

***Re-situating and re-mediating the canons:***

***A cultural-historical remapping of rhetorical activity***

*An earlier version of this argument was presented February 6, 2005 by Paul Prior in a plenary talk at the Santa Barbara Conference, Writing Research in the Making.*

**Contributors:**

Paul Prior, Janine Solberg, Patrick Berry. Hannah Bellwoar. Bill Chewing, Karen J. Lunsford, Liz Rohan, Kevin Roozen, Mary P. Sheridan-Rabideau, Jody Shipka, Derek Van Ittersum, Joyce Walker

**Introduction**

The five classical canons listed below (with first their Latin and then their Greek names in parentheses) have offered a map for rhetors and a frame for rhetoricians for at least two millennia.

- Invention (*inventio, heuresis*)
- Arrangement (*dispositio, taxis*)
- Style (*elocutio, lexis*)
- Memory (*memoria, mneme*)
- Delivery (*actio/pronuntiatio, hypokrisis*)

The first three emerged earliest and have remained the most robust in the last several centuries. Whereas other maps that ancient rhetoricians

bequeathed to us (e.g., forensic, deliberative, and epideictic discourse; *ethos*, *pathos*, and *logos*; the topics; tropes) identify types of discourse, the canons are unique in that they aim to map rhetorical activity. It is probably that emphasis on activity that has associated the canons so closely with both rhetorical practice and pedagogy. In this webtext, we argue that it is time to look to a new mapping of rhetorical activity, one that acknowledges advances in our understanding of language, semiotics, human development, technology, and society. We should start with two clarifications. First, this argument primarily addresses the canons of rhetoric from our perspective as writing studies researchers rather than from the perspective of classicists. As writing researchers, we approach classical rhetoric, much as Roland Barthes (1988) suggested, as a matter of a history. It is in part to address the freight of this history—woven, often tacitly, into our languages, institutions, and practices—that we take up the canons of rhetoric and propose re-situating and re-mediating them. Second, as we examine the map that the rhetorical canons have offered and propose a new mapping, we must acknowledge that we do not believe that this new mapping has only recently become necessary. The digitization of semiosis has certainly made the limits of the canons more palpable, but we would argue that the problems were there from the start. In other words, without in any way discounting the insightful intellectual labor of

rhetoric's classical pioneers or the value of studying the products of that labor to enrich our understanding and practice today, we suggest that the canons offered only a partial map even of the rhetorical and political worlds of Ancient Greece.

### **Delivery problems**

As many scholars have noted (e.g., Crowley, 1998), current-traditional rhetoric effectively shrank the canons to arrangement and style. As Writing Studies emerged in the 1970s as a distinct site of disciplinary activity, attention to invention merged powerfully with attention to cognitive process in the formation of the process movement, a movement that linked theory, research, pedagogy, and practice. In the last decade or so, another of the classical canons, delivery, has been reanimated as the field's attention has turned to electronic and digital media. In light of this renewed attention, we take up delivery as a strategic example to illustrate the kinds of fundamental problems that we (and others) have found with the classical canons. Through an analysis of delivery, we aim to identify the broader problems deeply embedded in the texture of the classical map, and we argue for remapping rhetorical activity, for re-situating and re-mediating the canons, rather than continuing to pour ever more, and ever more alien, content into those ancient vessels.

Under the prototype of oratory, delivery was about gesture, stance, gaze, dress, voice quality, intonation, and so on. As writing seemed to overtake talk as the dominant mode of civic-legal life, the canon of delivery fell into neglect, along with memory—understood to be about recall for lines of argument in oral debate and/or memorization of set speeches. Observers as diverse as Barthes (1988) and George Kennedy (1994) could agree that the last two canons became peripheral in a literate age. (What use are gestures, dress, stance, vocalization, and memorization to a text?) Consider, in contrast, Lev Vygotsky (1997), who saw externally mediated memory systems, like those of writing, as a matter of the revolutionary reorganization of memory, a key step in human history. This fading of delivery and memory tells us much about how firmly rhetoric has been anchored in a narrow range of contexts for specific sociocultural conditions and with a prototypical mode. Rhetoric was tailored to the public life of Greece, then Rome, then the Church. Speech was the prototypical mode, though rhetoric has certainly adapted to new modes. Orality was partly eclipsed by literacy (a process obvious with the medieval *ars dictaminis*, the manuals of letter writing), and both now feel the pressure of the digital age. However, rhetoric has only recently and partially begun to theorize mode.

