a collaborative production. In “The Sophistical Attitude and the Invention of Rhetoric,” Nathan Crick explains that their inventive rhetoric “naturally grew out of a thoroughgoing experimental attitude by which ideas and actions were allowed to interpenetrate and inform one another across a situated and temporal horizon” (28). While it was not uncharacteristic for a Sophist to argue both sides, I contend that the only way to teach this method and to practice it was through collaboration. To do what Crick outlines, it would only make sense for the Sophists, being teachers first and foremost, to collaborate with one another. While this in no way proves that the Dissoi Logoi was a collaborative work, the more important conclusion is that context should always be considered when discussing a work. Further, this example illustrates that assumptions of singular authors can prevent scholars from discovering the many different ways a text could have been produced. This example also indicates that changes in voice and tone could evidence that a text is the result of multiple authors. Additionally, this text illustrates that texts can represent groups rather than individuals.

The language of a text can also indicate a collaboration. Hortensia’s words are the first female’s recorded in Western history. In her 42 B.C.E “Speech to the Triumvirs” she approached
“the triumvirate of Mark Antony, Octavian, and Lepidus [who] proposed to raise money for the war against the assassins of Julius Caesar” by taxing the fourteen hundred wealthiest Roman females (Ritchie 16). In *The Civil Wars Book IV*, Appian explains the aftermath of a woman daring to speak to the Triumvirate:

While Hortensia thus spoke the triumvirs were angry that women should dare to hold a public meeting when the men were silent; that they should demand from magistrates the reasons for their acts, and themselves not so much as furnish money while the men were serving in the army. They ordered the lictors to drive them away from the tribunal, which they proceeded to do until cries were raised by the multitude outside, when the lictors desisted and the triumvirs said they would postpone till the next day the consideration of the matter. On the following day they reduced the number of the women, who were to present a valuation of their property, from 1400 to 400, and decreed that all men who possessed more than 100,000 drachmas, both citizens and strangers, freedmen and priests, and men of all nationalities without a single exception, should (under the same dread of penalty and also of informers) lend them at interest a fiftieth part of their property and contribute one year's income to the war expenses. (199)

Hortensia has been praised by both Quintillian and contemporary scholars, yet concepts of authorship have kept historians and rhetoricians from seeing the full picture. When Hortensia delivered this speech, she was not alone; as the editors of *Available Means* explain, “a group of Roman women opposed to the prospect of a civil war that had already cost many lives marched into the Roman Forum, demanding to be heard” (16). While Hortensia spoke *for* them, she also spoke *with* them, claiming, “As befitted women of our rank addressing a petition to you, we had
recourse to the ladies of your households; but having been treated as did not befit us, at the hands of Fulvia, we have been driven by her to the forum” (Appian 196). As these women marched to the forum, it is unlikely Hortensia made rhetorical decisions individually and on the spot. In “Women-Tempered Rhetoric: Public Presentation and the WCTU” Carol Mattingly explains the WCTU “recognized the prejudices peculiar to women speakers, they carefully addressed ethical appeal above all other concerns. Willard repeatedly counseled women, ‘Womanliness first-afterward what you will,’ understanding speakers’ primary need to dismantle resistance to women’s messages by presenting a reassuring feminine persona” (51). It is possible that like the WCTU, the women Hortensia was with gave her similar suggestions concerning appeals, prompting the use of pronouns that indicated she was not the only one speaking.

Perhaps, then, this speech was the result of a collaboration as her words “our,” “we,” and “us” indicate. These unnamed women could have chosen her to speak because she was the daughter of an orator. Hortensia’s use of pronouns indicates that these women made rhetorical choices together, and certainly discussed the content of Hortensia’s speech (and at the very least, they could have provided feedback) before the speech was presented to the Triumvirate. Karen Burke LeFevre’s work has reclassified invention as a social not solitary act, but in this case, invention has been forgotten in scholarly discussion, and as a result Hortensia’s friends have been ignored. They have been dismissed as followers without a say. However, the presence of the other women indicate Hortensia was not acting alone; instead, this was a collaboration of women, one that is quite obvious upon second look, but hard to recognize when not considering her use of pronouns and her biographical information.

Thus when approaching historical texts with the purpose of identifying collaboration, it is important to look for language (and specifically pronouns) that indicate multiple people are
being represented and also to consider the context of the situation. Had Hortensia gone to the
Triumvirate alone, not only would her speech have been less effective due to a lack of support,
but it also would have been more realistic to consider this the product of a single author.
Consequently, this example illustrates the need to consider invention (as did the example
concerning Pericles and Aspasia). It also indicates that considering language, and specifically
pronoun use, can indicate a collaboration, as can the support, attendance, and representation of
other individuals at the time of delivery. Pronoun use, however, is not enough evidence to
conclude that a text is the result of collaboration because “we” is often used by single authors.
The royal we, for instance, often used by monarchs actually refers to a single person. A more
contemporary example comes from Kenneth Burke. His *A Grammar of Motives* consistently uses
“we” instead of I, yet it is quite clear that he wrote this work alone. Consequently, the use of the
pronoun “we,” while indicating that a text may be the result of a collaboration, is not enough
evidence that said text is the result of collaboration; other evidence must be present as well.

Cicero’s *De Oratore*, his outline of the ideal orator, has long been considered his seminal
work. Written during his exile in 58 B.C.E., *De Oratore* recites other Roman and Greek orators’
ideas. This work represents not only Cicero, but also those before him, as is displayed by the
continued scholarly acceptance of the men he represents as real orators. In *The Roman World of
Cicero’s De Oratore* Elaine Fantham explains, “If there are two public speakers of the
generation before Cicero whose talents and careers can still be recovered, these are L. Licinius
Crassus and M. Antonius. Of course, it is Cicero’s witness that has kept them alive: more than
half of the details of their advocacy and speeches come from their ‘own’ claims and comments of
other interlocutors in De Oratore” (26). Fantham reveals that this was not only a rhetorical work,
but also a record of Roman oration during Cicero’s life. This record could be considered a
collaborative work as Cicero could not have completed De Oratore without the orators of the
generation before him. Equally important, is the fact that the orators he describes and quotes
would not be remembered at all today without Cicero’s recordings. That said, when looking
through historical artifacts and texts, a record of an event should be considered a collaborative
work. These records represent not only the individual who wrote the record, but also those he or
she represented. Without the recorder or the recorded, the text would not exist as it does, and
therefore multiple people were necessary to the completion of the text, rendering it a
collaborative work.

Moving forward to the nineteenth century, in 1817 the women of the Cherokee Nation
provide yet another way to understand historical collaboration. In their address to the Chiefs and
warriors in council they argue, as respected members of the Cherokee community, that the
Nation should no longer sell land to the United States. This recognized collaboration, attributed
to “Cherokee Women” in Available Means, relies on pronouns, like Hortensia, to indicate that
the address had multiple authors. Further, this address was intended to represent the Cherokee
women’s opinions to their nation. Consequently, when a group is represented by a speech or text,
this text can be considered a collaboration if it required approval. Yet unlike this collaboration,
collaborations are not always indicated in the titles of the address or work. So while pronouns
are one indication of collaboration, so is the lack of a specific author. While Nancy Ward is
referred to in the final paragraph of this address, she is referred to because of her respected
position within the Nation, not because she authored this piece. No other names are specified,
and so if the author is not apparent or referred to and pronouns indicate the text speaks for
multiple people then, as in this case, it is safe to assume the text was the composition of multiple
authors with similar interests or goals (Ritchie 106-7).
Texts, however, often represent people who did not directly contribute to production. One such example is the “Declaration of Sentiments and Resolutions” delivered at the Seneca Falls Convention in 1848. This text, coauthored by Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Lucretia Mott, Matilda Gage, Martha Coffin Wright, and Mary Ann McClintock, was delivered and then signed by many convention participants (some of whom would later remove their names) (Ritchie 138). While this Declaration is already considered the collaboration of the women named above, it can also indicate another form of collaboration. The women who did not help author the text but signed their names to it indicated that they felt this text represented their interests and opinions. When considering traditional perceptions of the author, these women do not appear to have collaborated on this text, yet if we consider a different approach, these women can be considered collaborators. This Declaration, as daring as it was, only became the manifesto of the Women’s Rights Movement because of the support of many women. Had it only represented the six authors I mentioned above, then the reaction from the press and the public would likely have been less intense. The many women who signed this document made its statement quite forceful. As a result, those women who only signed their names had an effect upon the way this document was received. This clearly indicates that these women’s names had rhetorical effect, and therefore, the text was the result of a collaboration. Consequently, signatures of approval can indicate a collaboration, as those signatures indicate the approved representation of many by a text that was only written by a few. Not only that, but signatures can also change the way an audience perceives a text thus rendering the text altered by those who signed in approval or support. Consequently, when multiple people impact the way an audience receives a text, said text is the result of collaboration (specifically in the canon of delivery).
Perhaps one of the most recognized collaboration in women’s rhetorical history is that of Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton. Due to Cady Stanton’s many pregnancies and small children, she was unable to give her own speeches for years. As a result, Anthony would not only give Stanton’s speeches, but she would also care for Stanton’s children while she wrote them. Further, as Lindal Buchanan explains in Regendering Delivery, “Anthony’s petition and Cady Stanton’s printed address were presented to and considered by the New York assembly” (155). These instances of collaboration extend the meaning of collaboration so that it is no longer perceived only as production or presentation, but also as the process of and the purpose for communication. Buchanan concludes that, “collaboration’s malleability made it indispensible to nineteenth-century women’s rhetorical production and delivery” (133).

Buchanan explains this “malleability” by identifying modes of collaboration which include a productive mode, a supportive mode, and a productive/supportive mode. Buchanan places these modes on a scale so the collaboration can fit anywhere on or between these modes of collaboration. She explains: “productive collaborations make direct contributions to the end result, for example, by dividing up and taking individual responsibility for particular parts of the rhetorical process or by laboring together on some or all of its phases” (134-5). Buchanan considers supportive collaborations to be “those in which one person’s efforts contribute indirectly to another’s rhetorical production and delivery” (135). Consequently, when considering the delivery and invention of collaborative texts, using Buchanan’s modes can help code the collaboration and make it possible to compare the production and delivery of one collaboration to the production and delivery of another.

Buchanan, however, is not the only scholar to identify different modes of collaboration. In “Rhetoric in a New Key: Women and Collaboration,” Lisa Ede and Andrea Lunsford consider
collaborations within seven different professions. In this study, they found not the single mode they expected, but instead a number of different modes which they divide into two categories: hierarchical and dialogical. They define hierarchical collaboration as “linearly structured, driven by highly specific goals, and carried out by people who play clearly assigned roles” (235). In contrast, dialogic collaboration is defined as “loosely structured…the roles enacted within it are fluid; one ‘person’ may occupy multiple and shifting roles as the project progresses.” (235-6). They consider the dialogical mode to be “predominantly feminine,” despite their findings that the two fields with the highest number of females were not utilizing this dialogic mode. These modes are not exclusionary, and when considered with Buchanan’s modes, provide different ways to look at collaboration, especially when considering large-group collaborations. Because Ede and Lunsford researched collaboration within larger groups, their modes are especially useful for this project.

To further Ede and Lunsford’s study, Thompson et al. considered their modes of collaboration within writing center relationships. As a result, they added a mode of collaboration they termed “asymmetrical.” They developed this definition with regards to tutors, and conclude power rests differently in each collaborator’s role:

In asymmetrical collaboration, both the tutor and the student have power. The tutor has greater expertise in the subject matter or skill than the student, but the student has the power to initiate the collaboration and set the agenda. The tutor’s directive-ness is based on the student’s needs and expectations, and the tutor is responsible for making the student feel comfortable enough to take risks and develop and maintain motivation to complete the task. (81)
This additional mode can also describe historical collaborations; it is specifically appropriate for explaining the role of the critic within debate and literary societies. Like the writing center relationship explained above, the speaker in a literary society has initiated the collaboration (by joining and then deciding to present a paper). Then the critic, much like the tutor, uses his or her expertise to improve the text, and in doing so, meets the speaker’s expectations. This mode can be identified when an individual initiates a collaborative relationship with a well-respected colleague or superior. Yet while such collaborations could be considered hierarchical, the collaboration should alternatively be considered asymmetrical when each member of the collaboration holds a different level of power during the relationship.

Yet another area of research regarding the social nature of composition deals with the rhetorical canons. This collaborative research has largely focused on the two canons of invention and delivery. Karen Burke LeFevre’s 1987 book *Invention as a Social Act* questioned the accepted notion that invention was a solitary activity. In challenging the favored Platonic and Romantic views of invention, she claims invention is actually dialectical, and in doing so, illustrates the many ways invention relies not only on the individual but on that individual’s relationships as well. She concludes her book with, “we will more fully comprehend the process of creating new ideas when we think of it as an act that is social even as it is individual, with the other always implicated in the inventions of the I” (140). Thus LeFevre claims that by recognizing the inherently social nature of invention, the field of rhetoric and writing will better understand the resulting composition.

Almost twenty years later, Lindal Buchanan’s *Regendering Delivery* challenged conceptions concerning the fifth canon of delivery by considering the many ways antebellum women developed distinctly female delivery techniques. In her chapter “Forging and Firing
Thunderbolts,” she considers how collaborative partnerships alter the delivery of a text, as discussed in the previous example of Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton. She claims, “gender thus creates inequities in the rhetorical process itself, a situation unacknowledged by men and society” (154). Buchanan’s conclusions concerning delivery indicate that the fifth canon is not only altered by gender, but by collaboration as well. Both LeFevre and Buchanan’s assertions concerning the rhetorical canons have lead to my own interest in the canons with regards to historical collaborative rhetorics. These scholars’ works have challenged the idea that the canons must be solitary. Yet there are still other canons to be investigated. Thus I hope to extend the field’s knowledge of collaboration by also finding evidence that the canons of arrangement, style, and memory can be collaborative and social.

Methods and Methodology

As a feminist activist and teacher, I also situate myself as a feminist researcher and thus use a feminist historical method to approach my archival research. My understanding of this method stems from Gesa Kirsch’s book, Ethical Dilemmas in Feminist Research: The Politics of location, interpretation, and transformation, in which she explains that feminist rhetorical research reexamines accepted notions in the field of rhetoric by looking at female experience from a feminist perspective—one that looks beyond the patriarchal norms and hegemonic expectations to the female desires, notions, and experiences with regard to the text and author. The aforementioned goal of recovering women’s collaborations, then, challenges the patriarchal vision of authorship. Moreover, the three case studies presented here will also serve as a women’s recovery project as the practices of these clubs, while discussed, have never been researched or explained in such detail. From this detailed archival recovery, scholars of rhetoric and writing can learn more about large group collaborations and collaborative theories.
To further the notion of a feminist historical method, Jaqueline Jones Royster explains, “While, with each run through a territory, we must inevitably choose a path, we need more than one crossing to see what is really going on… The more pathways we create…the greater the chance we have of accounting more adequately and more sensitively to complex worlds” (389). This quote is especially relevant as I am working with some texts that have been crossed before; I have, however, choose different paths by approaching with a different subjectivity, one that not only has the benefit of altered definitions of what makes a text, but also the benefit of looking at Ladies’ Literary Societies composed of females of different races, ages, and places. The heuristics, then, ensure I am asking the same questions about each case study despite the women who composed these clubs differences. Additionally, I will approach this project looking for “single texts” from “plural authors,” searching not only for the great individuals of history but the great collaborators as well.

As a general rule, Ladies’ Literary Societies were often composed of women of similar races, educational backgrounds, class standings, and by necessity, locations. Considering this, the study of a single society would limit my findings to a specific group of women. As a result, this dissertation will research three different Ladies’ Literary Societies or alternatively women’s clubs. This will ensure I am not making assumptions about all Ladies’ Literary Societies based on a single society, and also that I have a more complete view of collaboration within these societies. For this reason, I will study diverse societies, so as to reflect the many different women and collaborations of the time. These societies include an all-Caucasian non-college affiliated society (Boston’s Gleaning Circle); a college-affiliated mixed race society (Oberlin College’s Ladies’ Literary Society); and an African American non-college affiliated club (Boston’s Women’s Era Club).
These three clubs were chosen purposefully and based on a number of factors. The first was the size of their archives, as each of these clubs left behind records of their meetings. Both the Gleaning Circle’s and Oberlin’s Ladies’ Literary Society’s records (or minutes) are preserved, and consequently their meetings are explained in detail and still accessible. While the Women’s Era Club’s records are nowhere to be found, their newspaper has been preserved and digitized via the Women’s Writers Resource Project at Emory University. Thus while in different forms, each of the case studies recorded and preserved records of their meetings was essential to this project, as collaborative processes are not always explicit in textual products, but were explicit in these records. The second factor was diversity; in choosing these three clubs, my goal was to understand collaborative practices in a variety of situations. Thus including women’s clubs of different classes and races was essential.

In my archival research, I plan to work with not only a feminist historical method, but a contextual one as well. As a result of Gesa Kirsch and Liz Rohan’s book Beyond the Archives: Research as a Lived Process, I will approach each text and site of research “using space and location as a way to understand the sites where historical subjects lived” (2). Consequently, the context of each case study will be studied in great detail. Beyond studying the space and location where these women lived, each case study chapter includes a section that develops and speculates about the aspects of these women’s lives that are not included in the clubs’ archives. Scholarship on the nineteenth century women’s education, gender expectations and barriers, and the Women’s Club movement are considered with specific regard to each club in order to understand the lives of the women in these Clubs and Societies. Only after I consider the context of the time period and location did I enter the archives; and only after reconsidering these, did I
begin to write of my findings within those archives, so as to provide the best possible description of the factors that drove the women to educate themselves.

In order to ensure consistency, I approached each case study in a variety of steps. Due to constraints of time and money, I could not conduct all of my research in the archives. Consequently, when I first entered the archives of Oberlin and Boston’s Gleaning Circle I spent time becoming familiar with each book in the archives, discovering which aspects of the archive were most important to my study. As I continued to read through the archives, though, the next step was to document the archive through images. This allowed me to return to the content of the archives without returning to the physical archive. Thus the next step was to transcribe these images for easy reading, as the penmanship of the archives was archaic and hard to read. These transcriptions provided for an easier way to code and designate the collaborations I would then study using the heuristics. Boston’s Woman’s Era’s archive, however, was quite different from these two. Instead of viewing original documents, I was able to access the digital archives of their newspaper provided by Emory’s Women’s Writers Resource project. Because this archive consisted of three years of their newspaper which was printed monthly, I found myself with over seven hundred pages of material. Consequently, as with the other case studies I read through the entirety of the archive; however, in this case study I did not transcribe the images myself, as the Women’s Writers Resource Project had already transcribed the newspaper’s contents.

Each case study focuses on three specific collaborations. These collaborations were also chosen purposefully in an attempt to study different kinds of collaborations (I did not want to consistently study each club’s records, for instance) that would challenge the heuristics differently.
In order to identify collaboration, I have used the literature review in this chapter to identify the heuristics that will guide the research process while also ensuring consistency when approaching each Ladies’ Literary Society and text. This method seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. How can collaborative rhetorics be studied and understood? (What is a method for studying collaborative rhetorics?)
2. How did Ladies’ Literary Societies collaborate?
3. How did Ladies’ Literary Societies focus on the improvement of rhetoric and/or public speech and how did this focus on rhetoric contribute to the collaborative rhetoric they presented?
4. How does the context of a collaboration change the process and/or products of that collaboration?
5. How are collaborative rhetorics useful to marginalized groups?

These heuristics, which aim to answer above questions, have been developed using the field of rhetoric and writing’s conceptions of collaboration as texts authored by, contributed to, or delivered by multiple authors. However, the women studied here were not always collaborating with the sole purpose of producing a text. Consequently, I often found that my heuristics and the field of rhetoric and writing’s theories of collaborations were often unable to account for some of the aspects of nineteenth century women’s collaborations. (The full set of heuristics can be found in Appendix A.)

Consequently, the selection of contemporary theories of collaboration to define and code historical collaborations was, in some ways, problematic. The selection of Lindal Buchanan’s and Ede and Lunsford’s definitions of collaborations was intended to help me classify the different ways nineteenth century women were working together. Buchanan’s modes of collaboration were selected because she developed them as a result of the practices of nineteenth century women. However, Ede and Lunsford’s definitions represent twentieth century lines of thought. Despite this, I chose to use their definitions as they have heavily influenced the field of rhetoric and writing’s perceptions of collaboration. Additionally, my work seeks to expand and
challenge these definitions. In “Making Pathways: Inventing Textual Research Methods in Feminist Rhetorical Studies” Kathleen J. Ryan explains that she has:

increasingly found definition, or rather, redefinition, as well as feminist encouragement to resee and revise to be powerful means of theorizing to create change as a feminist pragmatic rhetorician. [She doesn’t] mean to create new definitions to be reified, but to embrace the ways definitions change and evolve as a result of feminist perspectives. Defining is also a valuable means of enacting agency and promoting reform to, in this case, rethink concepts in a feminist concept. (100)

Consequently, in using current definitions, this dissertation seeks to rethink concepts of collaboration with a feminist perspective (as did Ede and Lunsford and Buchanan) by looking at large collaborations from the nineteenth century that were intended to do more than produce texts. Thus these collaborations contrast and help redefine current definitions of collaboration as they are less product focused and contain large numbers of collaborators.

Consequently, the heuristics were not only developed with these definitions in mind, but they were also developed with the intent to redefine and challenge perceptions of both authorship and collaboration. As a result, some of the questions in the heuristics contradict contemporary definitions of collaboration. One of these questions treats repetitive acts by multiple members as evidence of collaboration. This would include similar actions made by diverse members of the group. Another less traditional look at collaboration considers documents approved by multiple people or all members of the Ladies’ Literary Society, and additionally considers documents that record the happenings of the Ladies’ Literary Societies as collaborative texts. The approved documents and the records of the Ladies’ Literary Societies—especially the parts
considering policies, assignments, event decisions, group member acceptance and dismissal—represent the group as a whole and represent a choice that more than one member of the group had to write, approve, or silently confer. As a result, I consider these texts the result of collaborations. The approval of documents is considered collaborative as long as the group was presented with the authored text (that was likely written by multiple members of the group) and the group members were allowed to make revisions, suggestions, and changes to the text. Even if the non-authors did not make revisions, the text is considered collaborative if they approved the document and did not wish to make revisions. Finally, public events put on by Ladies’ Literary Societies are also considered collaborative texts. The events represent rhetorical choices of the whole group (i.e. choosing the speaker, location, formality, attendees) and will therefore be considered collaborative rhetorical choices. While there are many other questions in the heuristics, those outlined here illustrate the general intent of these questions: to identify collaborations that both represent and challenge contemporary theories and definitions.

Understanding method as a “technique for (or way of proceeding in) gathering evidence” and methodology as a “theory and analysis of how research does and should proceed” (Harding 2-3), I approach this project with a feminist methodology. In other words, I believe I should recognize my subjectivity, be aware of the possibility for recreating hegemonic structures, and follow the research findings wherever they may take me. This methodology allows for the strongest and most honest possible archival recovery. With this in mind, the use of definition and the creation of new definitions will be thoughtfully approached, as definition, while necessary, often excludes and as a result can recreate hegemonic structures. I also use what Kirsch and Royster identify as strategic contemplation in “Feminist Rhetorical Practices: In Search of Excellence.” They explain, “This sort of back-and-forth movement calls for work that is not
merely analytical but also embodied, grounded in the communities from which it emanates, and deeply rooted in the traditions we feel obligated to honor and carry forward” (657).

Despite the carefully crafted methods of this project, this research is limited by a number of factors. The first is that my findings are limited to the female gender and to only three ladies’ literary societies. While this limitation is understandably not ideal, it will allow the project to focus on and expand conceptions of U.S. women’s rhetoric during the nineteenth century. Further, it will allow for a more in-depth study of ladies’ literary society practices than current scholarship has provided which allows for the theorizing of their collaborative practices. Despite this focus on only women, this project will have a broader reach to collaborative groups of both limited and non-limited memberships. Additionally, the narrow focus on three societies allows me to investigate collaboration in more detail than previous scholarship. Due to the nature of archival research, I was not be entirely aware of the availability of records (and what those records consist of) until I was working within each specific archive, so each case study focuses on different types of texts. While this will prohibit consistency, it will also allow for a more complete understanding of how collaborations change due to specific situations.

This first chapter has looked to the past in order to develop the heuristics that will be applied to the three archival case studies that follow this chapter. In this way, I have illustrated some of the many ways historical texts can be identified as collaborative, while also explaining the need for such a study that seeks to both identify and understand the role of collaboration in historical productions. The next three chapters will extend this understanding of collaboration by illustrating its inherent multimodality.
The second chapter, then, will focus on The Boston Gleaning Circle, formed in 1805 and ended in 1813, which consisted of young, unmarried women from the ranks of the elite. Mary Kelley explains:

when the Gleaners convened their meetings in the beginning of the nineteenth century, they responded to those who sought to limit them to ‘stockings’ and ‘puddings’ with a question that was entirely rhetorical—‘Is this not very wrong’? It surely was, at least for women who were resisting the mapping of a gendered geography along narrowly circumscribed lines. Instead, the ‘virtuous and accomplished woman’ they sought to emulate was a maker of public opinion.

(135)

It can be assumed, then, that these women wished to dispel the notion that their only purpose in life was to marry and serve. Their privileged status allowed them to gather with great resources, even though they were not yet able to attend college. So these women gathered to educate themselves, as due to the time period, the Gleaning Circle women did not have the same amount of public acceptance (however small) that the later societies did. Consequently, the chapter will begin with a discussion of who these women were. To do this, I focus on genealogies and census records as well as the women’s own writing. Following this section, the chapter discussed education after the revolutionary war as well as cultural arguments regarding women’s education in order to provide context. After a description of their meetings, the chapter turns to discuss their collaborations of “Question and Answer,” “An Argument for Female Education,” and their regulations.

The third chapter will focus on the Young Ladies’ Literary Society of Oberlin College, the first coeducational university in the United States. When Oberlin College opened its doors to
women, the curriculum did not change; instead, the professors, directed by the Ladies’ Board, did not allow women to orate in their rhetoric courses. This, of course, supports Lindal Buchanan’s claim that the conventions of speech were purposely kept from women. Even when women were permitted into the College Department in 1837, they were rarely permitted to read their own writing aloud. If the women of Oberlin wished to learn public speech and oratory, they had no choice but to do it on their own. As a result, they formed a literary society that focused on oration, as reading aloud was not a sufficient educational goal for these women. This chapter will contrast with the first as these women came from different locations and also had different opportunities than the females in the Gleaning Circle. Because some of their records were destroyed in a fire, the case study will study the society from 1846-1859. Before turning to their collaborations, the chapter discusses the educational context of the college, focusing not only on their courses but also on the structure of the college and the farming class make-up of the school’s population. After this, the chapter discusses three collaborations: the society’s minutes, their bi-weekly meetings, and their annual event.

The discovery of a literary society with a preserved history, like the Gleaning Club and Oberlin’s Young Ladies’ Literary Society, proved difficult when I searched for an African American club. While there is plenty of evidence that such clubs existed as early as 1830, these groups’ histories are, not surprisingly, less preserved than those of Caucasian women. In her book *Forgotten Readers: Recovering the Lost History of African American Literary Societies*, Elizabeth McHenry explains:

To better understand the various ways black Americans have acquired and used literacy, we must further complicate our understanding of early African American literacy by considering the literary activities of free blacks and the legacy of the antebellum
institutions that they built to promote reading and share texts. Of this group of readers, we have heard almost nothing; they have been, for the most part, forgotten. (3-4)

While McHenry remembers these groups in her book, her research relies on different texts than literary society research such as Mary Kelley’s. African American literary societies are not documented in the same ways, likely due to both economic and social conditions.

That said, records of female African American Literary Societies do exist, just not in the same magnitude as those of Caucasian literary societies. As a result, the fourth chapter will differ in some ways from the first two. The focus of this chapter will be Boston’s Woman’s Era Club. While minutes are unavailable (and likely no longer exist), the club’s newspaper, *The Woman’s Era*, provides “club notes” and a variety of other records that outline different collaborations.

This newspaper (the first African American female newspaper published in the U.S.) also provides a variety of discussions that will be considered when outlining the context in which these women met. While the texts of this case study will differ from those of the first two, this difference is fitting. As with other African American societies, this group was more active than reflective, attempting to improve educational opportunities not just for themselves but for their race as a whole. After discussing the educational and cultural situation of these women (through a biographical discussion of the club’s three founders: Josephine St. Pierre Ruffin, Florida Ruffin Ridley, and Marie Louise Baldwin), the chapter will turn to a discussion of three collaborations: committee meetings, the newspaper itself, and a national convention. These three groups illustrate the differing members and purposes of literary societies in the nineteenth century, though some women are certainly not represented here (for example working class women often had clubs of their own).
The final chapter will continue to argue that as we move forward with notions of the social nature of rhetoric and writing, we should also look backward for actual representations of such rhetorics. This chapter will explain how the rhetoric of Ladies’ Literary Societies, as displayed in chapters two, three, and four, can be used as a model to understand the complexity of collaborative practices. It will provide implications for understanding collaboration in the field of women’s rhetorical education, for research on women’s clubs, and for theories of collaboration. The chapter also develops a theory to understand collaboration as a multimodal activity that negotiates a variety of factors: context, stakeholders, process, purpose, need, time, size, and power. The chapter concludes with implications for teachers of writing and for feminist activists to consider when developing collaborations.
II: “BE THEREFORE PERSUADED LADIES:”

BOSTON’S GLEANING CIRCLE (1805)

Boston’s Gleaning Circle\(^1\) held their first meeting on Saturday the twenty-third of March, in the year 1805. They would continue to meet every Saturday until sometime during 1813, when the society appears to have disbanded for unspecified reasons. Early in the 19\(^\text{th}\) century United States, women’s educational opportunities were quite limited. Before the educational work of Emma Willard and Catharine Beecher beginning around 1810 and continuing into the middle of the century, female education often concluded when women reached their teens. When the women of the Gleaning Circle began meeting, only two female seminaries existed in the United States, one in Pennsylvania and one in North Carolina. Perhaps like the early students of these seminaries, the women of the Gleaning Circle were neither satisfied with their educations nor ready to be done learning. At the second meeting of the Circle, a member presented a composition addressed to the Gleaning Circle entitled, “Reflections on the cultivation of the Mind,” which read:

We should ever consider the importance of storing our minds with useful knowledge; but at this time, it has a more than ordinary claim to our attention. It is the great end which we ourselves have proposed in forming this society; and next to communion with our God, it is the most sublime employment in which we can be engaged. While reflecting on this subject, which has been so judiciously handled by the most enlightened Authors, I do not pretend to suggest any new idea, but only to “enforce old truths; and raise those powers which cannot be too

\(^1\) While the records do not explain the Circle’s choice of name, Judith Sargent Murray’s book, *The Gleaner*, published in 1798, likely influenced their choice. The book concerned women’s prospects and educations in the “Enlightened Age” and provided a positive outlook for young women.
often excited to activity. It has been very justly observed that nothing makes a
greater difference between one human being and another than different degrees of
knowledge. As the mind is the most valuable part of the human composition, it
should be the first object of our attention. If judiciously cultured, with dependence
or a higher power, it will produce fruits which will amply repay our cares. And if
by meeting in this social way to search for truth, we even advanced one degree
farther in knowledge, and virtue, we shall not have labored in vain. It is necessary
to a strict performance of our duties, as members of this society, that we observe
with the strictest regularity the rules it has prescribed. We must exert all our
powers to obtain useful knowledge and impart it to each other. But we must
recollect that knowledge is nothing unless it tends to virtue. Knowledge may for a
while raise wonder and admiration, but it is only in proportion to its unison with
virtue that it gains the plaudit of the truly wise. By blending them with each other,
we are brought to as near a resemblance to the Deity, as our present natures will
admit. But while we endeavour [sic] to effect this great work, we must not confide
in ourselves, for “The Fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and Except
the Lord build the house they labour in vain that build it.”2 (Records 7)

This composition, signed L— , clearly reflects the strong desire for knowledge that prompted the
founding of the Circle, a voluntary group to pursue further learning. Additionally, though, this
quote illustrates the trepidation these women felt when venturing out of their very restrictive
sphere and into their Circle. L— ‘s words elucidate the need for the members of the Gleaning
Circle to maintain a balance between religious devotion and knowledge acquisition. The

2 See the image of this composition see Appendix B, Fig. 12.
importance of virtue, contentment, and Christianity would all become subjects of later compositions, as would the reasons for studying history and for not reading novels.

