

This is supplementary material for the Julie Amick Cook webtext “Performing Rhetorical Attunement: Roughing the Scale,” published in *Kairos: A Journal of Rhetoric, Technology, Pedagogy*, 26(2), available at <http://kairos.technorhetoric.net/26.2/disputatio/cook>

“Performing Rhetorical Attunement: Roughing the Scale”

By Julie Amick Cook

Welcome: 0.00-2.01

Julie is sitting, facing camera.

Julie: Hi, and welcome to my, umm... well let me back up a minute. This work was originally intended to be a recording from the 2019 4Cs conference with the theme of “performance rhetoric, performance composition,” but I forgot to hit the record button until, well...

Transitions to video from 2019 4Cs conference, where Tony Scott, on a panel with Julie, says, “Does anyone have any questions?”

Julie: ... the very last moment. Of course, our movements within a discipline are rarely seamless, or without hiccups or tensions. Likewise, how knowledge comes into being and how it is mobilized across the different sites of writing is messy and complex. The scales of writing are just not smooth.

Video transition to Julie sitting in her office. She is restless, reading, writing, visually thinking. The view of Julie is filtered with static and other obscuring elements. Ages’s “Needle and Thread” plays in the background and the following is narrated.

Julie: As I think about current trends in writing studies and other disciplines attending to forms, patterns, assembling, and entanglements—and doing so with a preoccupation for naming—I am led to consider: How do we depict a discipline? How do we locate, or rather, how do we depict ourselves within it?

... As much as the scholarship would suggest otherwise, there would appear to be a fundamental divide between the way that we often write about and theorize and imagine the scales of writing and how these conceptualizations are materialized in our day-to-day realities.

And so, this current work is meant as a

Visual element appears, toggling from Julie to a close view of single words typed on computer screen as Julie narrates.

Julie: depiction of role negotiation, rhetorical performances, and adaptive assemblages. In what follows, I position the production, valuation, and the mobilization of knowledge across the scales of writing as multivocal rhetorical attunement.

Three upcoming chapters appear with a single shot, one by one to the left of the screen.

Julie: I do this in a series of performative vignettes that are experimental, explorative, inconclusive, and unresolved.

Book featured displays on screen.

I start with anthropologist Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing’s observations of nonscalability.

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Prelude: Setting the Stage: 2.01-2.38

Julie walks in from bottom right of screen and sits on stool, scratched music plays as she enters. She reads aloud the following excerpt from a book.

Julie: “Events can lead to relatively stable situations, but they cannot be counted on...; they are always framed by contingency and time. History plays havoc with scalability. The only way to create scalability is to repress change and encounter. If they can’t be repressed, the whole relation across scales must be rethought” (Tsing, 2015, p. 142).

Chapter One: A Campus Cameo 2.38-3.48

Images of UNC Charlotte’s bell tower, demolishing, construction (with construction sounds in background), sketches for replacement of area. Julie narrates as images appear on screen.

Julie: This beautifully landscaped area on my home campus is one that I’ve walked by, though, and around multiple times. The first was about 20 years ago, when I was required to use a university library for my high school senior exit project. In fact, it is difficult to navigate the university without passing by this location. This was by design. Though the campus is much larger now than it was in 1970, 49 years ago this location was marked as an epicenter for the campus with the construction of the Belk Bell Tower, demarcated by its designation as a “free speech zone.” Four years ago, the tower was deemed structurally unsound and was demolished. During the over a year-long reconstruction of this site, the area was contained, off limits, and new routes around the university were paved.... Bell towers at the heart of universities suggest that there is a shared place and time. As I chart my own history with this one location, I wonder how I might go about depicting this.

Chapter Two: Whose Line Is It Anyway? 3.48-5.53

Julie walks down hallway and enters studio. She writes a list on easel style whiteboard, as she narrates the following.