It is instructive to attend to recent attempts to rehabilitate delivery. When Robert Connors (1993) sought to revive delivery, for example, he

did so in another local institutional context and mode, exploring the delivery aspects of the student research paper—the type of paper, the typography, margins, printer options, and so on. Kathleen Welch (1990, 1999) has been arguing for two decades that we should reconceive *delivery as medium*, understood especially through the theories of Walter Ong (1982) and Marshall McLuhan (1994). In *Electric Rhetoric*, Welch (1999) notes varied media, but Ong’s electracy leads her to focus primarily on retro-fixing rhetoric to address television, with delivery becoming an important televisual domain—add panning cameras, newsroom furnishings, corporations, and postmodern HUTS (houses using televisions) to the old issues of delivery. In short, when delivery becomes unfixed from one set of institutional contexts, one mode, it is typically refixed in another institutional context and mode.

It is important to recognize that rhetoric was already multimodal for the ancient Greeks; they didn’t need the printing press or the web. Early in Plato’s (1989) *Phaedrus*, Phaedrus reads Lysias’s speech on love to Socrates, who has guessed Phaedrus would have the written text hidden in his cloak and would have been poring over it for his studies. In fact, Socrates insists that Phaedrus *read* the speech on love so he can get a precise representation of it. He tells Phaedrus he has no interest in Phaedrus practicing his oratory on him when “Lysias himself is here present” (p. 477). For Plato then (and this in spite of his sharp criticism

of writing later in the same dialogue), writing was not only a familiar, expected *pedagogic* practice, but also a valued means of storing precise, detailed representations of discourse.

### **Re-mediating and re-distributing delivery**

Like Welch, we propose theorizing delivery, but we are offering a different name to start and a different mix of theoretical lenses. Delivery might be reconceived as mediation. By mediation, we are thinking of Jay Bolter and Richard Grusin's (1999) *remediations* close to McLuhan (1994), but also of Vygotsky's (1987, 1997) cultural-historical approach to mediated activity, and Bruno Latour's (1999) accounts of technical mediation—detours, delegations, and hybrids. Latour, interestingly, begins with another Greek, Daedalus, the crafty engineer.

What mediations, what kinds of detours, might delivery of a text involve? Do we write a text to be read silently, read aloud (as a speech), recorded on a DVD, or performed by various groups of actors on a stage? What typeface do we use? What color? Do we deliver the document on paper, on the screen, or in some other medium? If on paper, by mail or by hand? If by hand, do we do it ourselves or do we have someone else do it? Do we synchronize the delivery with some other event? Or perhaps we deliver it (think espionage; think, like Erving Goffman, 1974, of the stratagems of con artists) by allowing others to find it in another place. Do we need to deliver the text first to

an intermediary (editor, publisher, boss) for review to get it out to a public of some size? Or do we want the text to be distributed in encrypted formats to a small select distribution list? Or do we divide up the delivery of the message so that the chances of illicit use are limited? (Think about systems to deliver the authorization codes for nuclear weapons.) As these questions begin to suggest, delivery seems to encompass two related but distinct types of issues: mediation and distribution.

In Jody Shipka's (2005) account of her activity-based, multimodal approach to composition, we see how she invites her students to conceive of their work as engineering rhetorical events, and we glimpse the truly complex means of mediation and distribution the students devise to achieve specific rhetorical effects. Moreover, her work highlights the fact that mediation is not necessarily singular, a choice of "this means or that." It may involve a distribution of means, a configuration, a dispersion. We may pursue rhetorical goals through a variety of genres, in different media, with different distributions across a series of events and texts.

