NEW AT BARNES AND NOBLE: AN ARGUMENT FOR MORE PUBLIC BASED
SCHOLARSHIP IN RHETORIC AND COMPOSITION STUDIES

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Scholars such as Ernest Boyer and Kathleen Fitzpatrick have been proponents of the expansion of academic work beyond the "ivy walls of academia" as a method of expanding and sharing knowledge with a wider audience. Using their ideas as a baseline, my dissertation is an argument for academics (specifically in the field of English) to add works and writings meant for public consumption as an acceptable means of work that counts as scholarship to the already existing tenure and promotion guidelines used by most universities by answering the question, "Why should scholars in English studies be able to publish outside academic circles?" I have examined current scholarship, the methods in which current scholars already write for the public and how writers from inside and outside academia approach similar subjects to help answer this question.
For my family: Bruce and Cheryl Olsen (Dad and Mom) and Todd Olsen (brother)
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CHAPTER I.
SIMPLE QUESTION, NOT-SO-SIMPLE ANSWER

Introduction

"Is there anything you want to pick up here for your prelim exams?" This one simple question, asked by my brother in the summer of 2013, ended up leading to what would be my academic focus for the next few years. We were at a Barnes and Noble in the central Ohio area when he asked me, and at the time, my answer was:

"Not really," I replied. "Besides, if I need to get a book, I have to order it on Amazon." And that was that, for a few minutes. In the car (probably on my way back to my parents' house) I stopped and listened to what I really said. "I have to order it on Amazon." I decided to look around the store to see if I was correct on this assumption. While examining my surroundings, I discovered a few books that were in my area(s) of interest, but numerous others that weren't.

When I went home, I decided to take a look at my specialized reading list to figure out what I could make of this realization. It didn't take more than a brief look at my list to discover a few things:

- Of the 30 sources I chose, 11 of the 30 books and articles were not written by anyone in the field of rhetoric and composition, though many of those authors work in academia.

- 8 of the sources directly had some form of "teaching," "education" or "pedagogy" in the title.

- Of the people in the field of English, only one book directly addresses either new media, comic, and/or gaming without pedagogy (two if one counts Tom Bissell, who works in creative writing).
• Of the seven books chosen on comic literacy, only two of them are written by members of an "academic field" (three including Stan Lee, who has taught massive online classes on his subject).

• Six of those books are written by people who are considered "experts" in their field; those books also are (arguably) the bigger sellers.

It was after this quick/initial glance that I started to realize something about the books I chose; each of these books are written by scholars and experts in their field, but what that means is different based on whether the text is written for the an academic field or from people who create these multimodal texts for a living (such as a comic artist, game designer, author of superhero stories, etc).

It was after this realization that I decided that I would shift my focus to the concept of "public scholarship," particularly in the English rhetoric and composition field. This project is going to attempt to answer a simple question: "Why should scholars in English studies be able to publish outside academic circles?" Of course, just because the question itself is simple, I am under no illusion that the answer will be as straightforward.

This introductory chapter will be divided up into several sections in order to establish a clearer understanding of the issue. I want to divide the introduction into sections because I'd like to create more transparency with my discussion in this highly theoretical conversation. This practice is partially inspired by Cynthia Selfe and Gail Hawisher's foreword in the edited collection, *Rhetoric/Composition/Play through Video Games*. In the final paragraph, Selfe and Hawisher state,

After all, if we, as teacher-scholars, are clear-eyed about the teaching of rhetoric and composition, we must recognize that our success as a field, our successes as
teachers, are intimately connected to the relevance of our art and techne in the contemporary world. (xviii)

While this statement focuses primarily on the successes of the field (as will a large portion of this project), Selfe and Hawisher highlight to the reader the various reasons/angles what we, as members of academia do has relevance to a world outside academia. However, in order to bask in our triumphs, it's prudent to discuss where we are as a field, whether it be progressive, limiting, or just the way things are as far as our scholarship practices.

The first section of chapter 1 consists of defining the terms that will be important to this exploration and evaluating the current systems of scholarly publishing along with highlighting key terms and definitions. Following that section will be one that examines current scholarship on publication practices along with opinions and criticisms from members of the English academic community. After that will be a brief section on digital rhetoric and its current state in academic study. The fourth part of chapter 1 explores the methods I will be employing to help address my research question, and the final one provides a preview for the chapters to follow.

Section One: Terms and Current Systems

For the purposes of this project, I will define "scholarly publishing" as the act of publishing in order to be considered a scholar and/or expert in a chosen field of study. In the article "What We Really Value: Redefining Scholarly Engagement in Tenure and Promotion Protocols," Michael Day et al. describe the act of being a scholar as:

Being a scholar, in short, means engaging in reflective, well-informed practices that help us accomplish the goals of advancing and sharing our knowledge of what it means to write and be a writer. Moving to a more inclusive understanding of what it means to be a scholar—and by extension, of what is required to gain
tenure or promotion will require us to do far more than demonstrate the value of work within each of the areas we've listed above. (186)

The definitions that Day et al. provide help ground my project by not only defining what it means to be a scholar, but also why scholarship is created. In a fundamental sense, scholarship is created to share what we learn; practically, however, it's to earn/maintain employment by proving that what a teacher/scholar is presenting as a part of whatever university/academic setting is still relevant and still palatable for students.

Other terms that will become more prevalent in later chapters will be "multimodal" and "open access." Multimodal, for the purpose of this project, will be a catch-all term for a text with more than one mode of communication (text, visual, auditory, etc.) that are combined together to create a new meaning.

Open access refers to texts or methods of creating texts that can be used by a larger audience. The reason why I want to discuss multimodality is its close relationship to digital literacy, composition and pedagogy. While reading texts from the "Scholarly Publishing" parts of this dissertation, many of the books and articles discuss digital as viable forms of publications for scholarship. Not only does an exploration of digital publishing create a newer avenue for types of texts, but anything that is available on the internet has a much more increased chance of being viewed by people in and outside academia.

Another important term is "sphere." This term will be used to discuss the figurative spaces that a person can inhabit. To use myself as an example, I inhabit "public," "private," and "academic" spheres. Each of these areas have different rules that I must follow and personas I must adopt. I would speak differently to, say, my parents in the private sphere as I would to my friends in my public life or my professors in my academic world. These divisions mean that
people have to adopt different personas in order to better fit with the different environments; this will become a vital part of the project later on.

Finally, this project also uses the term "text" in a liberal fashion. While text can, and is, used to mean a work that can be deciphered for information, there are several texts that will need to be examined that don't have as much information as they have a narrative or story to tell, such as opinion-based articles and personal blogs; both of these mediums have a commonality of not only conveying information to the reader, but also expressing something that is passionate to the author. With that in mind, a text will be any form of writing to be read or experienced regardless of purpose.

**Section Two: Current Scholarship and Critiques**

The point of this dissertation is to argue for additions to what we, as members of the English academic community, consider "worthwhile publishing." This dissertation examines additional potential avenues for scholars to be able to publish their work. As of now, the most important avenue for major publications is academic ones. Articles for journals such as *College Composition and Communication*, *Computers and Composition* and *Kairos* are just a few of the journals where many colleagues submit articles. In addition, I am also an editor for the "Professional Development" section of *Computers and Composition Online*, and I have had great experiences editing and working with authors.

However, what about works that people do with "non-academic" purposes or that are accessible in "non-academic fields?" While I'm sure that there are many scholars who would enjoy the opportunity to write in many forums, the idea of a scholar, as previously stated by Day, demands that we write for specific avenues (academic journals, textbooks, etc.) in order to become and remain employed in an academic setting. Because of these guidelines, many people
may feel that any other type of publishing would be worthless to their career, and after tenure would be reached, why would someone want to switch to public scholarship with potential promotion hanging in the balance?

In December of 2006, the MLA (Modern Language Association) published, "Report of MLA Task Force on Evaluation Scholarship for Tenure and Promotion," which outlines what is considered to be "acceptable" scholarship and publications to achieve upward mobility for those who study English (and foreign languages). There appears to be a particular emphasis in the book-length monograph/scholarly publication. The report states,

Even in a subset of 241 departments where respondents agree or strongly agree with the statement that candidates are unlikely to earn tenure without a publication of a book, almost two thirds disagree or strongly disagree (64.7%) that monograph publication is emphasized too much and referred journal articles credited too little. (MLA Task Force 36)

Soon after, however, the report includes the following:

If journal publication is to be sustained as an independent venue of scholarship, then stronger arguments must be made in tenure cases for such articles in all institutional sectors, notably Carnegie Research I institutions, which seem to be driving the definition of tenure requirements throughout the system. (39)

While perhaps still not an end goal, it has become much more clear that publications in scholarly journals have importance, but it is also clear that this kind of scholarship (book and articles) is the most highly regarded. The estimated percentage of those who complete a doctorate degree and receive tenure at the institution where they are hired is 34% (MLA Task Force 28).
While the demands for tenure and maintaining a career in academia are at the forefront of many scholars, there are many more who believe that the definition of scholarship can be altered or improved. Ernest Boyer's *Scholarship Reconsidered* also covers this idea of an expansion of the role of academic work. Boyer defines the type of academic research being done as "the scholarship of discovery," and confirms that it is an important part of the research methods. However, he does emphasize that, at times, too much focus falls on this kind of scholarship. He states this as the following, "It is our central premise, therefore, that other forms of scholarship—teaching, integration, and application—must be fully acknowledged and placed on a more equal footing with discovery," (75).

It's important that Boyer's book was published in 1990, but if compared with what Kathleen Fitzpatrick is discussing in her book, *Planned Obsolescence*, it appears that this is still an issue today. Fitzpatrick's book, one of the main sources for this project, is much more critical of the academic publishing practices than my project will be, but it still has many of the underlying themes that my project has/needs to be addressed. These include the ideas of peer-review, authorship, and university press expectations, and all of these are ideas that could cause some problems getting more legitimacy for more writing to and for a potential non-academic audience.

For example, I foresee a potential argument on scholarship to be about how these public avenues seemingly cut out the element of a peer-review system, which has apparently been a part of the publishing system since the 1700s. This practice goes back to England in the mid-1600s when the Royal Society of London was founded in order to improve "Natural Knowledge." In "The history of the peer-review process," the actions and acquisitions of the Society are further explained as follows,
And so it was for the next ~100 years until, in 1752 the Society took over the editorial responsibility for the production of the *Philosophical Transactions*, at which time it adopted a review procedure that had been used previously by the Royal Society of Edinburgh as early as 1731. Materials sent to the Society for publication were now subject to inspection by a select group of members who were knowledgeable in such matters, and whose recommendation to the editor was influential in the future progress of that manuscript. This type of review is sometimes regarded as the beginning of the peer-review process, and many other societies, including the Literary and Philosophical Society of Manchester, adopted similar procedures whilst publishing a disclaimer as to the accuracy of the published material. (Spier 1)

However, Fitzpatrick points out that this sort of practice can help what is published be more disciplined at the cost of repressing and oppressing what could be published (21-22).

Furthermore, while Fitzpatrick admits that the idea of being judged by one's peers is a good move, it often is used as a "gatekeeping" method and questions whether or not credentials and publishing should be separate things (32).

This idea is something that is explored in Jasper Neel's chapter "Getting Booked," which was published in the *Publishing in Rhetoric and Composition* edited collection. Neel explores the idea of the importance of a type of peer-review publication by stating,

The academic rage in the humanities these days is to write a book, particularly a "scholarly" book published (if at all possible) by a university press. One can define one's location in the academic pecking order by the number *and* status of books required for tenure at one's university. (91)
Though his chapter was published in 1997, I still believe that a similar attitude exists today. Neel discusses the book as a form of materiality that is used to show a physical representation of work done (this of course is challenged by the idea of digital scholarship, but that will be discussed in a later section).

Another part of publishing that Fitzpatrick discusses is the idea of Authorship; while she discusses an important aspect of newer forms of publishing and scholarly expression, one of the most notable conversations she engages in is the idea of "resistance":

Resistance to allowing scholarly production to take non-textual form runs deeply in many fields, particularly those that have a long reinforced divide between criticism (art history, literature, media studies) and practice (studio art, creative writing, media production). But one of the explicit goals of many media studies programs over the last ten years [2000-2010] has been finding a way within the curriculum to bridge the theory-practice divide... (86)

The idea is to give students a taste of multiple angles to explore and study (criticism-based students learn about hands-on experience and vice versa). Still, for the teachers and researcher, the idea has been to create these types of texts as well, but for scholarly analysis as the final goal. For example, Fitzpatrick discusses how a fear of the focus on Web 2.0 is the fear of a loss of what it means to be a community. Due to the web's anonymity and its perceived animosity toward anyone who does not fit in, it's an easy and logical conclusion to draw. However, by resisting the initial fear and assumptions, Fitzpatrick discusses what may be occurring is a loss of individuality, or the author him/herself (57). Using the idea of resisting a popular belief to create a new theory, or at least a new point of view for examination, will be a focal point of this project.
This, of course, can raise some issues that academia has always seemed to receive, and that's scrutiny from a public eye. Such a concept is part of a discussion in *Computers and the Teaching of Writing in American Higher Education* when Hawisher et al. discuss academia's reaction to the famous article "Why Johnny Can't Write." The book describes how the academic community (though not directly stated, I believe that it covered both higher and K-12 education) seemed to panic and went to great lengths to show the public that they could be trusted (21). Eventually, this could be one of the reasons why subjects (not just English) are now heavily tested in K-12 environments. This may explain why most academic work may stay (for the most part) in academic circles; it could be a preventative measure to avoid (unnecessary) scrutiny.

Around the end of her book, Fitzpatrick continues her discussion of the role of the university press (in general). She explains the works of Chris Kelty, who describes to publishers and scholarly groups that ideas like Open Access creates a question of what the point of these organizations are. Fitzpatrick continues afterwards by stating, "Scholarly organizations, no less than university presses, need to be held responsible by their memberships for increasing the visibility of scholarship, both within and outside the academy," (184). It is this call to action that is a primary focus of this dissertation, which is the need for what we discuss to be available and visible to members of our community that are not just in academic circles. Some of the subjects studied in rhetoric and composition expand beyond the classroom and an academic environment already, with some examples including comic literacy, gaming literacy, digital literacy, community literacy, feminism and social justice. By creating and validating scholarship that can reach multiple audiences, the line between "academic" and "general" applications blurs, which in turn can open up opportunities for further research, collaborations, and purpose for our work. A
main focus of this project to find the texts that are already doing so and highlight the successes that draw in multiple audiences.

**Section Three: State of Digital Rhetoric**

When examining the works of scholars in the field of Composition and Rhetoric, texts on the subject of digital and multimodal rhetoric seem to have two major goals in mind. Either they are trying to prove that these texts are significant to be studied in some way, or that they have significance in a classroom setting. James Paul Gee writes a lot on the subject of gaming and digital literacy. In *What Video Games Have to Teach Us About Learning and Literacy*, Gee presents each gaming situation juxtaposed next to one of his "36 Principles of Learning." For example, in his chapter on identity, he discusses there are three types of identity when playing: virtual (when we inhabit as a member of the world of the game), real (being who we really are in real life in the game), and projective (when we become who we want to be in the game). He then relates these ideals back to learning by stating we can have students play the game to see which identities they use, such as the "'Psychosocial Moratorium' Principle: Learners can take risks in a space where real-world consequences are lowered" and "'Amplification of Input' Principle: For a little input, learners get a lot of output," (64).

*Language and Learning in the Digital Age* (co-written by Elizabeth Hayes) offers a similar approach, but to the more broad topic of digital mediums in general, though video games do tend to pop up fairly often. In one anecdote, Gee and Hayes share the story of Jade and how she learned to use Photoshop:

Jade did not know how to do any of this, nor did the people running the club.

They told Jade she would need to learn about Photoshop, and directed her to some online tutorials. Jade spent weeks following tutorials on The Sims fan sites,
learning to use Photoshop (no easy task), and perfecting her ability to create new Sims clothing. (Locations 1970—1972)

Her story then moves on to her adventures in Second Life and how her learning continued from there. Other areas of the text that involve what games/multimodal texts teach include mathematics (using the World of Warcraft DPS, or "damage per second" formula), using the internet to search for symptoms of an ailing cat, and the concept of creating and sharing articles for the sake of knowledge (using the user written strategy guides from the Gamefaqs website).

Teaching our students how to read electronic texts is also important because of the popularization of the electronic book (e-book), which is something that is explored in Jay Bolter's Writing Space. Bolter discusses the idea that an e-book is a "remediation" of the print as it transforms a text from a linear to non-linear experience (much like how most digital texts are read or can be experienced). He also notices that these texts are available through multiple platforms and, though e-book remediation doesn't "join itself" with print, it is a part of its own electronic network. He describes it as, "The openness of such networked devices reflects our growing desire to construct writing in a way that breaks down traditional distinctions between the book and such larger forms as the encyclopedia and the library," (81). Once again, it's the idea that an e-book has the ability to be more easily connected that can alter the conventions of what makes a traditional text.

The importance of the e-book is availability, which is something that Fitzpatrick discusses in Planned Obsolescence. According to Fitzpatrick, e-books and e-readers have merit because they have the ability to spread thanks to a larger distribution network. However, she also discusses that there are several fundamental flaws for the e-book markets including: uninteresting looking pages, fairly generic layouts and the hundreds of years of conditioning
behind paper-based documents (93-94). Instead, Fitzpatrick puts more faith in "hypertext" which actually can provide different experiences for the reader thanks to its non-linear nature that can "... enable a new enlightenment to dawn, resulting in, among other things, the leveling of the previously hierarchical relationships between author and reader, elevating the reader to full participation in the production of the text's meaning," (96-97).

Danielle DeVoss, Elyse Eidman-Aadahl, and Troy Hicks's *Because Digital Writing Matters* discusses digital writing for an audience of educators, as it is not trying to endorse digital writing (despite the title) but discuss what it can do for students. The chapters include the use of digital writings that can help with the revision process as well as how digital mediums can be a distraction to the learning process (e-mail, videos, etc.). There's also a section on how to assess digital writing, which is important for anyone who plans on using multimodal projects for their class. The standards include knowing the characteristics (hardware and software), understanding the relationship between larger ideas and the individual, and understanding the nature of design, operation, and use of technology (95).

In her chapter, "Pedagogy in a Computer-Networked Classroom" (published in the edited collection *Computers and Composition in the Classroom*), Janet Eldred continues the discussion of the importance of digital texts though an analysis of a potential audience (classroom and beyond). She writes about an experiment that students who use electronic systems tended to write more "writer-based prose" or things that were personal to them and the irony that the freedom of self-expression makes the student feel more like they are a part of a group (246). Eldred explains the importance of using this idea to create conversation by stating:

True dialog emerges with the presence of an effective moderator..., who negotiates and weds the various voices and perspectives. Again, it is our
pedagogy that will determine whether reflective monolog or genuine dialog will occur. Both, it seems, might be the goals of a writing course. (246)

What's important about this quote is that it explains that, in order for true dialogue to be had, that it is up to the moderator (whatever that may mean) to create the meaning behind the types of text. So, if reflective work (public discourse) and dialog (academic discourse) are the goals for our students, why should they not be goals for us as well? If we want our students to take what they have learned and use it to enhance their own scholarship, occupational needs, or growth as a person, then at least some of what we publish should have application and transition to different spheres.

**Section Four: Methods**

This project is theoretical in nature, and thus I focus on a series of close readings of various texts in order not only to get a better idea of the subject as a whole, but also to come closer to answering my research question and perhaps add to the existing conversation on the definition of scholarship. I would also like to take the opportunity to directly state that this is examination into the publishing practices of scholars in the English field; this project is by no means a critique of how and why we publish. It is not something that is meant to challenge the system into a "rewrite," nor is it a way of saying that academic publishing is wrong and/or unnecessary. To simplify it, the point of this dissertation is to argue for additions to what we consider "worthwhile publishing;" if most of the academic conversations happen strictly in academic settings, there could be an issue that a general audience may not know what is actually being done at the university level.

I plan to use my own scholarship as an example when I am examining texts written for the purpose of teaching about mediums or ideas. The reason behind this all comes back to the
idea of the spheres that we (or, in this case, I) inhabit and how the rules change from space to space. One such example is when I was first learning about comic literacy, or how comics and comic books use the medium to express and narrate, back when I was a teenager. I was told to check out various books and guides on what to do, and many of them varied depending on whether the person was guiding me from an academic, professional or enthusiast standpoint. Despite the many different texts provided, there were a few instances when I received advice from these different people to check out the same source, mainly Scott McCloud's *Understanding Comics* series. McCloud is a comic author, but he presented his series of "how to" books as a conversation not on "how to draw a comic," but "why comics are and important medium and how they speak to the audience." My goal for the deep readings is to find more of these styles of texts and see what gives them a more universal appeal.

I also took a deeper look into the texts that are published by English scholars that are not necessarily academic in nature, or at least not entirely so. These will primarily include, but are not limited to, articles published in reputable, but non-academic, settings (for example, *The New York Times* or *Forbes*) or blog spaces that have received acclaim from a wide audience. Much like the examination of the texts from different spheres, I hope to find a commonality that could help explain the importance of these kinds of writings in order to identify potential steps or compromises for what can be viewed as the first steps someone interested in public scholarship can take (as well as how it may be evaluated by his or her peers).

**Section Five: Chapter Outline**

Chapter two of this dissertation focuses on open access, publication trends and predictions, and how digital rhetoric can create a wider audience for academic work. I also
examine how many of these texts are print based or digital, as well as classic or multimodal, to highlight the current trends and where the scholarship being published is most valued.

This section also enforces the idea that peer-reviewed texts have their importance, but maybe shouldn't be the end-all-be-all. With the peer-review process being as young as it is, I demonstrate that limiting ourselves to scholarship that is only peer-reviewed can be problematic because it's creating an artificial constraint on what can or cannot be discussed. One potential includes a "crowdsourcing" model that allows for a wider range of critique and authorship by allowing "professionals" and "amateurs" to critique works. I also show how publishing something in a public sphere is still peer-reviewed in some degree thanks to some texts still requiring an editor (books, e-books, etc.). This section also discusses the practical problems with creating public texts, which are the processes of tenure and promotion with the emphasis on peer-review, textbooks and academic journals (this discussion will focus on the practicality of the process and it will not vilify or slander the tenure process, but it will be a thoughtful critique).

The last part of chapter two will discuss potential benefits for public scholarship and will incorporate a little bit of what I am calling "business theory," or an examination on how businesses (can) use public scholarship to increase productivity in the workplace. Directly writing to a wider audience makes our discussions and work more accessible, which then has the potential to increase interest in our field of study. Through this practice and being transparent with our methods, we will be able to show what we do and be able to create a more open discourse, which could help enforce our importance as an academic field and help prevent another coming of "Why Can't Johnny Write?"