This chapter generally focuses on these women and their collaborations, beginning with a discussion of the members of the Gleaning Circle. Next the context surrounding the formation of this women’s study club will be discussed, including the progress (or lack thereof) in female education at the turn of the nineteenth century. Additionally, this section discusses religious and public expectations of women in early nineteenth century Boston. Having provided the context, the chapter then moves on to the happenings of Boston’s Gleaning Circle, focusing on the regulations and organization of each meeting. Finally, the chapter discusses the collaborative compositions of the Circle through a discussion of the answers to the heuristics presented in chapter I. The chapter concludes with reflections on the Gleaning Circle and their collaborations.

The Women of Boston’s Gleaning Circle

The women of the Circle were first brought to my attention in Mary Kelley’s *Learning to Stand and Speak*. Kelley notes the lavishness of their archives, something I, too, was impressed by when I first entered Boston Public Library’s Rare Books and Manuscripts room. While the archive consists of only four books and a letter, the contents and entries are vast. Each book is leather bound; and though some are falling apart today, the expense of these books must have been quite large. The books are all hardcover with different marbleized patterns on the outside covers. At the sixth meeting on the twenty-seventh of April, 1805, the members voted “that the books necessary for the Records of the Circle should be purchased in the future at the joint expense of the members without encroaching on the funds” (Records 41).
Fig. 1. Gleaning Circle Archive

The record books were all quite beautiful, though they differed in length and size. The first book I opened was the records book, which began with the regulations of the society\textsuperscript{3} and continued with the communications of the first meeting. This book contains detailed records of each meeting, comprising over one hundred and eighty pages, all of which were numbered by hand. The rest of the records continue in much the same way, including questions, answers, compositions, recitations, communications, and summaries of each meeting. The end of the records book includes an index of the book ordered by theme.

The second book I opened was a treasurer’s book that included the finances of the club written in a chart. This book was the shortest of all the books and included only financial records. The third and fourth books were recitation books, containing a variety of original

\textsuperscript{3} See Appendix B, Fig. 2.
compositions as well as transcriptions of the texts the women had recited. These books both contained hundreds of pages, though unlike the records book the pages were not numbered. They also included responses to questions members had proposed. The first recitation book had writing on every page and includes original compositions on topics such as religion and women’s proper behavior. It also begins with a title page that contains a beautiful and intricate drawing of trees and a beehive. The second of the recitation books contains the last existing records of the Gleaning Circle from the year of 1813. This book ends with an argument for women’s education, with hundreds of blank pages following the entry. The largest of all of the books in size, this book has “The Gleaning Circle” printed on the cover. For the purpose of this study, the records book and the second recitation book provide most of the primary evidence of collaboration and practices. This allows for a detailed look at the Circle’s practices at the beginning and end of the Circle’s meetings as well as an in-depth analysis of the Circle’s practices (from the records book) and their rhetorical products (from the recitation book).

The archives themselves tell us a bit about the women of Boston’s Gleaning Circle. The leather-bound books are evidence that these women were quite wealthy. For one, they have survived for over two hundred years with the only evident wear and tear being on the bindings. Compared to the documents studied from Oberlin’s L.L.S. in the next chapter, these books are in better condition despite being forty years older. The leafs are thick and appear to be composed of cotton, a material superior to commonly used wood papers. Additionally, the regulations (the first page of the record book) explain “any member who absents herself without offering a very satisfactory excuse shall pay a fine of 12 cents,” the equivalent of a $62.50 fine today. Additionally, in an entry from the eighteenth of May in the year 1805 the members vote that

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4 This number (as well as the next) represents the GDP per capita, meaning this figure was calculated to illustrate how affordable the fine would be to the average person today.
“every new member pay an admission of 50 cents.” This entrance fee is the equivalent of $260.00 today. These figures illustrate the relative wealth of the women of the Gleaning Circle. The fact that most of these women were a mere eighteen years of age only further illustrates the wealth they were accustomed to.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, women in the United States were not as likely to attend schools or seminaries as many were later in the century. Consequently, there are few records of the Gleaning Circle’s member’s lives beyond the remaining artifacts at Boston Public Library. The records that I could find, however, further indicate that the members came from families of the higher classes. Many of the Gleaner’s fathers and husbands were members of the Boston Marine Society, “the oldest association of sea captains in the world” (Boston Marine). As women at the beginning of the nineteenth century, their wealth also likely came from their fathers. For instance, Mary Ann Loring’s father was a partner in the firm Loring and Curtis and also a member of the Marine Society, as was Eliza Davis’s husband (Pope). Additionally, many of the women’s fathers are referred to as merchants, indicating the families of these women were not only sea captains, but were also involved in large-scale trading with foreign companies. That the women were wealthy indicates a number of things, one being that they likely were privately tutored during their youth, an assumption I further investigate in the next section.

By piecing together birth records from genealogies and the public records of Boston, it appears that the women of the Gleaning Circle were in their late teens while they were members. Mary Ann Loring, the last name on the original list of members added in pencil, was born on February 1, 1789, making her sixteen when the club was founded (Pope). Other members appear to have been a few years older. For instance, Sophia Dennie, daughter of shipmaster Thomas Dennie and wife Sarah Bryant, was born on October 11, 1787 making her 17 during the first
meeting on March twenty-third, 1805 (WalWorth). According to the 1850 U.S. Census, Harriot Sherburne was born on October fourteenth, 1780, making her twenty-four at the first meeting. Another list of “regular members” was recorded in the final recitation book, which kept records from 1812-1813. On that list was member Miranda Goddard who was born on the eighth of May in 1793, making her nearly twenty years old when the society stopped meeting in 1813 (Williams). The reasons that the women felt it necessary to meet starting around the age of sixteen and continuing on until their late teens and sometimes even their early twenties are best explained through an investigation of women’s education in New England during this time period. The next section, then, discusses education and religion as they were inseparable at this time, illustrating that the Gleaning Circle likely formed so that the women could continue their education at a time when there were no other options for continued study.

Education and Religion:

New England and Female Education in the Post-revolutionary War Era

In 1793, twelve years before the founding of the Gleaning Circle, “On Female Authorship” was published in Lady’s Magazine of Philadelphia, PA. In it the author wrote, “to forbid the use of pen and ink to ladies, is far from my intention. I think poetry a pleasing employment for their vacant hours, and novel-writing well adapted to female ingenuity. It is classical knowledge that I would wish to withhold (as useless) from their study; and female pedantry is the object of my ridicule” (70). The article continues with the story of a woman whose “pedantry” led her to be ridiculed by both sexes, eventually leading to her seclusion in a home frequented only by cats. The author ends the composition claiming, “This story was intended (at a time when the press overflows with the production of female pens) to check, or at
least keep in its proper channel, that *cacoethes scribendi* 5 lately become so prevalent amongst women, to admonish them, that more amiable accomplishments than reading Greek are attainable by a female mind” (72).

Seventeen years later a very different argument was made in the Philadelphia publication *The Portfolio*. An article titled “Female Education” (1810) claimed, “But although the reign of female authorship is wholly unknown in America; and although through the long vista of distant years, we cannot discern a solitary feature of the Augustan age of queen [sic] Ann, yet the education of women is sedulously regarded, and the principle itself is gradually gaining advocates of the most staunch and imposing character” (86). These two articles illustrate the changing public perceptions of educated women. The first claims female education will ruin a woman, while the second notes that while the United States was far from having female authors like Mrs. Radcliffe and Maria Edgeworth (both women of Great Britain), women of the United States were nearing a time when they could expect support for their educational aspirations. These articles reflect the reality that opportunities for female education grew as the turn of the century came and went. Still there would be arguments made both for and against female education for many, many years.

The members of the Gleaning Circle seem to have been aware of these debates, and additionally, ready to make their own arguments, not always sharing the same opinions as their sisters, as they referred to one another. On April 20, 1805, a member asked, “Some men have been of the opinion that females have no right or any share of literary knowledge, and if they can yarn a stocking or make a pudding think it sufficient. Is not this very wrong? It is left to the decision of the Gleaning Circle” (Records 40). Yet later another Gleaner responded, in quite a

5 Latin, an insatiable urge to write.
different manner, to the question, “which is the most useful branch of a female’s education,” claiming:

Reading and writing are thought indispensable even to a common education; they are doubtless very useful to ourselves, but by needle-work we are more so to others. To wield the needle to advantage is an employment truly feminine, and appears to be the most important of female acquirements; we daily see its utility, in making clothing for families and ourselves, and great numbers of our set gain a handsome livelihood [sic] by this mean. Although this art has its origin in necessity, it is capable, and has already been brought to a high rank in the scale of elegance and taste. (Records 100)

These differing opinions concerning the education of women evidence the conflicted nature of the Gleaning Circle. The women were more than aware that their desire for knowledge was often found to conflict with the messages they heard in magazines and newspapers. Some clearly believed they had a right to literary knowledge, while others still felt that of all the educations available to women in 1805, the most important remained that of a needle and thread. The members’ conflicting beliefs represented a shift in the ways women were being valued. In “Nineteenth-Century Girls and Literacy,” Jean Ferguson Carr explains, “Whereas an earlier era might have measured a girl’s worth by her piety, skill with the needle, or ability to dance, in nineteenth-century texts a female character’s value often depended on her ability to compose letters, read a text with the appropriate feeling or sensibility, or order her feelings through journal writing” (52). Meeting so early in the nineteenth century, the Gleaners had probably not seen the completed shift in how a woman was valued. Consequently, they disagreed on what aspect of a female education was most important. Still they all chose to meet for their improvement of the
mind, indicating that whether it was most important or not, reading and writing were to be part of their lives as women in the nineteenth century.

One of the most documented arguments for women’s education is that of Republican Motherhood. Coined by Linda Kerber, Republican Motherhood ideology required women to participate civically only when concerning the members of their family, with specific regards to the rearing of their sons or reminding husbands. If they participated otherwise, it was only in their discussions with their husbands. Women were expected to be virtuous partners and could therefore gently remind their husbands when their speech or actions ventured away from the appropriate religious goals. The idea of Republican Motherhood, however, required women to be educated, as rearing sons to be civically minded required civically minded and educated mothers and wives. Nineteenth century scholarship often claims that the Republican Motherhood ideology led to the vast changes in female education throughout the century.

Recent scholarship, however, has questioned this dominant understanding of female life in the nineteenth century, claiming it over-simplifies the changing educational rights of women. Mary Kelley, Margaret Nash, and Lucia McMahon have all sought to complicate this notion of Republican Motherhood. Mary Kelley terms the reasons for the changes in female education “gendered republicanism.” She claims, “Post-revolutionary Americans struck a compromise on the issue of educational opportunity, making a woman’s right to advanced schooling contingent upon her fulfillment of gendered social and political obligations” (25). She claims gendered republicanism began with the idea of Republican Motherhood, but would later be refigured to mean that women had the right to “instruct all males in republican virtue” (25). This change would lead women into the public sphere, in contrast to the common beliefs that Republican Motherhood kept women in the private sphere. Similarly, Lucia McMahon explains:
A closer examination of early national discussions of women’s education reveals that republican motherhood was not the primary factor used to justify improvements in women’s education. Instead, proponents also focused on Enlightenment principles about women’s capacity for reason; on arguments about the inherent usefulness and importance of women’s education; and—with great emphasis—on preparing women for their roles in society. (479)

Whether a result of Republican Motherhood, gendered republicanism, enlightenment principles or a combination of a variety of societal forces, post-revolutionary war America saw vast, if slow, changes in women’s access to education.

Residing in Boston, the women of the Gleaning Circle were surrounded by a longer educational history than citizens from other areas of the republic. Not only was Harvard, founded in 1636, close by in Cambridge, but the Boston Latin School, the first school in the United States, had been founded in 1635 by the town of Boston (Boston Latin). To be sure, only boys were allowed to attend until 1877 when a separate Latin school was founded for girls (Eisenmann 171), and this Latin school was founded too late for even the Circle’s daughters. Additionally, Boston’s first high school for girls was founded in 1826, twenty-one years after the Gleaners began their meetings. So the question of the Gleaner’s formal education remains. I will now turn to what little is known of women’s education in New England shortly after the Revolutionary War in order to speculate about the Gleaner’s educations prior to their formation of the Circle. For one, literacy rates are thought to have risen dramatically during the eighteenth century, as by 1790 female “signature literacy rates soared to eighty percent in New England” (Woody 171). The question becomes, then, where was this newfound literacy acquired?
Right around the time of the Gleaners’ births, Boston began to make positive educational changes for women. Thomas Woody’s *A History of Women’s Education in the United States* explains:

…in 1789, Boston took a step towards the education of girls in public schools by ordering: “That there shall be one writing school at the south part of the town, one at the center, and one at the north part, that in these schools the children of both sexes shall be taught writing and also arithmetic in the various branches of it usually taught in the town schools, including vulgar and decimal fractions. That there be one reading school in the south part of the town, one at the center, and one at the north part; that in these schools the children of both sexes be taught to spell, accent, and read both prose and verse, and also be instructed in English grammar and composition” (146).

Woody further explains girls were only to be admitted for half of the year and likely attended only when the boys were not around. Girls did, however, attend formal schools long before 1789. E. Jennifer Monaghan explains, “In many New England townships founded in the 1740s, girls began to attend the elementary town schools where they learned to write” (4). At the end of the eighteenth century, many private schools (likely the beginning of the seminary movement) were founded in New England. Whether any of the Gleaners attended such schools, however, is not clear.

Even before these improvements, Dame schools were common in New England. A Dame school was a private elementary school taught by a woman in her own home. While these schools were devoted to boys, girls were allowed to attend (Woody 138). Some of the Gleaners may have attended a Dame school during their childhood, though it is more likely, due to their
families’ wealth and class, that they were taught by private tutors. In “Piecing Together Narratives of U.S. Girls’ Early National Schooling,” Janet Carey Eldred and Peter Mortensen explain:

…diaries and letters reveal that some women with means and access to a father’s or a brother’s library were self-taught or schooled privately…For the absence of widespread formal schooling of women, especially in the decades around 1800, it is not possible to turn to the durable institutional histories that have helped compose a nuanced picture of men’s literacy and rhetorical education in the new republic. (24)

Lucille M. Shultz further reminds scholars, “it is easy to forget that beginning students in early nineteenth-century U.S. schools were not ‘writing’ as we use that term today. Especially in conversations about the education of young children, writing often signified handwriting, and in what we would call language arts activities, children were, for the most part, memorizing rules and parsing sentences” (11). The Circle’s records are all composed in beautiful penmanship, indicating that they too had been trained in the art of handwriting. However, while these women did have impeccable handwriting, their knowledge went beyond the emulation of scripts and proper grammar. Their records illustrate a focus on both composition and rhetorical knowledge. The Gleaners make arguments that directly reflect rhetorical knowledge and in the case of their argument for female education, a knowledge of the rhetorical canons:

For this purpose, those habits of the mind should be should be first cultivated which will lead it to seek useful ideas and pursue them in all their relations, and effects, and from their combination to extract what may produce pleasure and advantage. This is the most neglected part of a woman’s education. Not being
subjected to those forms of learning which men submit to, and which gives them system women have no means of obtaining method or arrangement in their thoughts. (Recitations IV)

Directly addressing the canon of arrangement and also touching on ideas of synthesis, this passage illustrates a mature and learned rhetorical knowledge. Consequently, the claims of Shultz and Eldred and Mortensen taken alongside the evidence that the Circle’s members were well-versed in the art of composition (as we consider it today), it becomes even more likely that their schooling was private or even reliant upon their own fathers’ libraries. Clearly, these women had attained a level of education not available to women in Boston’s turn of the century schools.

That religion was of the upmost importance to the women of the Gleaning Circle almost goes without saying. Beyond religion’s influence on the women’s acquisition of knowledge (as previously explained with the example of gendered republicanism), their records indicate that religion was frequently the subject of their musings. For example, on Saturday, April 6, 1805, Astrea, an assumed name used by a member, concluded a composition on happiness with the following: “The beautiful Structure of Happiness, can only be built on the broad basis of conscious Rectitude.” On the same day Julia, responded to the question “What is contentment?” with the following poem:

Contentment is Satisfaction.
Springing in the pious heart;
Pleas’d with every dispensation,
Heaven in wisdom doth impart. (Records 15)
At the following meeting, on April 19, 1805, the communications began with the following lines, “No one, I believe reflects much, who neglects the culture of religion. A wish to be more serious, to peruse the sacred writings, and pay strict attention to all the rules, which will lead us to adore and love the Father of all, we often form in our minds” (Records 21). The women of the Circle clearly believed education would not only lead to knowledge but also to a more cultivated piety. That every meeting began with a reading from a chapter of the Bible only supports the conclusion that the purposes of the Gleaning Circle were to increase knowledge of both religion and composition and rhetoric. However, their compelling arguments often relied on religious texts, illustrating that to the Gleaning Circle religious knowledge and rhetorical knowledge were not separate aspects of their education: they went hand in hand.

Now that the circumstances surrounding the formation of the Circle are more fully expounded, this chapter turns to the records and recitation books to discuss the beginnings of the society, the order of the meetings, and the subjects of the communications, readings, and compositions. This section is intended to illustrate the common practices of the circle, allowing for a later discussion of the women’s collaborations.

Learning Together: Boston’s Gleaning Circle

In March of 1805 eighteen Boston women decided to continue their education through the formation of Boston’s Gleaning Circle. Their regulations indicate that these women had strict opinions on what was and was not proper for female education. For example, the fifth bylaw states “Any book favorable to the improvement of the mind may be selected from Divinity, History, Geography, Astronomy, Travels, Poetry, but Novels and Romances, are absolutely excluded” (Records 1). The exclusion of novels was further explained at the fourth

To see the regulations, see fig. 2. To see the full regulations see Appendix B fig. 12 and fig. 14.
meeting. The original composition, signed Portia (though no Portia exists on the list of members), ends with: “Yet, though I think there can be no injury from perusing a good Novel, I hope they will never be admitted into the Gleaning Circle, for we meet for the improvement of the mind and not for amusement” (Records 25). The regulations also explain that “This society, is to consist of fifteen or twenty members from which are to be chosen (annually by written notes) a President and Secretary” (Records 1). This regulation was strictly adhered to. Never do the lists of members exceed twenty women.

The Gleaners met weekly to read, recite, and discuss. The regulations explain, “The circle is to meet every Saturday afternoon (precisely at three o’clock) at the houses of the several members, and separate at five” (Records 1). Each week, two readers were assigned to begin the meeting. The first reader began the meeting with a selection from the Bible. At the first meeting, Harriot Sherburne read the fifty-second chapter of Isaiah. The second reader would continue the meeting by reading from whichever book the Circle was currently reading together. They began with Isaac Watt’s *On the Improvement of the Mind*. The second book they read was *The Female Mentor* by Honoria. After the readings, the women took attendance (each meeting this was to be done at a quarter past three, though by the second meeting the members motioned that names were to be called at four), noting fines for those who were absent or tardy. Next the women dealt with transactions. This often included votes concerning the books the Circle would read, the member who would take an office such as librarian or treasurer, or the manner in which the fines would be utilized. After the transactions were completed, the women would move on to the communications of the day. The communications often began with original compositions ranging from argument to poetry. Often a member would recite a famous poem rather than one she had composed on her own. All communications were read aloud to the Circle and transcribed in the
records (and later in the recitation books) by the secretary. Following the recitations, members’ questions were proposed. The ninth regulation explains:

Any member, may send in some question, sealed to the Secretary, by her to be presented to the President and then made known to the Circle; that any or all may on the next meeting return an answer in writing; as the authors are unknown any comments may be made and judgment passed which production is really the best; each member has the liberty of writing on any subject, and in any character to be treated in the same manner as beforementioned [sic]. (Records 1)

Questions were then answered at subsequent meetings during the communications. While not explicitly explained, it appears the secretary read the anonymous answers to the questions. After questions were transposed, the records of the meetings end.

Collaborative Rhetorics: The Collaborations of Boston’s Gleaning Circle

The members of Boston’s Gleaning Circle met once a week to collaboratively attend to their shared goal of a continued education. Many of their practices were intrinsically collaborative, especially their regulations, their practice of posing and answering questions, and their work keeping recitation books. They also made all decisions by vote. The records of these votes are quite brief. However, the general manner of such votes is illustrated in a record from the second meeting of the Gleaning Circle: “Motioned & voted – that no member be admitted, until the Circle have met at each house; & then that the persons shall apply, not be requested—that the vote be taken by yeas and nays” (Records 6). Obviously, these meetings were based on the shared goals of these women, yet the ways the Gleaners collaborated are worthy of further study.
The following sections, then, look to the Gleaning Circle’s records and recitations in order to understand the member’s collaborations. To do so, I rely on the heuristics presented in Chapter I, noting the ways these collaborations complicate current theories. I investigate three specific collaborations: the regulations, the question and answer portion of the meeting, and a collaborative composition. These collaborations were chosen from an archive that certainly contained many more examples of collaboration. However, these were chosen purposefully, as they represent a variety of compositions. These compositions, developed in diverse ways, also provide varied evidence of the composition processes, allowing for a rich discussion of collaboration that would not be possible with other collaborations whose processes were less evident. Each entry will begin with a brief description of the collaboration and will continue with a discussion concerning the heuristics and what the responses to said heuristics indicate. The first set of heuristics is used to identify and define the collaboration. The next two sets look at the modes of collaboration. Set 2 relies on Ede and Lunsford’s hierarchical and dialogic modes, and Set 3 considers Buchanan’s productive and supportive modes of collaboration.

The Regulations of the Gleaning Circle

As previously mentioned, the first record of the Gleaning Circle contains the regulations, which begin on the first page and end on the second. These regulations were likely written in order to direct the weekly meetings, as they often refer to what will be done at and expected of each meeting. They are composed of thirteen bylaws. (See Fig. 1.) The responses to the first set of heuristics (used to identify a collaboration) indicate that the regulations are collaborative in a variety of ways. While it is not stated explicitly, I assume the regulations were produced by or contributed to by a number of members. The previous example of voting to pass motions likely represents how the regulations were composed, though there is no explicit explanation of the
collaboration that produced this document. Even if this is not the case, the regulations are still a collaborative document in that they represent an agreement between all of the members of the Gleaning Circle. Not only do they represent the members of the initial club, but they also represent those who chose to join the Gleaning Circle later, as those members would have also followed and agreed with these regulations. Additionally, the wording of the regulations often refers to the group of “members” rather than to specific individuals. For example, the eleventh regulation explains, “Every member who does not observe the rules prescribed shall forfeit 12 cents for each neglect” (Records 1). This use of the word “member” indicates that this was a binding contract for all of the women who chose to enter the Gleaning Circle. Consequently, it can be assumed that all of the original members agreed with these regulations (or at the very least agreed to follow them). This conclusion is further supported by the list of names that directly follow the regulations. All of the members’ names appear on the page next to the conclusion of the regulations. This list of names, given no explanation, indicates that all of these members approved or authorized the text, and possibly co-authored it as well, especially as the changes in penmanship indicate that each woman signed the document herself. Clearly, the responses to the first set of heuristics provide ample evidence for the conclusion that the regulations were the result of collaboration.
Fig. 2. Regulations of the Gleaning Circle

1. This Society, is to consist of fifteen or twenty members, from which are to be chosen (annually by written votes) a President and Secretary.
2. The circle is to meet every Saturday afternoon (precisely at three o’clock) at the houses of the several members, and separate at five.
3. Two readers are to be chosen for each day.
4. The first must select a chapter from the Bible to introduce the exercises of the afternoon.
5. Any book favorable to the improvement of the mind may be selected from Divinity, History, Geography, Astronomy, Travels, Poetry, &c. but Novels and Romances, are absolutely excluded.
6. A pause is sometimes to be made by the readers that any observations may be made.
7. No refreshments are to be provided (excepting sugar and water for the readers).

7 For a transcription of the regulations see Appendix B, fig. 15.
Hierarchical, Dialogic, and Asymmetrical Collaborations

While the text is clearly the result of collaboration, it is not clear what mode of collaboration produced this text. There are no records of the production of the regulations and so it is nearly impossible to identify the modes of collaboration that were utilized. There is not enough evidence to indicate that the text was either hierarchical or dialogic. Taking the assumption that motions produced the regulations, though, the motions would complicate Ede and Lunsford’s modes. In order for a motion to carry, first an individual member would propose the motion and then the other members would hold a democratic vote to pass the motion. Each individual instance of this, then, is clearly hierarchical, as the member of the circle who proposed the motion would have had more power than those who voted simply to pass it. However, when examined as a practice that repeated itself, the practice of carrying motions becomes dialogic as the roles were not fixed from one motion to the next: indeed, it is likely different members would have proposed different motions. Thus this example indicates that collaborations can have both hierarchical and dialogic attributes and those attributes can change if the practice is not used only once but many times.

Productive, Supportive, and Productive/Supportive Collaborations

Additionally, we can assume that in some way this collaboration was what Lindal Buchanan refers to as a productive collaboration, as it resulted in the production of the regulations; however, it is not clear whether there were supportive elements to this collaboration as well. While there is little to glean from this collaboration in regards to the modes of collaboration, this collaboration does indicate a shortcoming in regards to the modes of collaboration outlined by both Buchanan and Ede and Lunsford. If the authors of a text do not explicitly discuss the production of the text, and if no other records provide such information,
then it cannot be concluded that any of the modes appropriately describe the production of the
text.

*Canons of Rhetoric*

The final set of the heuristics has some of the same shortcomings as the previous two. It
is not entirely clear whether collaboration occurred in any of the canons, as we do not have
records of the text’s production. However, it is safe to assume that the signatures following the
records indicate collaboration, and consequently collaboration likely took place in the canons of
invention and arrangement. It is clear that the regulations are numbered in a specific order. For
instance, the second, third, fourth, fifth, and ninth regulations explain the content of meetings in
the exact order that they appear in the communications. In other words, the second regulation
explains the time the members will meet, the third explains that two readers will be chosen for
each meeting, and the fourth and fifth explain what will be read by the chosen readers. This order
is followed exactly at each meeting. Two readers were chosen after the society convened, and
then the first reader read from the bible and the second read from the book the society was
reading. This clearly indicates that the arrangement of the regulations was chosen to be the order
of the meetings. Thus the canon of arrangement was, indeed, collaborative.

The canon of memory can also be considered collaborative as the recording of the
regulations in the records book and the consequent collection of the four books itself illustrate
the importance of a collective memory among the Circle. Without these records, new members
would not be able to understand the purposes of certain activities, regulations, and practices of
the Circle. These recordings, then, keep the regulations present at each meeting of the Circle,
through their physical presence. Because the women each signed their own name after the
regulations, it could also be said that the canon of delivery was collaborative, as those signatures
will impact the delivery (i.e. the reading) of the text. Collaboration, however, was not indicated in the canon of style. So while it cannot be concluded that they were collaborative, it also cannot be concluded that they were not.

The regulations of the Gleaning Circle, then, indicate that while a historical text may be explicitly collaborative, this does not mean that the ways (or modes) in which it was collaborative can be determined. Despite this, the fact that the regulations were in the exact order that the meetings would later be held, indicates a truly collaborative act in the canon of arrangement, as the members of the group chose to repeatedly do the same thing at each meeting. Additionally, it is clear that collaboration took place during invention and memory; however, it is not clear how the collaborations manifested. Still the regulations indicate that the women of the Gleaning Circle formed their society through the collaboration that produced this document and then recorded this collaborative act by beginning their records with the text and following it with all of their signatures. The collaborations of the Gleaning Circle, however, got more and more complex as their meetings went on.

Question and Answer

The question and answer portion of the Gleaner’s meetings produced complex collaborations. As previously explained, at any time a member could send a sealed question to the secretary, who would then present the question to the president. At the end of each meeting, the secretary would then propose the question to the Circle and also transcribe the question to the records or recitation books. Questions varied from the literary to the personal to the religious and educational. Members asked questions like “What is the use of asking questions in the Gleaning Circle” (Records 10) and “Which is most desirable A married or a single state?” (Records 97). The question and answer portion of the meetings is first explained in the
regulations, indicating that this practice began with the advent of the club. The question and answer portion would continue throughout the records book and both recitation books, evidence that this practice continued from 1805 until 1813. Additionally, during each meeting time was devoted to this practice. So while answers were submitted anonymously and read aloud by the secretary, they were given a great deal of attention at Circle meetings. The amount of attention, however, depended on how many women had chosen to submit answers in any given week, so often there would only be a single answer given, while on other days multiple answers would be read by the Secretary.

To fully understand these collaborations, I will first explain some of the pertinent entries from the records and recitations books. The first is the answer to the above question concerning the purpose of asking questions. This response read:

As this circle was formed for the improvement and mutual instruction of its members, no method appears more rational than that any one, who does not comprehend a subject, should propose it to the circle, as it is probable some of the Gleaners will be able to answer it, to their satisfaction. Nor is this all, it garnishes us with a theme to employ our pen, which we shall more readily embrace when we know it is for the advantage of any of our sisters. That this short answer may prove satisfactory is the sincere wish of a Gleaner. (Records 44)

This response indicates that collaboration was at the very core of the question and answer practice. Not only did the women collaborate to produce the text (as will be discussed shortly), but they also collaborated to share knowledge with their peers.

On November 9, 1812, an answer to the question “what is sympathy?” and the following critique provide further insight into this collaborative practice. The critique, from November
twenty-third of the same year, titled “Observations relative to the forgoing piece on Sympathy” begins:

The style, or manner in which it is handled, is simple and pleasing, but the opinions expressed are objectionable and contradictory, that pure sensation “cannot be those feelings—In the two following sentences one’s sympathy seems to be confined to a friend, whereas the joys as sorrows felt by any individual may excite sympathy in that breast which had felt no previous interest for the person… (Recitation 12).

This example of critique illustrates that the women were willing to discuss a variety of different aspects of the composition process, including style and content (though their assessment criteria are not explicitly outlined). The time between the original composition and the critique also indicated that critiques were sometimes also composed.

That the question and answer portion of the Circle’s meetings was collaborative is self-evident. The texts, while produced by single authors, were contributed to by many. The answers themselves were always prompted by the question of another and then delivered by the secretary. Then the members of the club were prompted to critique (either in writing or at the meeting). What complicates this collaborative practice is the anonymity of the composer as well as the multiple purposes of the activity. The women were composing, critiquing to improve the anonymous author’s composition abilities, and educating the other members of the club (on both composition and the topic of the question). Additionally, the composer and the rest of the Gleaners were also exploring and forming opinions on the topic of the question as part of the Circle’s pursuit of education.
Hierarchical, Dialogic, and Asymmetrical Collaborations

The ways the question and answer portion of the meetings were collaborative is more complicated, however. Ede and Lunsford’s hierarchical and dialogic modes of collaboration are conflicted by the question and answer collaboration. This collaboration is hierarchical in that people have clearly defined roles (question poser, responder); however, these roles are not assigned and can shift, making the collaboration dialogic as well. For example, the member who proposed the answer can later become a critic for the responder. Further complicating this collaboration is the anonymous author of the answer composition. This person could critique her own composition and no one would be the wiser. This practice also fits the definition of asymmetrical collaboration. The question poser and the respondent must feel comfortable with the exercise before they decide to engage in it. The poser gives the member who decides to respond power by asking for the respondent to educate her on a subject she is less than clear on. In responding, the respondent gives the members of the Circle the chance to critique her composition, trusting their judgment to improve her own future compositions. Simultaneously, the members provide the composer power by allowing her composition to educate the society as a whole. Consequently, the question and answer collaboration appears to have aspects of all three modes of collaboration. However, none of these modes fully account for the simultaneous collaborations of learning, teaching, reading, responding, composing, and critiquing.