As an idealized map of rhetorical activity, the canons invite a sequential reading: The rhetor invents, arranges, crafts style, memorizes, and finally delivers. However, as in Burke's (1950) pentad or Jakobson's (1990) model of communication (which offer

simultaneous, multifunctional accounts where all of the elements are always co-present though in varying degrees of prominence or relevance), current thinking about the canons (and key elements of historical practice) reject that linear reading. Invention, for example, is widely understood as a process that goes on throughout the entire work (**not** something done first, then funneled into an arrangement, then enacted in words, then stored in some memory, then delivered). Mediation and distribution are also phenomena that operate at each moment in the process, as the “text” is always being mediated and distributed in some fashion, actually in multiple ways.

In summary, the canon of delivery does not focus attention on the possible rhetorical configurations of distribution, mode, and other mediations. It does not alert us to take a broader view of the rhetorical landscape, to the possibility of rhetorical campaigns. Nor does it feed back easily into a recognition of the arrays and chains of distribution, mode, and mediation in rhetorical processes. On the classical map, delivery is traced on a scene of individual production rather than on fields of cultural-historical practice. Given these multiple limits, we argue that it makes more sense to begin remapping rhetorical activity, to trace distribution and mediation, than to attempt to retrofit this ancient tool to do varieties of work it was never designed to address.

## **The rhetorical scene**

Here we reach the core of the problem, the prototypical scene of rhetoric, a model grounded in a speaker and hearer, essentially in monologue (even if turn-taking creates a chain of monologues). Critics of classical rhetoric's modern redeployments are fairly united in their concern for the scope of this model. As Dilip Gaonkar (1997) argues,

Even a renovated Ciceronian/Aristotelian theory of rhetoric, so long as it remains committed to the view of the speaker/author as the origin of discourse, is severely handicapped in reading discursive formations of not only modern science, but also modern polity. (p. 344)

Science, of course, represents an extension of rhetoric, but polity is what rhetoric was designed for, should be where it has the home court advantage. Gaonkar goes on to mention things like the congressional record, legislative tracts, commission reports, radio talk shows, and television. Media, in the corporate mass sense, are not a trivial detour from the old model. Kenneth Burke (1950) noted the way modern media alter the scene and effects of rhetoric:

...a "good" rhetoric neglected by the press obviously cannot be so "communicative" as a poor rhetoric backed nation-wide by headlines. (pp. 25-26)

The continuing belief in 2006 among many U.S. citizens that Iraq had nuclear weapons and was directly involved in the 9-11-2001 attacks on the Twin Towers in New York offers us a clear illustration of Burke's point.

Goffman's (1981) phenomenological critique of modern language and communication theories for their allegiance to prototypical speaker-hearer dyads offers an incisive analysis of, and remedy to, such scenes. When Goffman discusses footings, frames and participation structures, he explodes every term and re-scenes the site of discourse. A *speaker* must be decomposed into *author*, *principal*, and *animator*, and Goffman was explicitly offering that 3-part scheme as a generic first pass toward a diverse array of culturally-situated footings. (See also Judith Irvine's, 1996, wonderful delineations of complex framings of participation.) *Listeners* (or viewers) are likewise decomposed into addressed or unaddressed, ratified or unratified, with variable access to the speaker's communication. Goffman rejects that idealized pair of talking heads that has entranced so many linguists, pointing instead to concrete groupings of people, say, haggling in a crowded town market. He rejects the imposition of a shared, consensual, homogeneous space and re-portrays interaction as wildly laminated and asymmetric. For Goffman, audiences are constantly active, co-producers of the configuration of footings and the discourse itself. Goffman's scenes of semiotic interaction challenge

the abstract, dyadic, production-oriented bias that lies at the heart of the rhetorical canons.