The purpose of chapter three will also include close readings of not only digital presses and journals, but three blogs that have gained notoriety for their accessibility, or wider audience
appeal. The first blog will be by Christina H. Sommers, who has created a YouTube series called "Factual Feminist" and discusses feminism, though usually to a critical degree. The audience for this blog series is mostly public, though she uses her authority as a former academic to boost her ethos. The second blog examined will be Samantha Blackmon's *Not Your Mama's Gamer*, which is still being updated today. Blackmon's blog offers a look at tropes and trends in modern gaming, but also provides things as simple as experiences with specific games or gaming as a whole. With a podcast to go along with it, it has multiple methods of reaching a wide variety of people, academic and non. Michael Bérubé's blog will be the third one examined, which was active from 2004—2010 (though it has entries from 1985 and 1993). The blog contains his personal experiences with teaching, but it also has other entries including the discussion of politics as well as a tribute to a friend who passed away.

Bérubé's, Blackmon's, and Sommers' blogs will be tied together using the concepts of "the rhetoric of play," i.e. bringing in discussions or activities from the personal sphere into a professional environment. While many of the articles on play will have to do with gaming theories, I will also be discussing the concept of play on a much broader scale as well to hopefully cover more areas or potential study. Discussing the rhetoric of play will also address why a large focus of this dissertation will be on texts such as video games and comics, as these texts are primarily perceived as leisure activities.

There will also be an examination of two other scholars, Stanley Fish (with PhDs in English and Law) and Rebecca Schuman (with a PhD in German). They are strong voices about academia that are more easily accessed by the public, and these voices are highly critical of academia as a whole. The purpose of my project is to discuss the merits of a more open audience style of scholarship. There will also be a discussion on the importance and issues of vocal
academics such as these, such as creating an appearance of an academic life that is less than flattering.

Chapter four will be a larger comparison of how different authors belonging to different spheres approach subjects differently, including the comic literacy example I discussed earlier. Other subjects will include gaming literacy, digital mediums, and creative writing. These texts will include books, guides, and journal articles with the expressed intent about educating their audience about the specific subject. By examining both the differences and similarities of approach in each text, I will be able to more accurately determine methods for where academia could enter more conversations.

The final chapter will answer the question that I tell my students to address in their conclusions, which is "so what?" Why does it matter if we only publish texts for academics by academics. Why should we allow for more publications that aren't as scholarly and are "easier" to construct? Doesn't that mean that all of our scholarship will turn into pathetically easy to write and therefore the overall quality of what we discuss will drop and therefore drop what we teach our students in return? And for that matter, why am I using texts like video games and comics to make my point, especially when there are "more important" things to discuss? By creating and establishing the public publication practices, it could help us stay more relevant. Staying relevant in a public sphere can show that we are serving our students in practical ways, such as teaching them how to read, write, and consume as many varied texts they may encounter beyond their time(s) in college. This chapter will help cement the idea that the best way to serve students in such a manner is to be creators and consumers.

What I hope this dissertation does for English studies is to help broaden the avenue of what is acceptable means of publication and give the MLA Task Force's "lucky 34%" other
methods of achieving tenure. With more of what we have to say available for a wider audience, the chances of what we have to say being heard, understood, critiqued, and examined will increase. Of course, steps like this are already being taken (for example, Carly Finseth's discussion in "An Open Source Composition Space: Redefining Invention for a New Technological Age," which was published in *Computers and Composition Online* in the Fall 2013 issue); my project's goal is to open up some newer avenues of discussion and create conversation about more types of scholarship areas that could be considered "viable" for academic discourse. Though more public scholarship means more scrutiny on what we produce, I feel that a push for more scholarship will benefit English studies by providing more ways to have a conversation, which will lead to more kinds of dialogs, and will hopefully alleviate a supposed limit on acceptable discourse, and what should be left outside the gate.
CHAPTER II.

ACCESS FOR ALL: HOW DIGITAL PRACTICES CAN CREATE NEWER AUDIENCES FOR ACADEMIC DISCUSSIONS

Section One: Defining/Redefining Terms

This chapter is an examination of theories, readings, and ideas that discuss and/or support the idea of public scholarship for academics. The sections will be divided into the categories of: peer review, digital rhetoric, social media, and business tactics. The purpose of each one of these categories is to show how public scholarship can function within them, and the overall purpose of this chapter is to demonstrate what has already been established in past and current scholarship on publications in order to show a stronger need for public discourse.

In order to create a better understanding of the research and ideas behind digital practices (as they are one of the main sources of current publicly available scholarship), it would be prudent to (re)discuss some important terminology that will be used during the course of this chapter. First of all, and probably most vital to the understanding of this chapter would be the definition of "peer review." The definition of peer review that will be employed for this project comes at the end of the introduction of the edited collection, Peer Review of Learning and Teaching in Higher Education. The editors, Judyth Sachs and Mitch Parsell, concludes that the purpose of editing as follows:

To achieve the greatest benefit to both individuals and institutions requires commitment and engagement through the following interrelated elements. First, and foremost, peer review is a collaborative activity and requires an approach that brings people together in the common enterprise of improvement. Second, peer review requires strong leadership from all levels of the university—deputy vice-
chancellor (academic), Dean, Head of Department and Course Coordinator. Third, peer review requires clear messages about the benefit of engaging in review and a common understanding of the approach to be implemented. Finally, it requires an understanding by all members of the university community of the complexity and nuance required to ensure that the review relationship is clear and transparent, and that different approaches can be required when review is aimed at different institutions or different levels of the one institution. The volume hopes to provide the theoretical foundations and some practical examples to enable a more informed conversation about how best to implement and sustain peer review at your institution. (Sachs 9)

The peer review process helps to create community, leadership, communal understanding, and transparency, which when applied to the review process for scholarly publication means that the work that is created has a higher degree of thought, effort, and is more likely to be accurate.

Secondly is the definition of "open source." Normally, when something is open sourced, it usually refers to "software, code, video, music, writing—available to the public under a licensing agreement," (Selfe, ed. 195). The rights vary from author to author whether or not they have to be credited, have their work used in (non) commercial ways, or other ways their work can be used. Often, images, video and music can fall under creative commons, which allows for full un-credited and free usage/availability.

A type of piece that can be considered open access would be works or writing that has become "public domain." Works in the public domain are old enough that they are deemed free to use (some examples include all of William Shakespeare's work, L. Frank Baum's Wizard of
Oz, and Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland*). It is important to take a look at these works because not only do these texts have a history of readers, but they can now be open to different kinds of interpretation, or what the current author seeks as meaning.

In her article "An Open Source Composition Space," Carly Finseth discusses another interpretation of open source when she states:

Open source is about culture and community, and also about property, such as redefining ideas of authorship and ownership (Weber 2004). In a true open source community, there is very little ownership in the traditional sense of the word. Each participant is able to add his or her own unique touch or approach to the problem at hand, but rarely is there a need for the designer to insist on individual ownership rights. Instead, the open source product is continually in flux, always being changed and modified to suit the needs of individual users. Thus, an open source creation is owned by many—a community—and is able to serve many as well. (Finseth)

This open-source idea is similar to a "Wiki Space" or an article that has many authors who come together to create or display information; some publicly available ones include Wikis for television shows with character analysis, such as *The Simpsons*, and ones for more academic ideas such as *Geek Feminism Wiki*. This is a method known as "crowd sourcing," and it has many potential benefits. This would allow for a wider scope of collaboration between various people, academic or not.

Finally, at the end of the chapter, I will discuss an idea known as "business tactics." Business tactics is something that I developed after reading *Driving Loyalty: Turning Every Customer and Employee into a Raving Fan for Your Brand*. According to the author bio, Kirk
Kazanjian has written many books on the subject of business and marketing and is a former award winning business reporter and anchor. This form of tactic takes some of the more central ideas that the book discusses that apply more to publishing online in rhetoric and composition (IE some of the more general advice). It's essentially trying to create a loyal "fan-base" of readers. Again, creating a fan-base is something that universities already do (see "The Ohio State Buckeyes" and "the University of Alabama: Roll Tide").

Section Two: The Peer Review System—Importance and Issues

Thanks to not only the prevalence of the internet, but the fact that most anything can be posted anywhere, the idea of a peer review system makes a lot of sense in order to make sure the information is accurate; as Sachs previously suggested, a peer-review styles system will also create a much more transparent product, which is important in order to gain and maintain the trust of readers. However, as stated earlier by Fitzpatrick, this can lead to a form of gatekeeping, cliquish behavior among editors, and articles with slanted subjects being published while other views become ignored.

Fiona Goodle further explores this concept in her chapter for *Ethical Issues in Biomedical Publication*, "The Ethics of Peer Review," by providing a series of issues that can arise from a peer review process:

Four interrelated aspects of peer review as it currently exists justify such a statement [it has been argued that peer review is inherently threatened by corruption]. First, science is a competitive enterprise, increasingly so as funds become limited. Second, peer review controls the currency of success-publication from which flows funding, position, recognition, and the power of science. Third, in sending manuscripts for review by experts in the same field, journals are
putting them in the hands of the very people most likely to be in direct
competition with the authors. Fourth, most journals preserve the anonymity of
their reviews by removing their names from the comments that are sent to the
authors. Such anonymity has been considered necessary to obtain uninhibited
comment, but it has the effect of giving reviewers power without responsibility.

Though the chapter, and the edition as a whole, relates to science, there are many parallels that
can be drawn into English studies, if not academia as a whole. The following list is a
demonstration on how what Goodle is discussing relates to English:

#1: English Studies is Competitive

Much like science, English studies is also competitive; this is much more evident when looking
at the current job market and how there are more jobs for people with rhetoric backgrounds than
literature and creative writing. Also, as the MLA 2006 report shows, 34% of scholars in English
get a doctorate and tenure at the first school they apply to, which already creates a naturally
competitive environment.

#2: Peer Review Controls English Studies

Fitpatrick suggests that the peer review system is often used as a gate keeping method; one of the
purposes of gate keeping is to monitor what information is deemed acceptable to conversation
and study, which creates a favor to some disciplines over the other.

#3: People Reading Manuscripts are Direct Competition

The third aspect discussed seems to be the most applicable in a cross-disciplinary manner, so it
will receive more of a focus in this examination than the others; it is also the most troubling
sounding at first. While many people in academia, whether students, professors or scholars, are
encouraged to work together and become colleagues, there is an idea that the person you work with is not a friend; a colleague is actually a rival, or someone to work against instead of with. The idea of a colleague as a "frenemy," however, is something that is constantly being fought against. For example, a professor of sociology named Afshan Jafar, discusses in an article he wrote for *The Guardian* on how he noticed the similarities between academic colleagues and women in the comedy industry (after reading Tina Fey's book *Bossypants*):

I have witnessed this attitude in academia quite often: junior faculty feeling threatened by other junior faculty. This feeling becomes even more pronounced when that junior faculty is "like you"—which may mean the same age, gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, nationality, and so on. But this is not about blaming junior faculty. Like the women in comedy that Fey talks about, junior faculty have been made to feel like they're in competition with one another. We've been made to feel as if there are limited spaces available for us, and hiring or promoting or granting tenure to one more like us will make our job less secure. This is simply not true. Fey offers this response to women who see other women as competition: "Don't be fooled. You're not in competition with other women. You're in competition with everyone." (Jafar)

If Jafar's/Fey's statements are to be believed, everyone is in competition with everyone. Also, it is suggested that there are many (not all) academic environments that instill a methodology of competition in their students/junior faculty; perhaps that is something that cannot be avoided. If that is the case, than the issue of a reviewer who is in direct competition with the reader should also be moot. Without a competitive edge to the peer review process, perhaps then more
scholars would feel comfortable with writing to a non-academic audience without fear of falling behind their peers.

#4: Reviewers Are Anonymous, which Creates More Power for the Reviewer

Anyone who has spent any amount of time in the internet knows how blunt or ruthless being anonymous can be when it comes to leaving a comment. Because of the anonymity of who is exactly reviewing something for publication, they may be as harsh as they want or, if they are in direct competition (as #3 suggests) this could be an opportunity to crush the opposition with almost no visible reproductions. However, the purpose of the anonymous reviewer is to also protect him/her from the author's scorn, so the potential bad may be overshadowed by the practical good of this practice.

Still, what best combats the issues of the "four interrelated aspects," which is perhaps the most important aspect of peer-review, is transparency, or being up front, open, and honest with what is being reviewed. This means is that as long as transparency continues to be a staple of the peer-review process, it will prevent it from becoming closed off or stilted. The concept of transparency in education is quite old, and is even covered in Isocrates's "Against the Sophists." He opens up by stating,

If all who are engaged in the profession of education were willing to state the facts instead of making greater promises than they can possibly fulfill, they would not be in such bad repute with the lay-public. As it is, however, the teachers who do not scruple to vaunt their powers with utter disregard of the truth have created the impression that those who choose a life of careless indolence are better advised than those who devote themselves to serious study. (Isocrates 72)
When those who are teaching, or in our modern academic settings, are not clear and open with what they are discussing, it doesn't sit well with the public. Without trust, there can be little hope for finding a commonality between the public and academia. While used in the context of research, Norman Denzin discusses the concept of trust in his piece, "The Politics of Evidence" as (according to the 2006 American Education Research Association):

It is the researcher's responsibility to show the reader that the report can be trusted. This begins with the description of the evidence, the data, and the analysis supporting each interpretive claim. The warrant for the claims can be established through a variety of procedures including triangulation, asking participants to evaluate pattern descriptions, having different analysts examine the same data (independently and collaboratively), searches for disconfirming evidence and counter-interpretations. (651)

By being transparent with the methods and steps, trust can be gained between an author and the audience, or in the case of public scholarship, academic circles and non. Doing so with publication practices would hopefully do the same thing, and even though this is a common practice in academic research, if more is done to demonstrate to a reader that this is something that academics take seriously, it means more than just saying that we value other arguments and positions.

Perhaps one way to help alleviate this situation would be to create more texts on what we are discussing for public consumption. While the public scholarship may not go through the peer review process as vigorously, it still should be noted that, as discussed in the first chapter, peer review is still fairly young as far as academic practices go (less than 250 years old), so there may be some room for some additions. It should also be noted that a peer review process does not
mean that the article will be good or flawless. Once again, Godlee addresses this idea by stating that many peer reviewed articles have errors pointed out or highlighted if they go through another reader (65).

I have a few ideas on how to mitigate public scholarship with, at least, some idea of a peer review system. First, if a book is going to be submitted to a publisher that works in the public sphere, transcripts could be peer reviewed in house by the authors colleagues and co-workers. Following Judyth Sachs and Mitch Parsell's concept of the work process can help broaden the ideas of the original script as well as help make sure that the information is more correct. Perhaps the author could even give some editing credit to those who help him or her. For example, if someone was going to publish a book on the subject of social media and how to have a strong and safe presence, s/he could have several colleagues edit the manuscript for accuracy and ideas. After the editing is done, the original author sends out the manuscript to Penguin publishing (or something similar) with the title page being "Forever Present: A Guide to Keeping a Good Digital Presence by [insert author name] and edited by [insert editor name]."

If peer review is simply not possible, perhaps authors who publically publish can create an automatic peer review system by co-authoring a piece (monograph, article, etc.). A co-author relationship would benefit a text because it would have several different angles of observation on a text as well as the benefit of back-and-forth editing that would naturally occur between two or more authors. In the introduction of their book, Writing Together: Collaboration in Theory and Practice, Andrea Lunsford and Lisa Ede offer the following as observations on how collaboration alters their writing habits:

Most noticeable, as we have mentioned, was the larger proportion of talking together about our research and writing. Papers written singly have never been
completely silent affairs; we talk to others about our work or ask colleagues to read and discuss essays or drafts with us. But never had either of us (both prodigious talkers to begin with) ever talked so much or for so long while writing a paper. This talking, in fact, seemed to be a necessary part of co-authoring, one that made our writing more productive and efficient. (Lunsford and Ede 30)

As Lunsford and Ede suggest, by working together on the project, they ended up having more to discuss about it with each other, and consequentially, became more industrious as a result. So if public scholarship lacks the ability to be peer reviewed in a classical sense, having authors work together could be a good compromise. Creating more of a compromising environment will allow other authors or scholars in academia to, perhaps, try more "experimental" kinds of publishing, perhaps to an audience that is not inherently academic.

**Section Three: Digital Rhetoric and the Importance of Being Open (Sourced)**

Thanks to computers, smart phones and tablets (among other computing devices), access to information has never been easier since the last twenty-something years that the internet has become popularized in the United States. However, just because the information is available doesn't mean it's accessible, and this is a cause for concern.

At times, it can be difficult to use the internet to find academic sources, articles, or writings if a person does not know where to look. I have been a first-year writing teacher since 2010, and I have noticed that whenever a paper with any research aspects have been assigned, the first thing students do is use a search engine (usually Google). Due to some of the issues with finding popular, but unreliable sources, I have started to direct my students to use engines such as Google Scholar in order to find more academic sources.
While there are some places that are simple for students to locate the information they need, a common complaint that I get, and that I have due to my own experiences, is the inability to access articles due to them being behind a pay wall that can exceed forty dollars or having to sign up for a service with only a 150—200 word abstract for someone to work with. In fact, this is a complaint that has been lodged against academic publishing, particularly the sciences.

This issue has been increasingly difficult to research. For example, there is an interesting-sounding article that could help me called "The academy: hiding behind pay walls?" with an abstract that reads as follows:

The article's aim is to explore the issues of capturing knowledge behind a pay wall of an institution of higher learning. **Design/methodology/approach**—This is an opinion piece. **Findings**—Post secondary institutions will have to adopt alternative models for economic survival, as will knowledge seekers entering these institutions. **Social Implications**—Knowledge providers and knowledge seekers will restructure their relationships. **Originality/value**—The article challenges the existing model to undergo radical change as opposed to patchwork alternatives. (Abeles)

There are only a couple of ways that this article can be read. One is to subscribe to the literary journal, *On The Horizon - The Strategic Planning Resource for Education Professionals* (Volume 21 #2, 2013), which as of July 30th 2014 is currently migrating from one site to another and is unavailable to register. The other way is to buy the article for sixty dollars and ninety-three cents (plus tax). It also bears noting that this article is about four pages.

It should be noted that I am not against people being paid for their work or for journals wanting to make money, nor am I against paying money to buy books, edited collections, and
other sources. I know when I do research I usually default to either buying a book or borrowing one from the library; for me, books are just easier to use. Many times, however, when there is little time or availability to gather information on a subject, the pay walls can make the research process more difficult, especially with little to no information on where to look or what sources can be trusted. Fortunately, I am lucky enough to be a member of the Bowling Green State University student body, so I have access to the library website and database. However, where does this leave those without that access?

First of all, how did it get to this point? The author of *Othermindedness: The Emergence of Network Culture*, Michael Joyce, offers the following as an explanation of not only the concept of paywalls, but the idea of paying for access on the internet in general:

The question at hand seems to be whether there is any longer a Public in either the civic sense or economic sense. The public's expectation that it will have free access for possession of public good(s), cultural or otherwise, is fundamentally constructive. Art and commerce each intend to serve freedom (or at least make that claim). Yet to the extent the web is predicated on anonymity and irresponsibility, no publics actively assume the responsibility for the goods to which they have access. Instead they passively allow it, in greater and lesser volumes like irrigation sluices. So-called value-added schemes (the inner sanctum, the registered shareware user, and intranet) induce this public to increase the inward flow, to let the supposed provider include knowledge of the public holdings. In the net economy you don't take money from people, you give them the right to let you in the place where they spend it. When you charge access on
the net it is the same as doing advertising, just a matter of what people will let into their lives. (83)

As a public, people assume that there are things that should be free, which includes information. This is an oversimplification, of course, but the idea of free information is still a prevalent thought. However, the economy of the internet has allowed for a cultural norm that it is okay to charge people just to inhabit a space (forums, games, even access to a university's website and materials fits into this definition); in order to access the internet itself usually results in a monthly fee. It's the two opposing ideologies, the right to information for free and paying to visit or be a part of an environment that leads to difficulties.

Situations such as pay-walls and restricted information, however, can be greatly alleviated if more university publications are accepted by and given credit for open source publications or crowd sourced ideas/projects, because these sorts of texts are more widely available, which means they can be accessed by more than just academics. While there are some obvious legitimate examples of open sourced publications (for example, online scholarly journals), crowd sourced examples are a bit harder to explain. An example of a crowd sourced project comes from the release of a game called Foldit in 2011. The author of an article covering this story, Catharine Paddock, describes the game as a puzzle created by people researching the HIV virus, and asked people to play the game and see if they could predict patterns in proteins. It took the people who were playing the game three weeks to make a discovery that scientists were not able to make themselves:

Solving problems in the game helps scientists gain a better understanding of how cells make protein, a process call biosynthesis. A particular challenge in this field is understanding how certain proteins fold into three-dimensional structures. To
win, gamers have to do well in three factors: how well you pack the protein in 3D, how efficiently you hide the hydrophobic bits of the molecule, and how you resolve the clashes. The gamers don't have to understand these factors in this way to play the game.

The game presents them with a new protein and away they go, trying to bend it around to find its ideal form. When they hit a correct move, that hits these factors, they get points. The gamers are able to chat to each other online and compare solutions. It was through sharing strategies that gamers around the world solved the M-PMV problem. (Paddock)

The results of this crowd sourcing game, according to the article, sped up the process of finding a vaccine for HIV significantly. Creating a game, an article, or even a space such as this allows for multiple types of learning styles and, most importantly, community interaction to solve problems and make meaning. An example of a project that is a type of crowd sourcing would be "The Digital Archives of Literacy Narratives," which openly accepts stories on how people learned to be literate (not just learning how to read, but also experiences in literacy and examining where learning comes from). While many of the submissions come from people in the English field (I have an entry there myself from the CCCC's conference I attended in March of 2014), anyone is invited to share their experiences. By examining the experiences that people share, perhaps some understanding of how and why people learn (from a literacy standpoint) and what can be done can foster a good learning environment for children and adults.

I am not suggesting that open-source/open-access styles of publications are so rare that there is only one example. Many scholars submit book reviews, interviews, and scholarly articles to various journals for nothing more than the publication credit (as needed for tenure,
promotion, and hiring). They can submit these articles to print journals, such as *CCC*, *Computers and Composition: An International Journal*, and some people have even been published in other "disciplines," such as the *PCA/ACA* (the *Journal of Popular Culture* and the *Journal of American Culture*). While these are great publications and people should be encouraged to submit to them, there are many open-access style journals available for publication and are freely available for public consumption. A small list¹ of these journals includes, but certainly is not limited to: *Campus Technology*, *College Composition and Communication* ("extended section" is available online), *Composition Forum*, *Computers and Composition Online*,² *Inside Higher Ed*, and *Kairos: Rhetoric, Technology, Pedagogy*.

Even with this incomplete list of places for people to submit publications, why is there still a complaint of information not being available? While I cannot speak for other disciplines, it seems that there are more than a few issues with keeping an open access journal running. For example, there is a large list of many journals that are available and easily findable (see footnotes), but as of early August of 2014, many of the journals are no longer available. This is problematic because there are not only fewer places than it seems to publish, but it may also mean that it could cause some publications that authors work so hard on to be lost to the ethers of the internet, which can become incredibly tricky when trying to navigate the tenure process and such when some of the proof of scholarly work disappears.