Productive, Supportive, and Productive/Supportive Collaboration

Buchanan’s modes of collaboration are also complicated via the question and answer portion of the meetings. Because the collaboration, particularly the aforementioned collaboration concerning sympathy, produced a number of texts, the collaboration was clearly productive. The question poser, responder, and critic clearly contribute directly to the others’ production of a text.
The question poser prompted the responder’s composition, which then prompted the composition of the critic. Yet there are also a number of members who did not partake in the activity. These members could be said to have contributed to the compositions in a supportive way. Their very presence at the meetings, as well as their previous rhetorical activities at the meetings, could have prompted these women to feel comfortable asking, composing, and critiquing, thus there are aspects of this collaboration that are supportive as well. Consequently, this collaboration is a productive/supportive collaboration, though members of the Circle often played only one of these roles. The member who asked the question, the member who composed a response, and the member who composed the subsequent critique all played productive collaborative roles, while the members who were present while these compositions were presented played only supportive roles.

*The Canons of Rhetoric*

The question and answer collaboration also indicates some collaborations in the canons of rhetoric. While style and arrangement are critiqued in the example on sympathy, the actual canons are not collaborative in this example. (Though if the composer revises the composition later or uses the critiques to improve future style or arrangement then the canons do contain collaborative elements.) The canons of invention and delivery, however, contain explicit examples of collaboration. That the composer would not have ever composed this text without the person who posed the question is indicative of collaboration in the canon of invention. The text would not exist without the prompt and then response. Collaboration is also evidenced in the canon of delivery. The composer first wrote their composition and then sealed an envelope containing the composition. It was then delivered anonymously to the society as a whole. So
while the composer prepares the text for delivery, it was delivered by a third party and not attributed to the author. Thus both delivery and invention include collaboration.

The question and answer portion of the Gleaning Circle’s meetings produced a variety of simultaneous collaborations. These collaborations are particularly complicated by the lack of ownership given to the answer. The anonymous aspect of this collaboration allowed for honest feedback and critique, something the Gleaners clearly felt was less likely had there been a name attributed to the composition. Buchanan and Ede and Lunsford’s modes of collaboration were developed with authored products in mind; however, they do not accommodate collaborations that do not designate an author and use the collaboration to educate in a variety of ways. These collaborations educated the person who posed the question by providing an answer to their question and the person who composed the answer by critiquing the composition. Yet this collaboration also educated the members of the society who did not actively partake in the activity but were nonetheless audiences for these exchanges. They too were provided with an education in both the answer to the question and the critique of the composition. Consequently, during the question and answer portion of the meeting the members were collaborating in a variety of ways simultaneously. Some were contributing productively while others were contributing as supportive members. Some chose hierarchical roles that would later shift making the collaboration both hierarchical and dialogic. Additionally, the power relationships were complex, evidencing some asymmetrical aspects of collaboration as well. Still all of these modes of collaboration do not account for the variety of ways these women were collaborating, indicating that large group collaborations, such as this, may be far more complex than the modes originally defined by both Buchanan and Ede and Lunsford.
Argument for Female Education

The last records of the Gleaning Circle exist in a recitation book from the years 1812-1813. The recitation books contain communications from numerous meetings, including compositions by famous authors, original compositions of members, and questions and responses. The final recitation book concludes with a lengthy composition signed “The voice of the Circle.” This composition presents an argument for women’s education not unlike the soon-to-be famous arguments of Catharine Beecher (1841) and Emma Willard (1818). The argument begins:

Few subjects can be so useful to the mind as the study of the best means of improving its own powers, and none more interesting. That women are capable of becoming the rational intelligent and even literary companions of men, in this age. I think there is no reason to doubt that they are capable of becoming all this while they still maintain the character of modest, faithful, and domestic associates, submissive wives, affectionate mothers, I hope the next age will demonstrate. Some of the most prominent instances of feminine superiority have been in the characters of unmarried women: I presume, however, that none can suspect that their acquirements who have detracted ought from their worth or their charms, as wives or mothers. (Recitations)

This argument for female education continues for several pages, claiming education will keep a woman’s mind from wandering into the “irritable and unhallowed passions,” as her mind will instead be employed by “investigating subjects for her children” (Recitations). This argument, while interesting, does not explicitly present itself as the result of collaboration.
Further examination, however, prompts the conclusion that this document is, in fact, the result of a collaboration. The fact that the composition is signed “the voice of the circle” indicates that this text was intended to represent the views of the group as a whole. It also indicates that no one individual felt ownership over this work, but rather, that the composers believed this document should be attributed to the circle as a whole. Additional support for my conclusion that this is a collaborative text can be found in the penmanship of the composition. As the text continues, the penmanship changes. While this change is not obvious, the comparison of the images below illustrates a subtle change in penmanship. Specifically, the first words in Fig. 2 and Fig. 3 both begin with a capital T, but these Ts have been formed in different ways, that is, with different strokes. In Fig. 2, the Ts are formed by two separate strokes of the pen. By contrast, the Ts in Fig. 3 are formed with one stroke, that is, without lifting the pen from the page. These Ts have clear differences, illustrating that multiple authors contributed to the writing of this text.

Fig. 3. A section of the final entry of the Gleaning Circle.

Fig. 4. A section of the final entry of the Gleaning Circle (for comparison).
There are other indicators that this text is the result of a collaboration as well. In the selection of the composition quoted above, in Fig. 3, the author(s) frequently uses the pronoun “I.” However, the composition ends:

Be therefore persuaded ladies, to attempt this habit, mental application, it will yield you much happiness, and enrich the circle with a transcript of an idea, at least oftener than once a year. When you are going to perform any mechanical employment, select some subject to which you may attach your thoughts examine it in all its connects and aspects, till [sic] you have some well proportioned image in your minds if you find it needs an illustration which you cannot command, note it in the common-place shut, of memory till the opportunity presents of using the thoughts of others, and when you have arranged your ideas, we will thank you for a well attested copy. (Recitations)

The use of we in the final sentence indicates that this text was composed by more than one individual, though this directly conflicts with the previous use of the pronoun “I.” However, the use of “the circle” also supports the conclusion that this composition was the result of the whole circle’s collaboration. The combined evidence of pronoun use, the signature at the end of the document, and the change in penmanship provides ample support to conclude that this argument for female education was composed collaboratively.

As with the regulations, there are no records of the composition of this text. However, due to the length of the text, as well as the fact that it was the final composition of the Gleaning Circle, there is some evidence to suggest a variety of collaborative modes. When the regulations were composed, they were the first composition of the Gleaning Circle. Consequently, there were no existing practices to provide clues into the composition process. However, because this
argument for female education is the final entry of all of the records, it is possible to look at this
text in light of the previous practices of the Gleaning Circle and to understand some aspects of
the composition processes.

*Hierarchical, Dialogic, and Asymmetrical Modes of Collaboration*

Unfortunately, however, there is not ample evidence of all of the discussed modes of
collaboration. Ede and Lunsford’s modes of collaboration require that actual accounts of
composition processes exist. Without such accounts, as in this case, it is impossible to
understand the power relations of a composing process.

*Productive, Supportive, and Productive/Supportive Collaborations*

There is, however, evidence to suggest that the argument for female education was a
productive/supportive collaboration. There is little doubt that the composition can be considered
productive as a text was produced by the Circle as a whole. However, the ways the
collaborations that composed this text were supportive are less explicit. On the second page of
the composition, the following questions are presented:

Perhaps you ask where is the necessity of woman’s becoming philosophic in their
enquiries? Where the advantage of improving an [sic] woman the more severe
labour [sic] of the mind? When the sphere she is to occupy is best adorned by
attention to the simple domestic duties which require only a cultivation of the
refined affections, with modesty and cheerfulness? I answer that even where a
woman sustains all the relations of life with promptness of fidelity she still has
more time for reflection than most men. (Recitations)

This aspect of the composition clearly reflects the previously discussed practice of question and
answer. When the members of the Circle composed this argument they had spent many weeks
responding to their peers’ questions. It is fair to conclude that this practice influenced the composition of this argument so much that the authors actually chose to include the practice within their composition. This composition decision is the result of a supportive collaboration. The women who founded the club, eight years prior, developed the practice of question and answer in the regulations. While only two remained members of the club in 1813, all of the women who initiated this practice supported the current collaborative composition. Moreover, none of the composers would have been a part of the Gleaning Circle had the original founders not decided to begin meeting. Even more important is that the practice of question and answer was created by an entirely different set of women than those who utilized it to make their argument in the final entry of the Gleaning Circle. This collaboration is not direct and therefore it is supportive. However, once again the women who were producing the document were not the same women that were supporting the document. So contrary to the Buchanan’s conclusion that if both productive and supportive modes of collaboration were utilized the collaboration becomes “productive/supportive,” this collaboration is separately productive and supportive because those who supported the collaboration were not the same collaborators as those who produced it.

*The Canons of Rhetoric*

Similar to the problematic discussed with regards to Ede and Lunsford’s collaborative modes, because there are no records of the composing process, there are no explicit answers to set four of the heuristics (regarding the Canons). However, the very practices of the club likely influenced this document’s production. The Circle had been meeting for nine years when this document was produced and it can certainly be said that the women’s participation in the Circle led to the ideas presented as well as the composition decisions used to present said ideas. By their own participation in female education (via the Gleaning Circle,) the authors of this
argument had developed the opinions that were presented in the piece, illustrating invention. Through participation in the question and answer portion of the meetings, members had participated in discussions of the purposes of women’s education and related issues addressed in this composition. Additionally, the women had practiced the composition process as well, likely influencing the canons of arrangement and style. Thus despite the fact that no records of this document’s production exist, the women’s very participation in the Gleaning Circle indicates collaboration in the rhetorical canons.

While there is not ample evidence of the production of this text, this collaboration has made it clear that productive and supportive modes of collaboration can be evident even in the absence of actual evidence of the composition processes, as can collaboration within the canons. Rhetorical practices from the composers’ past can clearly influence composition choices, and consequently, provide evidence of supportive collaborations despite this lack of process evidence. This collaboration has also shown how conflicting evidence within a text can indicate both a single and collaborative author. In a case such as this, the heuristics become even more important in determining “ownership” of the text. In this case, the changes in penmanship and ending signature allow for the conclusion that this is a collaborative text despite the use of the pronoun “I.” Consequently, the heuristics must provide multiple evidences of collaboration in order to support the conclusion that a historical document was collaborative.

Conclusions on Boston’s Gleaning Circle and Their Collaborations

The collaborations of the Gleaning Circle discussed in this chapter have illustrated some complications or even shortcomings concerning both the defined modes of collaboration and the heuristics. These collaborations, particularly the regulations and the concluding argument for female education, indicate that set two of the heuristics, which relies on Ede and Lunsford’s
hierarchical and dialogic modes, is useful only when the authors have explicitly discussed their collaborative choices or when that information is otherwise available. Without such a discussion it is not possible to understand the roles of the collaborators. It is even further not possible to sense the power structures that created the text. Consequently, the heuristics may need to be adjusted to account for collaborative power structures when lacking explicit accounts of the production.

The question and answer collaboration as well as the argument for female education indicate that the outlined modes of collaboration do not account for groups as large as the Gleaning Circle. Collaborations with twenty stakeholders complicate contemporary theories as Buchanan and Ede and Lunsford’s collaborations studied much smaller collaborations. Buchanan’s productive/supportive mode (and my interpretation of it through the heuristics) was particularly complicated by these large groups. Originally it made sense to conclude that if a collaboration was both productive and supportive it was, therefore, a productive/supportive collaboration. Yet the question and answer collaborations of the Gleaning Circle clearly indicates that this is not the case. The large numbers of the collaborators allowed for some women to collaborate productively while others collaborated supportively. None of the women appear to have played both productive and supportive roles. Consequently, this example illustrates a need for further theorization of the multiple roles possible in large group collaborations.

Additionally, the heuristics do not account for collaborations that take place with members of the past over time. These collaborations, particularly that of the final argument for female education, have illustrated that authors can collaborate with people who are not collaborating in the present. The women of the 1813 circle collaborated (supportively) with the founders of 1805. No rhetorical theories currently exist to explain collaborations that transcend
time. Collaboration is clearly far more complicated when groups of individuals create rhetorical practices that are sustained long after the original individuals cease engagement with those rhetorical practices. Further investigation and theorization on time and collaboration is clearly warranted.

Finally, the Gleaner’s collaborations also indicate that in the absence of explicit records of production, rhetorical practices can be utilized to indicate collaboration. In the example of the argument for female education, the women clearly utilized a practice first set forth by the founders of 1805. However, there is no explicit explanation of their use of questions and answers in the composition. Instead, the rhetorical practices of the women provide evidence that the composition was the result of a collaboration. This conclusion necessitates that in future investigations (and revisions of the heuristics), rhetorical practices should be examined. These rhetorical practices can evidence collaboration in a case, as with the regulations and the argument for female education, when the processes of collaboration are not explained by the authors.

Unfortunately, it is not clear how the members of the Boston Gleaning Circle used their continued education. Unlike later societies and clubs, these women’s lives are less documented due to the time period and the still conflicted societal beliefs about a women’s right to education. Still census data and Boston city records indicate that many of the women went on to marry. Mary Ann Loring, Miranda Goddard and Elizabeth Davis all went on to marry successful merchants and doctors (just like their fathers). Mary Gore and her husband would give a house to the Boston Anti-Slavery society in 1841, indicating a small amount of political involvement on Mary’s part. Other women, however, remained single. The 1850 census shows that Harriot and Catherine Sherburne would live together for the entirety of their lives. While records of their
continued rhetorical and collaborative practices do not exist, the Gleaning Circle’s records
provide a variety of fascinating ways to challenge and extend current theories of collaboration.
These complications will be further discussed and theorized in chapter five.
III: “[WE] MUST SPEAK FOR THE WOMEN”:

OBERLIN COLLEGE’S YOUNG LADIES’ LITERARY SOCIETY

In 1835 Oberlin College built its first Ladies Hall and designated two of the rooms for the male and female Literary Societies. One of the rooms was decidedly nicer with a view of the Oberlin Settlement. The other was in the attic, and unlike the wider, nicer room on the second floor, it was long and narrow. In the “L.L.S. The Story of One Hundred Years,” the room designation is explained, “The girls had the attic. We are not told why the weaker sex were assigned the extra two flights of stairs in their own hall, but the arrangement seems to have been amicable. We learn that the young men of the college presented the young women with a stove, a gift full of pleasant and companionable suggestions between friends, but a clumsy peace offering if intended to appease righteous wrath” (6). This example indicates a great deal about female life at the first coeducational college in the United States. While the college was revolutionary in its acceptance of women, nineteenth century perceptions of women and their subordinate place existed and dominated, as the example of the gift of an oven implies.

Understanding the conflicted, even contradictory, world the women of Oberlin resided in, this chapter will first elucidate the context of the women’s collaborations. To do this, the chapter begins with a description of who these women were, that is where and what they came from. Next the chapter will discuss the combined influence education and religion had on these women’s rhetorical lives and opportunities. After the context has been thoroughly explained, the chapter will move on to discuss the advent of the Ladies’ Literary Society\(^1\) at Oberlin College.

\(^{1}\) Contemporary scholarship and archival citation use an apostrophe when referencing Oberlin’s Ladies’ Literary Society. However, the members of the literary society (as evidenced by the titles of the minutes books as well as by an amendment to the constitution) referred to themselves as the Ladies Literary Society (no apostrophe in Ladies). For the sake of consistency I will use the apostrophe throughout this chapter.
This discussion will continue with an in-depth analysis of three specific collaborations: the society’s minutes, meetings, and annual event.

The Women of Oberlin

I first learned about the women of Oberlin when I traveled to the college’s archives in the Summer of 2009. I went looking for disagreements among women to support a project I was working on, and when I came across the Ladies’ Literary Societies (also referred to as the L.L.S.) I found the very opposite. It was the way these women banded together to do the forbidden that drew me to Oberlin specifically and to Ladies’ Literary Societies in general. The archive consists of a number of records from the L.L.S., beginning with a minutes book from 1846. The women kept a variety of different records and as a result there are corresponding secretary and treasurer records from the same time period, though these are not as detailed as the recording secretary’s minutes. Because the records are so detailed, my research focused on the first 3 minutes books, which cover from 1846 to 1859. To piece together life at Oberlin, I also utilized Robert Samuel Fletcher’s notes for his book *A History of Oberlin*, these notes include letters and diary entries from Antoinette Brown Blackwell, a student of Oberlin from 1846-1851.

The women who attended Oberlin were more often than not the daughters of farmers “prompted . . . by pious intentions” (Fletcher 512). In *A History of Oberlin College: From Its Foundation Through the Civil War Book IV* Robert Samuel Fletcher explains, “in 1836, forty-six young ladies, members of the institution, prepared statements, each giving her home address, date of birth, date of entering Oberlin, residence in Oberlin and future intentions. Of the forty who included statements with regard to their intentions, seventeen definitely mentioned missionary work as a possible or probable future employment” (512). Fletcher goes on to conclude that a Mr. Tyler’s description of his fiancée illustrated the typical Oberlin woman. It
read:

The Lady is Sarah Ann Lay of Westbrook this state, a plain farmer’s daughter brought up to the useful employments of domestic life. She became a school teacher at 15 & has taught every summer since & one or two winters. She has had little advantage in select schools. She has been a member of the church for some years. She seems to have gained universal confidence in the different towns where she has taught. She seems very desirous to be prepared for the greatest usefulness in her Master’s cause &, in view of consideration which I presented, she & her parents have concluded that Oberlin is the place for such preparations. (qtd. In History 513)

Oberlin’s reputation for piety and religious devotion attracted a number of female students, as while they were attending a radical coeducational institution, they were also attending a school with a reputation for developing good Christians. Antoinette Brown Blackwell, a student of Oberlin from 1846-1851 and the first ordained female Minister in the United States, wrote, “The students were those who had come to learn not because they were sent by parents to obtain a fashionable education. Few colleges could show a better record for thoroughness” (Notes 3). Unsurprisingly, the women of early Oberlin were almost always religious, as the school had a reputation for piety. They were also generally of modest backgrounds, as the manual labor system allowed them to attend Oberlin without the benefit of a wealthy family, something necessary to attend the more established schools in the East. Fletcher explains, “Economy was a basic principle at Oberlin. If the institute was to be of real service to the sons and daughters of poor Yankee farmers it was essential that the expense be as low as possible. Tuition at first was from $10.00 to $14.00 a year; in 1834-35 $12.00 in the preparatory department and $18.00 in the
Yet, cost was not the only reason for attending Oberlin; many women believed Oberlin would provide a more intellectual and religious education than the Ladies Seminaries and attended for that reason (Fletcher 514).

**Education and Religion: Female Life at the United State’s first Coeducational College**

As the first college to admit both women (1833) and African American students (1835) alongside Caucasian men, Oberlin College has been the subject of numerous scholarly works (Fletcher; Hogeland; Hosford) and has been referred to by various studies of nineteenth century rhetoric and education (Connors; Gere; Kelley; McHenry). Despite this multitude of scholarship, the advent of online archives and new methods of historiography provide a new lens with which to approach the first coeducational college of the United States. In *Regendering Delivery*, Lindal Buchanan asserts “rhetorical delivery is a socially situated act and …the surrounding context exerts enormous pressure on the speaker, imposing constraints, affording compensating strategies, and establishing audience expectations…Thus, a socially situated fifth canon might examine who is permitted or denied access to the public platform as well as how rhetors obtain an education to prepare for public speaking” (3). With that in mind, this section will examine the context of Oberlin’s curriculum, manual labor system, and exclusion of women from rhetoric courses, allowing for a later discussion on the advent of the L.L.S.

While Oberlin began its coeducation experiment in 1833, it was not until September 6, 1837 that four women were accepted into the College Department after presenting themselves to the Preparatory Department. Gladys Haddad explains, “Oberlin’s innovation existed in the presence of a ladies’ seminary as part of an institution that offered a regular college course” (46). At this time, Ladies Seminaries existed in many parts of the country. So for the first four years of coeducation, not a single woman received a degree or took a course that other women
were not taking in Ladies Seminaries all over the country.

   Even when women were permitted into the College Department, they were only permitted to read their own writing aloud while male students were required to practice oratory. Still, as Haddadd claims, “Co-education at Oberlin reinforced the traditional subordination of women to men in social roles. The doors of academic privilege, however, had been opened” (46).

Ronald Hogeland, however, is a bit more skeptical. In his article, “Coeducation of the Sexes at Oberlin: A Study of Social Ideas in Mid-Nineteenth Century America,” he asserts: “the introduction of coeducation at Oberlin was not equally directed toward men and women but was conceived of and implemented with masculine priorities in mind. Thus at best the education of women there was a ‘female appendage’ to the school’s major aim which was the well-being of its young men” (160). Hogeland’s belief that women were an “appendage” is supported by the “Report submitted to the Trustees of Cornell University, in behalf of the majority of the Committee on Mr. Sage’s Proposal to Endow a College for Women” by Andrew D. White. In this report, Oberlin was studied in great detail, as in 1872, when the report was submitted, Oberlin had been educating men and women together for almost forty years. The report, which discusses whether Cornell should open a College for Women, reads:

   [A]n air of refinement which the member of the Committee more familiar with college life has never seen at a table frequented by men alone. . . The social culture is found valuable. ‘To secure this, the student does not need to make any expenditure of time, going out of his way or leaving his proper work, for the pleasure or improvement resulting from society. He finds himself naturally in the midst of it, and he adjusts himself to it instinctively. It influences his manners, his feelings, his thoughts. He may be as little conscious of the sources of the
influence as of the sunlight or the atmosphere; it will envelope him all the same, saving him from the excessive introversion, the morbid fancies, the moroseness which sometimes arise in secluded study,—giving elasticity of spirits and even of movement, and refinement of character not readily attained out of society. (14)

The opinions above, a representation of the committee’s interview with Revered Dr. Fairchild, Oberlin’s president at the time, indicate that the first and most important students were indeed the men. Unsurprisingly, the women are considered and valued—by Cornell’s committee and by the President of Oberlin—by their influence on the education of the male students. Women were mentioned only to indicate how they improved the male students’ college experiences—spoken of only to discuss how they could impact male college life. The words “he” and “his” dominate this passage, while she and her are not used once. This passage supports Hogeland’s claims that women were an appendage at Oberlin, illustrating that the purpose of including women in Oberlin (and later in other Colleges) was not to educate the women, but for the women to “civilize” the men.

Of the many arguments for including women in life at Oberlin, Hogeland finds the first and most prevalent justification to be the Christian (or Republican Motherhood) one Catharine Beecher used in her own written arguments. President Fairchild argued not only that women were better wives and mothers after a Christian education, but went as far as to declare “the joint education of the sexes would exert a ‘civilizing’ influence, converting careless and prankish young men into mature Christian gentlemen” (qtd. in Hogeland 165). Under these Christian arguments, however, lay another more surprising reason for including women. Upon graduating from the school, new ministers were expected to marry, and the inclusion of women at Oberlin made this process more convenient. Hogeland explains, “Henry Ward Beecher's college mentor,
Herman Humphrey of Amherst told his pre-ministerial students to ‘mark’ out for themselves one or two promising female companions and later, after completing their education, come back and claim one” (166).

Not only were women at Oberlin objects for men to “claim,” but they also served men directly. Oberlin expected all of its students to do labor, men included. This manual labor system allowed poor students to attend Oberlin when they could not afford to go elsewhere. On Mondays women were expected to do the men’s laundry, and in addition the women repaired the men’s clothes, cleaned their rooms, and worked at the dining hall. Men did work too, but the tasks the women performed were considered unworthy of the men. In Gayle Rubin’s, “The Traffic in Women,” she writes “it is precisely this ‘historical and moral element’ which determines that a ‘wife’ is among the necessities of a worker, that women rather than men do housework, and that capitalism is heir to a long tradition in which women do not inherit, in which women do not lead, and in which women do not talk to god” (164). In this case, women’s admittance to Oberlin can be explained not only by their usefulness to the men’s education, but also by their part in reproducing labor: “Housework is therefore a key element in the process of the reproduction of the laborer from whom surplus value is taken” (Rubin 162). Before the women at Oberlin even became wives they were expected to cook and clean for the men, with these responsibilities even interrupting their studies, illustrating that the Oberlin women were not simply objects for marriage but free labor for the university as well. This is certainly not all negative, as the manual labor system allowed the price of an Oberlin Education to remain low. Many of the women who attended Oberlin would not have been able to attend without such a system. Despite these motives for including women in the College, the fact remains that whether they produced needed labor or not and whether they were admitted to Oberlin to improve the
male experience, women were being educated along with the men in 1833 and in the College Department in 1837. Even if they were merely an appendage, the women enrolled in the college department at Oberlin were still receiving an invaluable education.

In addition to having different responsibilities than the men, Oberlin women in the College Department were also treated differently in their rhetoric classes. In “Daughters of America Rejoice: The Oberlin Experiment,” Marlene D Merrill explains:

Although women participated right along with men in other classroom recitations, they had been prohibited from taking classes in rhetoric. Instead, their training for speaking was confined to women’s classes in composition taught by the professor of rhetoric. There they were trained in the fine art of reading from their carefully composed compositions. Good reading skills, which included good diction and clear enunciation, seemed especially important for future mothers and school teachers. Since training in public speaking was denied to Oberlin women, how could the new coeds take the required class in rhetoric? The answer: by allowing them to take the class but not participate in the rhetorical exercises. (17)

Even though the professors were willing to allow women into the College Department, they were not willing to allow them training in anything that may have led them out of the private and into the public sphere. The Oberlin women were even being trained to be wives and mothers in their rhetoric courses, as reading texts would come in handy when they were rearing their sons, but reciting texts would not.

The decisions to keep rhetoric and public speaking from women were not due to what could be considered the common belief of the time that women were not capable of such endeavors. Merrill continues, “The institute especially discouraged women students from
becoming public abolitionist agitators like the controversial South Carolina sisters, Angelina and Sarah Grimké, who were attracting much attention in the summer of 1837” (15). For Oberlin, it was important to illustrate that women could receive formal, liberal educations without turning into radical public speakers. This desperate avoidance of creating female public speakers is again illustrated in Cornell University’s “Report on the Sage Proposal.” In the report, President Fairchild is interviewed and one summary of his interview reads: “he has never observed any difference in the sexes as to performance in the recitations. He is careful to state, however, that he does not at all believe or consider that it follows from the above that there are not great differences in mental and moral characteristics between man and woman, fatal to the theories of those known as ‘strong-minded women” (14). His responses to the interview illustrate the need for Oberlin to show that women could be educated without becoming radical. Not only did Fairchild emphasize that he was not producing strong-minded women, he also spoke of women’s health in great detail: “Nor is there any manifest inability on the part of young women to endure the required labor. A breaking down in health does not appear to be more frequent than with young men. . .The field is, of course, too narrow for perfectly conclusive results; but there is no occasion for special apprehension of failure of health to ladies from study” (14-15). Almost forty years earlier, when Oberlin began educating women, such apprehensions about educated women were prominent. The women and men who began the coeducation movement were constantly striving to disprove the theories that claimed a woman could not be educated without becoming ill—or worse, “strong-minded.”

As already mentioned in the discussion of the “Cornell Report of the Sage Proposal,” coeducation at Oberlin also changed the lives of the men enrolled in the College. The men were allowed to call on the women in the boarding halls and could attend public meetings and other
places with the women. Blackwell, while sometimes frustrated with the rules about female speech and discussion, felt that, “The girls at Oberlin were allowed a good deal of liberty in a sensible way…We girls were allowed to take walks unattended” (Notes 4). The early days at Oberlin seem to have walked a fine line between granting women new freedoms and keeping them in their proper place. A Ladies Board, composed of the wives of professors, was appointed to deal with disciplinary problems and to promote proper female behavior. However, because these women had not received a college education, as some Oberlin women began to in 1837, there were often disagreements between the Ladies Board and the professors. For instance, Lucy Stone once asked Mr. Thome, a liberal professor, to participate in a debate before class, and when he agreed the debate went well, but afterwards the Ladies Board prohibited female participation in debate (Ladies Board 1846).

Despite the conflicting messages the women of Oberlin received about their purpose and their education, life at Oberlin appears to have been rather pleasant for those who wrote about their time there. Still Oberlin was a newly founded colony, and the perks of Eastern towns and colleges were non-existent. Antoinette Brown Blackwell remembers her time at Oberlin and hints at what life was like for the enrolled students:

The boarding house used exclusively brown bread, no meats, and the general accompaniments of that theory of diet. In my day which began in Oberlin’s thirteenth year, continuing for the next five years, the food was still extremely plain as it needed to be at the low price of $1.00 a week…Farming was carried on at that time for the college by students and others and much of the food for the boarding hall was raised upon the college land. (Notes 2)

She also explains that all members of the village and the college attended church and that all
students were expected to be present twice on Sundays. Thus Oberlin’s students’ days were made up of manual labor, courses, prayer, and additional study, a far cry from college life today.

Learning Together: Oberlin’s Young Ladies’ Literary Society

The Oberlin women, however, were not content with a college education that did not train them in the art of rhetoric, and as a result they formed a Ladies Literary Society (Lillich). While the original founders don’t explicitly give their reasons for forming such a club, an incident from eleven years later indicates that the original founders in 1835 and the revivers of 1846 were not happy with their role in their courses. Antoinette Brown Blackwell remembers:

Early in that year [1846] I read an essay appealing to the professor to allow such young women as desired it an opportunity of taking part as the young men were required to do in discussions and orations. I pointed out the injustice of requiring us to remain an hour each week as listeners for the benefit of the young men, while we had no part nor lot in exercises which we so much desired. This injustice so impressed itself upon Professor Thome that he appointed Lucy Stone and me to choose our own subject and conduct a discussion at the next meeting of the class. This we did to the best of our ability not only before a very full senior class but many outsiders who had come with curiosity to this somewhat novel entertainment. At the close, Professor Thome, who always criticized the speakers giving kindly instructions as to improvement, gave more time than usual to criticisms given in a friendly manner enough, but Lucy and I felt that since we had done our best there might have been at least some word of sympathy or approval. This semi-public speaking was so far disapproved by the faculty that no repetition of a like kind was allowed to take place while we were still
undergraduates. We felt the injustice but I believed that the majority of the faculty were so sincere in their religious belief that women’s speaking in public was un-Biblical and that they themselves would be held responsible for encouraging it that the decision was accepted good-naturedly. (Notes 8)

As previously discussed and supported here, women as late as 1846 were not allowed to speak or discuss in their courses, and as a result they revived the L.L.S. It is likely that the women who founded the society in 1835 had similar misgivings about being kept silent.

There is conflicting evidence as to when the Society began, as some claimed that the famous feminist Lucy Stone was the club’s founder. Many accounts, however, claim it was actually founded in 1835. Despite this, no records exist until 1846, the year Antoinette Brown Blackwell began attending the College. Antoinette Brown Blackwell remembers one advent of the society, indicating that the original society had either ceased meeting or that previous accounts have confused the advent date:

During my first year at Oberlin we began an informal debating and speaking society. The college gave instruction to girls in writing but in no branch of elocution. Some half a dozen a girls, all members of the junior or third year ladie’s [sic] class met as often as practicable in the house of one of Lucy Stone’s pupils, a colored woman, on the outskirts of the town. We went quietly by ones and twos as we felt it necessary to keep our proceedings unnoticed. Now and then we went into the woods keeping something of an outlook against possible intruders to hold our sessions. Some of the Young women who had no expectation of becoming public speakers took little active part in the meetings and were there
largely as the audience, although of course they were favorable to the project.

(Notes 5)

While Blackwell was not one of the founding members, Fletcher indicates that during her time “The Young Ladies Association of the Oberlin Collegiate Institute received a new lease on life from Lucy Stone and Sallie Holley in the middle forties…the name was officially changed to the Young Ladies Literary Society or L.L.S. They reached a particularly low state in 1848 after the graduation of Lucy Stone” (760). Thus the members of the Ladies’ Literary Society at Oberlin (women of mixed race, wealth, and education) came together to learn oratory, a skill that some would make a career of.

Yet it appears a literary society of some sort existed in 1839 when the women prepared a statement for British philanthropists which illustrates the societies practices:

We have connected with our Seminary, a Literary & Religious association, in which capacity we meet frequently and each one in turn, according to appointment, writes and communicates to us her thoughts on some important and interesting subject. We hold correspondence with many distinguished & pious ladies of our own and other lands and with some who have left for pagan shores, by this means we collect much valuable information and often have our spirits refreshed. (qtd. in Fletcher 762)

Accordingly, the literary society also had religious purposes, as the constitution and the content indicate. Each meeting began with prayer, and the compositions were often focused on religion and piety.