### **Take 1: Revising the canons**

Re-staging the scene of rhetorical encounters calls for an expanded dialogical mapping of rhetorical activity. Writers, for example, routinely work to shape the reception of their texts. We might hand a draft to someone and suggest a motive for reading (“I thought you might want to read this before our meeting, so you’d know how things are going in the program”), or a framing (“It’s still a rough draft”), or a kind of desired response (“Please let me know if I’ve addressed your concerns”). We might work more diffusely to build a positive climate for reception. Oddly (and one of the clearest signs of a dyadic, production-oriented perspective), audience is not one of the canons. Audience is addressed, considered through back doors (e.g., in invention by way of the commonplaces), but real audiences receiving the text and doing something with it are not figured in. Taking into account the reception and the response of audiences would expand the canons. It would imagine rhetorical utterances as dialogic in Valentin Voloshinov’s (1973) and Mikhail Bakhtin’s (1986) sense, a circuit only completed through the flow of contact. Folded back into the process, reception directs our attention to the many different receptions, chains that stretch from a writer’s moment-to-moment reviewing of a text to the kind of in-

progress oral, written, and material responses to a series of texts cycled through an organization. Where are we now? Perhaps we might revise the canons by elaborating the two senses of delivery and adding reception.

### **Revising the canons: Take 1**

Invention

Arrangement

Style

Memory

Mediation

Distribution

Reception

### **Society and socialization**

*Take 1*, however, still seems to leave much off the map. Gaonkar and Burke were pointing not only to more complex participation structures, but also to complex institutional networks. Consider recent developments in the U.S. political system. How would the classical canons (or for that matter the topics, or *ethos/pathos/logos*) help us to analyze the effects of, or plan a strategy comparable to, that of the far right over the past few decades? David Brock (2004), as a former insider, has detailed some of this long-term campaign: the formation of far-right think-tanks; cultivation of journalists, intellectuals, and media personalities (like Rush Limbaugh); changing Federal Communications

Commission rules on media concentration and regulation; the campaign to centralize and politicize protestant religious organizations; journalists secretly on the government payroll; strongly ideological judicial appointments across decades; and the IRS review of the nonprofit tax status of organizations like the NAACP and anti-war churches. Consider the following quote, found in a 2004 report of the Defense Science Board's Task Force on Strategic Communications (aka propaganda):

Information saturation means attention, not information, becomes a scarce resource. Power flows to credible messengers. Asymmetrical credibility matters. What's around information is critical. Reputations count. Brands are important. Editors, filters, and cue givers are influential. *Fifty years ago political struggles were about the ability to control and transmit scarce information. Today, political struggles are about the creation and destruction of credibility. (italics in original, p. 28)*

Rhetoric could say *ethos* here, but note whose *ethos* is being highlighted—editors, filters, cue givers. In fact, no part of classical rhetoric was oriented to sustained ideological struggle for control of the apparatus of the state and of cultural production. Are such struggles not a part of rhetorical activity?

What if we redesigned the canons starting with the prototype of the full range of activities involved as a bill in the U.S. Congress becomes a

law and then is enacted in practice? What we need here is something more like Latour's (1999, 2005) actor-network theory or Charles Bazerman's (1999) heterogeneous symbolic engineering (the rich account he offers of Edison suggests the kind of shape and complexity we should anticipate in considering rhetorical action). Latour's (1987) notion of black-boxing is suggestive as it highlights production of artifacts (material and semiotic). Black-boxing refers to the process of producing established facts or unproblematic elements (whose contentious, troubled histories become, for practical purposes, invisible). Latour (1987) notes the way a black box functions automatically and stiffly resists being "disassociated, dismantled, renegotiated, reappropriated" (p. 131). To take one of Latour's favorite examples, the notion today, post-Pasteur, that microbes are a primary vector of diseases has become a given, a black-box. We need do no rhetorical work to recruit this notion in a discussion of the potential dangers of bird flu. Likewise, the binary logic of integrated circuits has become so widely established materially and conceptually that it is difficult to imagine the forces that would be needed to undo this black-boxed piece of design history. In contrast, if we wished to argue that the United States should rapidly switch to a hydrogen-powered economy, immense material and rhetorical work would lie ahead of us.