Another issue is that websites are quite finicky. A single misspelling in the code can mean that a page is no longer viewable; the same can be said for if the website transfers servers

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¹ A more complete list of both print and open-access journals can be found on the WPA (Writing Program Administrators) website: http://wpacouncil.org/rcjournals and the CompFaqs website: http://compfaqs.org/Free-accessOnlineJournals/HomePage.

² For the sake of transparency, at the time of writing this article, I am the "Professional Development" editor for *CC&C Online*. 
and if the code is not updated, the article is lost. Unlike a print journal, online journals need constant updating and maintenance because websites exist on rented space. Unless the journal can get support from the university to use their webspace, funded to the point where they can afford the domain name and server space, or make enough money for self-preservation using ads, keeping the space can be problematic.

Creating a webtext is significantly more complicated than sitting down and writing on a piece of paper because there are multiple modes of expression (textual, visual, audio, format, etc.). Unless the author him/herself has knowledge of how to program using the languages of html, shtml, css, java, or any other website related programming, they will have to depend on the editor of the journal for assistance. Webtexts also need to be visually stimulating to a reader, so choices like color co-ordination, font choice, how the website is oriented, if and when audio is included all, need to be taken into account because websites act as hypertext. Websites use a choice of links so the reader can chose where they want to go and in what order they want to read something (either as a whole or in parts). In Writing Space, Jay David Bolter describes the importance of understanding hypertext (or hypermedia) as follows, "our culture... regards the computer and new media in general as eclectic forms that combine verbal, visual, and sound presentations" (Bolter 155). If a website or text does not follow the cultural normality of what a "new media text" is, it may be discarded by being simply behind the times.

Finally, there appears to be some form of bias against digital publishing in academia. Christine L. Borgman, author of Scholarship in the Digital Age: Information, Infrastructure, and the Internet, describes the situation as follows:

Despite the fact that digital publications can be held to the same standards of peer review and authentication as print publications, many scholars remain suspicious.
While they appreciate the ease of access to digital content, those at elite universities continue to value print over digital publication, both in choosing where to publish and in criteria for hiring and promotion. Digital products, whether journal articles, books, conference papers, or other objects, are subjected to a higher level of scrutiny than are print publications... (78)

While Borgman supplies this concept and is well worded and thought out, her book was written in 2007; does this thought process still permeate in 2014? According to Roopika Risam, who is an Assistant Professor at Salem State University, yes. In her article "Rethinking Peer Review in the Age of Digital Humanities," she opens up with:

For academics, double-blind peer review processes remain the gold standard for validating scholarly work. The value accrued by scholarship has traditionally flowed mono-directionally from peer review. In the hierarchies that govern academic hiring and tenure and promotion practices, the single-authored monograph from the distinguished scholarly press sent out for review upon completion occupies a position of prominence. Among shorter forms, the prestigious academic journal provides readily legible markers of academic quality. Yet, for scholars working in digital formats or within digital humanities, conventions governing the gatekeeping of "scholarly" work feel increasingly mismatched to the digital milieu. Therefore, digital scholarship requires consideration of the factors distinguishing it from print scholarship, along with a new approach to validating scholarship that emerges from and respects the specificities of digital work. (Risam)
While digital scholarship appears to have more validity than it used to, the print book (monograph) still appears to be the end goal for most people in academia as the most highly valued form of publishing, not only in English studies, but in most other disciplines as well.

With all of these potential problems, why go through all the effort? *Because Digital Writing Matters*'s introduction addresses many concerns about digital writing with a short, but important answer:

> From contextual factors in the school and community to professional development for teachers, from money to purchase appropriate hardware to the access that students have to that hardware, from the laws that govern child protection to ethical uses of technology, parents, teachers, administrators, and other stakeholders have specific and complex reasons for questioning and sometimes resisting technology. But if digital writing matters, these challenges will need to be addressed and solved. (DeVoss 15)

If there is to be any value in digital rhetoric and digital publishing, then work needs to be invested, especially if a wider audience for academic work is to be obtained. According to the 2012 United States Census Bureau, 78.9% of homes in the USA have a computer with 74.8% of households having internet (leaving only 4.1% of homes that have computers but no internet). That means that these open-access articles can be viewed at any time by almost three out of every four people in the USA. In addition, 45.3% of adults above the age of 25 use smart phones, and 88.1% of 25—34 year olds use the internet and 70.6% have access to a smart phone. The study shows that the younger a person is, the more likely they will be to be an avid internet user or at least have access to smart phone technology; it would be a safe bet to think that in
years to come, the number of people who have access to this digital publishing space will only increase to higher percentages.

So why do the Census Bureau statistics matter? Having what we work on be freely available on the web means narrowing a gap between what is free knowledge and what is "privileged." When that happens, the lines between the "academic" and "public" spheres will become blurred, conversation topics could overlap, and the important topics that we discuss will be better heard by everyone. This can lessen some amounts of distrust about the importance of education, and it could encourage more people to view academia as viable and important avenue for a career.

Section Four: Social Media

One of the more obvious ways that a scholar could enter the public sphere would be through social media sites and applications, such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Tumblr (to name a few). These methods can be used to post thoughts about current research projects or to join in conversations that are happening elsewhere in the world, and it creates a sort of equilibrium among those who visit it. In his book, *Play at Work*, Adam L. Penenberg (a professor of journalism at New York University) helps confirm this idea by referring to the Polish writer Piotr Czerski, who claims that the internet, to members of Generation Y\(^3\), is not an actual space, but it is something that they live not only on, but with. Penenberg goes into further detail on the subject by stating:

The emergence of social networks also contributes to the digital narrative "webanschauung\(^4\)," if you will. To Gen Yers, "society," Czerski writes, "is a

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\(^3\) "Generation Y" is a term that refers to people born in the early 80's to the late 90's (dictionary.com).

\(^4\) Anschauung means direct or immediate intuition or perception of sense data with little or no rational interpretation (dictionary.com).
network, not a hierarchy." With Twitter and Facebook, fans can chat with just about anyone, whether she's a rock musician, movie star, politician, or author. (Penenberg 188)

If the internet is viewed in such a way that it creates an equality among people with varying statuses, who all have to follow the same rules, this creates a level of accessibility that has only become a recent (within the last twenty years) phenomenon. While having a social media presence, as far as following the social etiquette set forth by the service, can be an equalizer, it should be noted that there still is a sort of additional set of standards that an academic must follow. For example, Steven Salaita was offered a job at the University of Illinois in October of 2013 as tenure track professor of American Indian Studies, which would start in the 2014-15 school year. However, in response to current events in the Gaza strip, he tweeted, "You may be too refined to say it, but I'm not: I wish all the fucking West Bank settlers would go missing," (Salaita). About a month later, he posted another tweet saying, "Every time my twitter feed updates, it seems there are new deaths in #Gaza. #Israel kills civilians faster than the speed of 4G," (Salaita). According to an article in the August 15, 2014 Chicago Tribune by Stephen Lubet, comments such as these caused his job offer to be revoked, as these comments were not protected under "academic freedom" due to not being officially hired.

This is not a situation that is unique to Salaita. In a Washington Post article, Valerie Strauss discusses how a University of Kentucky journalism professor, David Guth, had to take a leave of absence after tweeting (in response to the Navy Yard shootings in 2013), "The blood is on the hands of the #NRA. Next time, let it be YOUR sons and daughters. Shame on you. May God damn you" (Strauss). The article itself is more of a reflection on what is and is not protected by free speech, but it is clear from Salaita's and Guth's instances (among many others)
that while social forums like Twitter can be enjoyed by all, it may be a "be careful what you
tweet" situation.

While there is this idea of academic freedom, what are the limits of public scholarship in
the digital age based on such cases?

Section Five: What Business Can Teach

With all of the journals available to share information, why does the audience of these
articles still remain to be largely academic? They are purposefully structured so anyone
academics and others can read them, but often what is being written and how is quite different
than public writing. I have a few theories behind this, including that maybe the public doesn't
actually care what we're talking about or that they are more interested in what the sciences are
working on. However, I think there is a much more likely scenario in play, and it all comes back
to Google.

It's no secret that Google is so synonymous with search engines that the most common
way for people to tell someone to search for something online is to "Google it." It's also known
that Google's search parameters pick up the most popular search results to display first. What
this means is that academic articles have to compete with other writings on the subject unless
someone knows exactly what to type. There is "Google Scholar" of course, but this once again
leads to the more popular results, which sometimes means that a search will end with several of
the articles hidden behind a pay wall.

It is important to understand how Google works as a search engine, or at least have a
good idea of what it does. Most people are familiar with the idea that Google uses a special type
of "algorithm" or formula to determine what shows up in a search and in what order. There are
multiple articles dedicated to explaining how the Google algorithm works, but most of them echo
similar, if not the same, kinds of ideas. Jonathan Stickland, a senior writer for HowStuffWorks, explains that Google, like most search engines, uses programs called spiders (or crawlers) that search websites for the key word(s) that are entered by a user. These programs can search thousands (if not millions) of sites in the matter of a few seconds, and organize them in a specific order. According to Stickland, some of what Google uses to determine the order (also known as PageRank) are:

The frequency and location of keywords within the Web page: If the keyword only appears once within the body of a page, it will receive a low score for that keyword. How long the Web page has existed: People create new Web pages every day, and not all of them stick around for long. Google places more value on pages with an established history. The number of other Web pages that link to the page in question: Google looks at how many Web pages link to a particular site to determine its relevance. (2)

Stickland takes the time to specifically note that the third concept (the page links) factors in the highest when it comes to PageRank.

So what could be done to get more attention to what is already being done by academics in digital spaces? I came up with an idea for a potential solution that I am coining "business tactics." From a purely pragmatic standpoint, a university is a business. A university provides a service (higher education), pays employees to manage the customers (students), and it establishes its ethos by giving customers proof of what they have accomplished (a degree). To be honest, I actually don't like looking at a university this way because I love to learn and I honestly believe that many of the students here feel the same way. However, this cynical view of the education system isn't false at its core, so why not use it to our advantage?
What I am suggesting is not any questionable tactics in order to trick anyone. I am not suggesting that we change the names of articles to sound provocative to trick people into reading the journals, or clickbaiting. While perhaps the idea is not that new, the term is something that has only been discussed within the past couple years. In an article for *The Guardian*, author Steve Hind describes clickbaiting as:

> Clickbaiting is, at its core, about presenting a piece of content in the way that the media outlet thinks will maximize the number of people who see it. And to that end, it can be a really effective way to get the message across – and also lead readers to more worthy content. (Hind)

This method is usually employed by using a provocative headline and/or picture to get a reader curious about the content of the article. The more curious they can make the reader, the more likely they are to click on the article and share it (Google algorithm requirement #3).

In his article, Steve Hind tries to frame the idea of clickbait as being something that can be positive. While it is true that it can be positive if the reader is given content to match the title they are given, which is often not the case. It has gotten to the point where Facebook, as of August of 2014, has started to make an effort to limit the amount of clickbait that a user receives. In an article for *Forbes*, it was revealed that, according to a Facebook blog post, many users were frustrated that their feeds were overtaken by numerous "clickbait" news stories that it became hard to them to keep up with the reason why they are on Facebook in the first place, which is to keep in contact with friends and family (Chowdry). While perhaps a good idea in principle, clickbaiting is not something that should be adopted for academic journals.
I am not suggesting that the journals need to value certain stories so they will not be passed on in favor of others (submissions that don't fit with the theme of the periodical or don't fit in for the call for papers don't count). In short, nothing that is either unethical or "sketchy."

For the sake of clarification, there will be some discussion of "the competition" in this section, which will be defined as "non-academic publications" and not other scholarly journals. The goal of this business theory is to get what is already being written in the academic sphere more notice to the public; it is not to compete with our colleagues.

The first chapter provides a list of "Ten Ways to Stand Out from the Competition and Drive Customer Loyalty" (13). Using this list, along with different points from this book (and other sources), I'd like to offer a list of guidelines on what could be done to get more of a public eye on our work, and therefore more interest for both an audience and authors. This list is a representation of different concepts or strategies that a business could use to increase its customer base, and I will be looking at the list in its entirety. The reason for the full scrutiny is not to highlight just areas where the practices could be employed, but to emphasize what is already being done.

1. Meet an overlooked customer need.

Sarah Kendzior, PhD in Anthropology, covers the subject of academic articles being behind pay walls in a 2012 article for *Aljazeera* magazine (online). In her article, she points out several flaws in the academic publishing process, including students having to pay book prices ($19 and up) for articles, which can hinder the academic process. In fact, a quick search in Google for "academic writing paywall" yields a lot of complaints about the inaccessibility of many of these articles. This, of course, is not an exclusive practice of academia, but it's still a criticism.
2. Serve a specific and uncrowded niche.

This "way" is similar to the first one, but it's more about narrowing a focus to a specific type of person. While this would be a solid method for selling something (a product, service, etc.), I'm not sure this would be the way to go since the goal would be to get more mass appeal; in some regards, academics are already "a specific" niche. The best way for academics to serve a niche, however, is through the niche subjects within academia that have a parallel partner in public discourse. For example, *The Escapist* is an online journal that discusses gaming and "nerd" culture, and there are many people in English studies who write about that subject. *The Escapist* has an open call for writers, so perhaps a journal could "farm out" an editor to be a part of that niche crowd where they can not only discuss the medium, but link back to the journal he or she works for. While maybe "gaming culture" isn't exactly an uncrowded market to write about, this same principle could be used in practically any other genre.

3. Be willing to take risks.

One potentially risky idea could be to advertise in a more public forum, though that does beg the question of where to get the money for such advertisements. Another more realistic method could be to have/request that mainstay editors (or writers) write for established and credible publications outside academia, such as *The New York Times*, *The New Yorker*, *Forbes Magazine*, etc. This is, of course, all dependent on whether or not those periodicals want to have an academic voice on staff, but there are many sections to fill, and if that person becomes a popular or established writer in those areas, some readers will naturally check his/her background and discover the academic journals he/she works for. This could also address a concern that gaining readership is hard for academic articles due to the months or even years it can take for a piece to
be "publish ready;" the writer in the public sphere can be submitting "in the meantime" articles while the academic pieces are "the showcase."

There are a couple of risks to consider with this "outsourcing" method. The first is "wasted time," or that nothing comes from the excursion. However, if writers gain some positive notoriety for both their university and subjects of interest, then the risk is well worth the reward.

But what happens if a writer gains a following that is primarily negative? That could lead to bad press and a knee-jerk reaction against the academic market (a topic that is covered in chapter three). While that is a pretty significant risk, the potential positive outcome is worthwhile.

4. Position yourself as an expert in your industry.

Much like the second "way," which is something that we, as academics, already do/are, these journals are products of what scholars do for a living, and have spent many years engrossed in the subject. And much like the second number on this list, it's more about getting what we have to say out into the public sphere using our titles as academics. This can involve joining conversations on talk shows, interviews, news broadcasts, magazines, newspapers, or any other medium that is publically accessible.

5. Dedicate yourself to delivering excellent service.

For most journals, this is already a step that is being taken. The articles that are published are carefully looked over and edited by an editor/peer. Since the articles themselves involve research, readings, and/or talking to people who are experts in the area that is being written about, credibility of the information that is being provided is already there as well.

The main problem that online journals have is one that I discussed earlier—that some of them have a tendency to just vanish. It becomes hard for a reader to trust a source (or series of sources) that keep vanishing and/or closing. Part of providing excellent customer service is
letting them know that what they are enjoying today will be around tomorrow. Again, there are
many journals that already do this (Computers and Composition Online and Kairos), yet it can be
quite disconcerting when half of the sites on the WPA list for journal articles simply don't work
anymore due to changing their addresses or changing a host, such as when the site for the
Doctoral Consortium in Rhetoric and Writing needed to switch hosts, but the top searches led
readers back to the old site that was still up. Part of the responsibility of being reliable is letting
the audience know when these changes occur and to update information on a regular basis.

6. Find ways to reinvent existing operating models.

Again, this feels like something that is already being done by many academic journals, and it is
an added benefit of being a web-based periodical. Websites are constantly updated to work
better in different browsers and different devices, such as PCs, tablets, smart phones and even
MP3 players. This is assuming that the periodical has the right sort of sever space and that the
reader has a reliable internet/phone connection.

This also could work by adapting several kinds of things that "public journals" do, which
may include having the ability to hit a "share button" that allows an article to be shared across
social media. Sure, this can be done by simply copying and pasting a URL, but a share function
could provide a quicker response time to the entire process. Also, creating a share functionality
can help create more links, and the more links that are created, the higher chance a website has to
show up in Google's PageRank.

7. Offer something your competitors don't.

Credibility of articles can be an issue for some periodicals or news organizations in the public
sphere. Depending on who is asked, Fox News could be a factory of lies or the last remaining
stronghold of truth in news coverage. In the world of video game journalism, as of mid-August
2014, there is a struggle between journalist and the readers. Each side is blaming the other for the problems in the industry, with the journalists blaming the readers for being unreasonable and the readers accusing the journalists of withholding information and news they want to know about.

What our periodicals can offer would be a look at subjects, presented with research and thoughtful commentary. This is something that is, at least, naturally attempted and is already a byproduct of the publishing/peer-review system.

8. Be humble and authentic, in order to truly connect with your customers and employees. Because a common result to those submitting to an academic journal would be "revise and resubmit," being honest with the authors doesn't seem to be an issue. As far as the customers go, many academics use the articles published as sources for papers, monographs, or academic articles of their own, so it would appear that the audience trusts the information to be true, or at least credible.

An aspect that could be improved upon in the academic journal-sphere would be the interaction between the audience and the reader. One of the suggestions that Kazanjin puts forth in his chapter, "Let Customers Fuel your Growth," states:

The more you can do to let customers know how much you value their business, and the less you take away when the going gets tough, the more loyalty you'll build for when you turn the corner. The goodwill you can earn from taking care of customers—and employees—when they are hurting the most is immeasurable.

(208)

Using the distrust in journalism example from the previous "way," letting the readers know that their readership is appreciated is one of the best things a "business" can do. This could be
achieved by allowing comment sections on articles (some articles already have that built in),
having a reader feedback e-mail to contact (editor names and e-mails are available, but one for reader feedback may not hurt), or having special editions where the theme of the periodical is picked by the readers.

9. Always be on the lookout for potential opportunities.

Potential opportunities could have various meanings for an academic publication. One that I think could be helpful for the purpose of gaining more exposure would be to do a specialty issue with another publisher, perhaps one that publishes more in the public sphere. This could get the word out about what we are working on as well as advertise the periodicals. An example situation could be if the university has ties to a major news network like CNN through a broadcast journalism program. With an established relationship already intact, maybe having a meeting with the journalism program and then CNN about potential avenues would be acceptable. Or, perhaps more simply, being on the lookout for more interdepartmental opportunities within the university itself would yield results, such as working with the art department on a visual rhetoric style art show or the music program on a concert series that explores the meaning behind tone and lyrics.

10. Never rest on your laurels.

With the amount of research, collaboration, and quoting necessary to establish academic credibility (AKA building off the knowledge of those before us), education and the learning process is more eternal in ephemeral, so "resting on laurels" doesn't seem to apply here. John Dewey, the philosopher and psychologist, is often credited with the phrase, "education is not preparation for life, but life itself," though in reality, according to the Center of Dewey Studies at Southern Illinois University,
In his essay "Self-Realization as the Moral Ideal" (Early Works 4:50) Dewey writes, "...if I were asked to name the most needed of all reforms in the spirit of education, I should say: 'Cease conceiving of education as mere preparation for later life, and make it the full meaning of the present life.'" (South Illinois University)

It's important not to rest on one's laurels in that education itself is an ongoing process, so it would be quite difficult for people in the profession to simply not do the work or else education would become stagnant. However, perhaps realizing that education is not confined to academia and can be anywhere and everywhere would be a more useful attitude when it comes to writing for the public.

Out of all of the ways to "get our product" out there, the most viable concept that we aren't already doing is taking a risk. As stated before, there can be extreme consequences to a member of academia being a more public figure (though some people are), but with the benefits of gaining readership and (more importantly) a public understanding of what we want to accomplish, especially with the criticism of academia being locked away from the public.

There are kinds of texts that not all readers would be interested in reading, no matter if they are publically available or not. For example, there are discourse communities in English studies that focus on internal issues. In Patricia Duff's article, "Language Socialization into Academic Discourse Communities," she describes this kind of community as:

Academic discourse, and especially English academic discourse, has been examined from a number of theoretical perspectives over the past two decades in applied linguistics, particularly at the postsecondary level... socialization being
one of the more recent. Basic questions this latter work addresses are the following: How do newcomers to an academic culture learn how to participate successfully in the oral and written discourse and related practices of that discourse community? How are they socialized, explicitly or implicitly, into these local discursive practices? How does interaction with their peers, instructors, tutors, and others facilitate the process of gaining expertise, confidence, and a sense of authority over those practices over time? (Duff 169—179)

Subjects such as discourse communities may not hold the interest of or be of much use to a public audience. Since the purpose of this dissertation is to create an argument for academic discourse in public, discourse communities are an example that may not hold the public interest, and perhaps should be used sparingly in writings for public.

There are a multitude of methods and methodologies that could help increase success in the public domain, and while I can offer plenty of suggestions backed up with views and experiences of other scholars/writers, all of what I offer at this point is theory based. What that would mean, however, would be that the next step(s) would be to put these theories into practice, even on a smaller scale. Some examples could include:

- More hiring/tenure committees that decide to evaluate a candidate's work based on what they publish instead of how (print, digital, etc.)
- Those same committees, while maybe not ranking them as "as important," recognizing the value of public scholarship when reviewing a portfolio.
- An online journal finding a way to integrate a "share button" on its site.

As I have stated before, the changes that could happen with public scholarship (and digital works), would not have to replace any existing form of evaluations, but perhaps could be an
addition, or at least recognized as being some degree of important to an academe's repertoire/portfolio.

But how would someone go about being a part of the public sphere (beyond social media experiences)? There are already members of the academic community who commit to public scholarship in some regards, both to the advantage and disadvantage of academia as a whole. An in-depth analysis of four scholar's online presence is the focus of the next chapter, and it helps articulate the risks and rewards for being a public scholar.
Introduction: Freeing the Academy from Isolation

For the most part, much of what the academy produces remains in house, or is created for the purposes of the educators and those they teach. However, with the growing popularity of online/digital texts, more and more people have access to the work and research that is being conducted in English studies (as well as humanities as a whole). Still, there is a question on whether or not the public will truly understand what is being done in the name of academic study.