The Constitution of the Literary Society explains the general rules and guiding principles of each meeting. On the first available constitution of 1846, the society has yet to change their
name, and is still called the *Young Ladies Association of the Oberlin Collegiate Institute for the Promotion of Literature and Religion*. This constitution indicates that the women elected new officers every two months “by vote of the society and shall consist of a President, Vice President, recording Secretary, Corresponding Secretary, treasurer, critic and librarians” (Ladies 1846). The constitution from 1850 explains elections will then be held every four weeks. Next the women decided, “The meetings of this Society shall be held on Wednesday of each week and shall be opened and closed\(^2\) with prayer. The annual meeting of this society shall be held on the Wednesday evening prior to the comments of O.C.I.\(^3\) and shall be free to all” (Ladies 1846). Any woman attending Oberlin was welcome to join the society as long as they followed the constitution and were willing to pay the dues and late or tardy fees of six and a quarter cents. Finally, the constitution reserved the right of the society to dismiss its members for not complying with the constitution. The minutes indicate this was more frequent than one may think, as women were often dismissed from the society for excessive absences. These dismissals are also obvious in the list of members that follow each constitution, as after the constitution of 1846 twenty-nine members names had been crossed out.

The Ladies’ Literary Society mimicked the practices the women had learned from their courses in order to teach themselves how to speak publicly (LLS Notes). The weekly (and later bi-weekly meetings) always began with role call and then prayer. After prayer, any business was tended to. This included preparations for annual meetings, discussion of society needs and purchases, and also the dismissal of those members who had ceased attending the weekly meetings regularly. Eventually, the exercises would be read and the critic would respond with

\(^2\) The minutes indicate that at first the women both opened and closed with prayer. However, at some point the decision was made to only open with prayer and the corresponding secretary then crossed “and closed” out.

\(^3\) Oberlin Collegiate Institute.
feedback. Often, discussion was held after a particularly interesting or debatable essay was presented. Other times, two disputants would present a prepared discussion, though these were sometimes postponed. Fig. 5 represents the April 30, 1856 meeting. This image illustrates the order of each meeting and also shows the results of an election.

Collaborative Rhetorics: The Collaborations of Oberlin’s Ladies’ Literary Society

The Ladies’ Literary Society at Oberlin was fundamentally collaborative. Every decision the society made was based on a democratic vote. The women formed the society because of a joint need: they wished to be trained in the art of rhetoric, but were not allowed to speak in their rhetoric courses. As the previous example indicates, even eleven years after the society had formed, Lucy Stone and Antoinette Brown Blackwell were given the opportunity to lead discussion only once before the Ladies Board banned all women from the shameful act of speaking in public. Despite this, many of the young women of Oberlin believed rhetoric and composition were fundamentally important to their educations. This proved true, as women like Stone and Sallie Holley went on to become public speakers and activists.

The women of the society collaborated in a variety of ways simultaneously. While they were making decisions they often elected committees by vote. The committee members would then work together in the coming weeks and report back to the Literary Society when another vote would be held. If the majority of the vote supported the committee’s suggestions the committee would then move forward. If the vote did not support their decisions they went back to the drawing board and would resubmit a revised suggestion. The women also held elections for the Society’s offices frequently (from every four weeks to every 2 months), giving all members a chance to be involved in governing the Society. No decision was made without a majority approval, even one as small as the purchase of lamps for their meeting place.
The following section will rely on the heuristics presented in Chapter I to discuss a number of different collaborations. These collaborations are likely only some of the many, as my research is limited to studying these women over one hundred and fifty years after they met. Despite this limitation, the three collaborations I discuss (Minutes, Annual Event, Meetings) clearly illustrate the complicated nature of the Literary Society’s collaborations. Each discussion will begin with a brief description of the collaboration and will continue in the order of the heuristics. The first set of heuristics is used to identify and define the collaboration. Set 2 relies on Ede and Lunsford’s hierarchical and dialogic modes, and Set 3 considers Buchanan’s Productive and Supportive modes of collaboration. The final set of heuristics is used to discuss collaboration within the canon(s) of rhetoric.

The Minutes of the Ladies Literary Society

The minutes of the Ladies Literary Society at Oberlin provided a record and history of their club’s meetings and decisions. At the beginning of each new school year, the minutes would begin with a newly revised constitution and would be followed by the names of the members present at that first meeting. Other names would be added to the bottom of this list as new members were admitted during the year. For the remainder of the year, the minutes would comprise a record of each meeting. (Again, see fig. 5 for an example of what this looked like.) The minutes were the responsibility of the recording secretary, a woman elected by the society to commit the society’s happenings to paper. This secretary was only temporary, residing over four to eight meetings before passing the role to another member.

It is important to note that while the field of rhetoric and composition often consider texts to be the primary goal of collaboration, this was not the case with the minutes of the Ladies’ Literary Society. The goal of the meetings was to improve each member’s abilities to orate and
compose. The minutes were never the sole purpose of society meetings. Instead, the minutes had their own purpose of recording the happenings of the society in detail. While there is no indication as to why the women felt keeping such a record was important, it can be assumed that they, like the male and female literary societies before them, wanted to develop a history of their meetings for future members to follow. The minutes also were used to keep attendance and tardy records and were referred to when the society felt it was time for a member to be dismissed.

The production of the minutes was collaborative in many ways. Applying the heuristics, I found some surprising and sometimes even conflicting modes of collaboration utilized in the minutes. These minutes, when looked at as a single text, are clearly collaborative. Not only were the minutes contributed to by multiple authors because the recording secretary changed frequently, but the minutes also represent the essays, decisions, and discussions of all of the members of the Literary Society. Consequently, every single member of the Ladies’ Literary Society, in some way or another, contributed to the minutes. The minutes were also, somewhat surprisingly, delivered by multiple speakers. At each meeting, after role call and prayer, the minutes from the previous week were read by the recording secretary. After the secretary delivered the previous week’s minutes, the society voted to accept them or to make alterations, though the minutes indicate they were accepted immediately more often than not. The similarity between each week’s recordings also indicates a collaborative choice. Despite the fact that the secretary changed, the minutes, though recorded in varied detail and diverse style, almost always included notations about prayer, role call, the names of those who presented essays, and an indication that homework was distributed for the following week. This pattern indicates that there was, at some point, a collaborative decision concerning what was important and needed to
be included in the minutes. This evidence shows that the minutes are, indeed, the result of collaboration.

Hierarchical, Dialogic, and Asymmetrical Modes of Collaboration

Surprisingly, the collaborations that produced the minutes are both hierarchical and dialogic. Initially, this finding does not seem possible or likely. However, when Ede and Lunsford developed these modes of collaboration, they admit that one would not necessarily automatically exclude the other possibility. Accordingly, the collaborative relationships that produce the minutes fit the definitions of both of these modes. Ede and Lunsford define hierarchical collaborations as “linearly structured, driven by highly specific goals, and carried out by people who play clearly assigned roles” (235). The minutes fit this definition because the secretary played a clearly assigned role as the person who recorded each meeting. Further, the minutes have the specific goal of recording the decisions and happenings of each meeting. These roles are linear and fixed for each term of the secretary’s office. Yet the minutes also fit Ede and Lunsford’s definition of dialogic collaboration. They define this type of collaboration as “loosely structured…the roles enacted within it are fluid; one ‘person’ may occupy multiple and shifting roles as the project progresses. In this mode the process of articulating and working together to achieve goals is as important as the goals themselves” (235-6). The collaborations that produced the minutes are dialogic in that after each term of the secretary the role shifts. So while for the term of each secretary’s office the collaboration is hierarchical, as the roles shift the collaboration becomes dialogic, despite the fact that the roles do not appear to be loosely structured. The secretary is at once a part of a hierarchy and a part of a democracy. For a limited time, an individual plays the fixed role of secretary, though shortly after her term begins the role
shifts dependent upon who wishes to fulfill the role of secretary and how the ensuing vote plays out.

While there are many reasons for this contradiction, one of the most important is that the modes Ede and Lunsford developed assume the product is the project’s goal. The minutes, however, are a representation of a goal (improved composition and rhetorical abilities of the members). The product, in this case, was not the project’s goal, and this appears to have complicated the modes Ede and Lunsford define. The roles also seem to shift from linear to loose when a new secretary is elected to office. While for the most part, the secretaries’ recordings are similar, there are differences in the way secretaries compose the record, illustrating that the recording is not simply strictly or loosely defined, but both. To illustrate the difference in recording styles, compare fig. 5 and fig. 6. In fig. 6 the recording secretary composed a paragraph explaining the happenings on August 1st 1855, while in fig. 5 the secretary utilized lists as well as paragraph to record the meeting of April 30th, 1856. Thus while the secretary had to record certain things (i.e. date, role call, prayer, exercises), the manner in which she does so is loosely defined. This supports the previous conclusion that the minutes of the L.L.S. were simultaneously hierarchical and dialogic.
Fig. 5. A Typical Representation of a Meeting of the L.L.S.⁴

⁴ A transcription of fig. 5 can be found in Appendix C.
Productive, Supportive, and Productive/Supportive Modes of Collaboration

The minutes also complicate Lindal Buchanan’s modes of collaboration, as her definitions also rely on the idea that the purpose of a collaboration is to produce a text. The minutes were produced as a result of a collaboration, however they were not, as previously stated, the purpose of the meetings. Instead the minutes served merely as a representation of each meeting. As a result, it is hard to clearly classify the minutes as productive, supportive, or productive/supportive. Buchanan explains that in a productive collaboration, “two or more people contribute to the crafting and completion of a rhetorical product, such as a pamphlet, address, or public event. Productive collaborations make direct contributions to the end result, for example, by dividing up and taking individual responsibility for particular parts of the rhetorical process or by laboring together on some or all of its phases” (134-5). With this definition, the minutes appear to be productive as all of the members, in varied responsibility and at varied times, contributed to the minutes. Yet Buchanan’s definition refers to a rhetorical product, and the minutes were only a representation of the meetings. Additionally, the minutes were not attempting to persuade anyone, as with Buchanan’s examples. The only people who saw the minutes were the members of the literary society. Thus while a text was produced, the minutes are not the result of a productive collaboration.
Aug. 1st 1855

Society met pursuant to adjournment, called by opening prayer offered by Miss Hamilton. Report of the past meeting read and accepted. Society voted to have one section. The town voted to have the council in the church if possible. The annual history expressed their thanks. Declarations were made to Jefferson Brown and Brooks Whetstone by Miss Pavlick. Discussion was made by Miss Hoppin, Gilbert Hitchcock and Hamilton. The critic's report was read after which the society voted to have voluntary speeches at the next meeting and that adjourned to meet in one week.

S [handwritten name]
Sec

Fig. 6: A Change in the Recording Style, illustrating the loose yet linear role of the Secretary.

For a transcription of fig 6, please see Appendix C.
According to Buchanan’s theory, if the collaboration is not productive then it should be a supportive collaboration. Buchanan defines this mode of collaboration as “those in which one person’s efforts contribute indirectly to another’s rhetorical production and delivery” (135).

While the actual meetings of the literary society would represent a supportive collaboration, the production of the minutes does not appear to support any of the member’s production or delivery. The minutes, quite simply, record the happenings as objectively as possible, without inserting opinion. Consequently, Buchanan’s modes of collaboration do not appear to account for products that are not the sole purpose of the collaboration. This is not all that surprising, as her modes were primarily concerned with the fifth canon of rhetoric, delivery. Based on this analysis of the minutes, it appears that the productive, supportive, productive/supportive mode may be limited to the fifth canon.

The Canons of Rhetoric

The minutes do, in fact, indicate, or at least represent, collaboration in multiple canons. Collaboration clearly took place in the first canon, invention, not only because the women collaborated to develop the minutes, but also because when the club first began, they decided to record the minutes, inventing (or mimicking) a way to record their meetings. The second canon, arrangement, also contains collaboration, as the minutes record the arrangement of the meetings, which was decided upon in the original drafting of the constitution. The previous example from the section of the constitution which concerned prayer, shows that while at first prayer was to be held both at the start and finish of each meeting, the society decided to only have prayer at the beginning of the meetings, thus collaboratively arranging meetings, and consequently, the minutes. The third canon of style is a bit more complicated. As previously mentioned, the style changed dependent on the secretary. However, the women did have to agree to leave the minutes
as the secretary wrote them or to revise the record. This decision indicates that while style was more individual than the other canons of rhetoric, there was collaborative agreement to accept each secretary’s style of recording. The fourth canon, memory, is especially interesting with regard to the minutes. Typically, memory is considered to be the part of rhetoric in which the rhetor must remember the previous three canons in order to deliver a successful oration. In this case, the minutes are the memory of the collective group of the literary society. Therefore, it could be said the minutes are actually the collaborative memory of the Ladies Literary Society. Finally, the minutes are delivered each meeting by the recording secretary of the previous meeting; however, the fifth canon of delivery does not appear to be collaborative in the case of the minutes. Each secretary read the minutes individually, and asked for only approval or disapproval. Thus, delivery, in and of itself, does not appear to be collaborative.

The minutes of Oberlin’s L.L.S., then, illustrate the women’s utilization of a variety of modes of collaboration both at once and at separate times. The above, however, are not the only forms of collaboration the minutes illustrate. The remaining collaborations I will discuss in this chapter are summarized, explained, or referred to in the minutes of the L.L.S. as well as in other sources. Thus the minutes are not only a collaborative document in and of themselves, but they are also a record of other collaborations.

*Oberlin’s L.L.S. Annual Meeting*

Once a year, the women of the L.L.S. would hold an annual public meeting. This meeting was the only meeting attended by men all year and was open to anyone from the Oberlin Institute who wished to attend. As a result, much planning and time went into this event, as it was not simply a public meeting, but a demonstration of the L.L.S.’s practices and successes. In
remembering one such event in a letter dated May 17, 1841 to his future wife, James Fairchild wrote:

Since I read your letter, I have spent most of my time in the Chapel at a meeting of the Young Ladies’ Literary Society (Semi-annual). It went off very well. The audience was large; larger than I have ever seen before at one of their meetings. As I looked around upon the young ladies who were interested in the exercises, I noticed one and another and another whom you would have recognized as your former companions. Let me give you the order of the exercises, as nearly as I can recollect them. The singing was sweet, performed by four or five ladies, Misses Hosford, Rudd, Day, and Allen and one or two more. Officers present, Miss M Messinger, President., Mrs Keep, V.P. ,, Misses Ingraham and Turner, Secretaries. First exercise was a “Sketch of the Life and Character of Urania C. White”, by Miss F. Messinger. Interesting and instructive. Second performance, “Disadvantages of Locomotion without the Attraction of Gravitation”, by Miss Snow, a sort of semi-burlesque on some of the notions of the present age, such as Non-resistance and Grahamism. Quite characteristic, rather queer. Third, “Prospects of Christ’s Kingdom as connected with the Movements of the Nineteenth Century”, by Miss Rudd. Not very deep—pretty good—read too fast. Fourth, “A Spirit’s Decent to Earth”, a poem by Miss H.F. Grannis. Of this I can give you no adequate idea. The plan was admirable and the execution happy. (Fairchild)

As the future President of Oberlin’s recollection illustrates, the annual meetings followed the same format as the weekly meetings. However, the planning for the annual was quite different.
To fully understand how the women prepared for the annual, I looked at the notes concerning the occasion for a number of different years, as the minutes do not discuss such things in great detail. Doing so allowed for a better understanding of the collaborations that produced the annual event.

While the event itself was a collaborative endeavor, as multiple women worked together to sing, read, and entertain their guests for the evening, the development of this event was quite unique in its collaboration. When considering the event as a text it becomes quite clear that the annual event was produced, delivered, and contributed to by all of the members of the L.L.S. Further, the annual was a representation of the society as a whole, as this was the club’s only chance each year to show that their society was succeeding at its purpose while not forgetting the proper conduct for women. Thus the event was collaborative in both its execution and planning. Because the planning utilized less typical forms of collaboration, the remainder of this section will focus on the planning of the event.

*Hierarchical, Dialogic, and Asymmetrical Modes of Collaboration*

Like the minutes, the planning of the event utilized both hierarchical and dialogic collaborations. The women appointed committees to make each decision during the planning, which spanned several months. While the committees appointed to make decisions were hierarchical in that they had clear goals and purposes and designated specific members to make specific choices, hierarchical collaboration does not account for the requirement for the women to get their decisions approved. In situations when this is not the case, for instance, once in 1849 a Miss Ingersoll was appointed to choose an individual in or outside of the club to officiate that year’s annual, the collaboration is clearly hierarchical. However, when the typical committees were appointed and then required to get their decision approved by the whole society, the collaboration, while still hierarchical, distributes power in a more dialogic manner. Despite this
dialogic characteristic, the roles do not shift loosely, so neither hierarchical or dialogic modes truly explain the collaborations taking place in the planning of the event.

*Productive, Supportive, and Productive/Supportive Modes of Collaboration*

Buchanan’s modes of collaboration better fit some of the collaborations concerning the annual. The women clearly composed a text (the event) that was the result of a productive collaboration; all of the members of the club contributed (both directly and indirectly) to the production of this event. Additionally, the committees’ decisions directly contributed to the final product, making this a clearly productive collaboration. The collaboration may also be considered supportive in that the critics’ comments from the past year improved the orator’s compositions, as did the members’ roles as an audience. Similarly, the planning can be considered a supportive collaboration, as the committees often made executive decisions that were not changed by the remainder of the committee but agreed upon. As a result, the planning of the event (as well as the event itself) was a productive/supportive collaboration. Because delivery was essential to the annual, unlike the minutes, these modes better account for the annual event than they did the minutes.

*Canons of Rhetoric*

The most interesting part of the annual event’s collaborations are their manifestations in the different canons of rhetoric. First, this whole section has been mostly concerned with the collaborations that planned the event. This planning is clearly the process of invention. Thus the canon of invention not only utilized different modes of collaboration but also different individuals at different stages. The women planned different parts of the event (who would sing and read and where the event would be held) in committees. They also decided what the chosen readers would read, decisions that were also the result of the supportive collaborations of each
L.L.S. meeting. Consequently, the canon of invention for these women was clearly collaborative, or as LeFevre would put it, “A Social Act”.

The next canon, Arrangement, was also clearly collaborative. The L.L.S. of 1846 went so far as to develop a “Committee of Arrangement” for the annual event. This committee decided the order of the singing, reading, and praying. As with the committees mentioned above, these women made hierarchical decisions and then returned to the society for approval. They also had a hierarchy in their own small committees, for a single woman was often appointed the head of the group and then she would choose the other members. Yet once the group was appointed, it does not appear the head of the group made the decisions on her own. Instead, the group worked together to gain access to the chapel for the annual meeting and to make the decisions concerning arrangement. As a result, the canon of arrangement, in the case of the annual event, was clearly collaborative.

The canons of style and memory are not clearly collaborative in this case, though the canon of delivery is. Not only do multiple members deliver different readings, but what they deliver, how they deliver it, and when they deliver it had all been decided collaboratively. Thus, the annual event illustrates, as LeFevre and Buchanan already have, that invention and delivery are indeed collaborative acts. However, the annual meeting also allows the conclusion that the canon of arrangement can also be collaborative, and in the case of large events consisting of more than one speaker, arrangement is likely always collaborative.

The L.L.S. Meetings

Another collaboration the minutes discuss are the actual weekly or sometimes biweekly meetings of the L.L.S. As previously mentioned, the women began with prayer and role call; the truly collaborative part of the meetings came later when the exercises were read. The interactions
between the readers and the critic were collaborations designed purposefully to improve the composition and oration abilities of the members. This section, then, focuses on these collaborations, as they are different from those previously discussed. These collaborations are the most like the ones in our classrooms, our writing centers, and even our own collaborations. The society meetings provided the women with the rhetorical education and practice they desired. Consequently, collaboration was, perhaps, at its strongest here.

Hierarchical, Dialogic, and Asymmetrical Modes of Collaboration

The critic’s role, though shifting every election term, initially appear to make the meeting’s collaborations hierarchical. Though the minutes illustrate that all members could offer criticism and suggestion, it is clear that most of the time the critic was the only member to do so after an individual had read their original composition. The power the critic has, then, does not represent a dialogic collaboration. However, these collaborations were not truly hierarchical either, as the power distribution between speaker and critic is more complicated than that of a hierarchical collaboration. Instead, the asymmetrical collaboration proposed by Thompson et. al., most clearly defines the collaborations at the meetings. In an asymmetrical collaboration (defined in terms of writing center relationships):

both the tutor and the student have power. The tutor has greater expertise in the subject matter or skill than the student, but the student has the power to initiate the collaboration and set the agenda. The tutor’s directive-ness is based on the student’s needs and expectations, and the tutor is responsible for making the student feel comfortable enough to take risks and develop and maintain motivation to complete the task. (81)
The power dynamic of the collaborations at the meeting was just as complicated. First, the women had to want to be a part of the society. Next the society had to decide (by vote) to admit the member. Third, the member had to decide to develop a composition and later present it to the society. And finally, the critic had to be democratically elected by the society. This means, that as with the asymmetrical collaborations of writing center relationships, the power dynamics in the Ladies’ Literary Society meetings was distributed to different participants in different ways. The composer first had the power to decide to compose, present, and ask for criticism. The critic then had the power of an expert who was helping the composer who had asked for criticism. The critic based her comments and the level of involvement on the needs of the composer, thus rendering the meetings a clearly asymmetrical collaboration, despite its initial appearance as a hierarchical one.

*Productive, Supportive, and Productive/Supportive Modes of Collaboration*

The meetings are also clearly productive/supportive collaborations. Events, compositions, and decisions were frequently made or composed by varying collaborations of the L.L.S., rendering it a productive collaboration. It was also supportive in that many of the society’s women indirectly improved other member’s compositions and orations, simply by attending the meetings and providing an audience. These audience members did not directly contribute to the members’ improvements in rhetorical abilities, but instead supported the speakers in ways that allowed them to improve and become accustomed to reading to an audience. Because the members of the L.L.S. played both productive and supportive roles alternately, the meetings are productive/supportive.
Collaboration does not appear to happen in any of the rhetorical canons. The canons, actually, cannot be appropriately applied to this example. While the women were collaborating to improve future attempts at invention, arrangement, style, memory, and delivery, they were not collaboratively inventing, arranging, styling, memorizing, or delivering during the meetings. The women met not to deliver a rhetorical product, but to improve themselves. Their own (improved) abilities were the product of these meetings. The women of the L.L.S. approached collaboration as a means for long-term improvement. The composition products only helped them meet that goal. The collaborations were not of style, but instead to improve future styles, arrangements, and deliveries.

Conclusions on Oberlin’s Ladies’ Literary Society and Their Collaborations

The archive at Oberlin College provided many unique opportunities for studying collaborations in the mid-nineteenth century. The minutes were remarkably well-preserved and the number of them allowed for a study of collaboration over a number of years. Unfortunately, the minutes were often succinct, not allowing for a study of the collaborative processes in detail. Further, none of the student compositions were available; thus we read about the processes of their collaborations, but are unable to view the products. While products are important, in this case, the processes were more so, as Oberlin’s women were focused on the process of improving themselves more than the products that resulted from their meetings.

This chapter, then, has continued to answer the question “How did Ladies’ Literary Societies collaborate?”. The women of Oberlin’s L.L.S. have clearly collaborated in a number of ways, as the previous section illustrates, and have also collaborated during different canons while utilizing different modes. These women worked together to do everything from improve their
composition and oration skills to buy lamps for their room in the attic of Ladies Hall. Their most impressive collaborations, and perhaps most complicated, arose each year when they prepared for the annual meeting. The women arranged themselves into committees, which could rely on hierarchical or dialogic structures to make executive decisions such as who would speak.

Simultaneously, they continued their meetings and the improvement of their abilities by relying on productive/supportive collaborations that used both a critic and an audience to develop their composing and oratory skills. While doing this, these women managed to collaborate within not only the invention and delivery aspects of the rhetorical canons, but also the arrangement, style, and memory canons as well.

The example of the annual meeting also illustrates that the women of the L.L.S. were carefully crafting a collaborative rhetoric. In their committees and at their meetings, they were sure to make decisions carefully and not to over-step their place at the college. It is clear that their carefully crafted events were successful in the previous quote by James Fairchild. His enthusiasm indicates that these meetings were not only accepted, but also enjoyed by those at the college. The women had developed events that allowed them to do what their rhetoric courses would not, and without reproach from the Ladies Board, who did disallow the speech of Antoinette Brown Blackwell and Lucy Stone in class. Their focus on the improvement of public speech had clearly paid off, as James Fairchild, at the time a future president of Oberlin, praised the women of the 1841 annual event saying “I feel the evening was well-spent” (James).

The women’s collaborations allowed them to do things not permitted to them in their classrooms. Collaboration provided the women, a still-marginalized group at the first coeducational college in the United States, the time and practice needed to improve both their composing and rhetorical abilities. Without this collaboration, the women would not have had
that chance, as they were strictly forbidden to speak and discuss in their courses. Despite such restrictions, they were allowed to meet and practice with the society, which was accepted by the college. They were even allowed to speak in public at their annual events. While it is not clear why the Ladies Board allowed this society to meet, it is clear that this collaborative society allowed the women to do things they otherwise could not.

The L.L.S. at Oberlin was clearly a success. The women of Oberlin were able to practice oratory and even continued to meet for one hundred years before the society disbanded. Some of the early women also went on to become famous activists and public speakers. One such woman was Lucy Stone, a Massachusetts’ farmer’s daughter turned famous feminist and skilled public speaker. Her radical experiences at Oberlin prepared her for her life as a feminist, for she was the first woman to keep her maiden name after her marriage to Henry Brown Blackwell. Stone became a lecturer for the American Anti-Slavery Society, but would eventually cause trouble within the society because of her radical and feminist views. She explained her position saying, “I was a woman before I was an abolitionist. I must speak for the women” (qtd. in Filler 388). She also would found “The Woman’s Journal,” a weekly newspaper.

Antoinette Brown Blackwell, Lucy Stone’s close friend, would publish her writing in “The Woman’s Journal.” More importantly, she went on to be the first female minister in the United States, receiving her degree from Oberlin, but only a number of years after she had completed the course work (at first her name was not mentioned in Oberlin’s graduating class). She used her knowledge of scripture and religion to further women’s rights with public speeches and sermons. (Fletcher)

Sallie Holley, friend of Antoinette Brown Blackwell and Lucy Stone, also went on to speak publicly as an agent of the American Anti-Slavery society. Like Stone, she published in
William Lloyd Garrison’s *The Liberator*. She also remained with a companion and fellow Ladies’ Literary Society member from Oberlin College, Caroline Putnam, for most of her life. Also a feminist, Holley’s graduation speech, “Ideal Womanhood,” argued for women’s rights to vote and preach. Holley spent the last years of her life as an educator at the Holley Schools, which were established by Caroline Putnam (Pease 205-206).

Another member of Oberlin’s Ladies’ Literary Society, Betsy Mix Cowles, was the daughter of Connecticut Reverend Giles Hooker Cowles and Sally White. Miss Cowles began teaching in 1825, and she would continue her career as an educator after she attended Oberlin from 1838 to 1840 when she graduated from the “Ladies’ Course.” Before and after her time at Oberlin, Betsy Cowles “was a leading figure in Ohio abolitionist circles, as an organizer of women’s groups, and as the principal leader of the Female Anti-Slavery Society of Ashtabula County; her papers also indicate that she took part in the Underground Railroad” (Melder 394). Additionally, Miss Cowles served as the President of the first Ohio Women’s Convention and would later present a “Report on Labor” which detailed the difference between pay in men’s and women’s wages, an issue that persists today (Melder 394-95).

In 1850, Lucy Stanton, the first African American woman to finish four years of college, graduated from Oberlin. Stanton would later become, along with her husband, an advocate for higher education for African Americans. Further, Ellen NicKenzie Lawson and Marelene D. Merrill explain, “Lucy Stanton Day, whose writing ability was a talent recognized by fellow Literary Society members at college, wrote a short story on slavery in 1854 for her husband’s newspaper, the first instance of published fiction by a black woman” (196). Later divorced and remarried, Stanton would continue to teach despite the prejudice she faced as an African American, divorced woman.
While this study is limited to those attending Oberlin prior to 1860, this chapter indicates that the women of Oberlin sometimes (though certainly not always) went on to use what they learned in the L.L.S. The collaborations stayed with them beyond their time at Oberlin; this is clearly illustrated by the continued correspondence and collaborations evidenced by Antoinette Brown Blackwell’s published work in Lucy Stone’s newspaper, as well as, the life-long friendship of Holley and Putnam. The collaborations of the Ladies Literary Society not only provided these women with an education their college refused them, but also aided their development of lifelong friendships and professional collaborations.
IV: “LET US CONFER TOGETHER:”

BOSTON’S WOMAN’S ERA CLUB AND PERIODICAL

In February of 1893 in Boston, Josephine St. Pierre Ruffin, her daughter Florida, and educator Maria Louise Baldwin founded the Woman’s Era Club—a woman’s club composed of African American women of all ages (Lyman 196). The formation of the club is explained in the club’s newspaper, *The Woman’s Era*: “at the time Miss [Ida B.] Wells was creating so much interest in her crusade against lynch-law, it was a good time to carry out the club’s idea, call the women together and organize, not for race-work alone, but for work along all the lines that make for women’s progress. The result was that a club was formed with a membership of twenty, which has been more than doubled since that time” (Volume I 1.4). In the year previous to the founding of the Woman’s Era, more than 250 lynchings occurred in the U.S.—more than in any other year of United States history. In response, one of the club’s first forays into print took the form of a leaflet created to condemn the Denmark Lynching of Barnwell County, South Carolina. This leaflet, “sent in every direction….brought forth numerous and encouraging” responses (Volume I 1.4), the club reported. Indeed, the club received requests for additional hundreds of leaflets to be sent cross-country. The women were also told, by a variety of sources, that the leaflets they distributed had altered opinions and even convinced readers to act with the purpose of “awaken[ing] public sentiment” (4).

It is of little surprise that such positive responses sparked the Woman’s Era Club to form the first African American newspaper by and for women. The first issue explained the impetus for their work:

This reception of the leaflets has revealed to the club a line of work which has been little used and which the club can incorporate with its other work with
advantage. This is the publication and circulation of matter that refers especially to the race, not alone, but also such matter as shall be for the advancement and encouragement of the race, and to quote from our constitution “to collect all facts obtainable, showing the moral, intellectual, industrial and social growth, and attainment of our-people” (Volume I 1.4).

Thus in 1894 the Woman’s Era Club began to publish *The Woman’s Era*, a publication that would lead not only to public education but also to a national convention and federation. The Woman’s Era Club and its members would bring the women of Boston together, and even more importantly, they would spark national club relationships, movements, and friendships.

This chapter, then, discusses the women who founded, joined, and collaborated with the Woman’s Era Club, focusing largely on Josephine St. Pierre Ruffin and the other two founders’ biographies. After elucidating the circumstances surrounding the formation, continuation, and alteration of the Woman’s Era Club and newspaper, the next section investigates the women who devoted their lives to the Woman’s Era Club. Continuing with a focus on Ruffin and other members, this chapter then discusses women’s clubs as a necessity for those African American women wishing to continue their education. In this section is also a discussion on the importance of religion to African American Women’s Clubs. The chapter then shifts focus to the specific practices of the Woman’s Era Club and ends with a discussion of three specific collaborations: Club Committees, The National Convention and Federation, and the Newspaper.

The Women of Boston’s Woman’s Era Club

The Woman’s Era Club was first brought to my attention in Elizabeth McHenry’s *Forgotten Readers: Recovering the Lost History of African American Literary Societies*. In this book, McHenry devotes many pages to a discussion of the Woman’s Era, claiming, “The
importance of the Woman’s Era as both a site of publication and a source of literary reading for black clubwomen in the 1890s cannot be underestimated. It was one thing to read a paper before the membership of a local literary society; it was quite another for black women to see themselves in print, to know that their work was reaching a national audience” (219). After reading McHenry’s discussion on the newspaper, I found myself wanting to know more about the production of the paper, the women involved, and the club’s practices.