Serious attention to society implies serious attention as well to socialization, to the sociohistoric production of people. As Barthes (1988) points out, Plato (1989) defined (true) rhetoric as a *psychagōgia*—the leading or formation of people’s souls through discourse (public and private). Plato argues that rhetoric must begin by knowing what types of souls there are and what types of arguments will lead them; its goal is to instill in them knowledge, order, and justice so that they can escape the birth-rebirth cycle on this lowly plane of existence (not perhaps a key goal for many of us today). For Plato, the soul was the field in which true rhetors must sow their seeds. This formulation resonates, to a point, with cultural-historical activity theory’s attention to *making people*. However, Marx (Marx & Engels, 1976) offered another way to understand types of people, seeing them as made in historical conditions, as shaped, though not determined, by social relations of production.

Immersed in both traditions, rhetorical and Marxist, Burke began to articulate why it was critical to see making people as part of rhetoric. Consider the following quotations from *A Rhetoric of Motives* (1950):

Such considerations make us alert to the ingredient of rhetoric in all *socialization*, considered as a *moralizing* process....Only those voices from without are effective which can speak in the language of a voice within. (p. 39)

...often we must think of rhetoric not in terms of some one particular address, but as a general *body of identifications* that owe their convincingness much more to trivial repetition and dull reinforcement than to exceptional rhetorical skill. (p. 25-26)

The first quote resonates with Bakhtin's (1981) account of ideological becoming as the interplay between authoritative and internally persuasive discourses. The second quote seems to resonate with Bourdieu's (1990) notion of *habitus*. Because Burke (1950) defines "the basic function of rhetoric" as "the use of words by human agents to form attitudes or to induce actions in other human agents" (p. 41), education, socialization, or indoctrination all become basic rhetorical acts. The focal persuasive message begins to recede against a background of explicit campaigns of persuasion and more tacit socializing pressures of everyday cultural practice.

If persuasive identification has been prefabricated through socialization and through populating the world with black-boxed artifacts, then little or no focal persuasion need be done now. This kind of account of rhetoric can be found in Karen Lunsford's (2003) notion of distributed argumentative activity, which highlights ways that multiple mediations, socialization, production of artifacts (including texts), and establishment of institutions combine in argumentative activity. Burke begins to gesture toward a rhetoric that encompasses socialization, but

we think we can find richer toolkits than those he offered. Voloshinov and Vygotsky in the 1920s began traditions, grounded in a Marxist framework, for considering the semiotic mediation of thought, action, and personality as concrete cultural-historical practice.

### **Take 2: A cultural-historical remapping of rhetorical activity**

The canons of classical rhetoric then offer us a snapshot, a synchronic rhetoric, too situated in particular homogeneous worlds and not situated enough in emergent, laminated histories, too centered on the producer rather than the system, too focused on language at the expense of a full semiotics. We turn here to *cultural-historical activity theory* (CHAT; see, e.g., Cole, 1996; Engestrom, 1993; Scribner, 1997; Wertsch, 1991; Wertsch, del Rio, & Alvarez, 1995) to provide a richer framework for conceptualizing rhetorical activity. By CHAT, we mean the emergent synthesis that has brought together Vygotskian psychology, Voloshinovian and Bakhtinian semiotics, Latour's actor-network theory, and situated, phenomenological work in sociology and anthropology. CHAT argues that activity is *situated* in concrete interactions that are simultaneously *improvised* locally and *mediated* by historically-provided tools and practices, which range from machines, made-objects, semiotic means (e.g., languages, genres, iconographies), and institutions to structured environments, domesticated animals and plants, and, indeed, people themselves. Mediated activity means that action and cognition

are *distributed* over time and space and among people, artifacts, and environments and thus also *laminated*, as multiple frames or fields co-exist in any situated act. In activity, people are *socialized* (brought into alignment with others) as they *appropriate* cultural resources, but also *individuated* as their particular appropriations historically accumulate to form a particular individual. Through appropriation and individuation, socialization also opens up a space for cultural change, for a *personalization* of the social. Cultural-historical activity theory points to a concrete, historical rhetoric. Where Aristotle asks what the commonplaces of the people are, a cultural-historical approach asks how people, institutions, and artifacts are made in history. This cultural-historical approach suggests that, rather than revising and reinterpreting the classical canons, it is time to begin remapping the territory of rhetorical activity.