In his book, *Open Access and the Humanities*, Martin Paul Eve examines several possibilities for open-access education and what they mean to the humanities, though it can be argued that what he discusses could refer to academia as a whole. In his second chapter, entitled "Digital Economies," Eve states the following:

Indeed, arguments that the public will not always understand humanities research may, in some instances, be true. However, a growing proportion of the global population now receive a degree-level education, in which they are taught the skills to read humanities critically. If the process of a university education is one wherein access to such material is plentiful which one is inside but prohibitively expensive once flung into the wider world (academic books frequently cost £50 + and a single journal article can often fetch £40), it is clear that the academy may struggle to function efficaciously as a tool of social change. Social change, after all, must be executed immanently. It cannot be effected form an external, prestigious site that simply tells others what to do and think. Advocates argue
that open access could enhance the ability of the university to change society for the better. (Eve 53)

There are several important ideas that come from this passage. First of all, what Eve expresses is that academics should not concern themselves on whether the audience will "get" what they are talking about; there are more and more people out there who have gone to college and have "learned how to read and interpret academic languages."

The idea is to have faith in the audience and to not automatically assume that they just won't understand. In addition, a college level education is not always the benchmark for success and the best indication for intelligence either; plenty of people who either never finished college or never went at all are considered some of the world's most successful people, including (according to Leah Goldman's article for Business Insider, "The 15 Richest People Who Didn't Graduate from College"): Microsoft founder and multi-billionaire Bill Gates, CEO of Dell Inc. Michael Dell, and Oracle Software CEO Larry Ellison.

Secondly, and more importantly, there are many academics inhabiting English studies who support and wish to enact social change. However, according to Eve, expecting people to pay a lot of money for books and articles may not be the most productive way. It also wouldn't be good to simply tell people what to believe from a "position of power" and expect them to simply just listen. Most people need some form of evidence or at least more than someone's word to go along with what that person is saying. Open-access forums and mediums, then, could be the avenue that many academics, especially those who want to foster some form of change based on communication and action from the general public, may be looking for. The best part of this idea is that there are several scholars who already do so.
In this chapter, I will examine a total of five scholars and how they use public forums to their advantage when they want to share what they are passionate about. The first section will examine an incident that occurred in late 2014 and, as of January 2015, is still happening, and how two scholars have responded to the incident. The second section will demonstrate how three scholars share what they have learned/know using more broad topics. By examining all five of these figures, I will be able to point out common/successful trends between all of them and how they make public scholarship work for them, and possibly how it could work for those who wish to try their luck in the public eye.

**Section One: What I Learned from #GamerGate and Setting the Scene**

There are multiple topics that could be discussed when it comes to how a scholar can get into a public conversation; one such way is to be a part of a discussion that is happening all across many different public forums. Thanks to the availability and the widespread use of the internet, this may be the best medium to join such conversations, which can be achieved by having presences on social media (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, etc.), forum spaces, and websites (personal or professional).

While there are multiple ways to have a discussion on current events, the next step is locating a subject that either has some form of interest to the author or is in need of an academic voice, as well as what sort of academic voice (voice of reason, voice of knowledge/research, voice of authority on a subject). One example of a more recent internet topic that could use more voices on all types of academic voices would be the #GamerGate discussion. Please note that since the discussions involve the personal lives of real people, I will be discussing the situation using the language of critique. This way, I can try to make sense of the subject as objectively as
possible so I can then more easily point out how specific public scholars have reacted, and what the general public can expect from entering a conversation such as this.

To give a brief overview, #GamerGate revolves around the alleged censorship that is happening in gaming journalism. The inciting incident of the whole situation involved the ex-boyfriend of a female independent game developer creating a blog in which he described the many events that led to their breakup and why people in the independent games industry should be wary of working with her. One of the claims that was made was that she had an affair with five other people, but it was not the number of people that caused some people to be alarmed, but who some of these people were. One was a journalist who had covered her work, and one was the member of a judging panel of an independent games festival (in which her game won a prize). When members of various online communities tried to discuss the incident, many of them discovered the threads (conversations) were closed, mass amounts of comments were deleted, and people were banned for just bringing up conversations, and this includes web spaces that normally have a larger freedom of speech policy, like 4chan and Reddit.

This created a sort of Streisand Effect, or how the act of suppressing information (particularly in an online space) creates more of a story on a situation than if the suppression attempt had not occurred. Many in the gaming public saw this mass act of suppression as a sort of admission of guilt of nepotism between journalists and developers, causing them to start to organize a consumer revolt, which was united under the Twitter hashtag "#GamerGate," which was coined by actor Adam Baldwin in late August 2014.

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5 http://thezoepost.wordpress.com/

Along with the alleged censorship, there have been extreme responses on each side of the argument, which I will refer to as pro (support) and anti (don't support) GamerGaters. Some of these responses include, but are not limited to (antis on pro and vice versa):

- DoS (Denial of Service) or DDoS (Distributed Denial of Service) attacks on seemingly pro GamerGate websites\(^7\).
- Doxing, or posting someone's personal information online, various people involved; some alleged targets of this have included: developers, journalists, a charity, various pro GamerGaters, and a ten-year-old boy.
- Threats of violence (murder, sexual, and physical assault).
- (Successful) attempts for getting people who support one side or the other to lose their jobs through legitimate means (boycotting, letter writing to sponsors, etc.) but also through intimidation, falsifying claims, and harassment.
- Derailing conversations on both sides by using sexist, racist, and classist insults, as well as many other forms of logical fallacies.

In addition, there also seems to be a lot of confusion on what #GamerGate is actually about. The pro side of the debate views it as more of a consumer revolt against a corrupt system of game development and the journalists who report on it. Because the inciting incident that began #GamerGate involved the alleged relationships of a female independent game developer, the anti side views #GamerGate as an attempt to silence female voices from the field, and a front against feminism. Because of the strong/stubborn voices on both sides, not much is getting done because compromises are not being made.

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As of early 2015, the most commonly seen arguments in this conversation are fairly irrational, which means that there is a lack of genuine dialogue. Worse, people are being misrepresented with terms and labels that do not fit what they actually believe, such as many of the people on the anti side, who identify as feminists, being accused of racist and sexist behaviors themselves. Some of the more vocal anti siders use "straight white male" as an insult to any person who supports #GamerGate. This not only led to the invention of #GamerGate's parallel tag, #NotYourShield\(^8\), but also led to an incorrect view of feminism, which many of the anti #GamerGate identify as at least a part of their intellectual identity, as a movement that condones racism, sexism and objectification.

So what does this situation/movement have to do with academia and how does this relate to the subject of having academic voices in public spaces? #GamerGate is an example of what happens when there is a heated debate from people who have little to no accountability for their actions, whether it be the "anonymous collective" of the pro side or the "journalism side" of the anti. People are also using academic identities and methods in a way that is damning to the collective as a whole, with few voices in academia to correct or even converse with those who are abusing them. Situations like this only make everyone look bad, from the people who just want to play videogames to the social activists who just want more inclusion.

This does not mean, however, that there are no academic voices in play during this conflict. I will be exploring the responses of two feminist scholars as they respond to this issue: Christina H. Sommers and Samantha Blackmon. These two identify as both feminists and scholars, but enter the conversation at opposite ends of the argument. However, by examining the spaces they create, the language they use, and their interactions with the conversation as a

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\(^8\) This hashtag is invoked by people who support #GamerGate as a defense against people accusing them of being a "straight white male" when the person does not identify as at least one of those qualifiers.
whole, I hope to show how each of them approach this subject in a more fair and less biased manner. By analyzing how they react to the #GamerGate situation, I will use what I learned from them to then branch out to different scholars in different spaces and see how academics can fit into more public conversations.

It should also be noted that the purpose of examining each scholar is not to critique their work or challenge their place in academia (though certain critiques by others will be examined to, at least, examine how they are viewed by their academic peers), but to examine the spaces that they create using different mediums to reach a larger audience. Each scholar will be examined by using the following:

- A short bio on their academic/scholarly career (where they went to school, books/articles of note that have been published, and what they are currently doing from October—December 2014).
- A discussion of the space(s) they create (blogs, articles published in non-academic settings, videos, etc.).
- An examination of critiques launched by others in the field and whether those critiques, in the long run, affect the scholar's perception as a public academic.
- A discussion on why the spaces that have been created matter and what they have to offer as a part of academia as a whole.

The reason that I am examining these aspects in particular relates back to the "Ten Ways to Stand Out from the Competition and Drive Customer Loyalty" heuristic included in chapter two. Each of these aspects, whether it be the ethos the author creates, what they are discussing, and how they are doing it all go back to what attracts a larger audience. The more "popular" a
specific sort of text is in readership, the more the message(s) can be relayed, which is especially
good for those who wish to be a part of or enact social change like Eve suggests.

It should also be noted that not all scholars who are examined are in English studies,
though many of the scholars study subjects that are also explored in English; the more important
aspect of what I'm examining is not what field they are a part of, but the public conversations
they are taking a part of and what they do to foster these dialogues.

**Subject One: Christina H. Sommers**

Christina H. Sommers holds a doctoral degree in philosophy from Brandeis University
and was a professor of philosophy/ethics at Clark University\(^9\) from 1980 to 1999. As of October
2014, she is a resident scholar for the American Enterprise Institute where she studies feminism
and American culture, morality in American culture, and American adolescence.\(^10\) She has
published several books, including *Who Stole Feminism*, *The War Against Boys* and *The Science
on Women and Science*. According to her homepage, her textbook *Vice and Virtue in Everyday
Life* is a bestselling textbook in the field of ethics.

Sommers has two main methods of communication with larger audiences, with one being
Twitter and the other, and perhaps more importantly, YouTube. As a part of the American
Enterprise Institution's YouTube account, Sommers is the main host of a series called "The
Factual Feminist"\(^11\) where she discusses current event topics and how they relate to feminism,
such as #GamerGate. According to the YouTube playlist, the show is described as follows:

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\(^11\) [https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLytTJqkSQqr7BqC1Jf4nv3g2yDfu7Xmd](https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLytTJqkSQqr7BqC1Jf4nv3g2yDfu7Xmd)
The Factual Feminist video blog, hosted by Christina Hoff Sommers, covers all subjects related to feminist philosophies and practices. Christina and her #FactFem colleagues use a data-driven approach to the basic tenets of feminism and related topics. (American Enterprise Institution)

As far as the general audience is concerned, Sommers's videos seem to have an overall positive response to them. For example, one video she made called "What critics of GamerGate get wrong," has been seen by (as of December 2014) around 170,000+ people with an overall positive like ratio as seen in Figure 1. Her videos appear to be promoted through a combination of self-promotion, the built-in audience of AEI, and from being shared by those who agree (or even disagree) with the content of her videos.

![Figure 1. A screen capture of the statistics of Christina Sommer's #GamerGate video.](image)

Her most popular video, "Are Videogames Sexist?" is also the most popular video on the channel (which hosts several other programs beyond Factual Feminist), with over half a million views.

The biggest criticisms that Sommers receives come not just from her affiliation with #GamerGate, but from her working for the American Enterprise Institution, which is described as a "conservative think tank." Also, while many of her videos are about feminism, many of
them seem to be more of a critique or criticism on several feminist practices, which leads her to be labeled as "not a feminist." When someone doesn't agree with her videos, a common dismissal is that she is a "conservative anti-feminist." This line of reasoning is also present when examining some of her books, including *Who Stole Feminism?: How Women have Betrayed Women* and *The War Against Boys*.

Thanks to her presence in a public platform, however, Sommers has the opportunity to be in communication with the criticism and even respond back to it. In her video "Is there systematic wage discrimination against women?" Sommers answers questions by people who leave comments on her other videos (posted on YouTube). She directly responds to the criticism that she is conservative based on where she works and cites herself as a political moderate. She then encourages the viewer that skepticism is fine when first reading (or viewing) a text, but to actually read the content for the facts and message before jumping to conclusions.

Because of her videos and the stances that she takes, Sommers has also earned an affectionate nickname amongst many people in the gaming public as "Based Mom." One example of the gaming community showing appreciation happened sometime between October and November of 2014, after Christina Sommers's husband, Frederic, passed away (on October 2nd 2014). In order to show their support, someone set up the site dearbasedmom.com where over 1500 people sent her condolences on her loss\(^{12}\).

What is important about how Sommers uses YouTube to communicate with her audience is not only about the messages, but the overall tone and the way that she treats her audience. There are many people who discuss feminism (in games) by using an accusatory tone and by

\(^{12}\) http://www.dearbasedmom.com/
blaming the audience for the perceived problems that are being discussed\textsuperscript{13}. Sommers, however, presents her side of the argument, and then invites people to continue the conversation in the comments section. While there are some dissenting voices (as there tend to be on YouTube), many people carry on civil conversations and even thank her for presenting her side of the story. A telling comment that was left on her video about #GamerGate states (in Figure 2):

![Comment](image)

Figure 2. Comment made in Christina Sommer's video "What critics of GamerGate get wrong"

Regardless of whether or not someone agrees with what she's saying, it's clear that invites a wide audience to participate, and does so in a way that does not alienate a majority of those who see her videos.

While it may not seem important to have a relationship with an audience like Sommers, the exact opposite is true. In Kathleen Fitpatrick's "On Open Access Publishing," she describes what happens when an author/institution refuses to engage its audience:

> The problem, of course, is that the more we close our work away from the public, and the more we refuse to engage in dialogue with them, the more we undermine that public's willingness to fund our research and our institutions. Closing our work away from the public, and keeping our scholarly conversations private, might protect us from public criticism, but it can't protect us from public apathy, a condition that is, in the current economy, far more dangerous. This is not to say

\textsuperscript{13} Purposefully left vague as to not blame anyone specifically.
that such openness doesn't bear risks, particularly for scholars working in
controversial areas of research, but it is to say that only through open dialogue
across the walls of the ivory tower will we have any chance of convincing the
broader public, including our governmental funding bodies, of the importance of
our work. (Fitzpatrick)

Opening up work to the public is a scary prospect for academics; most people have a hard time
exposing themselves to criticism, especially online because the comments and criticisms can
evolve into something much nastier. However, the alternative is far graver, as it may cause
potential audiences to no longer care about what is being discussed. If the threat of losing
potential readers isn't enough, then the threat of losing funding because nobody is understanding
the work that is being done should be acknowledged as they have real implications for an
academic's reputation.

There is, of course, a potential issue when it comes Sommer's form of public scholarship
that needs to be addressed. Since she no longer works in a traditional academic setting,
Sommers has the luxury to make her videos as a part of her scholarship/job description.
However, this is not the sort of freedom that comes to many faculty members at a university.
Many professors are more concerned with creating texts and products that will lead to
promotion, tenure, and job security; they do not have the time to do something that many
academies might consider frivolous.

In a section of the National Education Association's website called "The Truth About
Tenure in Higher Education," the organization provides several myths and realities of the tenure
processes, before and after a faculty member receives it. Some of the statistics provided are that
only about a third of the faculty in a university department have tenure, with many departments
depending on part-time or adjunct faculty to take a bulk of the classes. This also means that
there is a trend that when universities hire a new faculty member, it is usually a position that
does not offer tenure. The article also states:

It's hard for demoralized faculty members, always conscious of their
vulnerability, to bring into the classroom the confidence and creativity necessary
for fine teaching. It's a double shame when part-time faculty are hired to teach
courses largely subscribed by part-time students and/or students with special
needs, the very students with the greatest need for instructors who are fully
connected to the institution and its resources. (National Education Association)

What this passage is suggesting is that many of the students who would benefit the most from a
creative/out of the box style of education aren't getting it because the instructors they do have are
more concerned about whether or not they will have a job in the following semester.

That is why how Sommers conducts herself in her videos and in her other more public
spaces really matters. Because she is willing to interact with her audience as well as address
criticisms and critiques, she is far more approachable and therefore the audience cares more
about what she has to say, and it's clear that many members of her audience respect her for
taking a stance for them when seemingly few will.

Subject Two: Samantha Blackmon

According to her Purdue page, Samantha Blackmon received her PhD from Wayne State
in 2001\(^\text{14}\) and is currently an Associate Professor at Purdue University. Her areas of academic
interest all fall under the rhetoric and composition "roof" of computers and composition,
African-American culture, lesbian studies, and women's studies. She is an editor for *The Writing*

\(^{14}\) http://www.cla.purdue.edu/ english/directory/?p=Samantha_Blackmon
Instructor and is on the advisory committee for Modern Fiction Studies (at Purdue). What she is most known for in the field, however, is the blog space that she created called Not Your Mama's Gamer. In this space, Blackmon discusses various aspects of gaming, including reviews and current events, but it mostly is about examining gaming through a feminist perspective.

In order to run the blog space, Blackmon works with various students from Purdue, both graduate and undergraduate, all of whom contribute posts/articles. In the "About" section, they have blurbs about each one of the contributors (including Blackmon) as well as their account information available for gaming platforms such as Xbox gamer tags, Steam\(^{15}\) accounts, and Playstation Network accounts. What's important about having these gaming names available is not only does it establish credibility as people who game, but it also shows a form of accessibility to the audience; hypothetically, after reading the blog, a reader could then play games with one of the contributors.

What makes Not Your Mama's Gamer stand apart from most gaming blogs (in general) is the inclusion of videos (the last one made in August of 2013) that include reviews and some play-throughs of various games. More importantly, there are over 80 episodes (as of November, 2014) of a podcast under the same name. Since 2011, the podcast has updated twice a month and it has covered a wide variety of subjects such as female characters, protagonists, and emotional responses to video game stories. In addition, each of the podcasts starts off with Blackmon and whomever else is on discussing what games they are currently playing (and what books they are reading) and discussing their overall experiences with them.

There are two main places that the Not Your Mama's Gamer podcast can be downloaded: directly from the blog’s main website and from the iTunes store. Because most people in the

\(^{15}\)Steam is a service that allows people to download and play various games on many platforms, but primarily on PC and MAC.
U.S. have some form of Apple device (phone, computer, MP3 player, etc.), having the podcast available on such a platform would be beneficial to reaching a wider audience. In the podcast store, the show holds a five-star rating with thirteen comments left, all of which are positive.

Much like Sommers, Blackmon's blog/podcast discusses #GamerGate as well. While Sommers openly supports #GamerGate, Blackmon finds herself on the other side of the debate than Sommers. On September 12\textsuperscript{th}, 2014, almost a month after #GamerGate's inciting incident, Blackmon wrote an article called "Come Together Right Now..." where she (indirectly) discusses the issues of being alienated in the gaming scene. She states:

Gamers have been coming together over games since the beginning of games, but somewhere along the way we forgot that. Gaming became less of a community space and more of a chance for excluding other folks. Oddly enough the folks who were being excluded have been there all along. Girls, minorities, queer folks...you name it. We’ve been here. But now we’re not welcome? Some say it’s because we want to destroy games. Believe it when I say that destroying games is the last thing that we want to do. We’re not new to games or new to thinking critically about games or wanting characters that look or behave differently/like us. The difference is that we are finally being heard. We have been coming together to talk about how great it would be to have a female/Black/Hispanic/Queer protagonist in a game since most of us first started playing games. It’s just that now is the first time that technology and social media have given us the voice to ask out loud in a tone that can actually be heard.

(Blackmon)
What is important about this passage is not only what she is saying but how she is describing it. Blackmon is expressing her concerns about her and people like her not feeling welcome in the gaming community. She describes the experiences and the concept in a non-judgmental tone; in other words, she does not blame the reader or any potential reader for the issues of discussion. When discussing something to a wider audience, it is important not to alienate or use language that potentially silences a reader, and Blackmon seems to have a strong understanding of how to enact this practice. It is the same basic idea for the two podcasts directly involving #GamerGate.

Blackmon, like Sommers, also interacts with her audience by responding to questions and comments left in the comment section of the blog space. For example, in her article "Don't Tell Me that my Game is Sexist," the following exchange occurs (in Figure 3):

![Figure 3. A series of comments made on Not Your Mama's Gamer made by a reader and Blackmon](http://www.samanthablackmon.net/notyourmamasgamer/?p=5797)

Blackmon directly talks with the commenter and even goes a little bit further into explanation on the importance of the subject. This is also important because this conversation was not a part of the original post, but actually became an extension of the main point. Keeping this open dialogue with the reader is a smart practice because creating a space that is safe for expression is vital to maintaining and gaining a wider audience.

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16 [http://www.samanthablackmon.net/notyourmamasgamer/?p=5797](http://www.samanthablackmon.net/notyourmamasgamer/?p=5797)
Though Blackmon's style of writing is inviting to readers, as is most of the contributors, there are a couple whose tone can be interpreted as alienating. While it is understandable that many people on the "anti" side of the #GamerGate argument are frustrated with the idea of alienation, some of the contributors adopt an accusatory tone and have resorted to name calling. For example, in one of the #GamerGate articles, the author "respectfully asks a commenter to stop posting in her articles" after a commenter provided a thoroughly written counter-point to the article in question because this person "talks a lot and never listens;" she also tells the commenter that s/he has "warped, incredibly sexist (and nonsensical) opinions." This is especially disconcerting because this kind of response will not only push away that commenter, but any other ones as well when they see that the author is not willing to participate in discussion\textsuperscript{17}. This same author, in another article, tells people who support #GamerGate that they have "fucked themselves," that they need to "reflect on how fucked up their movement is" and makes a clear distinction that those who support #GamerGate are not "academics" buy addressing both groups separately\textsuperscript{18}.

This kind of rhetoric is just as concerning as when people on the pro-side accuse feminism of being a hate group against men. This kind of tone can alienate potential readers and it has its own potential to be problematic with how information is being presented. A clear "Us VS Them" scenario is being created, and if that's the case, then the kind of environment being created is one without compromise or conversation. The tone of what is being discussed automatically pushes away half the members of a conversation as the villain. This sort of scenario is what Fitzpatrick warned against when she discusses "public apathy." Because what

\textsuperscript{17} http://www.samanthablackmon.net/notyourmamasgamer/?p=6005

\textsuperscript{18} http://www.samanthablackmon.net/notyourmamasgamer/?p=5890
was once a more open forum has been taken away from them, they may find themselves caring less and less about what is being said until they no longer read or listen and leave with a negative opinion or, even worse, no opinion at all. Blackmon's writing has the ability to create a conversation that the readers want to be a part of, which is a large component of getting rid of public apathy.

**Where Sommers and Blackmon Meet:**

Despite being on opposite ends of a heated debate, there are quite a few similarities between Blackmon and Sommers when it comes to how they present their conversations to a public audience. Both of them create a digital space that invites commentary, but actively encourages the audience to participate in the actual conversation. They establish their ethos as credible members of their discipline, but they don't hold it over the heads of their audience in a manner that suggests that everything that they say is absolutely infallible.

To relate back to the "Ten Ways to Stand Out from the Competition and Drive Customer Loyalty," the tone that Sommers and Blackmon create help to support spaces where they meet "customer" needs. Customers and readers, for the purposes of this project, are similar because they are looking for a satisfying product that isn't too complicated. It should be noted that a reader is more motivated by the pursuit of the knowledge a text can provide while a customer is looking for a general need or want. With those comparisons in mind, the needs Blackmon and Sommers meet are:

- **Meet an overlooked customer need**

Sommers addresses the points of view of a male audience that is constantly being vilified in the media and by certain scholars, while Blackmon addresses the needs of an often-forgotten group of people when it comes to gaming and stories in games.
• Be willing to take risks

Instead of focusing in on a much safer academic audience, Blackmon and Sommers have clearly taken a risk in presenting their discussions to not only a public space, but in one where there is the potential for harsh criticism, trolling (also known as intentionally antagonizing, usually through a comment section), and even harassment.