When I began searching for the Era’s archives, however, I ran into challenges. The original papers were, unfortunately, nowhere to be found. Luckily, the Women Writers Resource Project at Emory University had digitized the first two volumes in full and the third in part. Without these digital archives, this chapter would not have been possible, for all of my primary research was done within these digital archives. The archives compose approximately seven hundred pages of transcribed newspaper articles, advertisements (See fig. 12 in Appendix D), and club notes. The Club Notes sections proved especially invaluable, as it is in these sections that the Woman’s Era Club discussed their practices (for an example of Club Notes, see Fig. 7). The one downfall to these digital archives, however, is they are based on the material artifacts of newspapers. Some of the original newsprint had been damaged, and thus complete transcriptions were not always possible. Despite this, the sheer magnitude of the newspaper volumes allowed for an in-depth study of the practices of the club and the contributions of the newspaper from 1894-1897.
Mrs. Annie King, president
Miss S. H. Johnson, cor. sect.

New England Women's Club.

I am happy to say that the
Directors of the N. E. W. Club
voted to subscribe for the
Woman's Era, and wish me to
express to you their interest in
the movement of which it is the
organ, and cordial good wishes for
its success. There is not much
in this Club that would serve as
news, or perhaps be of very
general interest, as the meetings
are held every Monday afternoon
from November to June, when a
lecture is given, followed by
discussion; but our secretary, Miss
Lucia M. Peabody, will be very
glad to respond, if at any time
there should be any special points
you would like to know about.

There is another matter I should
speak of; about a year ago the
Massachusetts State Federation
of Women's Clubs was formed
with Mrs. Julia Ward Howe as
President. Twenty-six Clubs
have already joined, and we hope
in time it will be a union of all
the Women's Clubs in the State.
If at any time you may know about
any that you may know about
should like to join, we shall be
most happy to welcome them.

We feel sure this is going to be
very helpful and inspiring to all
the Clubs, for meetings are held
for the discussion of Club
methods and subjects of general
interest, and as the members of
the various Clubs meet, and know
each other better, all will be
helped, and by uniting in this way,
they will become more and more
a power in the State.

FLORENCE EVERETT.
MISS G. H. WILLIAMS.
BUSINESS ADVISER.
Hour for consultation, 4 p.m. to 7 p.m.
48 Charles Street, Boston.

BUTLER B. WILSON.
ATTORNEY AT LAW.
34 School Street, Boston.

THE WOMAN'S ERA.
Boston.
THE WOMAN'S ERA CLUB.
Club Motto—"Help to make the world better."

This club has just closed a carnival which, considering the
hurdles in the shape of continued bad weather counter attractions,
etc., was very successful. Of the four afternoons and evenings
during which it was held, there was
only one evening when the weather
was pleasant, for the rest although
the beautiful little hall was elaborately decorated and the cafe
stocked with "good things" to eat,
the rain and snow and sleet were the
obstacles which prevented the
public from enjoying these features
in large numbers.

In spite of the storm, however,
Children's Day found the hall well
filled with happy youngsters and
admiring parents. Those who
braved the storm were amply repaid,
for there are few prettier sights than that of children dancing.

Some of the features of the Carnival
was the sale of home-made bread,
pies and cakes, of household
articles and implements, delicious
home-made tonics, hot chocolate
and the exquisite cups in which it
was served. Besides these there
were the usual features in tables
for aprons, flowers, fancy goods
and an especially attractive tissue
paper table. No pains were spared
to make the carnival a great success,
and had the weather been favorable
the sum cleared above the
great expense would have been
much larger.

Other leagues may find in this
gathered detailed account some
suggestions which may be used to
their advantage.

The club meets bi-monthly, the
first meeting each month being
dedicated to business, the next six
meetings are arranged, the
literature, the temperance, and the
program committee will each provide
for a meeting with appropriate
speakers.

FREDERIC H. LEWIS,
Undertaker & Funeral Director.
132 Charles St., Boston.
D. A. NEWCOMER & SON,
DEALERS IN
FRESH, SALT AND SMOKED
FISH.
Boston.

THE AMERICAN WHINGER CO.
13 & 15 Broadway Extension,
near Washington St.
BOSTON, MASS.

C. C. BUCKLEY,
Whinger & Clothes Whingers.
All kinds of Whingers and Clothes Whingers.
Orders filled promptly.

Fig. 7. Woman's Era "Club Notes"
The Women’s Era Club appears to have welcomed women of all ages, unlike the Gleaning Circle whose members aged from their late teens to their mid twenties; and Oberlin’s L.L.S., which included only those enrolled in the Oberlin Institute. Josephine St. Pierre Ruffin, born in Boston in 1842, was around fifty-two years old when she helped found the Era. Florida Ruffin Ridley, her daughter, was born in 1861, making her around twenty-three when the club was founded. Their co-founder Maria Louise Baldwin, born in 1856, was thirty-seven at the time. These women clearly indicate that age was not a factor in admission to the Era Club. Instead, it appears purpose was the most important factor, as the Woman’s Era was far more active than reflective (Lyman).

Fig. 8: Josephine St. Pierre Ruffin (Left)     Fig. 9: Maria Louise Baldwin (Right)

Additionally, the biographies of the founders of the Era indicate that these women were highly active women of the middle class. Josephine St. Pierre Ruffin, married to successful
lawyer (and later municipal judge) and Harvard graduate George Lewis Ruffin, was actively involved in both community and national projects. Born to an English born white woman, Elizabeth Matilda, and the clothes dealer and founder of the Boston Zion Church John St. Pierre of Martinique, Josephine St. Pierre came from one of Boston’s prominent and successful families (Knight). In *Great African-American Women*, Darryl Lyman explains, “During the Civil War [Ruffin and her husband] recruited black soldiers for the Union army, joined the Home Guard, and worked for the Sanitary Commission. After the war she organized the Kansas Relief Association, which collected money and clothing to help ex-slaves traveling from the South to Kansas” (196). In Hallie Quinn Brown’s *Homespun Heroines and Other Women of Distinction* (1926), Sarah L. Fleming, one of Ruffin’s contemporaries, explains, “[Ruffin] early connected herself with Julia Ward Howe, Lucy Stone, Abbie May, and Edna Cheney and others in the Suffrage Movement,--being one of the charter members of the Massachusetts School Suffrage Association, and cast a vote for over fifty years for school officers under this body” (152). Ruffin was also an editor of the *Boston Courant*, a black weekly newspaper (Lynman). Ruffin’s daughter and co-founder of the Woman’s Era Club, Florida Ruffin Ridley, wrote of her mother, “In recently looking over the Manual of the Massachusetts State Federation of Women’s Clubs, I found that my mother was one of the founders, her name is linked with those of Mabel Looms Todd, Ada Tillinghast and others as incorporations. This puts her not only as a pioneer in colored club work, but also as a pioneer in white” (Brown 153).

Co-founder Maria Louise Baldwin was the first black woman principal in Massachusetts. Her father, Peter Baldwin, was a postal worker from Boston and her mother, Mary Baldwin, was born in Baltimore. Maria L. Baldwin was named principal of the Agassiz Grammar School in 1889, after teaching each of the offered first to seventh grades. She would later help design a
new school building and would subsequently become the master of twelve teachers and five hundred students (Lyman 15). In addition to being active in the Woman’s Era club, Baldwin was a member of the League of Women for Community Service, the Teachers’ Association, and the Boston Ethical Society (Lyman 15). Hallie Quinn Brown’s brief biography of Baldwin includes the following words provided by a colleague only referenced as a “senior pupil:”

From the first day I saw [Maria Louise Baldwin] I realized that she was a rare character. I was then serving on the Cambridge School Board and she was teaching in one of the lower grades in the Agassiz School which was in my care. Her poise and dignity, her calmness and beautiful voice struck me at once and I felt that her mere presence must be a valuable lesson to all of the children. Several parents told me their children realized this and always spoke of her in admiration and affection, but never spoke of her color. (Brown 185)

Other remembrances written following her untimely death in 1922 were included in *Homespun Heroines* and illustrate, like the remembrance above, that Baldwin’s impact on the Agassiz Grammar School was remarkable. All of the parents and children who benefitted from her hard work were vocally thankful.

Florida Ruffin Ridley was the second African American public teacher in the Boston Schools. She was also a successful writer and essayist, publishing in not only *The Woman’s Era* but also in later publications as well. Her story “Two Gentlemen of Boston” was published in 1926 in *Opportunity* and was recently anthologized in *Harlem’s Glory*. She also published work in *The Messenger* and the *Saturday Evening Quill*, where another of her stories, “He Must Think it Out,” was published. It, too, would later be anthologized. She and her husband, Ulysses A. Ridley, founded the Society for the Collection of Negro Folklore in Boston in 1890.
The founders of the Woman’s Era Club were clearly successful and active within their Boston community, as were the other members. Ninety years after the Gleaning Circle and forty-five years after Oberlin’s L.L.S., women’s access to education and professions (like teaching and hospital work) had clearly changed. However, less than thirty years after the end of the American Civil War, race was a large factor in determining this access. Consequently, the subsequent section focuses on African American education (with particular regards to female education) post-Civil War.

Education and Religion: African American Education in Nineteenth-Century Boston

Although slavery had been illegal in Massachusetts since 1783, Boston schools were segregated for much of the nineteenth century, officially desegregating in 1855. Advertisements from *Freedom’s Journal* (1827-1829) indicate that prior to the Civil War and desegregation many schools and educational opportunities were available to black Bostonians—albeit not the same opportunities for the white girl or boy. As David Angus and Ernestine K. Enomoto explain in *African American School Attendance in the 19th Century*, “In the North, if schools for African Americans did exist, they were generally housed in crowded, inferior buildings staffed by less-than-qualified teachers of either race, and restricted in their curricula offerings” (42). To be sure there were other options for literacy acquisition. Discussing the well-known narrative of Fredrick Douglass’s struggle to learn to read, McHenry explains “Less well-known are stories of the efforts of free blacks in the urban North to acquire and use their literacy, or of the channels through which they gained access to and distributed books and other printed texts. Although technically free, this population also faced systematic resistance to their efforts to gain and exercise their literacy” (3).
A combination of traditional and non-traditional forms of education literacy rates among African Americans soared—despite traditional assumptions that African American populations remained largely illiterate: “By 1850, the census reports that 86 percent of Black Bostonians were literate; by 1860, that number had risen to 92 percent” (McHenry 337).

Non-traditional forms of education were perhaps largely responsible for such high literacy rates among African Americans in Boston. Literacy was, however, not the end goal. Many African Americans realized that rhetorical education was essential to their race’s equality. In Liberating Language: Sites of Rhetorical Education in Nineteenth-Century Black America, Shirley Wilson Logan writes, “rhetorical education for nineteenth-century African Americans rarely included explicit training in rhetorical theory or direct instruction in rhetorical performance, but the application of theoretical principles occurred nonetheless” (3). Instead, African Americans relied on self-education, literary and educational societies, and the Press in order to educate themselves.

The founders of the Woman’s Era Club were involved in these alternative educational options. As founders of a literary society and newspaper, they were directly responsible for educating the black public, even beyond their roles as principals, teachers, and activists. Their own educations, however, occurred much earlier, during the fifties, sixties and seventies. They attended schools both before and after Boston segregation. Josephine St. Pierre Ruffin “was sent to the public schools of Charleston and Salem and later to a private school in New York, coming back to Boston at the opening of the public schools to colored pupils. She went to the old Bowdoin school which was the finishing school for girls as no high school had been started for girls up to that time” (Brown 151). Maria Louise Baldwin spent all of her schooldays in Cambridge. “At the age of five years she entered the Sargent Primary School. She attended the Allston Grammar School and finally the Cambridge High School, graduating from there in June,
1874. She entered the training school for teachers in the same city and graduated from there in June, 1875” (Brown 182). Florida Ruffin attended Boston Teacher’s College as well as Boston University (Harter). Clearly the founders of the Woman’s Era had access to formal educations at both the secondary and post-secondary levels. However, they, like many African Americans at the time, were not satisfied.

To continue their educations, many African Americans of both genders founded literary societies. Logan explains:

The desire for self-improvement first economic, then intellectual, led African Americans to establish associations of their own to offer mutual support in these endeavors. The organizations had many similar and parallel goals. But the early societies were formed by blacks, not so much in response to rejection by white societies as in recognition of a need to launch major, generalized literacy initiatives. (60)

In this same vein, the Woman’s Era Club formed in response to many racial issues. Beyond the issue of lynch mobs, addressed earlier in this chapter, they were also interested in both racial and gender uplift. These women did have the opportunities to join other white or biracial societies; however they still felt there was a need for union among Boston’s African American women.

Literary societies did, however, serve other purposes as well. For African American women one such purpose was the confrontation of stereotypes. McHenry explains, “The growing numbers of educated black men and women considered reading and other literary work as essential to the project of refashioning the personal identity and reconstructing the public image of African Americans in the last decade of the nineteenth century” (189). The women of the Era specifically, and African American women more generally, were constantly faced with printed
and spoken prejudices concerning their status as women which claimed they were less moral, less attractive, and less intelligent than white women. Gere claims, “although all clubwomen faced challenges to their dignity and goals, African American clubwomen at the turn of the [twentieth] century confronted special challenges posed by racism” (Intimate 160). In one example, the women of the Era were sent a letter written by a Mr. James W. Jack. This letter, originally sent to Miss Florence Belgarnie of the Anti-Lynching Society of England, included “a denouncement of the morality of the colored women of America” (Woman’s Era 1.3.14). In response, the women of the Era write, “The matter is a solemn one, and one upon which we shall call all our women all over the country to act. In the meantime we wish to move with discretion, and so not defeat the ultimate aim, which is the confusion of Jack and that host of traducers who are so free in bringing the charge of immorality upon all colored women” (Woman’s Era 1.3.14). Thus the Woman’s Era newspaper and club sought to prove these charges wrong, not only by gaining education in clubs but by then performing their morality in public forums. One of the small committees that made up the larger Woman’s Era Club was even titled “The Committee on Manners and Morals.” In Gere’s words, “Instead of merely attempting to influence others to act on their behalf, as might be dictated by a more passive concept of ‘woman,’ [African American] women undertook direct action to improve the circumstances of members of their race” (Intimate 161). Thus these clubs constituted a form of rhetoric in and of themselves, arguing that African American women were just as moral and intelligent as any other citizen of the United States.

Additionally, African American clubs were not always accepted, welcomed, or respected by white women’s clubs. While the Massachusetts’s Federation of clubs had welcomed the Woman’s Era Club in June 7, 1894, the General Federation of Women’s Clubs would not be so welcoming. In what would become known as the “Ruffin Incident,” the General Federation
denied the Woman’s Era Club entrance in 1900. Gere explains “the General Federation had admitted [the Woman’s Era Club] to membership without realizing it was composed of African American women” (Intimate 165). In an effort to resolve the matter, the federation told Ruffin she could enter as a delegate of the Massachusetts Women’s Press Club (a club composed of mostly white women). However, “Ruffin took the position of an African American acting on behalf of her people, refusing to accept the racist compromise of acting as a (light-skinned) individual rather than as the president of her club” (Intimate 165). Thus African American clubwomen were not only confronting the prejudices of the South or of white men, but of white clubwomen as well.

While religion was not as prominent a topic among the Woman’s Era Club as it was in the Gleaning Circle or Oberlin’s L.L.S., it was still an important—even essential—aspect of the club meetings. Due to their race, the members of the Woman’s Era Club were often faced with criticisms from Christians, especially white Christians from the South. Thus their club’s relationship with religion was complex, as they were not only all religious but also all African American women who were doubly oppressed by certain Christian churches. The first volume of the Woman’s Era, presents an account of Mrs. Edna D. Cheney’s address to the members of the Woman’s Era Club at the Chicago Fair of 1893. In this address, it is explained that Mrs. Cheney “was asked whether it would be right to leave politics and religion out. She replied emphatically no. It is there they are to learn and discuss such questions broadly and they ought to find no better subjects to help them” (4).

The Woman’s Era Club did not, however, begin or end their meetings with prayer. Instead, the Woman’s Era Club frequently used Christianity and religion in their arguments. One such example comes from the third issue of Volume I. In this issue, the women published a letter
to Mrs. Ormiston Chant, a speaker from their first public meeting who had stopped a resolution at the National Conference of the Unitarian Church that would have denounced lynching. In this letter, the Woman’s Era wrote:

we know that in most sections Christian men and women will absolutely refuse not only to live beside us, to eat with us, but also to open their church doors to us….We view these things with amazement, but realizing that prejudice can only be eliminated by time and our general progress, we have tried to bear these indignities put upon us by a professedly Christian people with the fortitude and dignity of real Christians. (1.3.8)

Thus African American clubwomen were forced to confront the contradictions between white Christian churches and Christian Doctrine. In the above argument, the Woman’s Era Club addresses this contradiction and resolves that the only way to change these flawed Christian’s opinions of African Americans was to provide evidence their own Christianity and humanity. Yet even beyond the use of religion in published arguments, the Woman’s Era Club had a clear connection to local religious institutions. The club often met in the Sunday school room of the St. Augustine church and also frequently made note of their club’s attendance at services at the same church in the Social Notes section of the paper.

Beyond this, the members of the Woman’s Era Club often took it upon themselves to call upon the church to change its practices. In one example, recorded in the second volume of the Woman’s Era, the woman discussed and then published their distaste for a common practice of raising money: “That inasmuch as the custom of permitting young girls to solicit men to buy tickets from them is damaging to modesty and a menace to morality, we do set the seal of our condemnation upon it, and call upon the church people especially to help us abolish the custom”
(2.1.2). This call for change clearly indicates a relationship of respect not only for the church from the women of the club, but also for the Woman’s Era Club from the church. Without such respect, such a call for change would never have even been considered by the women of the Era. This call for change also further illustrates these women’s desires to counter the stereotypes of African American women’s moral behavior. In asking the church to change a practice that could be considered immoral or forward, the Woman’s Era Club was further ensuring that the public rhetorics of African American women—and in this case girls—were portraying propriety rather than immodesty.

Beyond their direct interaction with religious institutions and religious thought, the women of the Woman’s Era Club were frequently forced to respond to attacks on African American women’s lack of morality. For example, the first conference was intended to refute the condemnations that colored women lacked morality not “by boisterous denials of the accusations, but by earnest affirmations and showings of what we are, our aims, aspirations and hopes…One session will be devoted to ‘social purity’ and what can be used as factors in promoting it” (1.4.15). While religion was often used in response, the women of the Era also presented their actions as evidence of their own morality. While these accusations were certainly not rare at the end of the nineteenth century, the women of the Era were in a unique position to respond to such arguments both publicly and in print.

Now that the context surrounding the Woman’s Era Club has been explored, the remainder of this chapter focuses more specifically on the Woman’s Era Club and Newspaper, discussing the members, the purposes, and the collaborations. Focusing primarily on the newspaper as evidence of the club’s practice and collaborations, this section also discusses the day-to-day happenings of the club and the production of the newspaper.
Learning Together: The Woman’s Era Club and Newspaper

While only three women founded the Woman’s Era Club in 1893, the club quickly grew in both size and purpose. The Club’s motto, “Help make the world better,” accurately describes the club’s purpose as one based in action, as evidenced by the previous example of the original anti-lynching leaflets. On March 24, 1894, thirteen months after the club’s formation, the first issue of the Woman’s Era was published. In this issue we learn that the club’s membership had already grown to include one hundred and four women. The club notes also explain, “the work of the club generally is chiefly educational, though each committee carries on practical work along its own line, with or without the active co-operation of the club” (Woman’s Era 4). This practical work included when “the Ways and Means Committee with the assistance of the whole club…raised a scholarship for Atlanta University and the Domestic Science Committee [considered] the agitation of more industrial training in certain of the public schools” (Woman’s Era 4).

Yet beyond both the educational and practical purposes of the Woman’s Era Club, the women of the club were also quite focused on their status as women of color in Boston. The first issue of the Woman’s Era provided an account of one of the club’s meetings. In this account President Josephine St. Pierre Ruffin explains:

The idea of a Woman’s Club, not necessarily a colored woman’s club, but a club started and led by colored women had been dormant in the minds of a few women of Boston for some time. Of women’s clubs there seem to be no end, and the field for women’s work in this direction so completely covered as to leave little room for a new struggler. And yet with so many organizations, many of which were willing and anxious to receive colored women as members, there seems to be
reason and indeed an earnest call for an organization of colored women. There are
so many questions which, as colored women, we are called upon to answer, more
than this, there was so much danger that numbers of women would be over-
looked unless some special appeal was made to them. (Woman’s Era 5)

As an eventual result of this sentiment, the women of the Club and newspaper would work
tirelessly to organize and hold a national convention that would bring African American women
club members together in Boston in the summer of 1895.

The Woman’s Era Club’s practices were, in some ways, quite different than those of the
L.L.S. and the Gleaning Circle. Likely as a result of the club’s large membership, the club was
divided into committees. Referred to in the Woman’s Era as the “chief feature of the club,” these
committees were “formed to include every member of the club and [were] as follows—Ways and
Means—matters pertaining to race, Domestic Science, Civics, Literature, Philanthropy,
Temperance, Current Events, Moral Reform, Press, and Corative [sic]” (Woman’s Era 1.1.4).
Because the committees met separately, the club as a whole met bi-monthly, “the first meeting
each month being devoted to business” (Woman’s Era 1.2.3). Each subsequent meeting after that
would be in the hands of one of the committees. These meetings began with a recitation by one
of the committee members and would often continue with a guest speaker’s informal remarks.
Both recitations and remarks were intended to “provide suitable subjects for discussion”
(Woman’s Era 1.1.4). The club would then go into executive session, which, for instance, during
a meeting on May 10, 1894, led to the club’s endorsement of the previously discussed letter to
Mrs. Chant.
Collaborative Rhetorics: The Collaborations of the Woman’s Era Club

The purpose of the Woman’s Era Club is best expressed in the club’s own words. In that first meeting, the President exclaimed, “We the women of the Woman’s Era Club enter the field to work hand in hand with women, generally for humanity and humanity’s interests, not the Negro alone but the Chinese, the Hawaiian, the Russian Jew, the oppressed everywhere as subjects for our consideration, not the needs of the colored women, but women everywhere are our interest” (Woman’s Era 1.1.4). Later in the same meeting the club’s collaborative approach to address the needs of “women everywhere” is reflected on by guest speaker Mrs. A. H. Spaulding: “The Woman’s Era Club is a happy arrangement, and what they need is the consideration of great questions together. Women must learn to think independently” (Woman’s Era 1.1.5).

The collaborations of the club varied a great deal. From organizing the individual meetings of the club to producing documents intended to support or contest political claims and laws to publishing a newspaper and even organizing a national convention, the women of the Woman’s Era Club were busy working together to “make the world better.” Like the Gleaning Circle and the L.L.S., the Woman’s Era Club voted to pass or support changes to their constitution and practices. Taking this one step further, however, they also voted before publishing a variety of resolutions that often resulted from a speech or presentation given at one of the club meetings. They also often collaborated to fund scholarships, carnivals, and other public events. Additionally, the women collaborated to conduct investigations. In one instance, the club looks into the claims of a letter sent to a member, Miss Gould. In this letter it is charged that Clara Barton’s agents—who were given money, food, and clothes intended as charity for the sufferers of the Sea Islands Flood—were “[requiring] that all colored people should work for
rations, while nothing was required from white people in exchange” (Woman’s Era 1.3.14). Sadly, these claims turned out to be true. As a result, large sums of money were withheld until a different and honest organization could be found to distribute the charity to those of any race.

The collaborations of the club, however, go beyond those between the members of the Woman’s Era Club. The newspaper, the women’s anti-lynching activism, and the national convention and association eventually became collaborations between women from all over the country and all different women’s clubs and literary societies. These complex national collaborations are discussed in the following sections, which use the heuristics discussed in Chapter I to investigate the modes of said collaborations.

**Club Committee Meetings**

To avoid repetition with the previous two chapters, this chapter focuses not on the club meetings in general, but rather only on those meetings run by one of the Era’s committees. The workings of these committees are best explained in the member’s own words, found in the Woman’s Era:

As has often been said, the Woman’s Era, which is composed of nearly one hundred and fifty women, is divided into committees, every member being put upon some one of the committees, of literature, civics, philanthropy, domestic science, race work, etc. Each committee takes charge of a meeting in turn, selecting an essayist, and these are to discuss the particular matter which is to be put before the club. The club has the usual officers, with an executive board, which maps out the work of the year and presents it to the club in the form of a printed programme. Some one committee may choose to have a public meeting...
with public speakers, some one to have it “tea,” some an entertainment to raise funds. “The ways they are many, the end it is one.” (Volume II 1.6.13.2)

In short, the substance of each meeting was left entirely to the decision of the members of the committee in charge. The committees varied their approach, sometimes even holding public meetings. These meetings would, however, always include the reading or recitation of a paper which related to the topic chosen by the committee. In one example, the women recollect a meeting from January of 1896:

The last regular meeting of the Woman’s Era Club was in charge of the domestic science section of that club, Mrs. Harriet Ruffin, chairman of section, in the chair. Carefully prepared papers were read on “Ventilation,” by Mrs. Fannie Johnson, on the proper care of cooking utensils by Mrs. Pope, food preparations by Miss Simmons, and on decorations, wise and otherwise, by Mrs. Ruffin. Short discussions followed all the papers. (Volume II 1.8.1)

Another committee meeting held on June of 1895 went quite differently:

The last social meeting of the season of the Woman’s Era Club was in charge of the Current Events Committee, Mrs. Mary Dandridge chairman. A very pleasing programme was carried out. Miss Harriet Smith read a paper on the “influence of clubs on the home,” and an unusually fine program of music was rendered by Mrs. Sparrow, Mrs. Harris, and Mr. Moses Hodges. The afternoon wound up with club tea. (Volume II 1.4.13)

Other committee meetings would result in public condemnations (such as the previously discussed disapproval of church fundraising practices), while others still would result in published arguments against lynching.
These committees produced a variety of rhetorical products, be they the meetings themselves, the rhetorical arguments that were read at the meetings and then sometimes published, the carnival that was actually the result of a variety of committees collaborating, or the variety of scholarships and programs the committees were able to fund. In the end, what I was most interested in, however, was not the productions of these committees, but the ways the women worked together to achieve a variety of their goals. However, the heuristics I developed in Chapter I are largely focused on collaborations that result in a product, a text and while the committee meetings were produced, the collaborations of the committees are not all represented in the products. Consequently, I use the heuristics to discuss the committee meetings and the products that resulted, all of which are represented in the first three volumes of the *Woman’s Era*. However, this discussion does not fully represent the collaborations of the committee meetings, as there are no complete minutes of the committees’ planning meetings. Instead, this discussion relies on the products produced by the group (i.e. the club meetings) and later recorded in the newspaper. That the committees were collaborative hardly requires further explication: each committee was composed of multiple members who fulfilled a variety of roles; each meeting was themed, developed, and delivered by the members of a specific committee; and finally, the committees required club approval before publication. Unfortunately, the modes of the committees’ collaborations are not so easily explicated.

*Hierarchical, Dialogic, and Asymmetrical Modes of Collaboration*

Ede and Lunsford’s modes of collaboration provide unique challenges for a discussion of the Woman’s Era Club’s committee meetings. Beyond the “highly specific goals… carried out by people who play clearly defined roles,” hierarchical collaborations view knowledge “as information to be found or a problem to be solved. The activity of finding this information or
solving this problem is closely tied to the realization of a particular end product” (Rhetoric 235). In contrast, those utilizing the loosely defined dialogic mode find “the process of articulating and working together to achieve goals… as important as the goals themselves” (Rhetoric 236). That the members of women’s clubs would find the process as important as the goals themselves seems obvious, especially when considering the Woman’s Era Club’s own claim that the primary goals of the club were educational. The committee collaborations were dialogic in that the committees rotated the leadership over meetings and also found the process of working together useful; however, they were hierarchical in that all committees were focused around their specific theme (a highly specific goal) and in that all committees were also broken down into individual roles (highly fixed roles). For example, each committee included a Chairperson.

To further complicate this discussion, Ede and Lunsford write that in “dialogic collaboration this group effort is seen as essential to the production—rather than merely the recovery—of knowledge and as a means of individual satisfaction within the group” (236). The members of the Woman’s Era Club explicitly reflect this belief in the first issue of the Woman’s Era: “The actual work done by the club since its formation is small but most promising” (Volume I 1.4). Yet despite this satisfaction arising from simply working together, the committee collaborations cannot be simply defined as dialogic because these collaborations are identified by Ede and Lunsford as subversive. While in many cases women’s clubs and literary societies were, indeed, attempting to undermine the patriarchal authorities that did not allow or support their education, in this case the dialogic nature of the committees was designed as a consequence of the sheer multitude of club members. The women were collaborating in every facet of their club, and the organization of the committees as well as their themes and purposes were also the result of a collaboration diminishing the need (at least in this case) for subversive acts. To be
subversive, a committee would need to be attempting to subvert the authority of the Club as a whole. Instead, the club was a collaboration in and of itself. All of the collaborations of the Woman’s Era Club, however, could be seen as subversive in a different light: the women were using all of their collaborations to challenge and confront the opinions that their race and gender were less intelligent, moral, and worthy than other U.S. citizens: and that they had less responsibility to contribute to the improvement of society than did white women. This focus on action is evidenced in the previously discussed actions of the Ways and Means Committee when they raised a scholarship. With these actions the women were subverting the systems that oppressed them by encouraging education among those of their race despite a lack of financial and cultural support for such endeavors.

Productive and Supportive Modes of Collaboration

The committee meetings and collaborations are undoubtedly productive/supportive collaborations. The committees were designed with the purpose of producing diverse club meetings illustrating their productive tendencies. Moreover, the meetings also required other productions including recitations, arguments, and discussions. The committees were also supportive in that they rotated from the productive to the supportive role. When, for example, the Domestic Science committee led a meeting, the members of other committees played a supportive role, that is everyone allowed each committee to focus solely on its theme by dividing a variety of important topics between all the committees. Consequently, the committee producing a given meeting was supported by members of the other committees. That is, one committee could not have produced a meeting with such energy had its focus been divided between all of the topics the Woman’s Era Club held in high enough esteem to discuss.
The Woman’s Era Newspaper

While the impetus for the newspaper’s advent has already been discussed, the practices and development of said newspaper are essential to a discussion of the newspaper as a collaborative endeavor. Beyond the initial lynching leaflets, however, the editors of the newspaper had additional reasons for publishing a newsletter. In expressing a void in newspaper work, the Era explains:

Such a void, we think, exists, and it is to help fill it that we presume to make our first bow as editors of The Woman’s Era, to a long suffering but indulgent public. The need of such a journal has long been felt as a medium of intercourse and sympathy between the women of all races and conditions; especially true of this, of the educated and refined, among the colored women, members of which class may be found in every state from Maine to Florida, but in nearly all of these places an important factor, and one that receives little or no recognition, and the one more than all others which prevents her from making the most of herself and taking her legitimate [sic] place among the advanced women, is the limitation of her surroundings and the circumscribed sphere in which she must move…it [sic] is to help strengthen this link by hastening on the day when a keener appreciation of the hindrances of this class and a better understanding between all classes shall exist that this little venture is sent out on its mission. (Volume I 1.1.8).

And so, this first issue, published on Saturday March 24, 1894, went to print under the editorship of Josephine St. Pierre Ruffin. Florida R. Ridley began as the Assistant Editor, and a variety of the other members of the club served as departmental editors.

The Woman’s Era was published monthly in Boston and primarily funded by Josephine St.
Pierre Ruffin. To support the paper, however, a small fee was charged for subscription: a single issue cost ten cents, a year’s subscription cost a dollar, and clubs could purchase one hundred copies of an issue for seven dollars. In each issue, the *Woman’s Era* is described as “the organ of the Woman’s Era Club, and devoted to the Interest of the women’s clubs, Leagues, and Societies throughout the country” (Volume I 1.1.8). The paper’s first issue began with announcements and continued with a tribute to Lucy Stone, who had recently passed away. The next section, entitled “Club News,” included letters from clubs from across the country, including the states of New York, Washington D.C., Missouri, Rhode Island, and Massachusetts. The issue continued with essays on “Domestic Science,” “The Problem of the Unemployed,” the “Difficulties of Colonization,” and other topics. Interspersed are advertisements and editorials as well as sections titled “Social News,” “Literature Department,” and “Club Gossip.”