### **Remapping Rhetorical Activity: Take 2**

<b>Literate Activity</b>	<i>in</i>	
Production	<b>Functional Systems</b>	
Representation	People	
Distribution	Artifacts	
Reception	Practices	<i>in</i>
Socialization	Institutions	<b>Laminated Chronotopes</b>
Activity	Communities	Embodied
Ecology	Ecologies	Represented
		Embedded

In the broadest context, this remapping begins (at the lower right) with laminated chronotopes, the time-spaces Bakhtin (1981) first described. Chronotopes can be understood as embodied activity-in-the-world, representational worlds, and chronotopes embedded in material and semiotic artifacts. Within these interpenetrated chronotopes, we then identify functional systems (Hutchins, 1995a). Functional systems—typified and fleeting—tie together people, artifacts, practices, institutions, communities, and ecologies around some array of current objectives, conscious and not. (See Prior, 1998, and Prior and Shipka, 2003, for fuller accounts of laminated chronotopes and functional systems.) The critical point here is that once socialization, Burke's (1950) body of identifications, has entered into the space of rhetorical activity, then the full range of material-social ecologies have to be on the table as well. (We would suggest Latour's, 1987, *Science in Action* and Bazerman's, 1999, *The Languages of Edison's Light* as foundational texts for these new cultural-historical, rhetorical canons.) Finally, within functional systems, we then turn to a map of literate activity. We placed this part of the map on the left and highest because it is closest in scale to the classical canons and closest to how we see our remapping being used for rhetorical practice and rhetorical instruction.

### **Mapping literate activity**

The terms of the map of literate activity (production, representation,

distribution, reception, socialization, activity, and ecology) are not intended to evoke a series of steps, but to signal a multidimensional model, like Jakobson's (1990) model of language functions.

**Production** directs our attention to the tools, practices, and contexts that shape the formation of a text (or series of texts) as well as to the series of texts and artifacts produced. It merges individual and collective invention with the mediated force of technologies, genres, discourses, and practices.

**Representation** involves the way a discourse is entextualized in talk, text, and mind. Representation highlights semiotic codes, discourses, genres (as representational artifacts). We're thinking here of Hutchins' (1995a) notion of distributed cognition as the "propagation of representational states across media" (p. 118), with media including the human mind and body. Representation collapses style and arrangement, but also expands them to encompass the full range of semiotic media and means found in representational artifacts of all kinds (material, machinic, biologic).

**Distribution** involves the way particular media, technologies, and social practices disseminate a text and what a particular network signifies. It's important to stress that even a person sitting alone writing on a piece of paper that is read only by herself is displaying a type of distribution.

**Reception** is actual reading/viewing/hearing and response, how meaning is made under what conditions and for what ends. It is a mental and social activity. Reception can be, and often is, actively shaped by writers or distributors.

**Socialization** is the making of people and the making of society in concrete history. As individuals engage in cultural practices, they are involved in apprenticeship, learning, and development. As situated engagement in cultural practices unfolds, society is (re)produced, that is, transmitted and transformed in activity.

**Activity** points to the more or less durable, goal-oriented, motivated projects that lead people to cooperation, indifference, and conflict. Cultural-historical activity theories appear to offer richer ways to investigate and define rhetorical situations.

**Ecology** points to the biotic and natural world, which enables and constrains all the previous functions and which may also be a domain of rhetorical action. Bazerman (1988) noted the ways scientists must deal with the responses not only of other scientists and publics, but also of the material world. And Monsanto certainly recognizes that the debate over genetically modified (GM) plants will be settled when all plants have GM DNA, a condition we are fast approaching in the case of corn and soybeans.

You may have noticed that mediation is not on this list. What happened to it? In fact, we did not drop it. From a cultural-historical perspective and adopting James Wertsch's (1991) terms, we take mediated activity and mediated agency as fundamental units of analysis. In those terms, everything in the three maps (literate activity, functional systems, and chronotopes) is about mediation.