• Position yourself as an expert in your industry

Anyone can purchase a URL and web space, so one of the first things that people learn about going online is to be suspicious about what they read. Most first year composition teachers teach their students how to discern what online sources are more credible than others, and the site types that are considered the safest are ones with "gov" and "edu" endings to the websites articles and/or writing is found on. Unless published in an online journal hosted by a university, how can a scholar show they are a credible source? In Miriam J. Metzger's article, "Making Sense Of Credibility On The Web: Models For Evaluating Online Information And Recommendations For Future Research," various people (students and non-students) were given a series of questions over the course of several years on how to evaluate websites. The qualifications for a "good website" were:

• Check to see if the information is current.

• Consider whether the views represented are facts or opinions.

• Check to see that the information is complete and comprehensive.

• Seek out other sources to validate the information.

• Consider the author's goals/objectives for posting information.

• Check to see who the author of the website is.

• Look for an official "stamp of approval" or a recommendation from someone you know.
• Check to see whether the contact information for that person or organization is provided on the site.

• Verify the author's qualifications or credentials (Metzger 2080).

While listed in order that people answered most likely to do (the top being the most likely and the bottom the least), each one of these suggestions are all valid when checking the validity of the author's ethos.

For example, both Sommers and Blackmon introduce themselves as doctors and discuss where they work as a way to establish credibility about the subjects that are being explored. They also converse with their audience in ways that not only follow through with the comments on their texts, but build upon them in meaningful ways. Blackmon reminds her audience that she is a gaming scholar and talks about what games she's been playing, while Sommers refers to herself as "the Factual Feminist" to reinforce the point that what she is looking at are the facts. Both of them discuss current events as they come up, and while much of what they discuss can be considered opinion, they do their best to follow up with evidence when applicable.

• Find ways to reinvent existing operating models.

Blogs, whether they be textual, auditory or video, are not new mediums and are especially not new mediums for academic discourse. However, both Sommers and Blackmon use the existing models of digital blogging and add something which can sometimes make a huge difference when it comes to attracting an audience, such as the ease of implementing images and graphs. Sommers uses the primarily entertainment based YouTube to discuss a more academic subject while Blackmon uses the podcast space to do the same. While each medium can be used as an educational tool, often comments are either closed or there is no conversation; there is only a
person talking at the audience. Sommers and Blackmon invite audience feedback and comments, which is fairly rare in both mediums.

- **Be humble and authentic, in order to truly connect with your customers and employees**

Previous evidence presented shows that both Blackmon and Sommers have an open relationship with their audiences. By keeping lines of communication open and not asserting too much authority over their readers, they are able to connect with the readers and therefore are more open to a wider conversation. Sommers reads what her audience says about her and responds and "re-tweets" what people say to her. Finally, while this cannot be said for all of the contributors in Blackmon's blog, most of the other writers seem to follow Blackmon's example of being open with readers who agree with what is being said and courteous to those who do not.

- **Never rest on your laurels**

Christina Sommers has been in/making videos on YouTube since June of 2013, and Samantha Blackmon has been updating her blog since December 2010, and her podcast since January 2011. Both of these scholars' shows are still ongoing and updating their b/vlogs and providing new content that is also current with the landscape of the subjects they are discussing.

Both of these scholars use their mediums in simple, yet innovative ways to reach a wide variety of readers/listeners/viewers; not only that, but each one has benefited from the risks that they have taken. While she has received many criticisms on her work for a "conservative think tank," Sommers has also gotten the respect of her audience, making her videos the more highly viewed ones on the AEI YouTube channel. During the *Computers and Writing* conference in 2012, Samantha Blackmon and Alex Layne received the 2012 Computers and Composition Michelle Kendrick Award for Digital Scholarship for their work on *Not Your Mama's Gamer*
from her peers who recognized its importance to composition studies. Each blog has created an encouraging space for debate and conversation, and though Sommers' *Factual Feminist* may appeal to more of a public crowd while *Not Your Mama's Gamer* may be more focused on academic conversations, both spaces are open to discussion and are good examples of how people in academia interact with different public.

Both examples that I have examined so far have had something to do with #GamerGate—gaming culture and feminism, but what about those who have created spaces beyond these topics? There are, of course, many people who are currently and formerly in academia who create spaces like Sommers and Blackmon have, and they have benefited from their status and the public space.

**Section Two: Public Academics on a Broader Scale**

If blogging and other forms of digital production are good for sharing discussions of feminism and gaming with public audiences, what about other more broad subjects, such as rhetoric or academia as a whole? In this next section, I will examine the works of three more scholars who wrote and write for the public spheres about broader academic subjects. Much like what was done for Blackmon and Sommers, the point of the following section is to see what is already being done, what sorts of conversations already exist, and where new conversations can arise.

**Subject Three: Michael Bérubé**

When this project was only being materialized, I ran the idea of reading academics' public scholarship to my colleagues at Bowling Green State University. I got many useful suggestions from everyone, but over and over again, they suggested that I take a look at Michael
Bérubé's work, particularly his blog. It was, by far, the most suggested course of action I received, but why?

Michael Bérubé began teaching in 1989 at the University of Illinois, and then moved to Penn State in 2001. At Penn State, he held the position of the Paterno Family Professorship which he held until 2012; he resigned from this position due to, as he called it, "the Jerry Sandusky serial-child-rape scandal." He does still work at Penn State, however, as the Edwin Erle Sparks Professor of Literature and the Director of the Institute for Arts and the Humanities. Bérubé also served as the president of the MLA from 2012—2013.

As for his publications, Bérubé is a distinguished scholar in English studies. Some of his books include *Public Access: Literary Theory and American Culture Politics* in 1994 and *What's Liberal About the Liberal Arts Classes? Classroom Politics and "Bias"* in 2006. It should also be noted that the book he wrote in 1996, *Life As We Know It: A Father, A Family, and an Exceptional Child*, was the 1996 "Notable Book of the Year" for the *New York Times* and made the best books list published by NPR. He was also a past president of the MLA.

While he has done a lot of work in academia, Bérubé regularly writes for many periodicals in the public sphere, such as *The New Yorker, Harper's, The Village Voice* and *The New York Times*. One article that he wrote was in 2011 for the *New York Times* and involved his opinion on the Jerry Sandusky scandal. The article explores his feelings on the event itself, but is more of an assurance to an outraged audience and to express the legitimate shock that something like a football coach taking advantage of children could even occur (let alone at his

19 [http://theconversant.org/?p=5065](http://theconversant.org/?p=5065)
21 [http://english.la.psu.edu/faculty-staff/mfb12](http://english.la.psu.edu/faculty-staff/mfb12)
home school of Penn State). An article like this is important because, especially considering the timing, it helps create a layer of transparency to hear from someone who works at the university and it helps keep an open dialogue about is going on in the wake of such a scandal. When an event of this magnitude occurs, it's easy (and understandable) that many people would be upset and would take their anger out on the university as a whole. He ends the article by stating,

The principle of "shared governance" is the least well understood aspect of academic freedom, and as a result, it is honored chiefly in the breach. But if the administration is serious about restoring shattered trust at Penn State, it must start by trusting its own faculty; and we faculty members — invisible so far, too stunned and depressed to speak — must work with the administration to repair what Mr. Sandusky and his enablers have destroyed. (Bérubé)

This article not only shares Bérubé's opinion on the event, but also expresses how the rest of the faculty have reacted; they feel embarrassed about what had occurred and they had yet to speak out. It also outlined what would have to be done in order for the university, the administration, and the faculty to fully recover from the scandal's damage. Bérubé's writing also addresses one of the top concerns with this case, and that is the faculty and most of the staff at the university were not Sandusky's enablers. This sort of thinking and strategy is important to discuss in the academic sense as well as for a public to see, especially if they are concerned about the goings-on in a particular setting.

While Bérubé has published many articles and it would be possible to go more in-depth on many of them, the focus on for this project is going to be the blog that Bérubé kept until 2010, which he referred to as American Airspace. According to the archives, the first blog post

was made in 1985; it's hard to discern whether or not anything was actually posted in 1985, but this is more than likely Bérubé having a bit of fun (the tagline of the blog also states "I invented blogging in 1985"). It could also be interpreted that Bérubé is having some fun with his 1993 entry as well. The blog's true content begins in January of 2004, and it continues on an almost daily update schedule until October 2010.

Much like Sommers and Blackmon, Bérubé's blog is significant because it demonstrates a variety of different subjects, but more importantly, it demonstrates how to use a lighter, more conversational tone in non-academic space. When thinking about academic writing, humor is something that rarely comes into question without it being about the theory or rhetoric of humor. However, some of those theories can be useful in explaining why Bérubé's tone is so important. In Meyer's article, "Humor as a Double-Edged Sword: Four Functions of Humor in Communication," he describes an important role that humor plays as follows: "Although humor always can serve several purposes, the merit of humor function definitions rests on their clarity in explaining phenomena as well as their simplicity," (Meyer 324). Bérubé uses humor to make the subjects he explores more accessible and easier to understand, which means that his writing has the potential to reach a larger audience.

While not "English related" all the time, Bérubé covers a wide range of academic style topics, including discussions about colleagues and (United States) politics. What makes his blog accessible, however, is the tone and wording that he employs. One such example would be his post on April 27th, 2009, titled "Neither Arbitrary Nor Fun Friday: Truth and Consequences Edition!" The title alone demonstrates a playful nature not only from its use of an exclamation point at the end, but also the slight variation on of the regular expectations on "Fun Friday." The opening sentence of the post reads as follows:
Greetings Chávezian Airspacepeople! Now that Presidente Chávez has rounded up the teabaggers and assorted dead-enders in state-of-the-art Radical FEMA Pedagogy Camps, it's time to talk about taking the next step. Yes, that's right, we're going to complete the Third-World Latin-Americanization of the nation by forming a Truth Commission to investigate the use of torture by the former U.S.!

(Bérubé).

The subject that Bérubé is discussing is quite grim, which is the use of waterboarding to "interrogate" suspected terrorists back in the early 2000s. However, there are several ways that Bérubé approaches this subject to those who follow (then) current events, and it's the tone that makes it far more accessible to a wider audience.

The first part of the opening paragraph more than likely refers to activist Cesar Chávez, who was an activist for many causes, including worker's rights and immigration. Also, the link provided with the phrase "Third-World Latin-Americanization of the nation" which goes into the event in a little more detail (the potential prosecution of members of the George W. Bush administration for the torture acts). However, despite the heavy subject matter, Bérubé keeps the tone rather light. From reading, it is clear that the tone of the post is both sarcastic and satirical in nature with an overall goal of poking fun at the situation.

The rest of the post is essentially a "pros and cons" list of creating a Truth Commission in the United States, but it keeps with the promise of the first few paragraphs that this list will be making fun of the situation. For example, the first pro, or plus as Bérubé calls it, states, "Plus: The Truth Commission would restore the rule of law and put a decisive end to the era of systematic torture in the Cheney Archipelago of secret detention sites," while the accompanying minus states: "Minus: The Truth Commission would not be bipartisan, and thus would make
David Broder cry" (Bérubé). The purpose behind this sort of tone is probably twofold. First, a tone of sarcasm and a general light hearted demeanor does not lessen or trivialize the subject, but it does make it a bit less horrifying to think about, and therefore easier to either read (or write about). Secondly, the use of satire make sense of world events is not something that is new; television shows such as *The Daily Show* and *Saturday Night Live* have been making fun of the news for years. His writing, at least in tone, is reminiscent of humorist Dave Barry, who also writes about his family and events he has experienced.

The biggest issue with Bérubé's blog is one that was brought up in its description; it no longer updates. Especially due to the topical nature of much of the blog posts (i.e. contemporary politics), this causes much of what was written to become dated with every passing year. However, Bérubé updated his blog, at least, several times a week for around six years, which is quite a long time, especially considering the ephemeral nature of texts posted online. Instead of focusing on the content of how it related to current events, Bérubé's blog could serve a better purpose of how to speak with an audience using humor and insight. It's not what he wrote, but how he wrote it, that makes for a great case study for the potential of humorous public scholarship.

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Much like Sommers and Blackmon, Bérubé's blog meets many needs that would draw in or keep an audience satisfied. Bérubé is well respected in rhetoric studies, and holds and has held several high-standing positions in the field, but in his blog, he does not present himself as the "end all be all" when it comes to the subjects being covered. Similar to Blackmon and Sommers, Bérubé appears to have respect for not only the subjects he is writing about, but the people he is (and potentially) writing for.
Some of the needs that Bérubé meets, according to "Ten Ways to Stand Out from the Competition and Drive Customer Loyalty," are as follows:

- **Serve a specific and uncrowded niche**

While political satire may not be an "uncrowded niche," it is certainly a specific one. Most of the time, the satire falls on the "left" of the political spectrum, but thanks to the tone it doesn't feel like it would be alienating to people of varying political beliefs.

One subject that has yet to be discussed, however, is that beyond the blog's political content, Bérubé discusses being a parent to child with special needs, which was a major force of the earlier iteration of the blog. Several blog posts are dedicated to what is going on with his son with Down syndrome, Jamie. One such article is his January 19th, 2010 article titled, "Reasonably Accommodating," in which Bérubé discusses how happy he is about his son getting his first job. One such quote reads,

> Wish him good luck! He’s very excited about this, as you might imagine. And since it’s a paying job, he’ll have his mind on his money and his money on his mind. What should he do with his first paycheck? I think he should take his parents out to dinner, don’t you? (Bérubé)

The tone in this passage, along with the rest of the post, has a lot of pride behind it for his son's accomplishment, which is a constant theme for many of the articles written about his son; it is this pride that can be useful to those who also have children and/or other relatives with some sort of handicap because it shows them that there is no reason to be ashamed and that, in fact, the exact opposite is true.

There is a specific reason to examine Bérubé's "non-academic" post about his family (among other subjects), and that has to do with how what goes on in someone's personal life
effects the professional one (the academic's full life). This idea is explored in an article called "The personal and professional selves of teachers: stable and unstable identities" which has an opening passage that reads:

In much educational literature it is recognized that the broader social conditions in which teachers live and work, and the personal and professional elements of teachers' lives, experiences, beliefs and practices are integral to one another, and that there are often tensions between these which impact to a greater or lesser extent upon teachers’ sense of self or identity. If identity is a key influencing factor on teachers' sense of purpose, self-efficacy, motivation, commitment, job satisfaction and effectiveness, then investigation of those factors which influence positively and negatively, the contexts in which these occur and the consequences for practice, is essential. (Day 601)

Bérubé sharing with his audience the importance of his family life, particularly his relationship with his son, provides a reader with some transparency on multiple aspects of his identity. Him choosing to divulge to his audience that part of his identity as that of a vocal parent with a child with special needs shows the reader how he may approach many subjects with the same gusto.

- **Dedicate yourself to delivering excellent service**

As previously stated, Bérubé updated his blog at least several times a week for over six years. When people read or enjoy a digital text of some sort, they are lucky if it updates weekly, and even luckier if the text doesn't unceremoniously just stop. Even if the post was not too long or involved, Bérubé was consistent with his updating to the point where he could really earn trust in his audience.
• **Offer something your competitors don't**

While many people can discuss "academic" subjects with truth, facts, and sincerity, it takes quite a lot of effort to actually do so in a "tongue-in-cheek" manner. While Bérubé certainly doesn't just stick to a funny tone for his entire blog (in fact, his final blog entry is a dedication to a friend/colleague who died suddenly), the use of sarcasm and wit help not only to make his point, but also to demonstrate a knowledge of the subject. Satire/parody are not new concepts, but it's not something that is often associated with academia.

• **Be humble and authentic, in order to truly connect with your customers and employees**

In his final blog post (October 15, 2010), Bérubé discussed the passing of his friend, Tim Buckley, from the previous March. Before sharing the passages that he wrote about Buckley, Bérubé wrote out this final paragraph of his blog:

> I wrote the following tribute to Tom back in July, and have been waiting ever since for the right moment to post it. (After I got Nita’s permission, of course.)

> I’ll leave it up until the end of the month, and then, just like back in aught-seven, I’ll draw the curtain over the blog and leave the archives here for Blog Archivists of the Future. Thanks once again to everyone who stopped by this humble blog since its humble origins in 1985—it’s been lovely to meet you all. I’ll be seeing you now and then at Crooked Timber or in a comment section yet to be determined. (Bérubé)

In his final paragraph, he talks about his friend, mentions his friend's wife, and states that it was a great opportunity to meet and talk to new people using this blog space. Though this is the last of his posts, this sort of attitude permeates throughout the entire collection of posts, and it is clear that Bérubé has a lot of respect not only for his subjects, but for the readers as well. While not a
necessary thing for public scholars to do, it is an appreciated sentiment for the readers; this concept, once again, refers back to the idea stated by Day (et al.) about how what happens in the private life effects the scholarly one.

Examining what Bérubé, along with Blackmon and Sommers, have done in the name of public scholarship is important for several reasons. First of all, each scholar has demonstrated (past and present) how respecting the audience they intend to write for is not only a courtesy, but vital to make a connection with them in some way or regard. From the way they write and speak, they seem to trust that their audience is informed and interested. Second, all three situate themselves as members of, or formally of, academia and use their backgrounds to establish credibility; however, they never use those backgrounds to suggest that they know more than their audiences. Thirdly, and finally, each one has found a different way to communicate to their audiences (Sommers though video, Blackmon through reviews and analysis, and Bérubé through insight and satire), which illustrates that there are multiple methods for sharing what they have learned and what they think with a larger and wider audience.

What Sommers, Blackmon, and Bérubé have done is important to the concept of public scholarship because they are not only stretching the idea of what it means to write in these spaces, but to allow themselves as the writer to become part of the narrative. While it may not seem like it directly relates to all three scholars at first, Matthew S.S. Johnson discusses the role of writing spaces in his article for Computers and Composition on writing for gaming culture by stating:

Gamers, motivated by seemingly simple "play," participate in an enormous number of writing activities, creating a diverse body of texts: gamer-authors write
online journals (from both player-characters' and gamers' perspectives), strategy
guides, walkthroughs, fanfiction, and blogs. They also participate in gaming
forums and other online discussions and create their own web sites. Gamer-
authors then exchange, post, share, discuss, and revise their texts, creating gaming
communities that then recruit new members. I argue that individually, gamer-
authors foster their own senses of agency through active participation in and
frequent contribution to gaming communities in the form of written texts.
Collectively, they not only gain influence over other gamers participating in
games or game-related community projects, but also over the production
companies who produce the software that originally inspired them. (Johnson 271)

Blackmon fits the best with Johnson's assertions as her blog is about her (and her other writers')
experiences with gaming and gaming culture, so putting themselves and their experiences
directly in the texts they write adds agency to their conversations as gamers and scholars of
gaming. Sommers, on the other hand, doesn't claim to be a gamer, but still has a spot in the
rhetoric of gamers by directly interacting with gamers on a cultural and intellectual level.
Bérubé, however, has written little to nothing on gaming. Still, the above passage from Johnson
on gamers can be analyzed on many parallels to gaming to those who appreciate and consume
texts from different genres. In Bérubé's case, he often writes about (United States) politics in a
publicly available manner, and many people discuss politics in forums and write opinions on
many political events, which actually can have an effect on policies, political figures, and current
events.

While all three of these scholars provide examples of how public scholarship can be
effective in sharing with an audience what is being done by academics as people with passions
that are beyond scholarship, it is important to note that these people are not the only ones who are a part of the public/academic sphere. Bérubé, Blackmon, and Sommers each demonstrate the good that can be done to foster a relationship between public and academic interests, but it is simply not the case for everything that is written/published, as the next scholars illustrate.

**Subjects Four and Five: Stanley Fish and Rebecca Schuman**

Before getting deeper into the public work these two scholars have done, it is important to establish the following: this examination of Fish and Schuman is not to criticize or demonize anything that they have done, but is merely a demonstration of (other) conversations that are happening by people with academic backgrounds. I am also not stating that the conversations they create/engage in are not needed or unnecessary and this is in no way a criticism of their work or ideas. What I hope to do in the following sections is to highlight the conversations that are being created, and to discuss how to either join in them or to (at least) discuss them further.

Stanley Fish is a well-known scholar with backgrounds in both English and Law. According to his bio:

Professor Fish is one of this country’s leading public intellectuals, and a world-renowned literary theorist and legal scholar. He began his academic career in the English department at the University of California, then became the Kenan Professor of English and Humanities at Johns Hopkins University, where he taught from 1974 to 1985, before becoming Arts and Sciences Professor of English and Professor of Law at Duke. He was dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences at the University of Illinois from 1999 to 2004. Professor Fish is a prolific author, having written over 200 scholarly books and articles. Professor
Fish is a contributor to "The Opinionator" blog for The New York Times.

("Stanley Fish")

While his background is academia is impressive, it should be noted that the bio opens up identifying Fish as "a public intellectual," which could indicate that his status as being a public scholar is the more important identity to him.

Meanwhile, Rebecca Schuman has a PhD in German, though she does have a Masters of Fine Arts in creative writing (fiction). While Fish's bio does mention what he has done in academia, Schuman's is more scarce on those details. Though it is a bio for Vitae, which is a scholarly publication and job searching site, what is stated in the bio is still telling about where she situates herself as a member of academia. It states:

I am a columnist for Vitae, here to treat the academic job market with the gravitas, authority and sobriety it deserves—by which I mean: none. My recurring column, Market Crash Course, provides a dose of real talk and gallows humor during the academic hiring cycle, a time where self-censorship, anxiety, and all-pervasive feelings of worthlessness can make even the most stable of us into unrecognizable monsters, just like the one I described in "My Academic Metamorphosis," or emotional trainwrecks, like I was in "Thesis Hatement." Although I adjunct five courses per year at the University of Missouri-St. Louis, I consider myself a "post-academic" hellraiser, truth-teller, and all-purpose blabbermouth. (Schuman)

Like Fish, her current identity has to do with someone who is a former member of academia as well as a public writer for several well-known (digital) periodicals and social media like Twitter. While she still identifies being, at least, current with academia (the classes that she teaches), she has made a clear distinction that she writes for the public.
While the previous scholars were examined (for the most part) separately, there is a reason I decided to talk about Fish and Schuman together, and that is the overall subject matter of what they write about. While Sommers and Blackmon have both written on similar subjects such as #GamerGate, they still have overall different goals (Sommers supported #GamerGate while Blackmon did not). Bérubé had the goal of discussing events and politics with more of a humorous, but no less intelligent, lens. Fish and Schuman, however, have similar goals in their writing, and that is a heavy critique of academia.

By examining the titles of most of their articles, it is fairly clear that they publically write about problems or critiques of academia in parts and in whole. When reading their bios, neither Fish or Schuman identifies first and foremost that they are or were academics. In Fish's bio, it states that he has written books and articles, but only his work for The New York Times gets a specific nod. Schuman directly states that she is done with academia, that the titles of her books (particularly Thesis Hatement) suggest a view of criticism, and that she describes herself as both a "truth-teller" and a "hellraiser" (the position of these descriptions suggest that it is directed towards academia and is a part of her brand).