While all newspapers are collaborative endeavors, the *Woman’s Era’s* was unique in that it allowed women to communicate and learn about club work cross-country. The roles of the editors and the authors were certainly not anything new; however, the interaction between clubs within this newspaper was a remarkably fresh way for women to communicate at the end of the nineteenth century. As the editors often explain, other journals, magazines, and newspapers were *not* being produced by women. Worse yet, some of the most popular publications, like the *Ladies’ Home Journal*, were not yet accepting contributions from African American women. Gere explains:

> Newspapers, magazines, and book publishing remained male-governed throughout the nineteenth century, and women who tried to succeed in the world of print encountered enormous difficulties. By underwriting their own publications and regulating their contents clubwomen created an alternative to the
male controlled mass market in which women could only rarely present themselves in their own terms. (Intimate 29)

Thus in contrast to the *Ladies Home Journal*, the *Woman’s Era* was not only edited and contributed to by a variety of African American women and women’s clubs, but also funded and published by these women as well.

As time passed and more issues were published, the newspaper began to change shape. While in the initial issue the letters from other clubs were brief, as the paper continued this conversation between clubs would become the paper’s primary feature. Beginning with the seventh issue of Volume I, the *Woman’s Era* no longer published a section titled “Club Notes.” Instead, the paper opened new departments with editors from New York, Washington D.C., Chicago, Kansas City, Denver, and New Orleans. This broader national focus was a direct result of the formation of the National Federation of Afro American Women, which is discussed in the subsequent section. It is important to note that this convention and the later federation were made possible through the *Woman’s Era*. Beginning on May 1, 1894 the paper began a discussion on the possibility for a national convention of “colored women.” In response to three questions posed by the members of the Woman’s Era Club, women and clubs from all over the country began to discuss in print the need and practicality of a national convention.

Additionally, the *Woman’s Era* provided a forum for a number of prominent African American women from all over the country to collaborate. The club notes section would eventually be delegated by city, and each city would be edited by a single woman. The New York department, for example, was edited by Victoria Earle Matthews. In *Homespun Heroines*, Frances R. Keyser explains, “[Victoria] was one of the group of courageous women who responded eagerly to the call made by Mrs. J. St. Pierre Ruffin…the call to our women all over
the country to gather in Boston for consultation for conference and to band ourselves together for our protection and welfare of the race” (Brown 211). Additionally, Matthews had a great impact on women’s domestic work, both establishing the “Home for Colored Working Girls” and also providing help and advice on how to make a woman’s work easier. Even more, Keyser explains, “Long before the interest in Race Literature became general, she was an enthusiast on the subject and placed in the White Rose Home a choice collection of books written by and about the Negro in America, forming, as a white reporter wrote, ‘One of the most unique special libraries in New York” (Brown 215).

Another collaborator and member of the Woman’s Era Club, Miss Eliza A. Gardner was a prominent figure in the anti-slavery movement. Sarah Fleming explains:

she devoted practically all of her time to church work and to the cause of anti-slavery. For this reason her home was a veritable ‘Bethel,’ being one of the stations of the famous ‘Underground Railroad’ — in the days of William Lloyd Garrison, John Brown, Wendel Phillips, Charles Sumner, Lewis Hayden, Frederick Douglass, Harriet Tubman, Sojourner Truth, and countless others with whom Miss Gardner was personally acquainted. She was associated with these great people as a guardian of the liberties of the oppressed” (Brown 117).

She also worked tirelessly to provide young African American girls with jobs at white owned business establishments. In the Woman’s Era, then, these two devoted women as well as countless others were able to collaborate despite the large distances between them.

The willingness of the Woman’s Era Club’s to share their own experiences provides yet another unique example of collaborative newspaper work. More than once, other clubs wrote to the paper to explain how they had begun a club, held a carnival, and even changed their social
practices after reading about the Era’s work. This practice of sharing club practices in print, however, was not unique to the Woman’s Era Club. Gere explains, “Clubwomen turned to “older clubs” for help, but they also recognized the need to ‘pay the debt’ to other clubs, leading clubwomen from all social positions to produce—often using the major portion of their budgets—printed representations of themselves” (Intimate 101). Moreover, the newspaper served as a forum for discussion on social problems like lynching. The Woman’s Era Club’s openness also meant that they sometimes provided notes on the reasons for including articles or on problems they had encountered. For example, they explain in the first issue: “The article on Domestic Science which appears in this number of the Woman’s Era was read before the Woman’s Era Club in January and led to an interesting discussion. Mrs. Dietrick is a prolific writer and an authority on the subject of household economics…The next number of the Woman’s Era will contain an article on the N.E. Women’s Hospital by Mrs. Eduah D. Cheney” (Volume I 1.1.7). In another, less positive incident an editorial explains, “A series of accidents which would have been ridiculous had they not been so nearly tragic, befell our last issue after going to press; our paper was consequently delayed in appearance for several days. This is deeply regretted by us and we feel that we must apologize to the many kind friends, who have received this venture with so much sympathy and enthusiasm” (Volume I 1.2.8). This openness in both club practices and newspaper workings clearly benefitted those women subscribed to the Era.

The most compelling evidence of the collaborations of the Woman’s Era, however, comes from the requests and comments of the editors. The first of these claims comes from Victoria Earle’s first editorial as the editor of the New York Department. She writes:

I am proud to be associated with the splendid array of womanly women who will
labor in the future for the success of this woman’s venture, *The Era*, and with deep emotions of anxiety and hope, look to the women of my section to stand by me and hold up my hands. I beg their interest; I desire their support and sympathy. With it lies success; without it, failure and all its attendant humiliation. There is great work to be done, but no one woman, or no ten can carry the weight of this great undertaking…without masses…with them. (Volume I 1.7.4).

This call for support from readers is not a rare instance; indeed, readers were also asked to contribute beyond the usual letter to the editors. After opening a new department titled “Open Court,” (see Appendix D, fig. 13) the column explains, “We desire to impress upon the readers of this column they are expected to help ‘run it’ by subscriptions, by literary contributions, by commenting upon the matter found within its limits, or upon that which they think the column should contain” (Volume II 1.1.25). As evidenced by these calls for help, the *Woman’s Era* was not only contributed to by cross-country editors but also by any reader of the *Era* who felt she had something to say.

*Hierarchical, Dialogic, and Asymmetrical Modes of Collaboration*

While the newspaper venture was clearly collaborative, the modes it utilized are unsurprisingly less explicit. This collaboration clearly fits the hierarchical mode defined by Ede and Lunsford: the women held set roles of editor, contributor, and reader. Additionally, the product (the newspaper) was clearly the most important aspect of the collaboration, as women across the country relied on the newspaper to communicate. This communication, however, complicates this hierarchical classification. While the product was the primary goal of this collaboration, a higher priority for the women of the *Era* was the wider communication the newspaper enabled among African American women. Consequently, the collaboration has some
dialogic attributes despite the fact that the roles of this collaboration were fixed not fluid.

*Productive, Supportive, and Productive/Supportive Modes of Collaboration*

The newspaper, perhaps, better exemplifies the modes of collaboration that Lindal Buchanan identifies. The newspaper, the result of a productive collaboration, was possible only as a result of a variety of collaborations: those of the Woman’s Era Club, the editors from across the country, contributors like Ida B. Wells and Frederick Douglass, and other women from all over the country. Additionally, all of these collaborations were necessary for the newspaper to go to print each month, clearly illustrating the qualities of a productive collaboration.

Whether the newspaper was the result of a supportive collaboration is less clear. It could be said the newspaper would have failed without the clubs who purchased and then read it. However, most texts are not successful without some audience, and newspapers are always purchased, so this collaboration could only be considered supportive in a financial sense. Yet it is not clear from Buchanan’s discussion whether monetary support would qualify as a supportive or productive quality. Because the newspaper could not have been produced without this money, this aspect of the collaboration still falls under the productive mode, allowing the conclusion that the newspaper was not supportive, but instead, a productive collaboration only.

*Canons of Rhetoric*

The *Woman’s Era* newspaper also evidences collaboration in some of the rhetorical canons. The canon of invention is clearly collaborative as some of the printed articles were the result of themed committee meetings (thus the eventual article was the result of a collaboration between section editors, club committees, and the club members who voted to print the speech in the *Woman’s Era*). Additionally, the arrangement of the newspaper is collaborative as the form and order of articles shifts as more contributors and clubs became involved. Not only does the
arrangement of the articles (and specifically the “Club Notes” section) alter, but the content also alters, evidencing collaboration in delivery. Additionally, editors from multiple cities collaborated to deliver and arrange the final product—the newspaper. Finally, the newspaper became the memory of African American Women’s clubs across the nation, recounting club meetings, cross-club conventions, and club sentiment. The editors of the newspaper as well as the clubs they represented all took an active part in creating this public memory of the African American women’s club movement.

The National Convention and Federation

Perhaps the most complicated collaborations of the Woman’s Era Club are those on the national level. On Tuesday, May 1, 1894 the Woman’s Era began a conversation via their newspaper that would eventually lead to both a national convention and the formation of a national federation. In this call, entitled “What Prominent Women have to Say,” they explain, “The Woman’s Era believes that the time is ripe for a convention of the colored women of the country to agitate the subject [sic]. It proposes to publish the views of influential women on the subject” (Volume I 3). This issue continues with responses from a diverse body of women from Chicago, New York, and Massachusetts. In these letters, the women respond to three questions posed by the Woman’s Era: “(1) Do you favor a convention of the colored women’s clubs, leagues [sic], and societies? (2) What in your opinion is the most available place and time for such a congress? (3) State why you do or do not favor a convention” (Volume I 3). The discussion that followed continued for much of the first volume of the Woman’s Era. One response, from Josephine E. Grant, to the Woman’s Era’s prompt, can be seen in Fig. 10. In these responses, women discussed when and where the convention should be held and why there was a need for such a convention.
In the November issue of 1894, after much conversation, the *Woman’s Era* moved forward with their intentions, taking the many responses they had received and published into consideration: “With our new departure, we again bring forward our suggestion of a convention. We hope our readers will open the matter again with renewed interest, and that the summer of ’95 will see a great congress of the colored women of America” (Volume I 1.7.9.3). And they would, indeed, find what they were looking for. In July of 1895 a section titled “Conference Notes” explained, “Widespread interest is being shown in the coming conference, communications from clubs all over the country showing that interest in and sympathy with the movement will have substantial recognition in the presence of its delegates” (Volume II 1.4.2). The column goes on to explain that Ida B. Wells would be in attendance, as would many women from New York, Philadelphia, Boston, Tuskegee, Wellesley, Washington, and Chicago. Delegates from clubs would be “lodged free by the members of the W.E. C., and dinners [were] furnished at the hall at moderate cost to delegates and others desiring them” (Volume II 1.4.2).

After much discussion, the conference was held in Berkeley Hall in Boston, MA on July twenty-ninth, thirtieth, and thirty-first of 1895. The National Conference of Colored Women opened when Josephine St. Pierre Ruffin called the meeting to order and Miss Eliza Gardner, also of the Woman’s Era Club, offered a prayer. Immediately following this prayer, “a motion was made to elect officers for permanent organization. After a variety of committees were organized, Josephine gave “a few simple rules to govern the convention, which were adopted” (Volume II 1.5.1). The rules were as follows: “(1) That speakers be limited to five minutes. (2) No person to speak more than twice on the same subject.” The convention then adjourned until two o’clock when the delegates from fourteen states and the District of Columbia reported and responded.
After these reports, the convention adjourned again until 8 p.m. when Josephine St. Pierre Ruffin delivered the address of welcome. In it she concludes:
If there is any one thing I would especially enjoin upon this conference it is union and earnestness. The questions that are to come before us are of too much import to be weakened by trivialities or personalities. If any differences arise let them be quickly settled, with the feeling that we are all workers to the same end, to elevate and dignify colored American womanhood. This conference will not be what I expect if it does not show the wisdom, indeed the absolute necessity of a national organization of our women. Every year new questions coming up will prove it to us. This hurried, almost informal convention does not begin to meet our needs, it is only a beginning, made here in dear old Boston, where the scales of justice and generosity hang evenly balanced, and where the people “dare to be true” to their best instincts and stand ready to lend aid and sympathy to worth strugglers. It is hoped and believed that from this will spring an organization that will in truth bring in a new era to the colored women of America. (Volume II 1.5.24)

The conclusion to her address emphasizes the importance of public displays of the delegate’s womanhood—a direct confrontation to public sentiments and the aforementioned letter by James W. Jack that condemned the character of the African American woman. The first day of the convention concluded with solos by Mrs. Arianna Sparrow and Mr. M. M. Hodges and a collection of $9.11 or the equivalent of $252.00 today¹.

The next day continued with devotional exercises, after which the convention went into a secret session to discuss Jack’s letter. This secret session resulted in a variety of resolutions that were adopted by the convention, printed in a leaflet, and sent to England. Part of the leaflet read,  

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¹ This number represents the GDP per capita, meaning this figure was calculated to illustrate how affordable the fine would be to the average person today.
“Be it therefore, resolved, that this National Conference of Colored Women denounce this man as a traducer of female character, a man wholly without sense of chivalry and honor, and bound by the iron hand of prejudice, sectionalism, and hatred, entirely unreliable and unworthy the prominence he seeks” (Volume II 1.5.3). The rest of the second day continued with readings and songs.

The final day of the convention opened with prayer and a song, sung by the whole convention. Next the minutes of the first and second days of the convention were read and approved with corrections. A variety of committees were formed to deal with lynching and the Impey letter. Finally, the convention took up the “business of national organization” (Volume II 1.5.2). The convention then agreed to form a national organization and also agreed to hold an extra session the next morning at 11 a.m. During this discussion, the Woman’s Era became “the organ of the national organization through which to gain all information regarding the organization. Mrs. Matthews’ resolution to frame a constitution adopted. Voted, that the name of the new organization be laid over; a collection to be taken to defray the expense of the leaflet; the clubs to be taxed pro rata; a new committee to be formed to gather up the loose ends of the Convention” (Volume II 1.5.2). The convention adjourned with the song “God Be With You Tin [sic]We Meet Again.”

The collaborations of this conference were many. From the initial and public decisions concerning a meeting place via the Woman’s Era, to the program carried on by both the Woman’ Era Club and clubs from across the country, to the organization of the National Federation and the election of President, Margarat James Murray—wife of Booker T. Washington—, to the day-to-day resolutions of the conference, the delegates and attendees made a variety of collaborative decisions. Ultimately, the conference intended to unite African American women
in both their confrontation of prejudice and their related work in women’s clubs. The women worked together in those four days to form a national organization, to develop a leaflet confronting Jack’s letter, and to compose the records of this First National Conference of Colored Women.

*Hierarchical, Dialogic, and Asymmetrical Modes of Collaboration*

The convention and federation were spearheaded by Josephine St. Pierre Ruffin (as the Chair of the conference) and the rest of the Woman’s Era Club. The three questions posed in the Woman’s Era prompted the initial discussion, illustrating clearly defined and hierarchical collaborative roles. Many women took this opportunity to weigh-in on the importance of such a convention; however, despite some recommendations for the convention to be held in Chicago, the Woman’s Era Club ultimately made the decision to hold the conference in Boston, again illustrating the hierarchical tendencies of this collaboration. As the convention moved forward, the members of the Woman’s Era Club remained in charge, developing the program and housing delegates from other clubs. The convention then was outlined in a program that outlined the speakers, discussions, themes, and performers for each day. However, at one point the minutes of the convention indicate this collaboration became less hierarchical when the women of the convention voted (in accordance with the rules outlined by Ruffin on the first day) that certain speeches be delayed until a later session. Still this slightly dialogic collaboration followed the rules outlined by the Chair, illustrating yet again, just how hierarchical this collaboration was. There are a number of reasons for this, some of which are further discussed in the next chapter, but it is important to note the possible necessity of hierarchy in collaborations that produce large-scale events involving many people.
Productive, Supportive, and Productive/Supportive Modes of Collaboration

While Buchanan warns against the dangers of productive collaborations for African American women during the nineteenth century, those dangers existed primarily because of the complicated relationships between abolitionists and African American rhetors prior to the Civil War (1861-1865). In the case of the convention—held at the end of the nineteenth century—, this collaboration—like another Buchanan outlines (the Seneca Falls Convention of 1848)—relied on the “cooperative efforts” of many women to produce and deliver many texts, speeches, and ultimately, the first national convention of African American women (1895). Thus the possible adverse relationships that could result from cross-race collaborations were not a problem with this collaboration as it was composed of mostly African American women and men. It is likely (though not explicitly mentioned in the newspaper) that many supportive collaborations took place with regards to the convention as well. Many women, some of whom had young children, traveled to Boston from fourteen states. To do this, someone (be it their husbands, family members, or friends) likely had to take over childcare. This, however, is just speculation. In one example, though, Margaret James Murray (referred to in the Woman’s Era as Mrs. Booker T Washington), founder of Dorothy Hall (a home for girls at Tuskegee), a reform school for African American boys, and the Tuskegee Woman’s Club (Brown 228), who would become the President of the National Federation, had been helping rear her husband’s two sons from previous marriages. To spend time at the convention, other people (and likely other women due to her husband’s busy life preparing for the Atlanta Exhibition that began less than two months later) must have stepped in at home so she could travel to and speak at the convention and leave the six and eight year old boys at home. As Buchanan explains, “Whether the post is filled by a friend, husband, sibling, or servant, the supportive partner plays a conventionally
feminine and, therefore, largely unappreciated role, one that often goes unnoticed in life and in
studies of collaboration” (147). Because the supportive collaborative role often goes unnoticed, it
is not surprising that these collaborators are not mentioned or thanked in the convention notes.
Consequently, while no explicit statements indicate that this convention was possible because of
supportive collaborations, women like Margaret James Murray Washington would not have been
able to attend without such support.

Conclusions on the Woman’s Era Club and Their Collaborations

Hundreds of members took part in the W.E.C. meetings while women from all over the
country contributed, edited, and sold the Woman’s Era newspaper from 1894-1897.
Simultaneously, women from a variety of places used the newspaper to collaborate on the
formation of a convention and federation. Consequently, the collaborations of the Woman’s Era
Club have encapsulated the shortcomings of my heuristics once again. As noted in previous
chapters, the modes of production outlined by Lindal Buchanan and by Andrea Lunsford and
Lisa Ede rely heavily on production. However, this very focus on product proves (perhaps again)
that my heuristics have failed to fully represent the types of collaboration uncovered in my
research. To be capable of speaking about collaboration only as a mode of production (I even go
as far as discussing collaborations with regard to how they support production) is representative
of a failure to understand the diverse reasons and desires that culminated in the act of working
with one another. Because the Woman’s Era Club was more apt to create products than the
previous two clubs, however, the heuristics did still provide insight into its collaborations.

Ede and Lunsford’s modes of collaboration recognize that in some collaborations the
processes of working together become as important as the resulting products. This dialogic mode
of collaboration, then, seems to be consistent with the practices of the Woman’s Era Club. The
women explicitly express their appreciation of working with one another. However, while collaboration in and of itself was consistently viewed as essential to these women, the products themselves often overshadowed this importance. The Woman’s Era Club often focused intently on the products of their labor: the newspaper, their meetings, and the convention. With this focus comes a complication of Ede and Lunsford’s modes: What happens when a collaboration has aspects of both dialogic and hierarchical modes? When roles are strictly defined yet the collaboration is just as important as the product? When rhetorical products are produced dialogically but not subversively? One complication of these collaborations is the exorbitant number of women involved in the production of the newspaper, the convention, and even the meetings. With over a hundred members, the Woman’s Era Club greatly outnumber the collaborations Ede and Lunsford investigate in both “Rhetoric in a New Key” and Singular Texts, Plural Authors. Ergo, it is no surprise that the modes they outline do not fully explain the collaborations investigated in this chapter. Consequently, the subsequent chapter more fully addresses these questions and challenges.

In contrast to some of the collaborations discussed in previous chapters, Buchanan’s productive and supportive modes of collaboration are clearly represented in some of the Woman’s Era Club’s cooperative endeavors. While the productive aspects of the collaborations are obvious, as in the example of the editors of the newspaper coming from different areas of the country or the production of a national convention and federation; the supportive modes of collaboration are, perhaps not surprisingly, less evident. As Buchanan explains, “the domestic, maternal, and ethical concerns so neatly addressed by supportive collaboration may frequently be overlooked, but they, nevertheless, often determine how, when, where, and whether women create and deliver public discourse at all” (147). Consequently, with specific regard to the
convention, supportive collaborations were likely essential in order for many of the delegates to attend. Unfortunately, in accordance with Buchanan’s claims, these people are not given credit for their collaboration in the historical records I have examined. Despite this, the example of the convention illustrates that it is possible to look at historical collaborations that do not explicitly name supportive collaborations and to recognize that without some supportive collaboration, the productive collaboration would not have been possible.

Buchanan’s productive and supportive modes, however, are obscured by the discussion of the newspaper. While Buchanan outlines child support and ethical support as typical supportive collaborations, the question of monetary support is not discussed. Such support seems to fit in the same category as child support as it did not directly engage in the production of the product—it supported those who did engage in the rhetorical production of the newspaper. However, the example of the Woman’s Era indicates that without women to purchase and sell the Era in their own cities, the newspaper would not have been able to continue. Further, it would not have been produced in print. Thus the money given to the newspaper supported the paper financially while also aiding in the physical production of subsequent issues. In as much, Buchanan’s modes are complicated when a rhetorical product is not only produced but also printed serially.

Through the Woman’s Era Club’s many collaborations with both one another and clubs across the country, a plethora of products were produced from 1894-1897. As the relationships between Women’s Clubs cross-country continued, the women took part in an even bigger collaboration: the fusion of two national federations. In Washington D.C. on July twenty-first of 1896, a “joint commission, consisting of seven members of the National League of Colored Women and an equal number from the National Federation of Afro-American Women,
assembled in the parlor of the 19th St. Baptist Church to consider the advisability of union” (Volume III 2.11). In their words:

the National Federation of Afro-American Women and National League of Colored Women met in the City of Washington, and by a means of joint commission, consolidated their forces. Women in both organizations were wise enough to see that more and better work could be done if the two organizations were united. All personal ambitions and petty jealousies were laid aside, thus making the union possible. The new organization is new only in the name it has assumed. It stands as did the two separate halves, as a whole, for the uplifting of womankind. (Volume III 4.1)

This union would be known as the National Association of Colored Women Clubs, and now known as the NACW, it is the “oldest African-American secular organization in existence” (Records vii). Shortly after the founding of the NACWC, the Woman’s Era would change its name to the National Notes and the publication would continue “to unite women and to educate them in the science and techniques of reform” (Records x). The National Notes would continue to be published until during the depression, July of 1935 (Records xvi). Before the change in name, the New York Editor of the Woman’s Era, Victoria Earle Matthews, wrote of the new association’s members: “As we stand today, we represent about five thousand members—the nucleus of a splendid force. We are too far apart—we must be concentrated, as to purpose and method of procedure” (Volume III 5.2).

While the Woman’s Era Club relinquished the name of their publication to the NACW in 1897, the members of the club remained active members of the NACW. Josephine St. Pierre Ruffin was a member of the committee that formed the NACW in 1896; and while Mary Church
Terrell of Washington D.C. would be president of the NACW, Florida Ridley Ruffin would be the corresponding secretary. For the sake of their collaborations, the women of the W.E.C. who had made the very first call for the national convention that would spur an association of over five thousand members were happy to share in the production of their newspaper and in the governance of the NACW.
V. “TOWARD THE MUTUAL IMPROVEMENT OF ALL:”

COLLABORATION IN THEORY AND PRACTICE

Writing in a time period when women like Sarah Palin support Rush Limbaugh’s anti-woman tirade against contraception advocate Sandra Fluke, I began this project with my fascination upon discovering the support women of the nineteenth century found in one another during the weekly meetings of woman’s clubs. After Fluke testified at a congressional hearing about the cost of birth control, Rush Limbaugh responded on his radio show. Andrew Rosenthal of the New York Times reports, “in Mr. Limbaugh’s propaganda chamber, her testimony became a declaration of sexual promiscuity. He accused her of expecting taxpayers to pay her to have sex, and suggested that she post videos of herself having sex on the Internet. He called her a “slut” and a “prostitute” and said she was “round heeled” (par. 5). Living in the nineteenth century, the women of women’s clubs faced criticisms similar to those Fluke encountered after speaking publicly. However, Sarah Palin’s often anti-woman stance, sharply contrasts with the support women of the nineteenth century found in women’s clubs. Yet by different names women’s clubs do still exist. Hardly meeting weekly to practice composition (women’s needs have, indeed, changed), these groups can be found in online forums, still often arguing for the rights of women and other marginalized groups. Blog spaces such as Feministing, Jezebel, and Feministe provide forums of support where women can discuss current events from politics to plastic surgery to body image. These blog spaces all promote social change, thus a further study of the practices of women’s clubs in the nineteenth century is indeed timely, as Anne Ruggles Gere has eloquently argued that the women’s club movement played a large role in nation making at the turn of the twentieth century. Consequently, at a time when politics is rife with discussions of women’s rights, bodies, and faults, studying the specific practices of women’s
clubs of the nineteenth century provides a model for those women today who are currently attempting to make the nation a safer place for women.

Thus I began this project asking how Ladies Literary Societies collaborated. As I began and continued my research, however, I realized I was really asking some far more complex questions, such as: How do the collaborative practices of Ladies Literary Societies challenge the contemporary theories of collaboration in the field of Rhetoric and Writing Studies? How did collaboration encourage, allow, and impact women’s education in the nineteenth century? How can historical collaborations be studied when the only evidence of such collaborations are the remaining textual products?

Consequently, this final chapter answers these questions in three sections. The first section focuses on Ladies’ Literary Society research in general, illustrating the contributions and complications this project has added to contemporary scholarship on the subject. The next section continues with a discussion of nineteenth century women’s rhetorical education scholarship and the implications and conclusions that this dissertation, and each club specifically, has added to current discussions in the field. Next I move on to discuss the theories of collaboration, considering how the three women’s clubs studied here have complicated current theories and modes of collaboration. This section also reflects on my methods by revisiting the heuristics I presented in Chapter I and consequently reworks these heuristics for future use. Finally, this chapter concludes with the implications this dissertation as a whole has for the field of rhetoric and writing studies at large, focusing on collaborative classroom and digital practices.

Ladies’ Literary Societies and Woman’s Clubs

Women’s Clubs and Ladies’ Literary Societies have been the focus of a variety of scholarly discussions, most notably those of Anne Ruggles Gere’s *Intimate Practices*, Elizabeth
McHenry’s *Forgotten Readers*, and Mary Kelley’s *Learning to Stand and Speak*. In fact, it was in each of these books that I initially learned of the impact of women’s clubs on education, culture, and literacy. Gere’s work focuses on the women’s club movements’ role in the reinvention of the nation from 1880-1920, a time she identifies as a period of immense cultural change. Consequently, she discusses a number of clubs, including the Woman’s Era, and focuses on the content of their compositions, both those addressed only to one another and those publicized in print. Mary Kelley’s work focuses on women’s education between the Revolution and the Civil War, focusing primarily on seminaries and institutions of higher education. Her chapter “Meeting this Social Way to Search for Truth,” however, devotes itself to literary societies (both institutionally affiliated and extracurricular) and their impact on women’s suffrage as well as education. In her discussion of a number of societies, including the Gleaning Circle and Oberlin’s Ladies Literary Society, Kelley explains “literary societies were important resources for experimenting with individual and collective subjectivities” (141) and also prepared them for later roles as makers of public opinion. McHenry’s work focuses on African American book clubs and literary societies (both male and female), illustrating how these clubs (including the Woman’s Era) contributed to African American literacy and identity in the nineteenth century. All of these works discuss a number of different societies, focus primarily on content (though they do briefly discuss practice), and are highly invested in illustrating the impact these clubs had on culture at large. In contrast, my project has focused largely on club practices, individual members, and the ways these clubs and their members’ relationships provided highly valued education to nineteenth century women.

Moreover, in these books I learned of the three clubs studied in depth here: The Gleaning Circle, Oberlin’s Ladies’ Literary Society, and Boston’s Woman’s Era. In this project, I have
added to these discussions by investigating the women who composed these groups, meaning I attempted to find biographical information about the women not contained in the archives or in previous accounts of the clubs. These findings reflect the recovery nature of this project; I aimed to give my later study of club practices a deeper meaning by addressing the contexts surrounding the women’s relationships. In all three of the aforementioned books, the cultural reasons for the women’s club movement are discussed in detail, and my discussion at the beginning of each chapter was intended to add the personal context to these cultural factors. In doing this, readers and researchers can learn more about the women discussed briefly in other books and in great detail here while also understanding how and why they came to and founded their societies. For instance, the incredibly large number of members in the Woman’s Era, the names, ages, and source of wealth of the members of the Gleaning Circle, and the living conditions of Oberlin’s L.L.S. provide richer discussions and visions of these women’s lives. These facts then allow for speculations that address why these particular women joined their societies rather than simply focusing on why women across the country joined the women’s club movement.

Additionally, my in-depth analysis of these three clubs contributes to Gere, Kelley, and McHenry’s works by focusing less on content and more on practice, meaning my study has looked at the processes these women employed to educate themselves and others. Because these scholars have explained the cultural context (of literacy, time period, educational opportunities, and race), I was able to use that knowledge in order to focus on three diverse societies with different practices. Through the Gleaning Circle’s practice of “Question and Answer,” Oberlin’s L.L.S. Annual Meeting, and the Woman’s Era’s publication, this project has been able to focus on the details in greater depth than previous studies of Literary Societies. In doing so, each of the case studies has evidenced distinct differences between the societies, in both purpose and
practice. Yet one thing remained static: each group relied on and utilized collaboration to reach their goals.

Gere recognizes collaboration as essential to club practice and production, explaining that “individual” textual production and even the writing of club minutes could involve several kinds of collaboration (39). Even further, Gere explains, “Far from seeing their texts as commodities to be sold for monetary gain, clubwomen invested their writing with communal power, highlighting its capacity to strengthen affective connections among themselves” (107). Thus textual production was not only the result of collaboration, but often texts themselves provoked collaboration among members and even among clubs. Thus building off of Gere’s claims that intimacy among women was essential to these groups, my project has discussed how three specific groups fostered collaboration and education through a variety of practices. While some of these practices (like the production of archives and the keeping of minutes) have been discussed elsewhere, never in such detail have these practices been explained, investigated, and coded. Other collaborations are new discoveries: for instance despite the Woman’s Era Club’s prominence in discussions concerning women’s clubs, there has been no attention to the important role their committees played in club meetings. Additionally, because their collaborations are covered in great detail, scholars of composition and rhetoric can learn from their collaborative practices in order for those in our classrooms to be less product-centered.

However, despite the rich conversations resulting from this very focused research design, the work done here is not fully representative of the women’s club movement, as Gere’s, McHenry’s, and Kelley’s discussions were. Instead, I provide discussions of only three diverse clubs, thus the practices and collaborations discussed here do not represent women’s clubs at large. My methods, while allowing for rich discussions of three groups, made this study narrowly
focused. Additionally, while this study focused on three diverse clubs (affluent women at the turn of the nineteenth century, farmer’s daughters at the first coeducation college of the U.S. in the middle of the century, and middle class African American women at the end of the century), this project has left many nineteenth century women out, as each of these clubs rarely crossed class, race, and local barriers. Thus the unique practices of working-women’s clubs, Canadian women’s clubs, southern women’s clubs, seminary affiliated clubs, western women’s clubs, and so on are not represented here. As a result, further research should look to clubs from different times, places, classes, and races to more completely understand the collaborations of women’s clubs as well as how those practices differed as a result of context.

