Authorship: Intention and Responsibility in Networks

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This dissertation looks at writers in digital networks through a study of clients and consultants at UW Madison's DesignLab, a digital media studio. I argue that digital genres reveal that much of the work that writers do are in acts of textual curation, or in assembling and evaluating texts. I look at how human, ethical writers interact with the other elements in their networks. In interviews, I asked my subjects to reflect on their own sense of agency and authorship. I wanted to know how they saw their roles in creating digital media projects, how they made choices as writers. Based on these interviews, I argue that digital networks have consequences for the ways in which we view authorial intention, plagiarism, individual voice, and rhetoric. My project demonstrates how distributed theories of agency intersect with the lived experiences of writers, providing insight on how we compose in networks.

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Introduction

As digital media has increasingly led us to consider agency within complex systems, one of the central issues that has emerged in the field of composition and rhetoric is a need for a better sense of networked, embodied agency – a sense of agency that recovers rhetorical agency without reverting to autonomous, liberal subject models. Recently introduced theories in the field, notably new materialisms, have asked us to consider agency as fully distributed or in some cases, shared equally between humans, animals, and non-human subjects. Networked theories of agency and ecological theories of writing understand agency as non-autonomous, continuously shifting, arising from interactions, and derived from constraints. We have therefore gotten to a place in our theories of agency where we find it difficult to explain the individual capacity for responsibility and social change. In response, a need to locate the individual as an ethical actor has emerged as an important question for the field as we move forward. I maintain that many of these questions have always existed. However digital genres have forced us not only to confront any lingering myths of autonomous authorship, but also to consider whether or not authorship is a viable concept through which to consider ethical writing and individual responsibility. As part of this rethinking of the subject within a network, I want to consider how new media genres might ask us to consider the relationship between agency and ethics.

Postmodern theories of agency often speak to the content of texts rather than their origins. Since Barthes and "The Death of the Author," theorists both in and outside of composition studies have considered the role of the human author as a mere scriptor. Meanwhile, our cultural notions of authorship speak of agency and responsibility for

writers as a matter of conscious intention. As noted plagiarism scholar Rebecca Moore Howard has argued, our attitudes towards plagiarism are aimed at students' intentions, not at the quality or the content of the work that they produce. While we can easily agree that writing may be socially constituted, we still want to see that authors think and make choices to create texts autonomously in order to hold them responsible as actors, even while this is at odds with our notions of postmodern agency and ethics. In the field of composition and rhetoric, we also want our research and our teaching to help us empower writers and to find their voices, even while our theories of agency continue to pull us further away from the human author. In addition to these contradictions, digital texts such as Wikipedia make it impossible to view authorship as merely influenced by our networks, as scholars such as Krista Kennedy and James Brown have argued. Not only do we have collaboration, we now have automation. Not only do we derive meaning from the relationship of one text to another, but the ways those texts speak to each other is, in some cases, all we seem to have. I'm interested in what happens to the authors and agents in networks, and my goal is to recuperate the idea of an embodied author that allows us to discuss intention and responsibility, without giving up on the idea that people actually do things.

This study looks at authors and consultants working in DesignLab, a digital media center at the University of Wisconsin-Madison dedicated to assisting students and faculty with multimedia projects which incorporate writing, images, video, and music. Through this study, I propose to re-examine two aspects of authorship and the ways in which they have been considered in the field, namely, responsibility and authorial intention, by viewing them through the lens of Actor-Network Theory. I consider responsibility by

looking at authorship, as practiced by the students in DesignLab, as primarily the place where we can recover a sense of obligation to or agency in relation to texts and to the actors in our networks, rather than as ownership over a text. I reconsider authorial intention in terms of where we locate agency within our networks, by examining how textual chains might be considered in terms of authorship, and considering how the embodied author might be defined among nonhuman actants, considering the ethical and agential implications of object-oriented theory for authorship, and particularly focusing on texts as objects and how authors might be defined as in relation to them.

Recently, concepts of authorship that posit writers as collectors and evaluators of texts as much as they are original creators of texts have pointed to a need to reconsider authorship. In, “Reviewing the Author-Function in the Age of Wikipedia,” Amit Ray and Erhardt Graeff argue, “Essentially, Wikipedia provides an example of poststructuralist principles operating online” (44). They argue that if agency is fully distributed, we may find ourselves moving away from individual intention with regard to authorship, and we may find ourselves with no choice but to reexamine the relationship between authors and their writing.