Julie: Like many of you, I identify with many roles about the scales of writing work:

- Non-tenure line teacher, Senior Lecturer
- Committee Member—or, should I say, member of multiple standing and ad hoc committees?
- I am also a Researcher
- Mentor
- Editor
- Facilitator
- Faculty Fellow
- Student
- Consultant
- And a very proud supporter of two adorable and developing-literacy offspring

Screen transitions to slide, featuring a mosaic figure in background. Dotted lines

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appear to display linear and webbed models for visualization. Julie narrates the following.

Julie: In *Network Sense: Methods for Visualizing a Discipline*, Derek Mueller complicates our methods for visualizing the field of writing studies. One approach for Mueller is to create depictions of professionalism by graphing patterns. Two patterns emerged for graphing career activity in Mueller’s study: the path-based or diachronic model, and the starburst or synchronic model. Diachronic patterns situate a clear “from” or “then,” where movement is understood in sequence.

Screen transition to Julie, standing in a black background. Julie jumps forward five times, resembling jumping on stepping stones, which light up when she connects with the new spot. Julie narrates.

You might relate it to jumping from one stepping stone to another, where footing is the focus.

Julie stands in the center of a quad on campus. As she narrates, a 360° graphing of webbed connections slowly develops in a surround dome around her.

Julie: By contrast, in the starburst model, while there is a center of “now,” it is informed by the many roots and branches of our past and projections for the future.

The following text appears in a block over visual elements.

These personal roles parallel the search for disciplinary identities, and these multi-roles also complicate my locative activity within disciplinary structures.

Julie appears in a black box, drawing out a diachronic graph in front of her on the screen. Julie narrates.

If you think about charting your own activity, you will likely find as I did that the diachronic model quickly breaks down. In segmenting this activity, there is much that must be overlooked and forgotten in order to capture these linear points of trajectory. Likewise, there is a smoothness to the scaling of ideas across these sites.

Screen transition to close movement of a webbed graph, moving with the lines developed.

But scales, like time, are legion, which is why the starburst model provides a more accurate representation. Still, scales are also relative.

The following questions appear in boxes, bottom of screen, over graphed visuals.

Where is now? And when is from?

Chapter Three: Talking Scale: Description, Not a Definition 5.53-10.12

Julie sits in animated room on a chair with a remote. Screen scratches then transition to Julie in office on a video call with Tony Scott, who appears on screen in front of her.

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Julie: When you think of scales of writing, what do you think of?

Tony: The first thing that I think of... I think of two things.

Screen focuses on Tony.

Tony: I think of disciplinary scales, and I think of programmatic scales that are nested within institutions.

Close focus on Julie, talking with Tony.

Julie: So, in some of your notes you were discussing, you know, how we use, you know, these terms across the discipline... which you say we need. And you're right, right?

Transition to show Julie talking in front of screen to Tony, appearing on screen.

Julie: We have to have a way of being in communication with one another, of establishing a discipline, a field that, you know, rhet/comp has been working on for some time. Is just establishing itself as a field.

Screen focuses on Tony.

Tony: And it gains authority and weight through the reproduction across different contexts.

Transition to show Julie talking in front of screen to Tony, appearing on screen.

Tony: A term emerges in the scholarship, uh, it gets absorbed into curricula and outcomes, uh, it becomes a part of teaching materials, uh, it gets absorbed into an assessment process, uh, and then that becomes a means through which value is created.

Screen focuses on Tony.

Tony: What is it that sustains... disciplinarity and its closely associated concepts of expertise. And that's another thing that's happened within writing.

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Transition to show Julie talking in front of screen to Tony, appearing on screen.

Tony: Within what we think of as our discipline, we pushed really hard for, uh, more professionalization for our field. A lot of us have. Uh,

Screen focuses on Tony.

Tony: So that people can be in positions in which they could stay in scholarly conversations about what they’re doing.

Screen focuses on Julie.

Tony: So that we can maintain a relationship between teaching and scholarship.

Transition to show Julie talking in front of screen to Tony, appearing on screen.

Tony: The economics of higher education mitigates against that somewhat, and favors, uh, practices in which you have people who are kinda “Jacks of all trades.”

Screen focuses on Tony. At bottom of screen a box contains text, quoting Tony.

Tony: There’s a force toward disassociating everyday teaching practices from disciplinarity.