The Gleaning Circle, Oberlin’s L.L.S., and the Woman’s Era have clearly illustrated that the collaborations a club utilized were determined by context and purpose. In the example of the Gleaning Circle, the women (who likely had no formal schooling) collaborated to produce documents, improve their rhetorical abilities, and in some ways, entertain themselves. Due to their lack of formal education, they invented their own practices of critique. Their common practice of “Question and Answer” allowed anyone to be a critic, in contrast to the more common club practice of electing a single critic. The uniqueness of this practice, particularly in the author’s anonymity, challenges our current theories and methods of collaboration, a subject I will return to in a subsequent section. Their other collaborations, especially their “Argument for Female Education,” illustrate that the women’s practices influenced their composition. Consequently, this in-depth study of the Circle evidences that Women’s Clubs were both similar and unique simultaneously and that each club provides collaborations worth study and emulation.
Oberlin’s Ladies’ Literary Society compliments Mary Kelley’s discussion of institutionally affiliated clubs. She explains that literary societies “acted as schools within schools, providing their members with an informally constituted course of study, a fully stocked library, and a host of oral and scribal opportunities for the engaged debates taking place in civil society” (117). Oberlin’s society additionally provided moral support, something the women clearly needed as evidenced in Antoinette Brown Blackwell’s discussions. While often approached as a simple complement to formal study, Oberlin’s L.L.S. was quite a bit more than that. In classes, the women, quite simply, were not allowed to speak, discuss, or even recite; thus not a complement to rhetorical study but their only forum for it, Oberlin’s L.L.S. was the women’s formal study of rhetoric.

Due to the sheer number of members and the resultant productivity, the Woman’s Era Club was certainly unique among women’s clubs and literary societies. Their governing practices (especially their use of committees) were necessary and new, until they were emulated by many subscribers of the Woman’s Era. Additionally, the Woman’s Era Club clearly supports the claim that African American women’s clubs were more active than reflective. Producers of a national convention, national association, a newspaper, and a number of activist events, the Woman’s Era evidences just how productive a nineteenth century woman could be when utilizing collaboration. While the other two literary societies discussed here focused mainly on educating themselves, the Woman’s Era sought to educate the country—about their race, gender, and intelligence.

The investigation of these three clubs supports Gere’s claims that intimacy was an essential aspect these clubs. While the case studies did not directly address intimacy, collaboration itself is a form of intimacy as it both relies on and encourages relationships. The
forms of intimacy, however, varied a great deal among clubs. The entire Gleaning Circle, for instance, was smaller than a single committee of the Woman’s Era Club might be; consequently, intimate, collaborate relationships varied a great deal among clubs. However, as in most things, these women certainly found strength in numbers, as without one another none of the women would have been able to continue their rhetorical education and activities. The three case studies presented here, then, have told three very specific stories of Literary Societies and Women’s Clubs. Adding to Gere, Kelley, Martin, McHenry, and Logan, I have focused more specifically on who the women of each club were, where they were educated prior to (and in the case of Oberlin, during) their membership in these clubs, and what their lives entailed after they left their clubs. This focus, while also allowing for an intense investigation of collaborative practices, has served as a women’s recovery project that does not only focus on the context surrounding club happenings generally, but instead, very specifically on the context of each club and its individual members. This has allowed for conclusions on the impact these clubs had not only on the country as Gere has outlined but also on the impact of these clubs on the individual lives of women during the nineteenth century.

**Nineteenth Century Women’s Rhetorical Education**

While rhetorical scholarship has, as of late, been focused on women’s rhetorical education in the nineteenth century, much of this research focuses on the later half of the century (Gold; Hobbs). Consequently, a great deal of attention is given to formal education in the United States (female seminaries, women’s colleges, and institutions of coeducation). In “Kitchen Tables and Rented Rooms: The Extracurriculum of Composition” Anne Ruggles Gere explains:

Instead of a historiography based exclusively on textbooks used in schools and colleges, on the careers and works of prominent teachers and scholars, on the
curricular decisions made by universities and on texts produced by students, we can consider the various sites in which the extracurriculum has been enacted, the local circumstances that supported its development, the material artifacts employed by its practitioners, and the cultural work it accomplished. (90)

While this call was made years ago, rhetoric scholars still often focus on institutional histories, especially when considering women’s education in the United States. Consequently, many extracurricular histories, particularly women’s histories, have been left untold.

Nineteenth century composition histories, however, are far from scarce. With the end of the Civil War came an educational effort to serve a growing economy as well as different classes of people. With this new population came the necessity of instructional and institutional changes, which James Berlin outlines and explains in Writing Instruction in Nineteenth-Century American Colleges. Berlin, however, ignores the incorporation of women into college life almost entirely, and as a result, he fails to recognize the effects the presence of the female gender had on rhetoric and composition instruction during this time. The incorporation of women into colleges was, indeed, a monumental and historical change; the impact on both individual institutions and academia as a whole, however, is not sufficiently understood. Consequently, other scholars have investigated this time period. David Gold’s Rhetoric at the Margins, for instance, looks at three often over-looked types of colleges: an African American serving institution, a woman’s public college, and a teacher training college. This study, however, focuses on 1873-1947. Catherine Hobb’s edited collection, Nineteenth Century Women Learn to Write similarly focuses on broadening institutional histories of women (for instance, Sue Carter Wood’s “Radcliffe Responses to Harvard Rhetoric: ‘An Absurdly Stiff Way of Thinking’”), however, this collection also steps outside of the institution. Judy Nolte Temple and Suzanne L. Bunker’s article, for
example, focuses on the diaries of a mother and a daughter, illustrating that literacy was often acquired outside of formal institutions.

Beyond the work on Literary Societies and their impact on women’s education in the nineteenth century (Gere; Logan; Kelley; McHenry), other scholars have focused on female literacy prior to and outside of institutions of higher education. Jane Greer’s edited collection, *Girls and Literacy in America: Historical Perspectives to the Present*, contains two particular articles of interest. The first, *The Uses of Literacy by Girls in Colonial America* by E. Jennifer Monaghan, focuses on a variety of examples of women’s literacy in Boston. Monaghan, however, is not able to discover where these girls acquired their literacy: “It is not clear how much formal instruction Jane had. She presumably attended private schoolmasters at some point because she thanked her father for sparing no expense in her education” (Greer 8). Thus while the article is able to talk about her literacy, the origins of this literacy are not as clear. In a later article of the same collection, entitled “A Few Patchwork Opinions”: *Piecing Together Narratives of U.S. Girls Early Schooling*, Janet Carey Eldred and Peter Mortensen claim that in the time after the Revolution an “important extracurriculum was at work” (Greer 27). The article goes on to study Eliza Bowne’s letters as “she seems to have lived through the transition boarding schools were making during this period, and as such her letters and journal entries draw both from the discourses of ‘finishing’ and ‘life-long study’” (Greer 30). However, Mortensen and Eldred make these conclusions based on letters rather than the actual practices of the boarding school.

In contrast, *Archives of Instruction* by Jean Ferguson Carr, Stephen L. Carr, and Lucille M. Shultz contains a section on “Reading School Readers.” This section, focusing on Readers
(textbooks designed to teach reading), looks at the content and form of the books used to instruct reading in the nineteenth century. Similarly, Lucille Shultz’s *The Young Composers* explains:

In the first two decades of the [nineteenth] century, as during the latter part of the colonial period, European American children attended infant schools, dame schools, charity schools, town schools, and/or district schools for their earliest formal lessons. In these independently run schools, hornbooks and the *New England Primer* were the most common textbooks, and ‘reading’ and ‘writing’ were the goals. (12)

Thus many scholarly accounts of education in the nineteenth century focus on such school readers and what they can tell us about how and what students were learning at the time.

Concluding this brief survey of rhetorical scholarship on women’s education in the nineteenth century, the rest of this section will focus first on the limitations of this study with regards to women’s education and then on what each Women’s Club can add to the existing knowledge on the topic of women’s education.

This study has focused primarily on the products and records of women’s clubs in order to learn about their practices. Consequently, the subsequent conclusions on women’s education in general are very limited in scope. First, they are limited by time period, as each club’s context was very different dependent on the years they were meeting. While this allowed for a broader focus on education across the century, it also forced this project to spend less time on specific histories of instruction with regards to each time period. Had I focused on clubs only from the end of the nineteenth century, for example, I would have been able to provide a broader picture of women’s education at this time. Instead, all of my conclusions are focused on particular time periods in specific locations with regards to a particular class and race of women. While this
does not provide cross-country pictures of women’s education when each club met, it does provide very specific looks at the individual women’s access to education.

Additionally, while I focused on only three clubs, these clubs contained many, many women, forcing me to privilege a few over the others in each club. To give a specific example, the Woman’s Era Club contained over a hundred members and, for the sake of brevity, my explanation of the clubwomen focused on three prominent members. This focus left some of the members without a voice and their histories remain untold. Thus while this project was focused, many stories of the members and even of the clubs more generally remain untold. Despite these limitations, this specific focus has prompted each women’s club studied here to evidence a gap in women’s rhetorical education research.

The archives of the Gleaning Circle have evidenced a need for further study on turn of the nineteenth century women’s education. While later educational histories are available, learning how these women obtained knowledge proved to be quite a struggle. Consequently, post-revolutionary war women’s private educations should be further investigated. The “Question and Answer” portion of the meetings clearly indicate compositional knowledge while the “Argument for Female Education” illustrates an advanced rhetorical education. Furthermore, these women illustrate that despite living at a time when women were not allowed to speak publicly and certainly not expected to be educated on the subject of oratory, their knowledge surpassed the simple and evidenced a complex understanding of rhetoric (particularly in their discussion of arrangement).

Unsurprisingly, in the years the Gleaning Circle held regular meetings (1805-1813) the varying members were able to continue their educations. This singular example of education in New England, however, illustrates a continued need for scholarship in women’s rhetorical
education before the advent of seminaries. If nothing else, the Gleaning Circle’s members illustrate that some women at the turn of the nineteenth century were rhetorically educated, despite the fact that they were not able to attend high schools or colleges. Indeed, in Mary Kelley’s brief discussion of the Circle she writes, “when the Gleaners convened their meetings in the beginning of the nineteenth century, they responded those who sought to limit them to ‘stockings’ and ‘puddings’ with a question that was entirely rhetorical—‘Is not this very wrong?’ (135). Whether it was the education in boarding schools or of private tutors, women at the turn of the nineteenth century were clearly rhetorically educated and this begs the questions: “where?” and “how?” Thus scholars of rhetoric and composition once again need to return to the archives to find evidence of educational histories that expand current research outside of seminaries and colleges and begin long before women had access to formal schooling. While the scholarship on readers and letters has done this to some extent, there is still much to be understood about private education at this time. The discussion of the Gleaning Circle illustrates that perhaps we should learn more about the teaching practices of tutors in this time period, as the Gleaners’ educations were certainly worth admiration.

Oberlin’s Ladies’ Literary Society also evidences the necessity of returning to archives and currently accepted histories. With Oberlin commonly celebrated as the first coeducational institution in the United States, its historical treatment of women (while somewhat consistent with the times) was unsurprisingly less than ideal. In contrast, educations at Vassar as well as the seven sisters colleges indicate that women were speaking in college classrooms shortly after Oberlin opened its doors to women. Ronald Hogeland, for one, claims the women of Oberlin were actually included for economic reasons (to clean the clothes, cook the food, and eventually marry the male students). Thus it was not surprising to read Antoinette Brown Blackwell’s
complaints concerning her courses. The reality that women were not allowed to speak or discuss in their classrooms is quite interesting, though perhaps even more interesting is the fact that when male professors decided to let them lead discussion, the Ladies’ Board (composed of the wives of professors) set out to ensure this would not happen again. Consequently, such governing bodies and their influence on women’s education is certainly worthy of further investigation, especially as women who had not received a formal college education were dictating the rules for those who were receiving such an education.

Boston’s Woman’s Era, unlike the previous two clubs, was composed of women who had either self-taught themselves the equivalent of a higher education (as in the case of Josephine St. Pierre Ruffin) or who had attended a higher education institution (as in the case of Florida Ruffin Ridley). While McHenry and Logan’s work has covered a great deal of ground concerning African American extracurricular education at this time, the work of African American educators like Florida Ruffin Ridley and Marie Louise Baldwin could certainly be further investigated. While brief accounts of these women’s work as educators exist, there is little detail on the practices and products of their classrooms. Similarly, there are not nearly as many investigations of African American women’s letters and their self-educations. Thus, yet again, while many institutional histories during this time period have been told, there remain gaps in educational research at this time—particularly with regards to the individual stories we have heard from Carr, Shultz, Mortensen and Eldred. The work on African American women often focuses on the exceptional and famous (Phillis Wheatley, Hallie Quinn Brown, Sojourner Truth) while the Women’s Era Club has clearly evidenced that the “regular” African American women of the nineteenth century are more than worthy of scholarly attention.

Collaboration in Theory and Practice
My interest in collaboration began with concerns over traditionally accepted views of authorship. While many theorists challenged the authorship-as-ownership ideology in the middle and end of the last century (Barthe; Foucoul; Moi) and many rhetoricians took up the same question more recently (Ede and Lunsford; Gere; LeFevre), my concerns were centrally focused on the transfer of this theoretical shift to scholarship on historical rhetoric and authorship. My goal, then, was to revisit the history of rhetoric in order to reevaluate our assumptions of authorship in historical rhetoric, with particular attention to the concept that female authorship is obscured by the authorship-as-ownership ideology. This focus was primarily sparked by Toril Moi’s Sexual/Textual Politics, in which she writes of patriarchal ideology: “In this humanist ideology the self is the sole author of history and of the literary text: the humanist creator is potent, phallic, and male—God in relation to his world, the author in relation to his text” (8).

And so, if the idea of the author was in fact a male notion, females were likely not playing by the rules of the authorial tradition. Consequently, women’s rhetorical and composition history was likely obscured—even hidden—by these dominant patriarchal notions.

Reflecting on Methods: Complications and Limitations

Lindal Buchanan began questioning these views in her chapter on collaborative authorship in Regendering Delivery. Her investigation of the collaborations of Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton prompted her to outline the productive, supportive, and productive/supportive modes of collaboration she argues are common in female rhetorical production. Consequently, this study attempted to continue that work by developing heuristics that would aid historical researchers in the process of identifying collaborations from textual products. Thus the heuristics presented in the first chapter, and relied on and tested throughout, are inherently (though not intentionally) feminist. While I did not initially recognize them as such, the goal of
this tool was to unearth and identify the forgotten and marginalized—those “authors” whose stake in a certain production had been silenced or erased (for whatever reason—be it gender, race, class). Thus these heuristics were developed with inclusivity in mind and with the direct goal of illustrating women’s rhetorical productions in the nineteenth century. In order to allow for a variety of visions of collaborative production (and thus include more forgotten composers), and in accordance with Ede and Lunsford’s claim that “the shifting and conflicting nature of the definitions revolving around the term collaborative writing seems to us to call not for simplification or standardization but for a Burkean complexifying—a series of perspectives by incongruity” (Singular 16), I included a variety of theories of collaboration in these heuristics. The addition of Ede and Lunsford’s hierarchical and dialogic modes along with the addition of the canons of rhetoric then provided the “complexifying” Ede and Lunsford call for.

As I approached each case study, however, a glaring flaw in the heuristics became evident: while I approached the project looking for examples of collaborative writing, I chose to study women’s clubs because they collaborated in a variety of ways and kept records of these collaborations in their minutes. Their collaborations, however, did not always fall under the umbrella of “collaborative writing,” particularly in the modes Ede and Lunsford and Lindal Buchanan outline. Instead, each case study focused on both collaborative writing and what I call collaborative educational practices (and what teachers of writing might call collaborative pedagogy or educational researchers would call collaborative learning). So instead of classifying each collaboration into a variety of neat categories through my heuristics, I found myself encountering similar problems to Ede and Lunsford when they first attempted to classify the collaborations they outline in Singular Texts/Plural Authors and “Rhetoric in a New Key.” Ultimately, I did not have the language to discuss the collaborations I was studying.
This flaw of the heuristics, however, provided a necessary conclusion: the discipline’s theories of collaboration are still product-focused, despite the theoretical turn to process and post-process theories of writing and learning. Both Ede and Lunsford’s and Buchanan’s discussions of definitions recognize and note the problems inherent in definition, before ultimately providing definitions of collaboration themselves. Ede and Lunsford, for instance, use the definition “any writing done in collaboration with one or more persons” (Singular 15) to guide their research. Lindal Buchanan defines collaboration (in contrast to Ede and Lunsford who specifically define collaborative writing) as “a cooperative endeavor involving two or more people that results in a rhetorical product, performance, or event” (134). Buchanan also asserts that her definition recognizes the importance of process in the act of collaboration. Yet both definitions remain focused on the “product.” Ede and Lunsford refer to this product as “writing” while Buchanan sees this product as writing as well as performances and events.

While collaboration often results in a product, the case studies presented in the previous three chapters clearly illustrate that even when products are produced during collaboration, they are not always the goal. Both of the definitions above assume that the collaboration’s goal is a final product. This is unsurprising, considering the objects of both studies: in Ede and Lunsford’s case a variety of adults in professional situations and in Buchanan’s case prominent women’s rights activists from the nineteenth century. Both studies focus on individuals whose collaborations have an end goal that requires a product in order to enact change: women’s suffrage, a new community plan, an educational brochure, etc. Thus while both studies focused on the processes of collaboration, their conclusions resulted from the reality that the participants in each study were product- and not process-focused.
In contrast, some of the collaborations of women’s clubs are similar to those we find in our classrooms; their end goal was often (though not always) educational. Moreover, the collaborations of the Gleaning Circle, Oberlin’s Ladies’ Literary Society, and the Woman’s Era Club often had both short-term productive and long-term educational goals. This is most clearly evidenced when the heuristics led to conclusions that were contradictory (i.e. that a collaboration was both hierarchical and dialogical or that individuals of the same collaboration played a variety of productive and supportive modes). These conflicting even contradictory end goals, then, produced conflicting answers to the heuristics. And as a result, my study, like Ede and Lunsford’s, provides more questions than answers, more complications than simplifications.

Yet another limitation of the heuristics resulted in the sheer number of participants in Women’s Club collaborations. While Buchanan mentions other collaborations, when identifying the two modes of collaboration used here, she focuses on the collaborations of two specific women. Ede and Lunsford interviewed larger groups; however, none were as large as the Women’s Clubs studied in this project. Consequently, the sheer size of these clubs complicate the notions of power, purpose, and process inherent in the definitions used in the heuristics. Ultimately, while Ede and Lunsford identify their dialogic mode of collaboration as inherently feminine, their study included more men than women. Consequently, it was also impossible for my study of only women to identify any of these modes of collaboration as gendered, as my study itself was gendered.

The final set of the heuristics, which focused on the canons of rhetoric, also presented unexpected challenges throughout the case studies. Buchanan’s work has already complicated the canon of delivery through a discussion of collaboration. Karen Burke LeFevre’s work has re-envisioned invention as a social (though not necessarily collaborative) act. In including this final
set of heuristics, my goal was to understand how arrangement, memory, and style were also collaborative, as well as how and when invention crossed the border between social and collaborative. While some of the women provided detailed discussions on their processes, many of the particular collaborations I focused on were not accompanied by a discussion of process. This final set of the heuristics, however, was only productive if these discussions were available. While some of the collaborations provided interesting complications and conclusions on the canons as collaborative, this research is not nearly exhaustive enough. A case study on a contemporary collaboration (as in the case of Ede and Lunsford’s) would more completely address these research questions, as the collaborative process could be collected and reflected upon by the collaborators.

When I began my research on Women’s Clubs and collaboration, I set out to further theorize the complicated nature of collaboration. During my research, however, I found that what I had considered a complicated vision of collaboration (and by this I mean my own view of collaboration) was actually an over-simplified vision. The heuristics I developed were too product focused—not because of the scholars I chose to rely on, but as a consequence of the scholars and theories I had left out. These heuristics should have, from the beginning, included theories and modes of collaborative learning and pedagogy, as Women’s Clubs were educationally focused. Despite these many limitations, however, the heuristics allowed for a number of conclusions on collaborative education practices, collaborative composition, and collaborative modes and canons. The next section turns to these conclusions before addressing the implications this work has for the field of rhetoric and composition generally and for classroom and digital collaborations more specifically.
Conclusions on Collaboration

While collaborative learning was long thought to be a phenomenon new to the twentieth century (and particularly to the seventies), Anne Ruggles Gere’s Writing Groups dispelled these notions by tracing collaborative learning in women’s and men’s literary societies back to the colonial period. Following Gere’s lead, Lynée Lewis Gaillet looked beyond the borders of the United States to other countries and time periods in “An Historical Perspective on Collaborative Learning.” Here she argues, “To understand better the full implications of using collaborative learning in our own classrooms, we should study the contributions of our predecessors who faced educational climates similar to our own—regardless of the region or the era. Their work can teach us much about current American pedagogical practices” (93). Focusing on a Scottish University during the 18th century, Gaillet outlines the collaborative learning practices (particularly those of peer review) of Scottish educator George Jardine who argues collaborative learning is only possible when a teacher can promote and create the proper environment for such collaborations. With these two studies in mind, this project was developed with the goal of learning even more about how the practices of women’s clubs of the nineteenth century can influence current theories and pedagogies of collaborative learning and writing. Extending Gere’s research through specific and detailed case studies, I was able to focus more specifically on a variety of practices and products of each club while also learning more about context and consequently the power structures, purposes, and expectations of each collaboration.

Yet when looking at these collaborations as exemplars or models, it is important to consider Rethinking Women’s Collaborative Writing: Power, Difference, Property, in which Lorraine York argues that women’s collaborations have been idealized and unproblematicized. York further argues that Anglo-American feminists are most likely to idealize historical
women’s collaborations. Even with this caution, my case studies still idealized these collaborations. This, in part, is a consequence of Women’s Club practices that likely intentionally ignored problems when recording instances of collaboration. Gere explains, “Not only did the rhetoric of club minutes and publications reflect language of intimacy, but also expressions of dissent and difficulty between members appear to have been deliberately downplayed” (45). Yet disagreements did happen. Two years after the Woman’s Era became the National Notes the newspaper outlined a controversy aroused “when Mary Church Terrell succeeded herself as president and supporters of Josephine Ruffin, the alternative candidate, criticized the ‘highhanded unparliamentary rulings of the presiding officers, and the unconstitutional elections” (Gere 33). Still this instance appears rare, or at the very least, the recording of such disagreements was rare, illustrating the collaborator’s rhetorical choice to present a united front in club work.

Consequently, the three case studies in this project were selected with the goal of presenting distinct collaborative learning situations—those of upper-class teens at the turn of the nineteenth century, those of college enrolled women of the middle or farming class in the mid-century, and those of women of African American descent and middle class at the end of century. This diversity ultimately allowed for the study of a variety of factors that can impede, support, and complicate collaborative learning and writing. The use of the variety of modes of collaborations in the heuristics also allowed for issues of power and class (at the very least) to be addressed. Finally, York argues that scholars mistakenly identify all collaborations as inherently subversive, thus questioning Ede and Lunsford’s claim that dialogic collaborations are subversive also became a central aspect of this project. As it turned out, women’s club collaborations were often subversive. These clubs were often formed in order to subvert the
patriarchal structures that prohibited the women who populated them from obtaining the same educational opportunities as men. Despite this, Ede and Lunsford’s conclusion that this mode of collaboration is inherently feminine is questionable. While women may use dialogic collaboration, doing so stems not from an inherent femininity, but instead from cultural constructions and expectations. Women, especially those of the nineteenth century United States, were not likely to be authoritative, thus dialogic collaboration was more likely. This is, however, a culturally constructed phenomenon, one that responded to a need—women were more likely to work together because they had no other way to obtain an education. Men, on the other hand, could work individually because they were granted educational opportunities. These theories, however, are untested. The subversive nature of dialogic collaboration, too, needs to be investigated in greater detail. With the purposes and limitations of my research design in mind, the following section considers the implications the specific collaborations of each club has for collaborative theories at large.

The inherently collaborative nature of Women’s Clubs and Literary Societies provided the opportunity to study a variety of collaborations via the products of the Gleaning Circle, L.L.S., and the Woman’s Era Club, specifically collaborative compositions, collaborative events, and collaborative learning activities. This varied set of collaborations then provided an array of ways to view, code, and complicate theories of collaboration. In using the heuristics, a number of key factors arose which complicated the nature of any given collaboration. These features, largely dependent on context, altered the collaborations and challenged the modes of collaboration in the heuristics to fully represent the collaborations of nineteenth century women. They are as follows: (1) Process, (2) Purpose, (3) Need, (4) Power (5) Time, and (6) Size. These
six factors then contributed to complications in the Canons of Rhetoric and the modes presented by both Ede and Lunsford and Lindal Buchanan and relied on in the previous three chapters.

Processes of collaboration and production are essential to both hierarchical and dialogic definitions as well as productive/supportive modes of collaboration, as both focus on product and the means used to develop that product. Consequently, in a historical recovery project, a product lacking explicit references to process is hard to classify. The power structures and production characteristics of a collaboration are reliant upon clues of these processes. As a result, the necessity of this process problematizes the study of collaborative practices in historical contexts. Despite this, there are instances when collaborative processes are evidenced through repetition and a study of previous rhetorical practices. So, in one instance, the Gleaning Circle’s “Argument for Female Education” made a rhetorical choice to utilize their common practice of “question and answer.” Consequently, a history of rhetorical practices and decisions can further elucidate the characteristics of a collaboration despite a lack of explicitly outlined process descriptions. Such evidence, however, is rare and also requires a record of rhetorical practices be they in club records as in the case of the Gleaning Circle or in previous rhetorical products. Consequently, while process is necessary to understand the complexities of a collaboration it is not always possible to uncover evidence of the collaborative and compositional processes when studying a historical collaboration.

Nonetheless, the process of production and collaboration was often explicitly referenced by the records of the Gleaning Circle, the minutes of the L.L.S., and the newspaper of the Woman’s Era. Even without explicitly outlined processes, however, the purpose of the collaboration was often quite evident. The purpose, of both the collaboration and the production of a document, additionally, proved to alter the characteristics of any given collaboration and
consequently problematized the study of collaborative practices. Most notably, the documents
the clubs produced were often not the sole purpose of their collaborations. Both the Gleaning
Circle’s Records and the L.L.S.’s Minutes, for example, were produced at each meeting.
However, the records were not the purposes of those meetings (the purpose, instead, was to
improve their rhetorical and composition abilities). As outlined in the case studies, this instance
of production complicates the characteristics of a collaboration, as the collaborative modes of
Ede and Lunsford and Buchanan assume the textual product is the purpose of the collaboration.

The minutes and records, however, are not the only cause for confusion. At weekly
meetings, members of all the clubs presented their original compositions. These compositions,
however, were not the result of collaborative writing. Instead, the collaboration began when the
women presented their compositions to the rest of the club. Here the purpose was two-fold: to
improve the presenter’s writing via critique and to educate the audience on any given subject. As
a result, the collaboration(s), while clearly hierarchical due to the clearly defined roles of
composer and audience (teacher and student), are not easily classified as productive or
supportive, as the speaker has produced a document which then supports her peers’ educations
while they support her improvement as a rhetor via critique. At first glance, this reflexive
collaboration appears to represent a productive/supportive collaboration. However, Buchanan’s
productive and supportive modes directly focus on the production or support of the composition
of a product. While the audience’s role as critic clearly supports the revision of a production, the
presenter’s supportive role as an educator does not support the production of a rhetorical product.
Instead, her collaborative role supports the furthering of knowledge among the audience. As a
result, while this activity loosely fits the productive/supportive mode, the multiple purposes of
this collaboration has clearly complicated the modes Buchanan outlines, illustrating that when
products are created they are not always the sole purpose of a collaboration, and additionally, this collaboration is consequently more complex than collaborations with the single purpose of producing a product.

The *Woman’s Era’s* purpose evidences another way intent can complicate the characteristics of a collaboration. The first newspaper by and for African American women also had a two-fold purpose. First, the women wished to fill a void in newspaper work by educating African American women on a number of topics. Secondly, however, the newspaper served as a forum for communication for clubwomen across the country. In this instance, the two-fold purpose of the collaboration complicates the hierarchical and dialogic modes. The roles of editor, contributor, audience etc., while relatively static, shift as the editors become the audience when audience members submit their own writing. Thus while the primary purpose of the collaboration was to publish the newspaper, the newspaper itself served the purpose of facilitating the communication and collaboration African American women so desired. As a result, this example illustrates, once again, that the purpose of a collaboration has an impact on the ways the stakeholders choose to collaborate with one another.

The purpose of the collaborations has a direct relationship with the next factor that alters the characteristics of a collaboration: need. More specifically, the purposes of women’s club collaborations were intended to meet a perceived need. These needs were dependent upon the make-up and context of the club, as each club met as a result of a different necessity. The Gleaning Circle, for example, met in their teens when there was no other way for them to continue their studies. The women of Oberlin’s Ladies’ Literary Society, however, were already continuing their education at the Oberlin Institute. Their need arose when the Ladies’ Board prohibited them from contributing to discussion in their courses, specifically in their rhetoric
courses. The Woman’s Era Club met with a very different purpose: they intended to work together to fight racism (through anti-lynching leaflets, a newspaper, and public illustrations of their morality). These diverse needs, then, contributed to the two-fold purposes of some of the collaborations, ultimately influencing the characteristics of each resultant collaboration.

While all of these needs were the consequence of each set of women being disenfranchised, and their reaction to this need was to separately form clubs where they could collaborate to work towards a shared goal, the level of disenfranchisement contributed to the formation of collaborations. As African American women in the Jim Crow Era, the Woman’s Era Club, in contrast to the L.L.S. and Gleaning Circle, faced higher levels of oppression and thus met not only with education purposes but with socio-political ones as well. Thus their need, while similar to the other clubs, was more pronounced. Their purpose, then, became to encourage change, awareness, and tolerance.

To encourage these changes, the Woman’s Era Club’s membership grew from around twenty initial members to over one hundred members in just one year. As they published a newspaper and held a convention that would eventually lead to the NACW, they collaborated with the five thousand members of the National Association. Thus in order to meet their needs, the collaborations of the Woman’s Era Club grew in size, the next factor that contributes to the characteristics of any given collaboration. My discussion of the Woman’s Era Club highlights one consequence of such large collaborations: by necessity they produce hierarchical collaborations and often silence those collaborators at the bottom of the hierarchy. The collaborations of twenty women, let alone one hundred, often force hierarchical relationships, as dialogic collaborations are most likely when the needs, purposes, and skill-sets of all collaborators can productively work together towards a single goal. The Woman’s Era had not
only a large number of women but a diverse set of goals: they produced a newspaper, educated
their members on a variety of topics, actively sought to “make the world better,” and developed a
national convention. Consequently, while their collaborations sometimes had dialogic
characteristics, they were more often than not mostly hierarchical in nature.

One consequence of such large numbers and consequently of hierarchical collaborations
is clearly illustrated by my own focus on the three founding members of the Woman’s Era Club
as well as the editors of the different departments of the newspaper. The hierarchical
collaborations, while of necessity, distribute power unequally. Thus the hundreds (even
thousands) of women that contributed to the collaborations I discussed in Chapter IV were
silenced, while I focused on the women whose names were listed frequently and whose writing
was featured in the newspaper often. Thus power distribution is yet another aspect that can
impact the characteristics of any given collaboration. While in the Woman’s Era Club these
power distributions often resulted from the prominent members of the club controlling many of
the collaborations as a result of the need to make productive compositions (such as the
newspaper), the committees of the Woman’s Era Club did distribute power in a more dialogic
manner. While the committees did have chairs in and of themselves, the committees collaborated
with other committees in a dialogic way to produce the meetings of the club (the power shifted
from committee to committee in a loose manner—each committee controlled the aspects of the
meetings which differed a great deal). Thus while larger collaborations often produce
hierarchical collaborations which silence many members, they can produce dialogic
collaborations as well, providing the silenced individuals with some stake in the collaborations.
The Gleaning Circle’s practice of “Question and Answer” distributed power in a unique and very different way than the Woman’s Era Club. This practice especially complicates the hierarchical and dialogic modes of collaboration, as they are dependent upon power relations. The anonymity of the composer (the compositions were sealed in an envelope and submitted without a name) complicates this practice, which would typically be considered hierarchical. While the composer submits a composition for critique, the composer does not place her name on the work, thus no one claims ownership. This anonymity changes the distribution of power, as the critics are not critiquing an individual (as they would be if someone admitted ownership of the piece). Instead, the critics are only critiquing the writing, allowing for honest discussions that are not always possible when a collaboration has clearly defined roles as it would in a hierarchical collaboration. Thus this anonymity turns a hierarchical collaboration into something else entirely, a collaboration for which current theories of collaboration have no words.