Additionally, this refiguring of the author is not unique to new media texts, but it is transferable to more traditional forms of writing as well. In fact, I would argue that new media exposes these issues regarding authorship in more traditional genres. For example, when we ask students to write a research paper or any other kind of paper, we are asking them to situate an argument within a network. We are asking them to evaluate the materials they encounter, though we don’t generally approach it that way – this action is rendered nearly invisible. What I mean by invisible is that the process that the author

needs to go through in order to make sense of that source material is ignored, while the trace that is left, or the citation, is treated as the object. In the majority of academic papers, the author's job is to manage sources – but we don't teach source management, we teach writing. Although we may be conscious of situating ourselves in an academic community, or joining an ongoing conversation, we locate our intention as a focus on expressing individual ideas. Sources conventionally appear as mere support for those ideas, denying the complex relationships that writers have with the sources that they use.

In addition, what we cite according to academic convention is limited to particular published works and is heavily influenced by ideas of copyright and fair use rather than the ways authors actually create, which is by a process of continually situating, evaluating and reacting to texts. The rules of citation seem to suggest that we only owe responsibility to particular voices and sources, rather than to consider our connections to a much richer range of experiences and materials. While a citation does provide a trace to some of this richness (and it is likely impossible for an author to identify a trace to every interaction they've had which contributed to a given piece of writing), citations also help to preserve the misapprehension that writers use sources in their creations, rather than the other way around.

This misapprehension becomes clearer when we look at digital texts, such as those produced in DesignLab, as they give a closer look at the collaboration and assembly that are at the heart of writing. As Collin Brooke writes, "It is still possible to maintain the illusion that reading a book represents a private communication between an author and a reader, but this illusion is impossible to entertain with digitized texts" (95). Because digital texts allow us to more clearly examine the relationship between

authorship and writing, or at least ask us to examine it in new ways, they force us to drop any lingering notions of autonomy from our concepts of agency and confront the complexities of authorship head on. The authors working in DesignLab draw from multiple sources and genres; they are meant to be absorbed by groups as well as individuals. Additionally, these projects highlight a reality that has always existed but been obscured: knowledge is context dependent and beyond the control of copyright. Such digital projects blur the lines of traditional authorship and instead make it more clear how authorship cannot be divorced from intertextuality.

Another, more familiar example of this is Wikipedia, based on what James Brown has called "citational chains," which positions an author in such a way that it is impossible to fully determine the link between a text and an author. Texts on Wikipedia can be viewed as collaborations between texts as much as they can be viewed as collaborations between authors, that is to say, sources are continually interacting with one another, confirming, contradicting, and shaping the content of the site, while the authors evaluate and examine the traces of these sources. Further, Brown argues, this aspect is not unique to Wikipedia or digital media, but that it exposes existing issues of authorship – that is to say, it has never been possible to fully determine the link between a text and an author: "While a new media environment that allows texts to be easily combined and/or redistributed…has provided a continual reminder of the impossibility of cleanly linking a text with its origins" (Brown 240). If anything, we might argue that Wikipedia removes the illusion of authors as creators. It is one thing to say that our authorship is mediated, but it is another to say that our texts make authorship possible.

Krista Kennedy takes this notion even further, arguing that "The Wikipedian "author" is becoming the purest sort of textual curator, shaping and showcasing what already exists – no longer fitting our construction of The Author but becoming a newly identifiable creature" (308). This textual curation refers to a process by which an author will collect and evaluate texts in order to form a new text. Additionally, she points out that a fair amount of this textual curation in Wikipedia is automated by editing bots, which are incapable of intention. Kennedy notes while rhetorical agency and intentionality may lie with the creator of such bots (someone who writes and executes a program to edit a text), "the writer of the program is not necessarily the writer of the text that his program eventually creates (308). The text produced is severed from authority, though authority guides its creation.

We might decide then that textual curation and citational chains locate agency within the ethical, intentional choices that are being made towards a text – but this agency is not necessarily located in the writing itself. It situates the text as a product, one that can be removed from authorial intention. This suggests that being an author is primarily about managing texts rather than creating new ones. These examples expose a division between authorship and writing – in fact, we can have writing without any kind of "authorship" occurring. And authorship doesn't necessarily have anything to do with writing. It seems that texts have the ability to speak to each other perfectly well without our help. My study here examines the extent to which authorship and writing work in tandem and, in some instances, work against one another.