Screen scratches and transitions to Julie sitting back in animated room on a chair. She uses remote to “play,” but shakes and hits remote when it does not do so. And then hits “play” again, this time working.

Screen scratches and transitions to Julie back in office talking with Tony on video call. Tony appears on screen in front of her.

Julie: So, now that we have a nice, clear definition [Tony and Julie laughing] of what the scales of writing is [laughing]

Screen focuses on Julie.

Julie: How do we go about, you know, describing that in a way that others can get enough of a sense to follow what we’re talking about and maybe with it a curiosity to further explore?

Screen focuses on Tony.

Tony: There’s different ways of doing scale and seeing scale. Uh, whether human beings can get beyond scale is a huge question. Whether we want to is one, too. You can have organizations that are scaled one way...

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Screen focuses on Julie.

Tony: Or organizations that are scaled in another. And they have to do with the way that you see people’s labor and intellectual freedom and ability to be creative, uh..., certainly play into those.

Transition to show Julie talking in front of screen to Tony, appearing on screen.

Julie: When we’re talking about scale, we’re talking about the way that knowledge and meaning-making travels across these...

Screen focuses on Tony.

Julie: divergent, local, national, disciplinary, kinda sites of writing.

Screen focuses on Julie.

Julie: Is that kinda succinctly what it is?

Screen focuses on Tony.

Tony: How ideas travel, uh, the means through which they travel and what happens, uh, is one way—one way—of seeing scale. Yeah.

Julie sits in animated chair, with back to screen. Thought bubbles appear, one on each side of Julie, showing the text for what Tony is saying.

Tony: Scale is everything: It’s how things relate. You’re looking at the big and the little at the same time. You’re looking at macro and micro.

Screen focuses on Tony.

Tony: It’s so puzzling to me though that...

Screen focuses on Julie.

Tony: Do you feel that you have it? Do you feel that in your...

Screen focuses on Tony.

Tony: perception of things, do you feel that you have scale? That you understand scaling and how...

Screen focuses on Julie.

Tony: And what it illuminates?

Julie: So, I feel like I have... a pretty good grasp of scale when it comes to that which is external from myself.

Tony: Um, hum.

Julie: But as soon as I move that to the roughing of the scale, you know, that becomes very murky, and I’m still kinda working through that.

Interlude: An Adaptation (from Spaceballs) 10.12-10.47

Repeated visual from 3.48-3.55 of Julie walking down hallway and into studio, this time the visual is sped up. Fast, playful, western saloon-like music plays as Julie walks into

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studio. Four versions of Julie will appear, simultaneously, on screen throughout this chapter. These versions of Julie will be referred to as J1, J2, J3 and J4.

J1 sits at desk in studio, bottom right of screen, writing. J2 appears writing at whiteboard, middle left of screen.

J3 pops up in middle right of screen, behind J1. J4 pops up, standing in front of J3, middle of screen. J3 and J4 are in conversation. The following is an adaptation from Mel Brooks’ (1987) Spaceballs.

J4: When did this happen?

J3: Now. Whatever you’re looking at now, is happening now not then.

J4: Well, what happened to then?

J3: We just passed it.

J4: When?

J3: Just now.

J4: Well, go back to then.

J3: We can’t.

J4: Why not?

J3: We already passed it.

J4: When will then be now?

J3: Soon.

Chapter Four: In Relation to 10.47-11.39

Screen shows picture of paper as Julie graphs out a webbed map of disciplinarity. Julie narrates.

Julie: How we depict and imagine scales forms our understandings of them. The relational attribute of time is one that anthropologist Asif Agha (2007) utilizes to observe and explain cultural chronotopes. He writes:

Text box appears over visual with Quote. Julie continues narration.

Julie: “Time is not a semiotic isolate. It is textually and ideologically grasped in relation to, and through the activities of, locatable selves” (p. 320).

Screen goes back to visual mapping.

However, understanding time to be relational does not alone account for the movement and passing of time or the bodies that are situated within and mobilized across scales.

Boxes appear with questions asked on either side, bottom of screen.