A final factor that influences the characteristics of a collaboration is that of time. In this case, time refers to collaborations that are sustained over long periods whether they are repeated practices or continued productions. When collaborative rhetorical practices are continued over long periods of time, their characteristics are more likely to shift from hierarchical to dialogic, productive to supportive and back again. While this aspect is commonsensical, there is one aspect of long-term continued collaborations that is not: often sustained club practices lead to collaborations between people who have never met. In the example of the Gleaning Circle’s argument for female education, the women who composed that argument in 1813 clearly utilized the practices that the women who founded the circle began in 1805. This collaboration is consequently complicated by a continued collaborative rhetorical practice over a lapse of time, in which women collaborate despite the years between their initial practice and the one put to paper.
and pen. Moreover, this lapse of time complicates the modes of collaboration: who fits the role of hierarchical collaborator? The women who first illustrated the practice or those who composed an argument? Instead, both women played hierarchical roles, yet the power distribution is less clear than normal: neither group of women had more power than the other. Instead, the power distribution is complicated by the time between the two acts that collaboratively composed the argument.

Time also complicates the rhetorical canon of memory. All three clubs kept records that would eventually become the collective memory of the club as a whole. For the Gleaning Circle this collective memory was composed of their records and recitations books. For Oberlin’s Ladies’ Literary Society, this memory was composed of their minutes. And for the Woman’s Era Club, this collective memory comprised their newspaper, which would also become the collective memory of the NACW. This collective memory, however, was composed by a variety of women who had never met. In Oberlin’s instance, their collective memory encompasses one hundred years of meetings, annual events, and purchases. In this way, time clearly complicates the canon of memory, for when a group rather than an individual produces a rhetorical product, the memory becomes physical—a text.

While the six factors I have outlined are not exhaustive, they did routinely complicate the collaborations that are outlined in the three previous case studies. Thus collaboration is not only multimodal (utilizing a variety of modes of collaboration simultaneously), it also crosses boundaries of power, time, and purpose as well. These factors, as illustrated in my discussion, directly impact one another, changing collaborations and collaborators frequently. As a result, there is no clear or easy definition for the variety of collaborations of nineteenth century women’s clubs. Instead, the factors I have outlined work with and against one another to shape
each collaboration. They are dependent on both context and the behaviors and preferences of the participants in a collaboration. Thus collaboration is a multimodal endeavor dependent upon how stakeholders address their context through the factors of process, purpose, need, size, power, and time. This process of negotiation is best articulated through Fig. 11.

Fig. 11: Collaboration in Theory

Despite the differences between collaborative writing and collaborative learning, the above collaborative model illustrates a variety of factors that are at play during both—the purpose and context, however, are the primary differences between the two. As the diagram
implies, while context and stakeholders influence the characteristic of a collaboration most, need, purpose, process, size, time, and power all influence the collaboration as well as one another in a varied manner that is entirely dependent upon those stakeholders and the specific context. Thus the diagram above is intended to represent the many factors that influence the characteristics of a collaboration—rather than to clearly define any given collaboration or model an ideal collaboration. Consequently, when scholars look to study a collaboration or teachers look to develop collaborations in their classroom, they should consider all of these factors whenever possible. A revision of the heuristics originally presented in Chapter I reflect this theory of collaborative negotiation and can be found in Appendix E. Now that general conclusions about collaboration have been made, the next section will turn to what these conclusions implicate for the teaching of writing.

Implications for the Teaching of Writing in a Digital Age

A brief survey of recent scholarship on collaborative learning and peer response indicates that following a plethora of research on the subject of collaboration in the late eighties and early nineties, research on collaborative learning in composition studies has been scarce. That was until a recent boom of scholarship on collaboration and digital tools, specifically the work of Robert Cummings on Wikis, as well as a continued focus on collaborative writing in composition studies, particularly in the work of Sheryl I. Fontaine and Susan M. Hunter. These works, as well as others, however, focus primarily on the act of writing, rather than the collaborative act of learning.

Rebecca Moore Howard’s “Collaborative Pedagogy” outlines a variety of models of collaboration used in the contemporary composition classroom before outlining a variety of strategies for teaching collaborative writing assignments. Reinforcing Ede and Lunsford’s claim
that peer response strategies, perhaps the most common form of classroom collaboration, do not question traditional assumptions of authorship, she claims collaborative invention does challenge the authorship-as-ownership ideology. Either way, both peer-response and collaborative invention are still product focused, ignoring the reality that the end goal in composition courses is not the textual product but the improvement of the student. Consequently, the main implications of this project for the teaching of writing are this: while products are a necessity in writing courses, our focus on those products during collaboration confuses the goals of the exercise.

Women’s clubs and literary societies also produced products during their meetings. However, their focus on product never obscured the final goal of the acquisition of knowledge, as it does in our classrooms. There are many potential reasons for this, the most obvious being that these women were meeting at a time in history when they could hardly think of themselves as owners of anything let alone their original thoughts and compositions—though this most obviously refers to the women of the Gleaning Circle and the L.L.S.. Despite this, however, some women, particularly those of the Woman’s Era Club, were producing products as a goal. Some would even go on to make a living delivering these products (i.e. Lucy Stone of the L.L.S.). Notwithstanding this, the products these women produced in their meetings were still not seen as the goal, as women like Lucy Stone understood that in order to do what she wanted (be a public speaker) she first had to develop the rhetorical abilities to do so effectively. Consequently, helping our students see their products not as the end goal but as a means to the end goal of increased rhetorical ability will help them recognize the value and purpose of collaborative learning in the composition classroom.
In *Writing Groups*, Anne Ruggles Gere outlines three types of writing groups: autonomous, semi-autonomous, and non-autonomous. Gere identifies the collaborations of writing groups as autonomous because of their voluntary nature and because “authority resides within individual members … because they choose to join other writers with whom they are friendly, share common interests, backgrounds, or needs” (101). Thus these groups often form around similar classes, education, and goals. In contrast, Gere classifies classroom writing groups as either semi-autonomous or non-autonomous. In non-autonomous groups “students never experience the empowerment of using language collaboratively to generate new understandings because the instructor fails to give them the authority to do so” (101). Even when the instructor does encourage semi-autonomous groups, however, students “experience much of the empowerment characteristic of autonomous groups, but they can never, because of the authority invested in the educational institution and its representative the instructor, become truly autonomous” (101). Unsurprisingly, these classifications still rest on the idea that a textual product is the goal. If instead teachers encourage students to focus around their shared goal of rhetorical education, perhaps classroom writing groups can be more like the ideal autonomous writing groups. Additionally, in giving recommendations Rebecca Moore Howard’s says students should pick their own groups (with direction from the teacher on what is the best way to form a group). This practice encourages students to have a level of authority over their educational experience and consequently may further push them towards the autonomous groups Gere outlines. Indeed, Gere explains this choice will move students at the very least away from non-autonomous groups.

Eventually, Gere explains, writing groups “are more likely to succeed when groups are sufficiently prepared and committed, when appropriate tasks are clear and/or agreed upon by all
participants, and when debriefing or evaluation is built into the life of the group” (112). To do this, students can use the above diagram (fig. 11) to map all the aspects of collaboration that are driving the tasks they are completing together in class. While this theory of what collaborators negotiate is based on the collaborations of Women’s Clubs, it can be applied and further refined in classroom settings for students who, like nineteenth century women, have a variety of factors to negotiate while addressing somewhat divergent goals. (For example, even when students embrace that they are writing to learn, they still must produce a product and receive a grade on that product.) Despite this, discussing what students need and how they can address that need for their particular context will help students gain the authority necessary for collaborative learning and writing to work in our classrooms. Overtly addressing issues of power among stakeholders, for example, can help students better from their own groups, following Howard’s and Gere’s advice that students gain authority through this practice. This practice, however, is quite complicated. So it may be more productive to make decisions as a class, mapping out the student’s strengths on a board before discussing, as a whole class, how the collaborative groups will be composed; thus even the decision of who will collaborate becomes a collaborative exercise. This also provides a model for students, showing them how to discuss the many factors of a collaboration. When women’s clubs formed, one of their first acts was to craft a constitution, thus collaboratively deciding how the collaboration would work. This act is essential to successful collaborations in the classroom as well, as all stakeholders need to be aware of the goals and expectations of the collaboration and its stakeholders. Making the many factors that contribute to collaboration overt, then, can allow students to decide how they want to approach collaboration together, rather than just hoping collaborative groups will work without direction.
Moreover, students need to be taught how to collaborate before they can be expected to learn through collaborative activities. Thus collaboration is no longer viewed (by teacher and student) as a means to an end, but as one of those ends itself. As Ede and Lunsford, Howard, and others have explained: students’ future jobs will more often than not require some level of collaborative writing. Consequently, if our job is to help students prepare for their future composition experiences, teaching students how to collaborate is necessarily part of that job. Clearly, three hundred years after Scottish educator George Jardine argued that the success of student collaboration relied on the teacher’s ability to promote the proper environment, the argument is still necessary (Gaillet). In order to facilitate collaboration teachers must not only teach collaboration, but they must also provide their students with language that allows them to discuss collaboration and ultimately make collaborative education practices successful.

Another part of this job as a teacher of writing has become preparing students for composition in a variety of modes. As digital composition becomes more prevalent in classrooms, so does digital collaboration. Additionally, as online courses become more prevalent, collaborating online becomes a necessity. In these environments, however, class discussions of issues of power become even more essential. As Gender and Computers: Understanding the Digital Divide by Joel Cooper and Kimberlee D. Weaver emphasizes, digital spaces are not gender-neutral. Nor are they class- or race-neutral. Sometimes access to and cultural assumptions about technology actually make gender, race, and class divides even more apparent. Consequently, when collaboration becomes digital, conversations about assumptions of power and the assumptions about each stakeholder become even more important. Collaboration does not eliminate these divides; instead it can illuminate them, making for uncomfortable
learning environments. Thus teachers of writing must find ways to address these issues when utilizing collaboration in digital spaces.

One example of the practice of questioning the inherent power structures in digital collaboration comes from “Mentors Versus Masters: Women’s and Girls’ Narratives of (Re)negotiation in Web-based Writing Spaces,” in which Angela Haas, Christine Tulley, and Kristine Blair “show how students in a largely decentered ewriting class interpreted issues of power and knowledge to continue traditional patterns of inclusion and exclusion” (232). In this work, context is emphasized as they outline some of the inequities that arose in the classroom:

rather than sharing technological knowledge through more decentered collaborative methods, often the very males who possessed the most expert of knowledge did not communicate such knowledge to the class or to individuals through presentations or “tutoring” in ways that empowered students to experiment with the process. Their presentations often covered more technical material in a lecture/demonstration format that was too quick for most novice users. Moreover, in a number of collaborative presentations, when both male and female students expressed doubt about the process of using a specific feature within an application, the male experts within such collaborative efforts often jumped in to “take over” by presenting exact knowledge rather than accept the pauses and guesswork of their group members who had novice or developing intermediate knowledge.

Haas, Tulley, and Blair go on to conclude that both novice and experienced digital composers should have the opportunity to mentor others within courses, as oppressive structures are hard to avoid in such circumstances. Consequently, when discussions of power distribution precede the
digital collaborations it is more likely for students and teachers to view themselves as mentors rather than masters or novices.

Additionally, the process of collaboration changes in online collaborations. These changes (from students working face-to-face to students working computer-to-computer) alter the ways stakeholders communicate with one another and thus collaborate. While beyond the scope of this project, it is essential for researchers to understand the differences in collaborative process that are dependent upon mode. These differences in process will undoubtedly impact the ways students collaborate by altering the distribution of power and the ways many people can collaborate with one another at different times. While this section has only touched on the ways collaboration differs in digital contexts, future research should further address the ways the factors that students must negotiate when collaborating are altered in digital environments.

Ultimately, teachers of writing need to begin to incorporate collaboration into their classrooms as one of the essential learning outcomes of their courses. While collaboration is often one of the learning outcomes of such courses, we rarely teach our students to collaborate. Rather, we place students in groups and expect them to work well with one another towards a variety of goals without explicitly discussing or teaching these students how to collaborate. As Ede and Lunsford and Lindal Buchanan have argued, and as I have continued to argue here, collaboration is a complex, multimodal process for which we often lack the language to discuss. However, in discussing the factors that contribute to collaboration (context, stakeholders, need, purpose, process, time, power, and size) teachers of writing can begin not only to ask students to collaborate but also to help them learn about how to create productive collaborations on their own.

A Final Word
As I hinted in the introduction to this chapter, I do not envision that only rhetoric and composition scholars and teachers have something to learn from the collaborations of nineteenth century women. Instead, I also see knowledge of these women’s practices as invaluable for contemporary feminists as well. One of Buchanan’s key focuses in “Forging and Firing Thunderbolts,” was the collaboration of feminists Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton. These women as well as the lesser known women of women’s clubs and literary societies prompted immense social change throughout the nineteenth and into the twentieth century. Thus the models of collaboration presented here are just that: models for contemporary teachers, scholars, and feminists. In looking back to the nineteenth century, this study has attempted to outline the ways women collaborated to learn against the societal pressures arguing (both implicitly and explicitly) that they were not worthy or capable of an education. Thus when contemporary women strive to oppose Rick Santorum’s (among others) claims that women are too emotional for combat, that pregnancy as a result of rape is a gift from God, and that women should not have the same rights as the fetus inside her, women’s rights advocates can look at these collaborative models and emulate the collaborative practices that allowed nineteenth century women to shape culture and “make the world better.”

1 The Woman’s Era Club’s motto; a quote originally from feminist Lucy Stone, a member of Oberlin’s Ladies’ Literary Society.
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APPENDIX A: ORIGINAL HEURISTICS

Set 1: Identifying Historical Collaborations

1. Was the text produced by multiple authors?
2. Was the text contributed to by multiple authors?
3. Was the text delivered by multiple authors?
4. Were multiple individuals involved in different aspects of the composition process?
5. Are there conflicting records about who produced the text?
6. Is the text a representation of multiple authors?
7. Was the event (read text) planned by multiple authors?
8. Does the tone, handwriting, or style change drastically as the composition proceeds?
9. Does the composer or rhetor use pronouns or other language indications that this composition represents more than one person?
10. Was the composition presented in the attendance of other individuals for rhetorical purposes indicating their support?
11. Was an action produced multiple times by diverse members of a group, representing a collaborative (purposeful) choice?
12. Does the text speak for the group, representing collaboration?
13. Is the text attributed to a group?
14. Does the text rely heavily on other’s ideas?
15. Is the text a record of the rhetorical activities of people who are not the author of the text?
16. Does the act or rhetoric take the behavior of other members into account?

17. Are there signatures of other individuals that indicate the text can represent them as well as the authors?

Sets 2, 3 and 4: Classifying Collaborations

Set 2: Ede and Lunsford’s Hierarchical and Dialogical Modes of Collaboration

1. Can this text be considered the result of a hierarchical collaboration?

2. Can this text be considered the result of a dialogical collaboration?

3. Can this text be considered the result of an asymmetrical collaboration?

Set 3: Lindal Buchanan’s Productive; Supportive; and Productive/Supportive Collaborations

1. Is the collaboration productive?

2. Is the collaboration supportive?

3. If yes was answered to both questions, the text will be considered the result of a productive/supportive collaboration.

Set 4: Rhetorical Canons

1. Can collaboration be identified in the processes of invention?

2. Can collaboration be identified in the processes of arrangement?

3. Can collaboration be identified in the processes of style?

4. Can collaboration be identified in the processes of memory?

5. Can collaboration be identified in the processes of delivery?
Comm. of the second Meeting.

Reflections on the cultivation of the Mind.
Addressed to the Gleaning Circle.

The acquisition of knowledge is one of the most
honorable occupations of youth: Blair.

We should ever consider the importance of stowing our minds
with useful knowledge; but at this time, it has a more than
ordinary claim to our attention. It is the first and which
we ourselves have proposed in forming this society; and not in
communication with our God, it is the most sublime employment in
which we can be engaged. While reflecting on this subject, which
has been so judiciously handled by the most enlightened
authors, I do not pretend to suggest any new idea, but only to
enforce old truths; and raise those passions which cannot be
the more excited to activity. It has been very justly observed
that nothing makes a greater difference between one
human being than another than different degrees of
knowledge, and the mind is the most valuable part of the
human composition; it should be the first object of our attention.

Fig. 12: Image of Composition “Reflections on the Cultivation of the Mind.”
The Regulations of the Gleaning Circle.

1st. This Society is to consist of fifteen or twenty members, from which are to be chosen (annually by written vote) a President and Secretary.

2nd. The circle is to meet every Saturday afternoon (precisely at three o'clock) at the houses of the several members, and separate at five.

3rd. Two readers are to be chosen for each day.

4th. The first must select a chapter from the Bible to introduce the exercises of the afternoon.

5th. Any book favorable to the improvement of the mind may be selected from Divinity, History, Geography, Astronomy, Travel, Poetry &c. but Novels and Romances are absolutely excluded.

6th. A pause is sometimes to be made by the reader, that any observations may be made.

7th. No refreshments are to be provided (excepting sugar, and water for the readers.)
Any kind of work may be admitted that does not require much attention.

Any member may send in some question, sealed to the Secretary, by her to be presented to the President, and then made known to the Circle, that any of all may on the next meeting return an answer in writing, as the authors are unknown any comments may be made and judgment passed which production is really the best each member has the liberty of writing on any subject, and in any character to be treated in the same manner as before-mentioned.

Any member who absents herself without offering a very satisfactory excuse shall pay a fine of 12 cents.

Every member who does not observe the rules prescribed shall forfeit 12 cents for each neglect.

The fines are to be appropriated to some charitable use.

The Secretary is to note the proceedings of the meeting and to record all the original communications in a blank book prepared for that purpose.
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3rd Two readers are to be chosen for each day.

4th The first must select a chapter from the Bible to introduce the exercises of the afternoon.

5th Any book favorable to the improvement of the mind may be selected from Divinity, History, Geography, Astronomy, Travels, Poetry, [soc?], but Novels and Romances, are absolutely excluded.

6th A pause is sometimes to be made by the reader that any observations may be made.

7th No refreshments are to be provided (excepting sugar, and water for the readers.)

8th Any kind of work may be admitted that does not require much attention.

9th Any member, may send in some question, sealed to the Secretary, by her to be presented to the President and then made known to the Circle; that any or all may on the next meeting return an answer in writing; as the authors are unknown any comments may be made and judgment passed* which production is really the best; each member has the liberty of writing on any subject, and in any character to be treated in the same manner as beforementioned. Sic. (their spelling not mine)

10th Any member who absents herself without offering a very satisfactory excuse shall pay a fine of 12 cents.

11th Every member who does not observe the rules prescribed shall forfeit 12 cents for each neglect.

12th The fines are to be appropriated to some charitable use.

13th The secretary is to note the proceedings of the meeting and to record all the original communications in a blank book prepared for that purpose.

Fig. 15: Transcription of the Gleaning Circle’s Regulations
Transcription of An Argument for Female Education (1813)

Few subjects can be so useful to the female mind as the study of the best means of improving its own powers, and none more interesting. That women are capable of becoming the rational intelligent and even literary companions of men in this age. I think there is no reason to doubt that they are capable of becoming all this while they still maintain the character of modest, faithful, and domestic associates, submissive wives, affectionate mothers, I hope the next age will demonstrate. Some of the most prominent instances of feminine superiority have been in the characters of unmarried women: I presume however that none can suspect that their acquirements would have detracted ought from their worth or their charms, as wives or mothers. It has in too many instances been the mistake of parents, to believe that the education of daughters was judicially effected, after a certain routine*[sic], which gave them the command of the most common knowledge necessary for every day’s use, and the decoration of some of the most fashionable accomplishments of their sex. But if nature has endowed them with faculties any considerable degree resembling men, and there is any moral obligation to use her gifts, she must be comparatively responsible for their application. The accomplishments which they often receive are more frequently an injury, than an advantage; for which they occupy too much of the time which should be devoted to more useful acquisitions, they prepossess the mind in favour of those pursuits, which are destined for amusement and display more than for happiness. Accomplishments should not be unappreciated, they are certainly very valuable, for the pleasure, they may bestow, and if properly conducted they promote industry, and advance the character and embellish the mind with many auxiliaries for usefulness. But surely the great business of life is to learn to use these faculties, Heaven has bestowed upon us, in a man over to promote permanently our own happiness, and give us, the means of becoming useful to others, or in other words to learn the art of thinking. For this purpose, those habits of the mind should be first cultivated which will lead it to seek useful ideas and pursue them in all their relations, and effects, and from their combination, to extract what may produce pleasure and advantage. This is the most neglected part of a woman’s education. Not being subjected to those forms of learning which men submit to, and which gives them system women have no means of obtaining method or arrangement in their thoughts.

These ideas are casual and without connection, seldom pursuing a subject till it is understood. Perhaps you ask where is the necessity of woman’s becoming philosophic in their enquiries? Where the advantage of imposing on woman the more servele labour of the mind? When the sphere she is to occupy is best adorned by attention to the simple domestic duties which require only a cultivation of the refined affections, with modesty and cheerfulness? I answer that even where a woman sustains all the relations of life with promptness of fidelity she still has more time for reflection than most men. Fortunately her duties which they keep her mind cheerful and in that state of amenity which disposes to exertion, are most of them entirely mechanical. I mean as they are generally performed leaving her mind at liberty to follow the suggestions of judgement [sic] or fancy. She may while discharging the duties of her family, investigate subjects for the instruction of her children, the entertainment of a friend, or twining a garland of the flowers of spring whose sweets will breathe on all around. In a mind thus employed the irritable and unhallowed passions would be less likely to gain an admittance, than where vacancy held
sway. By shutting out the trivial anxieties of life, which her cares could not alleviate, she thus causes her own happiness, in the midst of the world, in the most innocent and perhaps most useful way. This certainly were reason enough for controlling the mind. Do you doubt the picture? I ask you what makes the difference of effect, in apparently similar circumstance, upon different minds? While some are ever perplexed “strenuously idle,” others are always at ease, silently happy, and usefully active. But can it be unnecessary that a mother should be an acquaintance with the pleasures of a cultivated mind, and a vigorous exercise of the understanding? She to whom is committed if I may so express myself. Nature’s CarteBlanche in the minds of her children, she who is a form item to virtue, to guide their passions, to direct their faculties, Should she be unacquainted with the avenues of thought, with the paths of reflection?

It is particularly necessary that a mother should understand the philosophy of the human mind. Her opportunities of studying nature in the living oracles around her are less frequent than man’s; she must therefore study it, in books and in her own soul, which will be the best guide. When a woman is mistress of some measure of this science, if she have an understanding to apply it, she may lay better foundations of character in her own children, than it is in the power of any other person to do. A woman of intelligence always has an influence in society as in her own family, that will more than repay her for any exertions [sic] she may have expended, were not the efforts, their own award. But happily the human mind is so constructed, that every new acquisition facilitates the next, and self approbation increases with the progress, so that foreign stimuli are less necessary. Some animals appear to have new animation and strength, by lying torpid, a certain portion of every year: but this is not a law of our being. The economy of the soul, depends on constant use of its powers, and the enjoyment of their exertion increases in the ratio of their advancement. The woman, who has the habit of extracting amusement from her own resources, is more domestic, and less dependent on fashionable society than on who has fewer internal resources of wealth. The power of self instruction, therefore does not detract from her private virtues. Some men appear to a dislike of any thing more than common-place stamp of character in a companion. I can conceive no other reason for this, than a fear of conceit, that tumour of the mind. No maxim was ever truer than that superficial knowledge creates conceit presumption; and the want of better information in our sex, is the reason, that this excusance [sic] has so often been detected, but the information be more, and this malady would soon disappear. Be therefore persuaded ladies, to attempt this habit, mental application, it will yield you much happiness, and enrich the circle with a transcript of an idea, at least oftener than once a year. When you are going to perform any mechanical employment, select some subject to which you may attach your thoughts examine it in all its connects and aspects, till you have some well proportioned image in your minds if you find it needs an illustration which you cannot command, note it in the common-place sheet, of memory til the opportunity presents of using the thoughts of others, and when you have arranged your ideas, we will thank you for a well attested copy.

The voice of the Circle.

Fig. 16: Transcription of “An Argument for Female Education.” (My title, not theirs.)
APPENDIX C: OBERLIN’S LADIES’ LITERARY SOCIETY

Transcription of Fig. 5, Ladies Literary Society Minutes, Oberlin 30, April, 1856

Oberlin, April 30th/56

Society met pursuant to adjournment. President being absent Miss Church was appointed for the evening. Roll [sic] called. Prayer offered by Miss Wilery. Miscellaneous business being next in order, the committee for engaging a lecture reported that they had secured the services of Professor Munroe, who would deliver either a public or private lecture as Society desired. It was voted that the lecture be public, after which the report of the committee was accepted and committee discharged.

A committee of three was then appointed to engage singers for the lecture. An amendment to the constitution which should raise the admission fee to $.25 was then laid before the society for consideration by Miss Wells. The names of Miss Waters and Miss Bonfoy were then proposed for membership.

It being the regular evening for electing officers the following persons were appointed.

President. Miss Brooks

Officers

V. President Miss Wilcox
Critic Miss Ransom
Cor. Sec. Miss Bierce

The regular exercises then followed.

Essays – Miss Church and Cowles
Declamation Miss Farris Hazen, Huntington
Oration Miss Andrews

Discussion laid aside on account of the absence of one of the disputants. Miss Field then favored the society with a voluntary declamation. Critics report and assignments were then read after which society adjourned to meet in one week at regular time.

E.C. Huntington
August 1st /55

Society met pursuant to adjournment. Roll [sic] called. Opening prayer offered by Miss Hamilton. Report of the last meeting read and accepted. Society voted to have no lecture this term and to have the annual in the church if possible. The usual literary exercises then followed. Declamations Misses Jefferson Brown and Brooks. Select piece Miss Parmalee. Discussion Misses Hoppin Gilbert Hickok and Hamilton. The Critic’s report was read after which the society adjourned to meet in one week.

Amerlia Cross
Sec.

Fig. 18. Transcription of Fig. 6
APPENDIX D: THE WOMAN’S ERA

Fig. 19: Woman’s Era Advertisements (Volume II: 1.1.26)
wrote a different explanation. Do you sabe my argument now?"

While we were for the second silately absorbed in thought, an old '45er looked over her specs and said: "Girls, I dunno how that Jack's letter heh struck other places, but my opinion is, that letter should be followed by er few mo jess like it; it'll do good yit; better medicine is sometimes the best. That letter heh struck Los Angula from centre to circle in the way uv studiu our general good. It shows you it is more'n talk uv resolutions. Nothin' but lively intrust, hard work, backed with dollars, 'll overcome such things. An' another thing no good, that letter heh borned more 'race' (?) men and wimin then ever we knew we had, since I crossed the plains."

The press has attracted a great deal of attention to the defense of a notorious criminal of Philadelphia, whose mother has tried to secure executive clemency for him on the plea of inherited criminal tendency. She pleads that he is not responsible for his acts, that she, the mother, is; that she was forced by cruel treatment from his father, before the son's birth, to steal from the father's pockets money for her actual sustenance. She writes: "Thus I went through all the brain sensations of a daring barglar, even such as I am informed you have become. Shortly after that you were born, and I firmly believe you came into the world a thief, owing to that crime-like though necessary practice of mine." Medical science asserts and has proven that mothers influence the character of their children before they are born, and such a plea, while new as an argument of defense, is worthy of serious consideration, especially to colored women in view of the fact of the serious charges made against us. Sacred should be esteemed the privileges of motherhood and jealously guarded, that only the noblest and best influences be exercised in the formation of the child's character before its birth. As some one has said, "The successful reformation of a nation is begun before it is born."

The comments of the local press on the successful rendition of the sparkling opera, "New Flop Queen," classes it so far above ordinary social events, that our letter would be incomplete without its mention. Those of us bemoaning our "crow feet" age signs are elated over compliments, "you girls were just lovely." How could it have been other than a success under the able direction of Mrs. Harry Reed?

To the various friends who have kindly subscribed for the Era through this department, I desire to say that the receipts for all subscriptions will be mailed or otherwise placed in their possession sometime during the month of September. A number of petty illnesses and absence from the city for two months has prevented me attending promptly to various business matters, and has also prevented my attendance at the National Womans' Convention, or even representation by a paper on some subject worthy of the occasion. It is my very earnest hope that many friends will send in their names as subscribers for the Era, beginning with the September issue. Those desiring to secure the Convention or August issue may state the fact when sending their subscription.

Mrs. J. F. A. GARDINER,
128 Alder St., Pittsfield, Mass.
Will accommodate a few private boarders during the summer months. Five minutes walk from maple woods. Terms reasonable.

F. A. GREENLEAF,
Wholesale and Retail Dealer in
PAPER HANGINGS,
51 Court Street,
Near Scotsay Square, BOSTON.

MRS. H. L. KEMP,
Artistic Dressmaking and Millinery,
175 FRANKLIN AVENUE,
Near Myrtle, BROOKLYN, N.Y.
Competent dressmakers always on hand.

Fig. 20: "Open Court" (Volume II: 1.5.40)
APPENDIX E: REVISED HEURISTICS

Identifying Historical Collaborations

Set 1: Is the text the result of a collaborative act?

In order for a rhetorical product to be considered the result of a collaboration, the following answers of “yes” should be greater than the following answers of “no.” The researcher should also take into account the strength of the evidence in the yes responses in contrast to the strength of the evidence in the no responses.

1. Was the text produced by multiple authors?
2. Was the text contributed to by multiple authors?
3. Was the text delivered by multiple authors?
4. Were multiple individuals involved in different aspects of the composition process?
5. Are there conflicting records about who produced the text?
6. Is the text a representation of multiple authors?
7. Was the event (read text) planned by multiple authors?
8. Does the tone, handwriting, or style change drastically as the composition proceeds?
9. Does the composer or rhetor use pronouns or other language indications that this composition represents more than one person?
10. Was the composition presented in the attendance of other individuals for rhetorical purposes indicating their support?
11. Was an action produced multiple times by diverse members of a group, representing a collaborative (purposeful) choice?
12. Does the text speak for the group, representing collaboration?
13. Is the text attributed to a group?
14. Does the text rely heavily on other’s ideas?
15. Is the text a record of the rhetorical activities of people who are not the author of the text?
16. Does the act or rhetoric take the behavior of other members into account?
17. Are there signatures of other individuals that indicate the text can represent them as well as the authors?

Classifying Collaborations

Set 2: Stakeholders

1. Who had a stake in the collaboration?
2. What were the different roles of those stakeholders?
3. Do these stakeholders fit the model of autonomous, semi-autonomous, or anti-autonomous? How?

SubSet 1: Power Distributions

1. Can this text be considered the result of a hierarchical collaboration?
2. Can this text be considered the result of a dialogical collaboration?
3. Can this text be considered the result of an asymmetrical collaboration?

Subset 2: Process

1. What were the collaborative processes involved in this collaboration?
2. Is the collaboration productive?
3. Is the collaboration supportive?
4. Is it productive/supportive?
5. Can collaboration be identified in the processes of invention?
6. Can collaboration be identified in the processes of arrangement?
7. Can collaboration be identified in the processes of style?
8. Can collaboration be identified in the processes of memory?
9. Can collaboration be identified in the processes of delivery?

*Subset 3: Size*

1. How many people are involved in the collaboration?
2. Why are there that number of people involved?
3. How did the number of stakeholders influence the ways they were able to collaborate?

*Set 3: Context*

1. What is the time period when the collaboration took place?
2. What was happening during that time that may have influenced the collaboration
   a. What was happening nationally?
   b. What was happening locally?
   c. What was happening for the stakeholders personally?

*Subset 1: Need*

1. What sparked the stakeholders to work together toward a single goal?
2. What is it that made the stakeholders need one another to reach this goal?

*Subset 2: Purpose*

1. How did the stakeholders choose to meet their need?
2. What was the purpose of each product they produced?
3. What happened to each product they produced?
a. Was it published?

b. Who read it?

c. Did they save the document in an archive?

*Subset 3: Time*

1. Does the product represent a repeated rhetorical practice?
   
a. Over how much time does this practice repeat itself?

2. Does the product indicate a lapse of time between stakeholders? (Did the collaborators change over time?)
   
a. Why was there this lack of time?

   b. What did this time lack accomplish?
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Ken

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Alice Hickcox

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