An example of Fish's writing about academia is his June 2013 post called "A Case for Humanities not Made." In this article, Fish discusses the writings of David Brooks and Verlyn Klinkenborg and how they are describing the decline in humanities at the university level. He spends most of the article reviewing what each author had written in a strong critical tone. At one point, he writes:

The report promises to show the way by making the case in general and suggesting some specific actions that might be taken.
The promise is not redeemed, and I predict that this report — laden with bland commonplaces and recommendations that could bear fruit only in a Utopia — will be dutifully noted by pious commentators and then live a quiet life on the shelf for which it was destined. (Fish)

It is clear that Fish is not holding back any pleasantries and is giving his blunt appraisal of the report. He finishes his overall thoughts on the situation by stating:

That of course is precisely how the academy, and especially the humanist academy, has traditionally been conceived — as a cloistered and separate area in which inquiry is engaged in for its own sake and not because it yields useful results. It is the rejection of this contemplative ideal in favor of various forms of instrumentalism that underlies the turn away from the humanist curriculum. The rhetoric of the report puts its authors on the side of that ideal, but when push comes to shove, they are all too ready to dilute it in the name of some large abstraction — democracy, culture, social progress, whatever. They are, in short, all too ready to depart from the heart of the matter. (Fish)

An important distinction is that he makes a clear distinction that humanities, and perhaps academia as a whole, have clearly set themselves apart from "the real world" (much like the "ivory tower" metaphor that Fitzpatrick described earlier) and come up with theories and ideas that would only work there, if at all.

While Fish takes a more direct approach, Schuman seems to use more humor and sarcasm in her work. Though she writes for *Vitae*, a site largely written for academics and those looking for jobs in academia, she has a large archive of her work for *Slate*, such as her September 2014 post called "Why Your Cousin With a Ph.D. Is a Basket Case: Understanding
the Byzantine hiring process that drives academics up the wall." Already, the title itself implies a playful nature to the subject of the hiring process for post-PhD students. Just because the article is funny, however, doesn't make it less poignant to Schuman or her audience. Using this mythical "cousin" as an example of the application situations that many people find themselves in, she states:

So after your cousin has assembled his dossiers, and submitted them, and followed up with his overtaxed recommenders, he waits until December, when interview requests start trickling in—or don't. Because of the sheer number of candidates applying for precious tenure-track jobs, a common reaction to the receipt of one of these meticulously crafted (and expensively mailed) 40-page dossiers is a deafening silence; most candidates learn they will not be interviewed by checking crowdsourced discipline wikis, AKA the corner of the Internet where dreams go to die. And, of course, the realization—upon procuring five, two, or zero interviews—that one has spent the better part of the past decade dedicating oneself to a specter of a noncareer also tends to coincide with Christmas, otherwise known as peak aunt-and-uncle Why don't you just work at Stanford? time. (Schuman)

She is clearly having fun writing this article, as is evident from using such phrases as "the corner of the Internet where dreams go to die" and the expression of disappointment from the aunt-and-uncle characters about the cousin not working at Stanford. However, much like with how Bérubé approached his writing, Schuman is using humor to make a point; in this case, it's how no matter how prepared an applicant can be, the way hiring is set up will lead to what is an ultimately disappointing and frustrating experience for everyone involved.
Though both are highly critical of academic practices (and for different reasons), it is
clear that both Schuman and Fish care about what goes on in academia. For example, for every
article that Schuman wrote about "Why Your Cousin is a Basket Case," she also wrote one called
"Your Professor Isn't a Lazy Luddite," where she addresses to students (specifically) that just
because a course or a classroom doesn't use the latest technology isn't a sign of institutional
laziness. For every one of Fish's "A Case for Humanities not Made," there is a "Favoritism is
Good" where he discusses that the idea of favoritism doesn't mean that people believe in the
work that is being done by a person, but the person themselves is what makes them something
special. While not an example that Fish gives, Bérubé's works would be an example of what
Fish is describing. Both Schuman and Fish appear to have an appreciation of academia, but are
more comfortable pointing out the flaws.

What Fish and Schuman have to say about academia is equally as important as what
Bérubé, Blackmon and Sommers have expressed as well. While it is rare for people to enjoy
criticism, it is just as equally valid and important of an approach as praise. The problem with
these two kinds of scholarship/writing, however, is that they don't appear to be in complete
conversation with each other. The last of Fish's work for The New York Times seems to have
been in late 2013 and Bérubé does not blog anymore, but what can be done for the current (as of
January 2015) writers, such as Blackmon, Schuman, and Sommers?

One of the hazards of writing for a public sphere appears to be a sort of "Us VS Them"
sort of attitude (see most #GamerGate conversations), so perhaps this is something that current
public intellectuals could use to their advantage? A civil debate between Blackmon and
Sommers on #GamerGate would be great to watch/read/listen to and it would create more room
for a potential compromise to the situation. A conversation between Bérubé, Fish, and Schuman about academic practices and solutions would also be equally useful in creating more dialogue between different viewpoints.

These are just a few examples using the scholars discussed in this chapter. Though it may seem like a rather large task to find these conversations going on in public areas that scholars could become a part of, it's both possible and plausible to enter these spaces. Finding the "happy medium" between public and academic scholarship, however, could be a bit trickier than it sounds, but it is possible. The next chapter will examine how the public and academic settings view different subjects discussed within English studies; it will point out areas where the conversations can and do intersect to foster more dialogue between academics and those who are members of the public.
CHAPTER IV.

CREATING THE VENN DIAGRAM—WHERE ACADEMIC SCHOLARSHIP AND PUBLIC INTELLECTUALISM MEET

Introduction: Setting the Parameters

Robert Scholes, author of *Textual Power*, describes the idea of the separation of the academy and the public spheres when he states:

There is a difference between practice and earnest, which we must acknowledge. We err only when we make the gesture of erecting this difference into two "worlds," one of which is held to be all practice, the other all earnest... More important to our purposes, however, is the fact that all who write, whether in an ivy-covered study or a crowded office, are involved in a process that moves from practice to earnest, beginning with dry runs, trial sessions, rough drafts, scratching out, and crumpled sheets in the wastebasket. There is, then, something inescapably academic about all writing, whether in school or out of it, and many a text begun in school has finished in the world. The "real" and the "academic" deeply interpenetrate one another. (10)

Keeping in mind that Scholes wrote this in 1986, this dissertation's main goal of creating more public space for academic conversation will benefit a student/writer because writing is meant to start in academia, but eventually transition out of it. This idea of transition implies that the public and academic circles are not separate, but are instead linked together like some form of Venn Diagram.

The purpose of this chapter is to examine different subjects that are written about for academic and public consumption to see the purposes that the texts have, and where the two parts meet when it comes to similar subjects. What are the similarities and differences between a
book written on a specific subject from the two different spheres? What are the overall goals of the texts and do the goals intersect anywhere? Finally, what do these end goals and intersections say about writing for the specific audiences?

In order to help answer these questions, I have decided to employ two kinds of theories that heavily relate, but also seem to conflict in certain respects: process and post-process. For the sake of this examination, process theory will be defined as "teaching writing as process, not product," which also is the name of an article by Donald Murray in 1972. To further explain the idea of process pedagogy, Murray writes in this article:

Instead of teaching finished writing, we should teach unfinished writing, and glory in its unfinishedness. We work with language in action. We share with our students the continual excitement of choosing one word instead of another, of searching for the one true word. This is not a question of correct or incorrect, of etiquette or custom. This is a matter of far higher importance. The writer, as he writes, is making ethical decisions. He doesn’t test his words by a rule book, but by life. He uses language to reveal the truth to himself so that he can tell it to others. It is an exciting, eventful, evolving process. This process of discovery through language we call writing can be introduced to your classroom as soon as you have a very simple understanding of that process, and as soon as you accept the full implications of teaching process, not product. (Murray 2)

What Murray is discussing is that writing is more than just the finished product; the steps taken to the finished product are just as important. Why the writer is writing is just as important as where s/he writes and the writing done that is never going to be seen is just as important as the final project submitted. As the audience changes, from the self to another person, the reason
why something is being written will change, but much like how writing for the self varies from person to person, writing for different areas of interest/readership will also change the method and the message.

In his chapter for *A Guide to Composition Pedagogies*, Chris M. Anson also sites Murray for having one of the more clear definitions of process pedagogy. Anson further discusses some of the consequences of process-based learning by stating, "an obvious consequence of a new focus on students' process was to shift the orientation of learning away from the expectations of a final text and toward developing the knowledge and abilities needed to produce it," (Anson 216). What Anson most likely means is that extra attention needs to be paid not only to the final text, but to each individual step that would need to be taken and how the student and/or writer would need to understand it in order to create such a product.

If one were to examine what Anson states and what Murray established together, an example of how changing what is being written for different audiences becomes more visible. The "ethical decisions" (Murray) that a student makes while writing seem to become inconsequential to the student writings in when they are working for a process (Anson). However, this seems to work more towards the hypothesis that this sort of process writing is more "public" if we view what is written in a non-academic space as "process."

Post-process, on the other hand, is more than just the antithesis of "teaching writing as a process." According to Paul Kei Matsuda, whom Anson also cites in his article, The use of the term "post-process" to denote the social view of writing reduced process to expressive and cognitive theories and pedagogies, while the social theories of composition became a separate category. This rhetorical move made
the process movement even more vulnerable in the already shifting landscape of composition studies. (Matsuda 73)

Matsuda states that post-process is more about discussing a social view on the writing as opposed to the "step-by-step" nature of process writing. What is the most important in post-process writing is the implications that the writing can have and how it can affect society and/or social change.

To illustrate an example of what Murray, Anton, and Matsuda discuss, I will be using the concept of teaching a class about a specific kind of literacy, in this case, "political cartoons," which is a subject I have taught in my class(es) before. A potential introduction to the subject would include asking the students to examine the different aspects of political cartoons by asking them to do a Google search the exact phrase "how to political cartoons" and a Google Scholar search using the exact same wording. On April 21st, 2015, the top four results (that were clickable) for this search are as follows on Table 1:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Google results for &quot;how to political cartoon&quot;</th>
<th>Google Scholar results for &quot;how to political cartoon&quot;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot;How to Make a Political Cartoon: 10 Steps (With Pictures)&quot; by wikiHow</td>
<td>&quot;America's Political Cartoon Heritage.&quot; WR Heitzmann—Social Studies, 1988—ERIC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;How to make a political cartoon&quot;—Instructables</td>
<td>&quot;The Japanese Political Cartoon&quot; K Illerbrun—ualberta.ca</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. The search results for the Google searches for the term "how to political cartoon"
By examining the titles of the articles alone, there are several assumptions that can be made about each kind of search and article: First, the top three results of the regular Google search are straightforward "how-to" guides on how to write and draw a political cartoon; this illustrates a top desire for those who are searching using those terms to become a creator and to learn step-by-step how to do so. Second, all of the results of the Google Scholar search are how political cartoons can be used to learn about a certain subject (United States history, Japanese culture, a case study of an United States election, and Japanese culture and history). Third, though not in the top three, the fourth result of the standard Google search is something for educators, and it implies that the analysis of the political cartoon will be used for educational purposes; this is a possible indication of an interest in this sort of analysis.

So what does this quick look have to do with learning about this specific kind of literacy? It could show students the different conversations that could occur in different spaces about the same subject. What is being displayed shows a strong indication of a difference between process and post for these conversations, and by introducing the different modes of thinking, it could help promote critical thinking skills/literacies and knowledge of histories in addition to just the standard "how-to" guide. In this case, having one of the results (the analysis one from the standard Google search) illustrates to the students a potential point of entry into a public conversation based on a "consumer need."

Section One: Reasons for Definitions

There is a reason for defining and focusing in on process and post-process pedagogies when discussing public and academic scholarship. In many kinds of books or articles written for public consumption, the overall goal appears to be that of a "process" based style of learning, or what steps need to be taken to reach the end goal. Much more of the academic style of writing,
at least for Composition Studies, falls more on the side of "post-process," or how can the texts be used for social purposes or analysis.

It should be noted, however, that this is a hypothesis that is based on the examination of different genres that are being discussed. For the purposes of this chapter, I will be organizing the examinations in a similar manner as chapter three, that is, I will be examining a smaller sub-field that exists in both public and academic spheres to gain a sort of hypothesis or pattern and then examine a much more broad spectrum of concepts and ideas. The goal of these examinations is to locate where the public and academic writings fall when it comes to commonalities in authors, subject, presentation, or any other shared idea.

But why is it important to find where public and academic writings intellectually meet? First, by discovering the sorts of conversations taking place outside academic conversations, academia can learn what the public values, which can help with any writing for public consumption by pinpointing the kinds of conversations that are highly valued. Second, this is an opportunity to possibly expand on the number of acceptable subjects for academic study. Third, and finally, there is some business sense behind this concept, as the idea of finding the similarities between the two follows a couple of the "Ten Ways to Stand Out from the Competition and Drive Customer Loyalty" in Kirk Kazanjian's *Driving Loyalty*.

- **Meet an overlooked customer need**

To say that academics are not meeting the need of the public would be both incorrect and a vast oversimplification; the entire point of (higher education) academics is to serve the students who wish to learn, and to help prepare them for the careers that apply. What I am referring to as an overlooked customer need in this case is discovering what is important to the public and providing them with answers to their queries and concerns.
What academics can do, however, is find the conversations that matter to the public and be a part of them in one way or another, much like how Samantha Blackmon and Christina Sommers are a part of the #GamerGate conversation discussed in chapter three. The issue is that just joining the conversations doesn't count towards anything like tenure and promotion. However, spreading awareness of multiple ways of viewing a subject and providing safe spaces of debate is something that is a "service" to the public; while the service component for tenure is related to the university, department, and the students, perhaps some consideration to what students may consider important should be taken. If nothing else, it's a good step to creating good will between the two spheres; it is never a bad idea to build good will with potential clients (in the case of academia, potential students or sponsors).

- Be willing to take risks

Taking risks an idea that is explored in *The Available Means of Persuasion* by David M. Sheridan, Jim Ridolfo, and Anthony J. Michel. An important part of the conversation they have involves understanding of more than just the creation process, where they state:

> Our contention is that *all* successful public rhetoric is successful only if it effectively negotiates the material-cultural challenges of circulation, including challenges related to production, reproduction, and distribution. These circulatory concerns are even more salient and complex in the case of multimodal rhetoric.

(63)

The examination of how something is distributed is something that often determines whether a text in either sphere is successful; some examples include movies with good production bombing at the box office due to a weak distribution, a gaming system with a strong distribution having to be recalled to poor production, or the reproduction of a well-received textbook being heavily
criticized because it updates too frequently. These are all cases where using the timing (kairos) of events and publication could be used in a post-process manner to make sense of what has just occurred; even if what is explored is ephemeral, it can set outlines for how to make sense of future outcomes.

What this has to do with serving an overlooked customer need is found in the conclusion of the chapter "Kairos and Multimodal Public Rhetoric" (where the previous quote was found), when Sheridan et al. write (at the end of their seven point conclusion/implication list):

Complexity, uncertainty, instability, and contingency enter into the process at every translation. Cameras fail; computer files get corrupted; editors refuse to look at manuscripts (or, when they do look at them, apply to them culturally biased standards and reading practices); compositions get blown from door handles by the wind and end up in mud puddles; incredibly compelling videos languish on YouTube because no one knows they're there; and so on. (73-74)

What this means in the context of this chapter is referring to the ephemeral nature of multimodal texts and the potential dangers and pitfalls of working on these texts, much like Jim Ridolfo's *Free Trade of America* documentary (that the authors use as a case study). By positioning himself as a part of the study, Ridolfo is making a statement that as a creator of the kind of text they are looking at (a publically available documentary), he is aware of the potential pitfalls of the medium, and he shares this experience with other scholars in order to show them (in a post-process manner) how to navigate these identities. What this means to the idea of finding the common ground between a public and academic view of a conversation is that even if academia finds a subject that meets up closely with what the public, it can go largely unnoticed. However,
that is a risk of any publication, and the fear of having something not read is not a viable reason to not do it.

**Section Two: Examination of Common Ideas — Comic Literacy**

This category of readings may seem like they don't fit with the overall theme of academic publishing practices. The point of looking at comic literacy is not to use it as part of a theoretical background, but instead the (multimodal) texts are going to be a form of "case study" to illustrate the key relationship between the publishing on subjects inside and out of academic circles. The differences between the two are polarizing and illustrate the "Google" example used earlier to a much more visible degree. I feel that observing (these) texts in an academic fashion not only creates a stronger understanding of the concepts within the texts, but it could increase interest in the field of English studies as well if we have the ability to join in the conversation.

For the purposes of this project, I will be defining comic literacy as, "the study of how and why comics convey a message and/or story through the combination of text, visual, and/or sequential literacies." This definition is somewhat my own, though heavily inspired by the readings of Scott McCloud and Will Eisner, along with the concepts from Elizabeth Losh and Jonathan Alexander.

There tend to be two sorts of authors in this sub-genre; the academic and the expert. The expert is someone who identifies themselves as a maker of comic texts and has published such texts for a number of years. The examination will also include the texts they have written along with the overall purpose of why they were written; in other words, what was the end goal of the text as a whole?

But why comic literacy as a starting point? While I will go into more detail for the reasons later in this chapter, some good reasons to do this include the abundance of materials
available by public authors and a rising popularity to discuss comic literacy in an academic circle, specifically for their educational purposes and social significance. Finally, by conducting a more in-depth examination of texts on comic literacy and who they were written for/by, this will act as a stronger illustration of the mindsets of public intellectualism as process and academic writings as post-process.

**Comic Literacy—Experts**

If one were to take a look at the art section of a bookstore, it would be quite obvious that there are many books and texts written on the subject of comic literacy by many different authors. For the sake of this examination, I will limit my search down to the texts of three authors for each category. While many authors have worked collaboratively in some of these texts, I will be referring to the authors of the texts who are the "lead" writers for the sake of simplicity.

The experts in their field, in this case people who create comics for a living, appear to have an emphasis on the applications of education and are more interested in teaching their audience how to create these texts for themselves. This is in no way an indication that members of academia cannot be experts on comic literacy; for all intents and purposes, an expert will be "somebody with a great deal of knowledge about, or skill, training, or experience, in a particular field or activity," and while many academics have the knowledge of the subject, the creators of the texts also have the skill, training, and experience as well, so they fit the definition a little bit better.

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The texts made by the experts tend to be more multimodal in construction as well, by including images along with the text, or by emulating the medium they are expressing (in this case, comics). In fact, the works of Scott McCloud are set up to be read as graphic novels.

It is not uncommon for anyone who is interested in comics, whether it's for study or for creation, to be told by others to read Scott McCloud's *Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art*. Scott McCloud is a comic artist who decided to dissect and share his information that he has learned as an author/artist. In this broad overview of the genre, McCloud discusses the history of, the construction of, and how to read comics; all of this is done with the idea that the person reading the book will be either reading or creating comics in some capacity. This is most evident as he is describing comics not as a creative process, and not a text. After describing the six steps of creating (comics): idea/purpose, form, idiom, structure, craft and surface, he continues on by saying:

*Any* artist creating *any* work in *any* medium will always follow these six steps whether they realize it or not. All works begin with a purpose, however arbitrary; all take some form; all belong to an idiom (even if it's an idiom of one); all possess a structure; all require some craft; all present a surface. (McCloud 182)\(^{25}\)

In a sense, much of what McCloud suggests isn't that different than what scholars like Gee do; reading the text is like reading most any other, just with a different lens and/or frame of reference. Once again, what separates the two "genres" of discussion is the purpose of the text.

McCloud's second book is titled *Reinventing Comics: How Imagination and Technology Are Revolutionizing an Art Form*, and of his three, is probably the least known since it has less to do with creativity than *Understanding* and his last book, *Making Comics* (and, admittedly, is a

\(^{25}\) The text in the quotation is bolded as that is how it appears in the original text.
much more difficult read). Much of this book focuses on the idea of digital distribution, and considering that the book was first published in 2000, a lot of what he says still remains valid. This is most apparent in the section where he discusses the role of computers in the creation of comics. Computers made the comic creation more mainstream in a sense, and it also started to have artists depend less and less on non-digital creations methods such as ink, exacto knives, and screen tones (140). The book does discuss the possibilities of the medium as digital, which makes it feel much more "post-process" than the other two, since the discussion is on how to transition into another medium.

Despite the overall nature of McCloud's Comic series, there is a clear overarching goal that can be identified by the order in which the books were published. Understanding was published in 1993, Reinventing in 2000, and Making in 2006. While it is important to understand how comics relay their messages and how they can be reinvented to fit different mediums, in the end, McCloud's trio of books can be interpreted as a series for those who are making comics; in other words, the first two books are important to understanding the final.

This may not have been a conscious choice on McCloud's part, because the only reference that he makes to the previous books that he wrote appears at the introduction where he states, "In twenty years on the job, I've learned enough about comics to fill two books, various articles and a few thousand hours of talking to anyone who'd listen," (McCloud 2). He doesn't mention his other books overtly and doesn't include them in the end section where he has various other texts that he recommends for additional readings. Still, it's hard to ignore that the final book in that series is more about the creation of the comic text, which makes the series as a whole feel more process and seems to render the post-process feeling of the second book as moot due to the position of publication.
Most of the texts made by the experts seem to be on the process side of examining the subject. Another well-known author of these kinds of books is Stan Lee, who is often credited with creating and/or co-creating many of the famous Marvel superheroes, including (but certainly not limited to) Spiderman, Ironman, the X-Men and Daredevil. Two such books that Stan Lee has penned on the subject of comics also come from the creation side: *How to Write Comics* and *How to Draw Comics the Marvel Way*. While a comic's text is comprised of both visuals and texts to make meaning, Lee wrote these books separately, and both focus on how to do one of these aspects while working with someone on another. In fact, Lee discusses how creating comics is a multi-layered process. One such example is that both the analog (pencil and paper) and the digital (computer and software) are needed in order to create a text. It should be noted, however, that the analog is used mostly for notes while the digital is for the creation.

In *How to Write Comics*, when discussing the formatting of scripts, Lee points out that form varies, but the point of it is that it can be easily read and/or deciphered by an artist/editor (188). Based on phrases such as this, it can be concluded that this book is meant primarily for a writer only (not an artist and writer in one) due to its emphasis on teamwork and being able to be understood by another person. This sort of emphasis on creating the product is a similar idea to McCloud's *Making Comics*; Stan Lee finishes *How to Write Comics* with these words of encouragement:

This is a business, and as businesses go, it's one of the greatest careers anyone could ask for. Little did I know when I started at Timely in 1940 that I would still be at it, an idol of dozens (okay, thousands) decades later. All those years of pounding out stories as fast as I knew how created the opportunity of bursts of inventiveness and creativity that have endured for decades. I never lose the thrill
of seeing characters I've written cavort across the television screen in wonderful animation, or, better yet, stand dozens of feet tall on movies screens, seeing actors impersonate the heroes and actors I helped create. It all starts with an idea and then committing it to paper. Hopefully, this book has put you on the right path and you follow it to making your own dramas become a reality. Excelsior! (Lee 218)

While Lee explores the many parts and ideas that make a writer, it is quite important that he ends his book by encouraging the reader to follow his or her dreams of writing a comic, which is the process that the book describes.