How do we represent “in relation to”? And, as Jan Nesper (2004) asks, How is it that “some scales become more lasting or influential than others” (p. 313)?

Chapter Five: Coming to Terms 11.39-13.37

Julie sits facing camera, with head tilted down as she types on her laptop. Sound of keystrokes in background. Bookcase behind. Julie narrates.

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Julie: The sheer number of false starts when preparing this work is telling. I would get started, and then...

Second version of Julie pops up in front of Julie at the computer.

J2: Be careful what you say.

J2 disappears. Screen transitions to Julie back at laptop, typing.

Julie: These are words of advice were given to me not too long ago by someone I respect deeply and who has experienced a notable level of success in the field. These words were honest and well intentioned. But they were also silencing.

Thought bubble appears with text to left side of Julie.

Julie: Just write!

Bubble fades.

Julie: I kept telling myself.

Screen shows Julie’s screen, focusing on a few words at a time.

Julie: But these words, “Be careful what you say,” had become agentic.

Screen transitions back to Julie at laptop.

Julie: Their pressure fueled my indecision and kept moving my hand diagonally, top right, across the keyboard.

Screen shows Julie’s screen, focusing on a few words at a time.

Julie: Delete! Delete! Delete!

Screen transitions to Julie back at laptop, typing. Questions appear in thought bubbles on either side of Julie.

What had I said that was not “careful”? Did I understand my place? Had I overstepped?

Text referenced appears on screen.

Shakespearean scholar Phillip McGuire (1985) theorizes the performativity and constraints of silence in *Speechless Dialect*, making key distinguishing between open and closed silences.

Text boxes appears in front of book cover and displays quote from text.

Julie: “An open silence is a moment within a play where a character is not given a line to speak, nor any textual indication of how they are supposed to respond.”

Screen transitions to Julie standing, facing camera, with bookshelf in background. As she quotes the text, a box appears to the left of Julie with quoted text.

Julie: That is, according to McGuire, “An open silence is one whose precise meanings and effects, because they cannot be determined by analysis of the

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words of the playtext, must be established by nonverbal, features of the play that emerge only in performance” (xv).

Screen transitions to Julie typing at laptop.

Julie: By contrast, closed silences are when a character does not speak, but the manner in which they act or react is mandated by other means within the text.

Focusing in on Julie, screen shots appear one-by-one to the right of Julie.

Screenshots feature: Naming What We Know (Adler-Kassner & Wardle, 2015) description as provided by the Colorado Press, the Council of Writing Program Administrators’ (2014) WPA Outcomes Statement for First Year Composition, and CCC’s (2014) Position Statement on Writing Assessment and Programmatic Outcomes.

Julie: I adopt McGuire’s distinctions here as I consider some of the defining texts of our field. I don’t mean to suggest here that we have texts in our field that speak for us or influence how knowledge is mobilized across the sites and scales of writing studies, or that our epistemic courts are...

Second version of Julie pops up in front of Julie at the computer.

J2: Be careful what you say.

Chapter Six: A Rough Sketch 13.37-16.03

Screen shows completed sketch of graph from Chapter 4. Julie narrates.

Julie: Even in all its messiness, and even though paths are difficult to follow, we are able to see the mobility of knowledge and its scalability, but those scales are not smooth. They do not follow the same path. In fact, they do not all directly connect even when they share the same “now.”

Two versions of the graph appear, either side of screen, with visual behind.

Isolating two of these scales in connection to two of my roles within my university, there are clear contrasts between that of an editor for our program’s writing studies journal and that of a Quality Matters Faculty Fellow for the university’s center for teaching and learning.

Picture appears on screen of Julie with other Quality Matters Faculty Fellows, three of whom hold certificates, Julie being one of the three. Text box appears in front of image, as Julie quotes.

Julie: Many of you are likely familiar with Quality Matters: it “is the global organization leading quality assurance in online and innovative digital teaching and learning environments. It provides a scalable quality assurance system for online and blended learning used within and across organizations” (Quality Matters, 2018).

Screen focuses in on Julie, holding certificate, from group photo.