### **Using CHAT to form new canons**

We intend this cultural-historical remapping of rhetorical activity, this scheme of literate activity in functional systems in laminated chronotopes, to replace the classical five canons as a map for rhetorical action. Why do we argue for this remapping? First, we believe that CHAT offers a richer map of activity. Where the classical canons mapped the situational, productive acts of a rhetor, this CHAT map points to a complex set of interlocking systems within which rhetors are formed, act, and navigate. Socialization, for example, is not represented as part of rhetorical activity by the classical canons. Rhetors drew on the commonplaces of the people, but the option of forming people and their commonplaces was off the map. If some readers might argue that classical rhetoricians were very attuned to learning, that their whole practice was predicated on the value of instruction, we would not disagree. As we noted at the beginning, our argument is that the classical canons did not offer a full mapping of the actual rhetorical

activity of the ancients. A cultural-historical remapping of rhetorical activity should bring into sharper relief dimensions of ancient practices as well as of ours today.

For researchers interested in analyzing rhetorical practice, this cultural-historical remapping retunes attention. As in Lave and Wenger's (1991) cultural-historical account of situated learning, this CHAT perspective integrates communication, learning, and social formation, seeing them not as separate categories, but as simultaneous, constant dimensions of any moment of life. This perspective tunes our attention to multimodality, not as a question of which mode a message might be placed in, but as a question of how multiple modes operate together in a single rhetorical act and of how extended chains of modal transformations may be linked in a rhetorical trajectory. This map, in short, argues for attending to the full range of multimodality and to material ecologies throughout the process. It's not about the web or television, and it's not electracy. It's about attending to semiosis in whatever materials at whatever point in the activity. Finally, this account is fundamentally rhizomatic, asking us to trace spatially and historically extended networks. These networks do not live in the boxes our cultures have defined for us, so researchers should study and act outside of such boxes (see Latour, 2005). Neither life nor rhetoric is composed of an archipelago of focal events, so researchers should be

alert to extended semiotic campaigns, to interdiscursive connections across time, place, and social milieu.

In terms of rhetorical action and instruction, this cultural-historical remapping articulates an expanded space of rhetorical moves and contexts. In particular, whereas the history of rhetoric has focused on how rhetors take stock of the means of persuasion available in a rhetorical situation to craft and contextualize a message, a cultural-historical mapping opens up consideration of how rhetors and audiences are socialized, how means are made and black-boxed, and how situations are built and altered. Attending to the socialization of people, to black-boxing and to the profusion of semiotic objects seems like a purloined letter lying in our midst. We mentioned the far right, but also think of Disney, which is populating our world with t-shirts, stuffed animals, pajamas, coffee cups, TV shows, films, DVDs and CDs, mall stores, theme parks, books, and so on. When Disney wants to promote the next Britney Spears or the next *Lion King*, they do not have to make an isolated argument for a single product. They are working in a world populated with Disney artifacts that naturalize Disney, that incline people to attend favorably to whatever Disney offers next. As Umberto Eco (1997) argues, *primary indexicality*, getting people's attention, is a significant act itself and forms the semiotic ground for any further communication.

In short, we argue that a new set of canons is needed to re-situate rhetoric in complex sociohistoric worlds and to realize not simply a consistent multimodality, but a deep orientation to mediated activity and agency. Re-situating and re-mediating the canons takes us beyond any single setting and mode and offers a new map for an expansive attention to the rhetorical dimensions of all activity. Resituating the canons in this fashion is not a panacea for writing studies or rhetoric. We believe, however, that these revised canons are an artifact that will afford useful reworkings and expansions of the realm of rhetoric.