Another common thread between McCloud and Lee is that they both refer to comic creator Will Eisner on several occasions. In the comic community, Eisner's 1978 comic *A Contract with God* is considered to be the first graphic novel (Lee 39). In fact, on the cover of Eisner's *Graphic Storytelling and Visual Narrative*, there is a quote from McCloud's *Understanding Comics* that says, "There isn't a comic artist alive who hasn't benefited from Will Eisner's masterful work and formidable wisdom," (McCloud). The quote on the cover does two things: it establishes that this is a book for those who are or want to be comic artists, and it establishes that Eisner is a well respected name in the field.

Still, one important aspect that Eisner focuses on is the ability to read comics. He also addresses something important to the medium nowadays, which is the influence of other types of text, such as film, interactive video, and novels. All three of those texts are usually considered to be for public consumption first before academic analysis. Still, the focus on what the medium can do beyond a simple "step-by-step" tutorial indicates post-process thought, which is where
Eisner's texts vary; this could also be the reason why he is so highly regarded by McCloud and Lee.

To explain this, Eisner first explains how film and comics are similar as they hope to make a meaningful connection with their audience. When they differ, however, Eisner offers:

Film proceeds without any concern about the literacy skills or reading ability of its audience, whereas the comic must deal with both of these. Unless comic readers can recognize the imagery or supply the necessary events that the arrangement of images imply, no communication is achieved. The comics maker is obliged, therefore, to devise images that connect with the reader's imagination.

(71)

Eisner brings this up to show that there is a need for an understanding between the audience and author in order for the text to be fully comprehended.

This book muddles the idea of experts' writing on comic literacy as a process due to the focus on the literary skills required to fully read a graphic narrative. At first, it appears that there is a clear separation of the texts by McCloud and Lee, the step-by-step guides are what most "public" people want when they read these texts, and what Eisner has written about; there needs to be an understanding of how comics are read. Yet, this is something that is once again present in McCloud's trilogy, as his books begin with understanding and then move on to creation. Lee also has various nods to earlier works that he's read (such as Eisner).

So what does this do to the earlier hypothesis that "public intellectuals write process?"

What McCloud, Lee, and Eisner discuss ultimately ends with the creation of comics; McCloud and Lee set up various historical and ideological understandings needed to be a creator, and Eisner states that creators need to have the ability to have their work make the imaginations of
the readers come alive, but everything comes back to a guide on how to become an "expert." In a way, these three use what would be considered "post-process" as the building grounds for a potential comic author to become successful at the art of invention in the genre. "Post-process" is used as a form of "pre-process" that will still end in the "creation" of the texts, and the pre-post process should be part of the author's ethical decisions (as Murray discussed) for maintaining this background knowledge.

In going with the theme of this chapter's title, I have decided to show what can be learned by examining the multiple texts created by these authors as text within a circle so they can be compared side-by-side later. After examining the "expert side," the circle (Figure 4) looks something like this:

![Figure 4. A circle of what the goals are for the comic literacy texts written by "experts"](image)

While there are discussions on how to read texts, the different modes of comic literacy can mean the goal of these texts still seem to strongly lean toward a process style, or holding the production of the text as the most important goal.
Comic Literacy—Academics

While there are many examples of research on comic literacy by the comics' creators (public), there are also examples of this type of research in English studies. In order to keep as much of a sense of symmetry as possible between the two "circles," I will be focusing on three sets of authors in the academic field and trying to find common ideas between them. Also, since the texts that I examined for the experts were books, I will be doing the same here as well.

In March of 2013, Bedford St. Martin published Understanding Rhetoric: A Graphic Guide to Writing. Jonathan Alexander came to the Bowling Green State University campus, and he confirmed that the layout and overall theme of the book was, at least, inspired by McCloud's Understanding Comics. Losh and Alexander's book can effectively be split up into two parts; sections on rhetoric and rhetorical practices (where the two authors directly address the audience), and the application of comics, digital, and multimodal media by using three characters just starting out in college (titled "Reframe with Luis & Cindy").

Even though it may be a more accessible textbook by using comic literacy throughout the entire text, the fact remains that it is still a textbook, and it is one that doesn't really focus on comic literacy, but the overall goal is to teach students about rhetoric; multimodal literacy is discussed and encouraged, but it is a secondary goal at best. Each chapter, or issue, covers a different aspect of rhetoric, ranging from the use of evidence to how to create public rhetoric.

In order to properly examine what Losh and Alexander have to say about comic literacy, it is prudent to look at the "Reframe" chapters since they are the ones that are discussing multiple literacies the most often. One of the most effective parts of the book is the final "Reframe" chapter. It goes through an editing process of a video, but more importantly, it discusses the difficulties with issuing media to the public sphere. This small section covers hate comments,
censorship, and response to criticism in a well thought out manner. While uncomfortable, these instances can be used to create conversation and a more effective argument (273).

The use of comics and examination of multimodal literacy in this fashion eludes to a form of post-process pedagogy. What is important in the examination of comics (and the other texts that require multiple literacies) is the social implications; in the case of *Understanding Rhetoric*, the potential hazards of posting these texts online and dealing with trolls who spout hate speech. It's on this story that the text ends, and much like the ending of McCloud's *Comic* series, the choice to end the entire textbook on this story (save for the acknowledgements and index) indicates that this was the point of all of the other "Reframing" comics. The last time that comic literacy is mentioned expressly is in the book's second chapter; after that, the "Reframing" sections are more about how to use what the reader has learned about reading comics to learn about the structure of college and, in the last chapter, the social implications and strategies for handling criticism and trolling.

While many articles exist on the subject of comic literacy, the number of books seems much smaller. There are conversations happening outside of books and articles, usually in conference presentations and general conversations between colleagues, but for the sake of this project, I will be sticking with published texts on the subject. In order to get the other books for this analysis, I had to stretch the definition of comic literacy to any sort of academic style book that that mentions comics, graphic novels, or even visual literacy. Widening the search parameters also meant that I would be looking at books that may not have been written by English scholars, but if the author and/or editors were from the academic field, the books would still work. This led me to the other two books that I needed to complete this analysis.
Teaching Visual Literacy: Using Comic Books, Graphic Novels, Anime, Cartoons and More to Develop Comprehension and Thinking Skills is an edited collection by Nancy Frey and Douglas Fisher, both of whom work for San Diego State University as professors for the School of Teacher Education (Frey specializes in literacy and Fisher in language and literacy education). The collection has a total of nine chapters, and of those chapters, four of them directly use some form of comic literacy practice. As many of those chapters discuss similar ideas in different context, I will be focusing in on two chapters specifically because they have more to do with exploring the genre instead of just the practical application of a visual text.

Jacquelyn McTaggart's chapter, "Graphic Novels: The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly" discusses graphic novels in the style of a "question and answer" session between the reader and the author. Some of the questions are fairly simple, but important to ask, such as "what is a graphic novel?" What is manga and what is anime?" (too name a few). The purpose of this chapter is to explain how graphic novels vary from classic texts and how they can be used primarily in a K-12 environment (as do many of the chapters of the book, as this is a book that appears to be geared towards education majors).

Thomas Devere Wolsey takes a different direction than McTaggart in his chapter, "That's Funny: Political Cartoons in the Classroom." Instead of discussing comics as a form of longer narrative, Wolsey uses the idea of political cartoons to help teach children about politics and current events. By using these cartoons, Wolsey suggests that students will be able to use cartoons/comics in a scaffolding process to get students to understand larger implications, and even encourages teachers to have the students draw their own. The reason he suggests the students create their own political cartoons is:
Once students have developed an initial interest in the topic because they have drawn it, they are more often willing to find out more about the topic and create more complex cartoons based on their new knowledge... the more students work with current events and political cartoons, the more they are willing to do so and like doing so. (Wolsey 127)

While Wolsey discusses the idea of the creation process, it is more so to meet the end of teaching the students how to interpret political situations by getting them more interested/invested, which seems to be more of a post-process goal.

The third book of the academic trio is Trading Cards to Comic Strips: Popular Culture Texts and Literacy Learning in K-8 by Shelly Hong Xu, Rachael Sawyer Perkins, and Lark O. Zurich. Despite having comic strips in the title, the book is actually about how to integrate various kinds of "popular culture" into a classroom setting. Comics are still discussed, but the sections are either brief or interchangeable with any sort of pop-culture.

When it does discuss comics, it does take the time to break down the different "processes" of what goes together to make a comic, such as the directionality (how panels and word bubbles are placed), speech, captions, language, special effects, sound, visual, and color (109). Earlier in that same chapter, Xu encourages the reader to immerse themselves in texts that their students would probably consume in order to achieve the best understanding that they (the reader) can (if they chose to use these texts in a classroom setting, that is).

In keeping with the theme of the chapter, by putting together some key ideas that the academic texts and authors discuss/emphasize, one side of the Venn Diagram circle (Figure 5) would look something like this:
The academic texts that were examined had a heavy focus on end goals that are similar or identical to those of post-process pedagogy, which fit with the previous hypothesis of "academics' goal is post-process;" the goal of comic literacy from an academic perspective is to gain an understanding of how the text works in order to use it for something else.

**Comic Literacy—What Doesn't Jive**

From examining the texts by the three sets of authors in an expert and academic category, the differences between the two seem to be quite numerous. According to the circles I created, the two sides do meet together on ideas such as "comics are multimodal," "how to read comics," and "comics are different than alphabetic texts," but those similarities are minor compared to how they differ, and that is the overall end goals.

As stated earlier in the chapter, what the experts want their texts to accomplish falls more in the lines of process pedagogy, and what academics value appears to be more post-process based. However, the differences also appear to go beyond that distinction because the
information that is presented on the same subject seem to differ from sphere to sphere, and this could be problematic when it comes the question of accuracy of information.

One example occurs in McTaggart's chapter in *Teaching Visual Literacy*. When discussing the history of the graphic novel, McTaggart says, "In 1991 Art Spiegelman's comic-book-format, soft-covered boom *Maus* (the story of his father's experience in the Holocaust) was released, and the term "graphic novel" was coined," (McTaggart 28). While this is an interesting bit of information, it seems to directly contradict the information given by Stan Lee, who (as discussed earlier in the chapter) discussed that the modern graphic novel was actually written by Will Eisner in 1978. With a 13-year difference between the two and with two different authors getting the credit for the same achievement, who does a reader believe—the academic who has had the chapter peer-reviewed and researched, or the multiple-decade veteran of the comic book world?

Will Eisner's name does not seem to come up in the academic texts about comic literacy, but his works appears to be the foundation for the work of the experts. On the back of Eisner's book *Comics and Sequential Art*, there is a quote about him by Scott McCloud, who says, "There isn't a comic’s artist alive who hasn't benefited from Will Eisner's masterful work and formidable vision." There are also "Eisner Awards," which are not only named after him, but are some of the highest honors that a person in the field can achieve.

So if Will Eisner is so influential to the people who create comics, and is considered by many creators of famous texts (not just by Lee and McCloud, but also by others like Neil Gaiman and Jeff Smith who also describe Eisner's work as instrumental to their own), why does he not seem to have quite the presence in academic articles to the point where his
accomplishments may be attributed to others? Why is what Eisner has done (seemingly) ignored in academia?

There is no clear answer to this question, but after looking over the books along with many different articles, a possible hypothesis goes back to my earlier one; because much of Eisner's comic literacy work has an end goal of creation, it may not fit into the academic narrative of post-process pedagogy. While not hard proof of this hypothesis, Scott McCloud's *Understanding Comics* is often cited by scholars, and he uses Eisner's definition of comics as the starting point for his, but McCloud's other two books, *Reinventing* and *Making* are rarely ever cited. In the case of *Reinventing*, as it was published back in 2000 and it is based on the potential of a still-growing internet environment, the information could be seen as dated. However, because *Making*'s goal is to help a potential author create a comic narrative and it doesn't discuss how to use the creation, that could explain why it is not cited in academic work.

**Comic Literacy—The Center of the Diagram & A Different Approach**

Up until now, much of the examinations that have take place have involved research, close readings, and comparisons of what other people and scholars have had to say on the subject. In order to get to where the public and academic meet (specifically on comic literacy), it may be time to try another approach. Ruth E. Ray, author of *The Practice of Theory: Teacher Research in Composition*, offers this different approach when she discusses the feminist practice of the personal voice. She states:

The personal voice of feminist writing sends several powerful messages, both implicit and explicit. It is effective, in part, because it seems daring; the critic appears to be taking a great personal risk in eschewing the authoritative voice of academe, addressing her own questions and exposing her insecurities. Personal
writing seems decidedly "nonacademic," which makes it especially persuasive to feminist readers who equate "academic" with that which is totalizing, patriarchal, hegemonic. Further, personal writing is accessible to their own experiential terms; a feminist discourse with such a wide appeal is appropriate, given that academics make up only a small percentage of feminist readership. In contrast, much academic discourse excludes readers who do not share the highly specialized philosophical language and theoretical knowledge of the author. (Ray 37)

To get a better understanding and find where the meeting of the two locales of comic literacy lie, a personal voice may be useful to help solve the puzzle.

Earlier in the chapter, I eluded to the reason why I wanted to began this examination with comic literacy as the more focused-in subject. The reasons that I initially gave are indeed all true, but the main reason for using this genre as a starting point is a much more personal one. When discussing comic literacy, I come from a somewhat unique position of existing in both the academic and public spheres, and I try my best to situate myself somewhere in the middle of the Venn Diagram as both a researcher of comic literacy and an expert. I have to take the risk that Ray suggests, and expose the risks I have taken, similar to what Ridolfo has done with his documentary.

As an academic, I have studied comic literacy in an independent study as well as discussed some of the merits at a conference (21st Century Englishes at Bowling Green State University in 2013). One of the reasons that I like to explore the potential of comics in an academic setting, however, is because I have experience with comics in my private/public life as a creator. In the summer of 2009, I created a short comic strip series for the Ball State Daily
News that I called *Freshman Comp*. The reception to the comic was mixed, but mostly good, and that comic was awarded "third place" in the Editorial Cartoon category by the Indiana Colligate Press Association for the 2009—2010 year. From 2011 to 2014, I publically published a webcomic called *Fantastibad* once a week, but I had to stop when the dissertation process came into full swing.

The reason why I bring up my experiences with this genre is because I do not directly fit into either category of "expert" or "academic" based on the definitions that I have outlined: I do not make a living off of the comics I created so I cannot be an expert, but because I have created these texts in a public setting before, I (along with many other people) may not fit directly into the academic category either. That's not to say that academics don't create the kinds of texts that they study or examine, but it is probably not common (as far as comics are concerned).

I am aware of the potential problems and risks that come with putting these texts out in public. Though I may have won an award for my comic for the *Ball State Daily News* and it is something I am proud of, posting those comics also gave me the experience in dealing with comments sections, which was not a fun process. Unfortunately, the comics are no longer available on the *Ball State Daily News* site, so I don't have direct quotes to work with, but I do remember some of the unflattering responses I got; though they may have only been a few, they stick with me even now. I still view the overall experience of creating *Freshman Comp* as positive, and I may pick it back up at some point in my life, but I would be lying if I said the comments I received didn't have, at least, something to do with me no longer continuing the comic after summer was over.

Yet, despite having to step away for a bit due to the realities of collaboration, the pressures of an academic schedule, and being called some of the worst names I have ever been
called, I still love comics and comic literacy. I want to create them as long as I can, and I want to study them and how they create different sorts of meanings. Because of my background in the subject, I feel I have learned more about the subject and I can bring a somewhat unique perspective to what I write.

However, this got me to think about a middle ground where I do fit, and this is what has led me to a hypothesis on where these process and post-process ideologies fit. During the spring semester of 2014, I had the opportunity to design a course based on whatever subject I wanted, as long as it was a mid/upper level course. Already in the planning process of a dissertation, I decided to create a course that involved both an academic and public view on comic literacy; I called the course "Comic Literacy and Invention."

The goal of the course is a mixture between process and post-process pedagogy, as it encourages the students to play around with the medium of comics to learn more about them. For the class's first assignment, I have them experiment with making image memes. These usually take the form of reaction images (such as pictures of cats with captions), but the students are encouraged to see how different memes can be used differently to discuss the same subject. The second and third paper are research papers; the second paper is where the students research an aspect of literacy that is unique to comics, and the third is a rhetorical analysis of a comic text.

Though the goal of the class was to blend process and post-process together, in the end, more emphasis on the "post-process" was made for most of the semester. That's why the final project they had was important to the overall idea. Everything in the class led to them creating a comic narrative. The students learned about the social implications of comics, and even how they could use what they learned in that class to apply to other genres (such as web text, movies, games, etc.). But in order to be a true blend of process and post-process, they had to create a text
with the intent of learning how to effectively write/create in this medium, and not just how to read them and what they can be used for in a social setting, or a type of public discourse.

But once again, what does this mean for finding the common ground between the subjects of a public and academic subject and why is it important? There are several implications for what this could mean, but the first one does mean that there are different goals for each sphere of existence, and that separation is important to the learning process. It would not be a good idea to have someone in academia write a book on how to create a specific kind of text if they do not have the experience or are not working with someone who does. Likewise, it may not be the best idea to get the social/educational implications from a creator who either doesn't understand the implications or has no interest in them.

What this means, then, is that where the two sides can meet beyond making acknowledgements of the conventions of a sort of text is to build off of the knowledge that the other side provides, which is something that has already been demonstrated as being done on both sides. Using comic literacy as an example, McCloud's *Understanding Comics* uses a lot of historical context, story-telling, and art theory to help explain why comics are important as a medium and why they have a right to be understood properly. In McTaggart's conversation about using comics in a classroom, she uses *Understanding Comics* as one of the texts in her bibliography. This is a short example, but this sort of back and forth is where the two eventually meet. After all, part of understanding post-process pedagogy is having an understanding of process in the first place.

With the information gathered, combining Figures 4 and 5 together would look something like a Venn Diagram (depicted in Figure 6):
Figure 6. The Venn Diagram of how academic and public writings on a subject relate.

Academics:
- Primarily Post-Process
- The end goal of the literacy is to learn about the educational and social implications of texts.
- Uses the understanding of the texts to inform the learning process.

Experts:
- Primarily Process based
- The end goal of the literacy is for the reader to learn how to create the texts.
- Uses the understanding of the texts to inform the creation process.

Common Ground:
- Discuss how to read the text
- Discuss the differences between the text and alphabetic texts.
- Both work off of the other sphere to inform their work.
The Venn Diagram illustrates the relationships that can happen from two areas that have seemingly different approaches to a subject, not just comic literacy. Much like one of the main goals for the "Comic Literacy and Invention" course I designed for Bowling Green State University, one of the goals was to take what was learned from comic literacy and try to apply it to other genres as a whole. Upon closer inspection of the Venn Diagram, no use of the terms "comic" or "comic literacy" are used, so it is a hypothesis that approaching texts using the same mindset would be equally beneficial.

Section Three: Examination of Common Ideas—Some Broader Implications

How a person identifies themselves, whether public or scholarly, and who they write for will have a varying effect on how their work is presented. To refer back to chapter three once again, part of the reason that Samantha Blackmon has found success in reaching a more public audience with her blog space Not Your Mama's Gamer is because she exists as a scholar and a gamer. Some of the blog posts are about the implications of gaming and the need for more diverse stories and characters, while others are just straight up reviews on whether a game is worth playing on the merits of if it's fun or not. Christina Sommers is in a similar situation with The Factual Feminist as she identifies as a feminist, a public scholar and a former academic. These two scholars are able to reach wider audiences because they exist as multiple identities at once, not just one or the other. In the case of comic literacy, perhaps existing in both realms is what makes an author or a text important to the study, much like how McCloud's work was presented in the public but is able to transcend spaces to be used by academia as well.

There is also an idea of what can happen with a rhetoric of play. Scott Rettberg, who wrote a chapter on games and simulations for Beyond Fun: Serious Games and Media, describes why he uses games to teach students about the creative writing process:
I've always been fond of writing games. With or without a computer (pen and notecards will do), I think that thinking of writing, particularly collaborative writing, as gameplay, is useful for creative writers to loosen some inhibitions and unlock some doors, to explore some narrative paths they might otherwise not pursue. (Rettberg 112—113)

By letting the students explore a subject, they become much more comfortable with what they are learning, much like the students working with political cartoons in Wolsey's example. What the synthesis of Rettberg's and Wolsey's works suggests is that an important part of learning how to understand a medium is by, indeed, playing around with it. By learning about the creation process, it informs the students on how to learn about the potential of what they are working with, regardless of what the medium actually is. This allows the students to become a form of engaged expert while learning what is academic about the genre.

An example of a "how to" book for the public comes from Thomas C. Foster's *How to Read Literature Like a Professor*. Foster is a professor of literature at the University of Michigan at Flint, but this book was published by Harper and is meant to help a reader learn to understand literature like an English professor (with a humorous tone). Foster gives an example of trying to teach people to read poetry by writing:

Okay, great, so I can identify one type of poem, you say. Who cares? I agree, to a point. I think people who read poems for enjoyment should always read the poem first, without a formal or stylistic care in the world. They should not begin by counting lines, or looking at line endings to find the rhyme scheme, if any, just as I think people should read novels without peeking at the ending: just enjoy the experience. After you've had your first pleasure, though, one of the additional
pleasures is seeing how the poet worked that magic on you. There are many ways a poem can charm the reader: choice of images, music of the language, idea content, cleverness of wordplay. And at least some part of the answer, if that magic came in a sonnet, is form. (Foster 17)

By talking about the conventions of a poem that members of academia value, he can readily explain to a reader how to explore the genre like they do and how to read a text in multiple ways. Foster's viewpoint is similar to Stan Lee's view on writing for comics as they both explore the histories/implications of the genres and why they matter before going into further detail on how to go about with the "process." In both examples, they have transcended their limited spheres and have become both "experts" and "academics" at the same time, being able to have the knowledge, skill, training, and experience in their discussions.

Through an examination of comic literacy as a basis, some of the steps to bridge the gaps between writings written by experts and academics become more clear. The way that they meet the best, beyond the surface ideals of structural similarities and differences, are the most effective strategies to relate to one another; by referencing the contributions of what each side has done and to try, they can be both a part of the creation and understanding process (of whatever is being discussed).