Julie: Even while I promote the process and standards of Quality Matters—and I

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do want to note here that I do find them of value—I am very much aware that its branding and focus on design products that are marketable and appealing are only one example of the fast-growing commerce and corporatization of education.

Text of narration appears on screen in front of visual mapping document.

Julie: I am accountable to and a voice within this exchange—I am a part of its sustainability and scalability.

Visual of second mapping appears and transitions to Julie standing in front of a poster promoting the journal for which she is the editor, and holding the physical version of the journal in front of her.

Julie: Though also resulting in a product, my role as editor for our program’s journal is process based, connected to critical perspectives of key concepts in the field and our writerly processes. It is a creation by and for the program that often positions meaning-making as problem-posing. The journal is connected to program curricula, scholarship in the field, outcomes, principles, writing studies concepts, and teaching practices.

Text of narration appears on screen in front of second visual mapping document.

Julie: I am accountable to and a voice within this exchange—I am a part of its sustainability and scalability.

Screen scratches and transitions to Julie sitting in office viewing emails on desktop. Julie pushes back from desk, and instrumental music from The Wild Reeds’s “Lose My Mind” plays for the duration of this scene. There is no narration. Julie packs her work bag with laptop and exits office. Screen transitions to her walking down hallway, toward the exit door of building. Transition from back view of Julie to front view of her opening the door to exit building, followed by side view of Julie crossing street into parking lot. Julie is seen approaching car and opening car door. Screen shows driver view of road, as car passes by road sign reading, “Highway 49, UNC Charlotte.”

An Aside: Home from Work 16.03-17.18

Black screen. Sound of door opening. Audio of kids playing stringed instruments and singing, “Pirates, pirates, pirates.” Sound of door shutting. Julie enters, top left of screen. The screen is filtered and blurred. She walks diagonally to the center of a theatre stage. Kids singing in background, “Pirates live in the show.” Screen becomes clear, and Julie stops center stage. The following is presented in spoken word by Julie.

Julie:

Door shuts

Shoes off

Mind, racing

It had been one of those days,

It had been one of those days where I felt like I had nothing to show But I’d given everything I had

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Months of work gone with one decision ONE
As justification: “The scholarship says”
Made to feel like a contrarian in one context and a sellout in another
Unsure of my place
And so we work week by week and we tweak just to stay in the game. And at home I hear my little girls’ whispers and laughter and singing: Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday [sung]
Wednesday
And I wonder when-is-the-day that I will no longer hear as knee-jerk justification for overriding my non-tenure line “opinions” of practice that “The scholarship says.”
The scholarship says?!
The scholarship says.

Clapping from audience, camera moves to capture two additional versions of Julie.

J2: “Well that was bold.”

J3: “Yeah, saucy.”

Screen fades to black with kid saying, “I did my best on that.”

Chapter Seven: Walking in the Field 17.18-18.15

Screen fades to fully developed courtyard where Bell Tower once stood. Five versions of Julie appear walking around courtyard, some clashing into each other. Julie narrates.

Julie: The smoothness of scales becomes unbalanced—asymmetrical—as they are materialized in practice. Understanding the production, valuation, and mobilization of knowledge across the scales of writing, I am left to consider: How might we embrace dissonance across the scales of writing work?

Screen focuses on Julie, sitting in courtyard, drawing. Panning into Julie, the camera shows Julie sketching the once standing Bell Tower and then moves to a closeup of a place in memoriam to the history of the Bell Tower.

Julie: Moreover, how might we value the work of writing across the field so that those working within it find value and a voice in experience?

Visual of person sitting at desk, showing completed drawing of the Bell Tower sketch. Person flips page. Camera pulls up from desk and shows that it is Julie sitting in a classroom, looking at the teacher, who is another version of Julie.

J2: So hi, everyone, and welcome to class. We’re going to get started today with a freewrite. So, take about five to ten minutes and consider—What is writing?

Camera moves back to Julie as student, with back to camera and a focus paper in front of her. She writes, “What is writing?”

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18.15-19.41

Cowboy Junkies's instrumentation from “Rock and Bird” plays as credits roll.