### **From the core text to the data nodes**

The individual data nodes we have arrayed around our core text are not intended to rehearse our analysis of the limits of the classical canons. Nor do they systematically unpack specific terms of the cultural-historical remapping we have proposed. Instead, they represent a collage of images of literate and rhetorical activity that we have developed (individually and jointly) in our studies. Through these nodes, we present some of the spaces and paths this new mapping makes more visible and navigable. In them, we enact the kind of attention to materiality and mediation that Anne Wysocki (2004) sees as the defining feature of new media texts. In content and form, the data nodes illustrate the value of a cultural-historical remapping that can follow rhetorical activity wherever it goes and however it is conveyed.

The data nodes focus on complex rhetorical remediations and trajectories. In a feminist web installation, Hannah Bellwoar, for example, explores the literate and multimodal character of healing/medicine as she remediates academic theory, a personal narrative of her own medical experiences and records, and a series of audio reflections on the relationship among academic, medical, and personal discourses. Patrick Berry traces how multiple modalities and contexts intersect, overlap, and echo one another around uptakes of Bernard Shaw's *Pygmalion* tale of the linguistic and social remediation of a London flower girl. Tracing a series of diversely-mediated recontextualizations of the rhetorical, material, affective, and interpersonal strategies that a first-year composition student employed for an in-class activity called "Music Day," Jody Shipka and Bill Chewing present five distinctly different, but decidedly interrelated, remediations of a composing process narrative that Shipka collected in a research interview.

The data nodes also highlight socialization—the production of people in practice. Foregrounding the profoundly laminated nature of identity, Kevin Roozen, for example, examines dialogic relations among a college student's literate engagement as a mathematics major, a member of a sketch comedy troupe, and a developer of a new online role-playing game. Karen Lunsford examines how the digital remediation of copyright, peer review, and scientific transparency reshapes the

experiences and stances of a scientist-editor. Remediating a sampling of early 20<sup>th</sup> century career advice/training texts and films aimed at women office workers, Janine Solberg explores socialization as distributed work, mediated by texts and by the cultural/material channels through which those texts circulate.

The data nodes pay close attention to the rhetorical affordances of materiality and mediation. Liz Rohan, for example, examines the ways a form of ordinary writing, “venting” (writing graffiti on air vents) in the library stacks at the University of Michigan—Ann Arbor, can be understood as a system in which writers, readers, technologies and ecologies act collectively and in a nonlinear fashion to produce meaning, in this case to forge a collective memory of college life. Analyzing the situated practices of revision and redesign of a virtual art object, Paul Prior presents mediational means (screens, programs, drawings, gestures) not simply as means of delivery, but as tools of production, forms of representation, key vectors of distribution, and sites of reception.

Finally, the data nodes suggest that a cultural-historical remapping resonates with the complex, but everyday rhetorical challenges people face. Mary Sheridan-Rabideau, for example, considers the rhetorical tasks a new community arts organization, *Artists Now*, faces as it seeks to put up a billboard, tasks that go well beyond inventing text/image

and delivering it on a space, tasks that must navigate diverse material conditions and the pivotal role of forces and contexts well removed from any “moment” of reading/writing/creating/designing. Offering a close examination of writers engaged in memory work with digital tools, Derek Van Ittersum argues that, while the rhetorical canon of memory continues to provide insight into memory work (such as the power of images and place memory) and the generative aspects of memory, cultural-historical activity theory is better able to account for permutations introduced by new artifacts (such as databases), new practices (such as those afforded by digital tools), and the interplay between functional systems and specific instances of literate activity. Joyce Walker narrates a story about a group of students who decided (for a multimodal class assignment) to give textual voice to trees on campus that were designated for removal; Walker argues that CHAT assists her in (re)fashioning both practices of, and rationales for, a first-year composition course that emphasizes research, multimodal materialities, and an expansive awareness of rhetorical activity.

These data nodes reflect our diverse interests, settings, subjects, practices, and materialities, but individually and jointly, through analyses and enactments, they have sharpened our awareness of the disjunctions between the rhetorical activities they trace and the spaces and tools offered by the classical canons. Working with these images of

rhetorical activity has led us to argue for this cultural-historical remapping of the canons.

*The sources cited in this core text, and in all the data nodes from the webtext, are available in html and pdf formats as links from the webtext at Kairos (issue 11.3).*