Taking what has been expressed in this chapter, and in previous ones, the final chapter of this project will be a discussion of potential pedagogical, institutional, and administrative benefits of having more public scholarship opportunities and policies. By spelling out the opportunities available, I hope that the final chapter will be able to express the importance of public scholarship as a whole.
CHAPTER V.
CONCLUSIONS, HYPOTHESES, AND POSSIBLE BENEFITS OF PUBLIC SCHOLARSHIP

Introduction

Throughout this project, I have demonstrated why public scholarship is something that is in the consciousness of scholars, how it could be implemented, and how academic writers can enter public conversations by examining the similarities of the subjects that are explored in both spaces. However, for this chapter, I will answer what may be the most important and complicated question this project will face: "So what?"

Though it is a two word question, it will take an entire chapter to even come close to addressing it. For this final section, I will discuss the potential scholarly, community, pedagogical, and financial benefits of introducing and normalizing academics writing for a public audience. After each one is explored to the extent that it can be, I will then show how each one relates to public scholarship.

Even with the examples I provided in chapters three and four, and considering what is being discussed in those spaces are beneficial conversations, there is still a harsh reality to the whole situation, as is expressed by Nancy Cantor, chancellor of Syracuse University, and Steven D. Lavine, president of the California Institute of the Arts, in their 2006 review for The Chronicle of Higher Education. They state:

We higher-education leaders claim that we want creative scholars who are also committed to the public good. We brag about the fabulous work of our engaged faculty, whose ranks frequently include professors of color and women in underrepresented fields— just the kinds of scholars we'd like to attract and keep. But often that engagement is not what gets them promoted. Surely the gap
between praise and reward is not inevitable. To encourage top-notch scholarship that contributes to public purposes, and to attract and keep a diverse faculty, we should look hard at the culture of the academic workplace and reconsider what constitutes excellence at tenure time. We need to develop flexible but clear guidelines for recognizing and rewarding public scholarship and artistic production. (Cantor and Lavine 2)

Though this was published back in 2006, the attitude that public scholarship is a "nice idea" but is not actually "scholarship" is something that still seems to be prevalent later on. Furthermore, Ivan Karp discussed this same dichotomy six years later in his article "Public scholarship as a vocation," when he stated:

The relationship between scholars and various "publics" has long been a source of debate. Some insist that scholarship may be divorced from personal interest. They hold that using certain methodologies, which they deem objective, will produce the distance between the student and the studied that is necessary to achieve validity. From this point of view communities are objects to be understood from without. Others argue that each culture has a set of standards that are not commensurate with any other, nor are there any universal standards by which they should be judged. Communities can only be understood by their own members, whose "voices" have been silenced by members of dominant cultures. The first position can be called "objectivist" and places the scholar in the position of the privileged knower. The second position is strongly relativist and identifies the members of communities as the only possible owners of knowledge about them. The first position fails to account for the ways that society itself is produced by
knowledgeable agents, who make history – if not always under circumstances of their own choosing. But relativism has its flaws as well. It is simply unable to acknowledge or account for cultural, social and political diversity in communities; real relativists find themselves unable to exercise moral judgments when oppression is internal to different cultures and communities. They also fail to allow for the reflective examination of cause and pattern in human affairs that only distanced scholarship may be able to provide. (Karp 291—292)

The most apparent scholarship that is produced appears to be the less personal kind and, as Karp suggests, there is a divide between personal interests and what is being published. Yet, he seems to argue that what people choose to study in academia is, in itself, left up to personal choice. On a personal note, while most of my scholarship involves the evaluation and construction of multimodal texts, it's because I have an interest in the subjects.

What Karp is also eluding to is the reality of academia, and that is there are many parts of cultural studies that may be too difficult to capture accurately, such as culture, community interactions, and what the author thinks of these situations. With many different variables at play, it can become difficult to write an article or a book that has accurate portrayals of what is being discussed.

Aside from the idea of academic diligence, the reason for being as accurate as possible all comes back to what was discussed in chapter two, and that is the job market. Graduate students are encouraged to keep their work scholarly so they can be more appealing to potential academic employers, and faculty members do so in order to please an institution that will provide promotions and job security. With most people doing, at least, a nationwide search for employment and applying for many different kinds of jobs, the concept of having the students do
work that is more universally acceptable is much more important to future jobs because it makes the future employees more flexible to take a larger number of positions.

All of the reasons listed are excellent reasons to avoid public scholarships, but there is another way to look at the job market. In Miriam Bartha and Bruce Burgett's 2015 article in *Pedagogy*, they discuss the idea of the "crisis in the humanities," or the idea that jobs in the humanities are becoming more scarce. They state:

> The problem with this typical framing of the "crisis of the humanities" as a "crisis of the job market" is that it ignores students' motivations for entering into graduate programs in the first place. True, some students aspire from the outset to tenure-track jobs. But our experience with the institute and the certificate program indicates that many have more complex commitments and view their relation to institutions of higher education more critically. Even for students who seek academic positions, the desirability of a job often hinges on the promise of ongoing institutional transformation. A wealth of research supports this local observation, suggesting that nearly half of the students who enter humanities doctoral programs nationally leave without a PhD as a result of becoming disenchanted by the narrowness of their intellectual and social experiences, with a disproportionate number of noncompleters being women and underrepresented minorities. (39)

Both Bartha and Burgett discuss that just because someone is in graduate school or in a PhD program in the humanities, it does not mean that they are looking for a career in academia, or even a new career at all. However, the pressures put on some of those students to "publish or perish" or to get a tenure-track position at a university seem to push some students away, and in
this case, it pushes away far more potential female and/or minority scholars, which may create a sort of "maintaining of the status quo" when it comes to change.

Once again, I come back to the "so what" question of this chapter. What does this long conversation about public scholarship mean and why is it important? Is it possible that public scholarship could help communicate more with what people in academia are doing, and it could help maintain scholarly voices from all over? In order to answer some of these questions, I have divided the remainder of this chapter into three sections:

- Potential implications of public scholarship
- Potential pedagogical advantages
- Limitations of this project

For the sake of this chapter, the discussions will be limited to what could be done for English Studies, and the implications to a larger academic framework will be discussed at the end of the "Limitations" section.

**Section One: Implications of Public Scholarship**

If members of academia are allowed to participate more actively and freely in public discourse, in ways like Sommers, Blackmon, Bérubé, Schuman, and Fish, it could help dispel perceptions on aspects of academia that are incorrect. For example, to refer back to the #GamerGate (GG) incident, there have been large arguments back and forth between the two sides with little to no sign of it getting better; in fact, it appears to be getting worse.

There have been many instances of comic/gaming conventions kicking out anyone that is in the pro GG side. A Twitter exchange between the Denver Comic Con about people wearing GG apparel at their own risk prompted an internet artist known as "Kukuruyo" to make this comic (as a part of a longer series) as shown if Figure 7:
The girl in the striped shirt being pushed out of the convention by the gorilla (a mascot portrayal of the Denver Comic Con) is a character by the name of 'Vivian James' and is often used to portray those who support GamerGate. But what is striking about this comic is the portrayal of the "social justice warriors" and/or "feminists" in the second panel. To the public, this is a caricature of what a feminist is and how they operate, by shutting down what they deem as hateful while endorsing a different kind of hate in the name of "social justice."

The type of feminist being depicted is often referred to as a "radical feminist," and it is a part of feminism as a whole, many people in the public view those who associate themselves with feminism with this form of hatred; in some ways, it's understandable why. In the comic above, the "kill all men" shirt is a real shirt that is available for purchase; it is more than likely related to or based on a Twitter hashtag of the same name that trended back in 2013. Mary

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26 Available at Topatoco:
Elizabeth Williams wrote an article on this subject for Salon (online) magazine and she opens up with the following statement:

This is why we can't have nice things: Every day, plenty of nice, reasonably normal women are already tired from defending the word "feminism" from the angry, annoying trolls who think that acknowledging sexism means misandry. And then we wake up and see that #killallmen is trending on Twitter, and we just want to turn this car around until everybody can behave themselves. I swear to God, no ice cream for anybody today, Twitter. (Williams)

The tone that Williams uses is playful, but what she is saying is that this sort of movement is counterproductive. Feminism is about achieving equality through the sexes, but instances like this are a step back; what started as a joke became something that many people who identify as a feminist seemed to latch on to and make serious.

What's important about what Williams is writing is that things like #killallmen and how seriously people react to them in an online space affects the way that people view feminism; in cases like this, it leaves the perception that feminism is about misandry, which couldn't be further from the truth. However, situations such as these create a sort of "lowest common denominator" from which all members of a group can be judged.

With that in mind, scholars like Blackmon and Sommers both play important roles in situations like these. Blackmon provides what Williams is asking for, and that is a reasonable/normal reaction to the situation that allows for similar kinds of conversations. Sommers is on the other side of the argument, and points out that the kind of behavior is not acceptable and provides evidence to back up her claims. Each one of them provides an
important part of the discussion, and it would be great if more scholars could join in the conversation.

Situations such as these would be greatly mitigated if there were more academic feminists that could have the space in public to interact and refute these claims. This is why the blog spaces that have been set up by people like Samantha Blackmon are so important, because they allow conversations to happen in a mostly judgment-free zone. Blackmon's willingness to identify as a feminist and a gamer has allowed her to reach that larger audience, and what she does could be part of what begins to increase the public perception, which then enhances the knowledge of the subject. Derek Barker wrote an article called "The Scholarship of Engagement: A Taxonomy of Five Emerging Practices" that further explains the idea of having "audience participation" in public scholarship, as Blackmon demonstrated. He discusses participatory research and compares it public scholarship:

Like public scholarship, participatory research stresses the active role citizens can play in the production of academic knowledge. The main difference I see between the two stems from the relative emphases on participation versus deliberation. While public scholars are more concerned with enhancing the quality of public participation in research, for participatory research the emphasis tends to be on promoting participation itself. Participatory research tends to respond to problems of exclusion by reaching out to a marginalized or previously excluded group.

The sort of public scholarship I am discussing (the public posting and response/conversation with the audience) falls under, at least according to Barker, more participatory research. However, public scholarship and participatory research can be similar in practice as long as the
environments that are produced remain open and hospitable. This has already been demonstrated by how Blackmon responds to those who post on her blog and how Sommers picks topics that her viewers want to see discussed. Creating a place where the audience feels safe to discuss different ideas and aspects of ideas will not only foster kinder environments (Blackmon's reader responses are an example of this), but it also allows for more conversation, which in turn helps to drive out the more harmful stereotypes that seem to be pervasive.

Another important part of academia encouraging more public discourse would be that the people who chose to do so would be under some form of scrutiny from their institutions. While this may sound like a negative thing, and in some regards it could be, the positives to the discourse as a whole are pretty great as well. This also seems to fly in the face of what I discussed in chapter two with the "Salaita Incident."

To clarify, if scholars are allowed to participate in conversations publically, they should be able to converse on any subject that they feel is important. However, there is a difference between the ideas of "what is said" and "how it is said." Though many people use social media to advertise ideas and to connect with others successfully, mediums like Twitter are probably not the best avenue for conversations of any sort because of the limitations of what can be posted (a 140 character limit per post), and the immediacy of the posts don't allow for much reflection. The longer a person writes about a subject, the more s/he has time to think about what is being written, and then can decide that maybe something is a bad idea, or at least not in good taste, and then not post it.

This can also lead to some undesirable outcomes as well, especially if the potential "gate-keeping" practices are in play to censor what people can say. However, as long as the comments and conversations are not harmful or rude in nature, scholars should be allowed to participate in
the conversation. If the scholar gets full support from their institution, then the gate-keeping issue should not be an issue. Of course, the realities of this will be discussed later in the "Limitations" section.

Section Two: Pedagogical Advantages

Writing with a public audience in mind means that there is the ability to teach with the public in mind. This means having the freedom for scholars to teach a wider variety of classes and also create classes that fit the needs or desires of their students more closely. There is no secret that university funding goes to programs that make the institution more money, so drawing in more students can make a huge difference when funding decisions are being made.

For example, many students are interested in video games and how they could be used for more than just playing games (this need is evident by the conversations going on online and Samantha Blackmon's blog). In order to meet this need, the University of Alberta (UoA) in Edmonton, Canada created a class called "Understanding Video Games" as a free MOOC (massively open online class) that is available for anyone (not just UoA students) and real college credit could be earned for this program. This 11-week course covers a wide variety of subjects, such as violence, sex/gender, race, and gaming culture. While open to anyone, in order to take the exams for the class, there is a fee that needs to be paid ($263 Canadian). What is also important about this class is that it is co-developed by the videogame company Bioware, which has made bestselling games such as Mass Effect and Dragon Age (Hackmon). This sort of class is both reaching a larger audience and it is allowing for the research to be public.

Though it can gather a lot of attention, a free MOOC may not be the best example for the "need to make money argument." However, part of the reason that the class is available is because of the cooperate sponsor, which is nothing but good for a university. Since it is a
University of Alberta class, people will associate the name of the college with this form of class, which in turn can mean more increased interest in the university overall. This is fulfilling one of Kirk Kazanjian's "Ten Ways to Stand Out from the Competition and Drive Customer Loyalty," and that is "serving a specific and uncrowded niche."

An example of a potential class that could be constructed with the aid of more interest in writing for the public would be a class on how to write for popular/best-selling genres. One of the top selling genres for fiction is "licensed fiction," or stories that are based on pre-existing properties, such as Star Wars (a series of movies), Dungeons and Dragons (a table top role-playing game), the Marvel and DC universes (superhero comics), and My Little Pony (a television show/toy line). These sorts of genres have built in audiences and generally have high sales, and there is a large community of fans who like to write fan-fiction, so why not turn an idea like this into a class?

This sort of class could be a creative writing and/or rhetoric class that explores how to write in a genre that has the potential to teach students the skills on how to become a published author in a popular/lucrative genre. The best sort to teacher for this class, of course, would be one who has found some measure of success publishing for a specific genre, which means allowing for the sake of their own scholarship, a professor could expand what is acceptable for promotion and tenure to indulge these practices.

A potential argument against this would be that what would be happening would be some form of "academic selling out," or that the only purpose of enacting classes such as these would be for the sake of trying to earn more money and not for the pursuit of knowledge. The basis of that argument is undeniably true, but the truth is the main purpose of a university is to serve the students' needs, and a focus in public writing and interests could be a reflection of such.
Elizabeth A. Buchman wrote about a similar situation back in 2000, back when taking classes online, let alone getting a degree, was much less common. When talking about the needs of the students, Buchanon states the following:

Institutions of higher education must be willing to change and adapt to new circumstances and new student needs. Such institutions as Western Governor's University and the Open Universities reveal a commitment to planning and to providing resources and services to distance students analogous to those provided to on-site, traditional students—or, they have shown the importance of providing services and resources above and beyond those for on-site students. (Buchanon)

While what Buchanon is discussing is online education, the needs of the students and the university's willingness to adapt is a key point. Universities need to be able to change with what the students need, and the rising popularity of online/distance education is a demonstration of that. This sort of parallel can be drawn with a current need to have what is learned at a university to be both academic and practical, especially considering the growing concern among (potential) students about university-related debt and if the college experience is worth the time and money.

Section Three: Limitations

Public scrutiny is not something that is new to academia. At the beginning of the spring term in 2015, an English class was made available at Arizona State University (ASU) called "U.S. Race Relations and the Problem of Whiteness," taught by Assistant Professor Lee Bebout. The class made national news based on the title alone, and it became quite controversial. Many people who heard the title were outraged by the concept of the class and responses have been quite volatile in some regards. For example, in Kaila White's article for the AZ Central news
station, she talks about the reactions of two people. One is from an ASU student named Lauren Clark who said, "Clearly we have a lot of work to go as a society in terms of racial tensions, but having a class that suggests an entire race is the problem is inappropriate, wrong and quite frankly, counterproductive" (White). The other is from Professor Bebout, who declined to comment on the class because, "the last 24 hours have been stressful with some of the vitriolic hate-mail that I have received" (White).

Perhaps the point of the class was to start conversations, and it has created a lot of talk in the public, but what Bebout has done has inadvertently invited a lot of hate speech directed towards him and the university. The reason why I am bringing this up is to demonstrate what is already taking place before any implications of public scholarship to one of the most damning limitations of being in the public consciousness, and that is "cyber bullying."

As I discussed in the previous chapter, I am no stranger to being made fun of online, and because the internet is such an important part of public communication nowadays, it would be impossible to avoid such. It's obvious that Bebout has already experienced such a thing from creating a class, which was available at a public university, but not meant to become part of public discourse. Questionable title aside, if professors are getting critiqued by the public for courses that they teach, then what's to stop an onslaught of hate speech to head one's way if they publish in public spaces?

The idea of the kinds of harassment that people can receive online is a real fear that should not be taken lightly, and perhaps is a good reason for many scholars to not participate in such discourses. Recently, Christina Sommers gave a speech at Georgetown University that was protested by feminist students on campus. In an article for the *Washington Times* online, journalist Jessica Chasmar described the situation as:
Ms. Sommers, an equity feminist from the conservative American Enterprise Institute, spoke April 16 at the Georgetown event, which was organized by the school’s College Republicans and the Clare Boothe Luce Policy Institute (CBLPI). Feminist students protested her appearance, claiming Ms. Sommers is a rape-denialist and offered students an alternative "safe space" location during the event, Campus Reform reported (Chasmar).

It's important to note that Sommers was not there to discuss rape or rape culture; her talk was on "Freedom Feminism." However, what this incident shows that what is said in public can be interpreted in a number of ways and can come back to other conversations, whether they are relevant to the current conversation or not.

These incidents are reflections on how people, students, and the media react to current and former members of academia. The many reactions are rather ironic because they are unreasonable situations that many would consider to be normal (a professor teaching a class and a former professor giving a talk). The hate-mail that Bebout received and the unexpected criticism/protest that Sommers experienced are all realities of being in the public consciousness. No matter what is done, there will always be some form of potential backlash waiting to happen.

While there are real dangers to the potential of public criticism and cyber-bullying, this limitation does have an interesting side to it, particularly in the case of Bebout. The class he constructed ended up being a national talking point, more than likely, by accident. If what is being done in academia, such as teaching practices and opinions, are already being discussed in a public forum, why shouldn't academics be allowed to participate? Being silent fosters an incorrect perception for much longer than necessary. An idea like this is expressed in Lindsey Waters article for the Journal of Scholarly Publishing called "Scholarship and Silence." She
discusses that the current academic system does not allow for "individual agency" and how she received a lot of criticism within academia for just not getting how the system works and that she should "get with the program" (15). She explains herself by stating:

As long as we acquiesce in this system, we will remain inside the whale. Freedom will come when we throw over the need for control, the need to be so totally in control of what can be known, and embrace ignorance. We must be willing to be fooled – mistaken in scientific and humanistic inquiry. (Waters 15)

Staying with the current system of not questioning and remaining silent is more harmful than helpful, according to Waters. Based on what she has discussed, I believe that public scholarship is one way of helping to break the internal and external silence that can occur in academic conversations, and thus is not as much of a limitation as it could be.

Another potential limitation to this conversation relates to the scope of this project. Most of the conversations are occurring within English studies and, while there are people who are participating in the conversations, they are generally not universal and they are conversations that I personally have interest/investment in. I enjoy multimodal rhetoric, digital literacies, and feminist practices as genres of study; I also acknowledge that what works in one discipline may not work for others.

One positive example from the discipline of rhetoric and composition would be in community literacy, which already engages in forms of public scholarship by interacting with various communities as part of their scholarship. In a 1995 article for College Composition and Communication, authors Wayne Campbell Peck, Linda Flowers, and Lorraine Higgins examined this idea by monitoring the writing practices of the Pittsburgh Community Literacy Center. They define community literacy as "a search for an alternative discourse" (205), and they state
that one of the most important parts of community literacy is to enact social change, which implies having to work with communities in order to make that happen. Several more observations they reach are as follows:

But community literacy means more than simply representing different views in conversation. It seeks to restructure the conversation itself into a collaboration in which individuals share expertise and experience through the act of planning and writing about problems they jointly define. The goal is not to resolve the myriad of differences that arise in a mixed, working group, but to treat diversity as a resource for solving specific problems. (Peck et al. 204)

Peck, Flowers, and Higgins acknowledge what a community is, and that is a collection on many different points of view, and it means having to interact with members of the community being examined. In other words, what they do is public scholarship, just not in the publishing sense (for the most part) and in a lot of cases, it may not be practical or fair to assume they are not working for the public good. What this has to do with public scholarship is the idea of "different view in conversation;" what is happening in the public communities is a conversation that needs to be heard and acknowledged.

Finally, while this project focuses on English studies, and perhaps humanities as large, it does not take into account other fields of academia, particularly the schools of business, journalism, and science. For example, the book *Play at Work* is about how understanding (video) games can help with creative thinking and increasing workplace productivity, and it has received overall positive reviews. It's written by Adam L. Penenberg, who is also a professor of journalism at New York University with ties to the business and economics program. While
Penenberg is just one person, this does not seem to be an uncommon practice for other members as many publically available business books are written by professors both current and former.

Scholars in the sciences also perform public scholarship on a daily basis, especially those who are doing medical research on diseases, injuries, engineering, and anything else that benefits the common good. There are too many examples available to name them all, but one comes from the University of Texas (UT) at Austin where researchers discovered that overweight/obese patients with breast cancer have a lower reoccurrence rate and a greater delay in reoccurrence if they use NSAIDs, also known as anti-inflammatory medicines such as Aspirin and Ibuprofen, as part of their hormone therapy (UT News). What these university-funded researchers discovered is something that has a great common good and could benefit thousands, if not millions, of people suffering from breast cancer; what they are doing is already for public consumption.

**Taking a Risk: Final Thoughts**

Though there may be some pushback on writing for the public, and even with the limitations of this project, I believe I have demonstrated the need for more academics to participate in public spaces. There are still some unknowns when it comes to the potential of writing outside of a comfort zone, but we as an academic community need to be willing to take that risk (#3 on Kazanjian's list) in order to better serve our students. By finding another method of serving university students, scholars have the potential to affect greater change by demonstrating to a larger audience the purpose of academia and why people should not discount going to college based on the fear of debt or not learning anything.

"Is there anything you want to pick up here for your prelim exams?" is the question that my brother asked me that started this whole conversation. If this project will be a part of an academic conversation that will allow future students to change my answer of "no" into
something close to "I think there are a few I can get here," then I believe that I will have achieved my goal. It may seem like a small goal, but the purpose of this dissertation is not to "change the world," but to ask the question "does public scholarship have a place in the English academic community?" and to hopefully get a larger audience to consider the question and be better equipped to answer it.

Writing in a public sphere is not for everyone, nor should anyone who is not comfortable doing so be forced into; it should at least be an option as long as there is a reason why a scholar wants to do so and is furthering the brand of the college, increasing awareness on a subject, or expanding their knowledge as a whole. As Peck, Flowers, and Higgins stated, a community does not need to have one solution to every problem, but if they can work together with different people and different ways of thinking, the community will become stronger. I believe that making public scholarship more acceptable will make the already diverse ways of thinking among academics more robust, interesting and well-rounded as we continue in our pursuits of knowledge and the service of an ever-changing student population.


"Directory: Samantha Blackmon." Purdue University. Online. 1 Dec 2014.


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Salatia, Steven. *Twitter.*


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