This separation of authorship from the text allows us to view something crucial about our role in these networks: the texts we work with and the networks we evolve

from always act as constraints on our writing, which in turn grant us agency. Our relationship to the text involves negotiating these constraints – not escaping from them. Even when we have considered agency and writing as collaborative, we have tended to understand authorship as being about individuals who are already writers who then negotiate texts, rather than as individuals who become writers as a result of negotiating texts.

And authorship is collaborative, but as we, as teachers of writing, focused on the collaborative relationship between readers and writers, we may have forgotten about the constraints. A problem with viewing authorship as primarily collaborative as an answer to the agency problem has been that we continue to focus on how writers situate themselves *against* the origins of texts, rather than how they situate themselves *among* texts. Instead, we might focus on the ways that our texts relate to each other and embrace our role as textual curators. To do this, I turn to Bruno Latour's Actor-Network Theory (ANT) as a way to think about how we might conceive of agency and ethics for writers as a way for accounting for individual intention, or how writers feel as though they do things in the world. In considering how ANT can account for rhetorical ethics, I also engage with the work of Diane Davis and her notion of "response-ability" which I see as compatible with ANT and tracing our capacity for rhetoric in the network. I ultimately argue that ANT allows us to more fully account for how authors assemble and curate texts as ethical actors, by examining their relationships in the network. Further, I argue that the concept of authorship via ANT is more reflective of the work that writers do.

This project engages ANT as a theory of rhetorical agency. According to ANT, action does not emerge from an actor, human or otherwise, but *toward* the actor: actors

act because of their connections within a network, not in spite of them. Actions are not the result of individual intentions that take shape against constraints, but rather they emerge through constraints, as the result of many interactions that precede them. I argue that it is within our ability to cite and evaluate within those interactions that we locate agency for human authors.

As the dissertation engages these theoretical questions, it also posits ANT as a method of research, and I take it up in an empirical study of users of UW-Madison's DesignLab. The study considers how texts are traceable to their authors within the more visible connections to sources within a network that digital, or multimodal texts provide. DesignLab provides a unique opportunity to examine authorship within a network, providing an expansive view of authorship and its vast connections. I look at how an author's intention interacts with the other elements in the network in which they write and, in applying Latour's framework of "following the actors," to examine how writers view themselves as authors in a network, and how these authors interact within textual or citational chains.

The first chapter offers a history of ANT in the field that focuses on agency and ethics, and traces how the field has taken up ANT with regard to responsibility and intention**.** It considers how ANT, as a "rhetoric of citationality," can more fully account for agency. I further argue that authorship is primarily about the relationships between texts, and that locating ourselves as "textual curators" is where we locate a sense of agency and ethics for authors. I conclude that being an author is more about assemblage than it is about creating new texts, and authorship is largely a matter of allowing texts to speak to one another.

Within this framework I argue that a concept of authorship as curatorial allows us to locate ethical bodies within the network through our ability to trace and evaluate - that is, to cite. In chapter two, I focus on how a rhetoric of citationality is affective. I argue that rhetoric in terms of Actor-Network Theory involves techne as both the making of something as well as attunement to one's surroundings. I discuss how rhetoric via Latour demands our attunement to our networks, and that how we are able to evaluate the materials in our networks is how we locate ourselves as ethical, embodied beings. I consider "response-ability" via Davis and I trace how users of DesignLab are attuned to their networks and how they define themselves as authors in relationship to the materials they use.

In chapter three, I examine how digital media and authorship render actors visible in the digital ecology of the DesignLab at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. I argue that digital media draws attention to its own production and delivery, which in turn asks us to reveal the role of human actors in seemingly automated processes; what makes digital work "digital" is this self-referential aspect. To be a fully realized author in this context is also to be fully engaged with the technology and its rhetorical, networked properties. I discuss how the users of DesignLab are rhetorically aware of their positions within citational chains, knowing that they have boundless access to texts, but that they also have boundless access to actants and their traces. To follow these traces, is where, I argue, is where we should be focused when we consider the work that writers do.

In chapter four, I examine authorial voice and discuss how voice was foregrounded as a topic in my interviews with DesignLab subjects. I argue that individual voice functions as a trace of agency in the work that my subjects produced,

and argue that ANT offers an opportunity to rehabilitate a form of authentic voice in the field.

In the conclusion, I consider how a sense of networked authorship is might be understood and interpreted in the classroom. I argue that to conceive of authorship through ANT is to conceive of rhetoric is as primarily ethical, and that it can provide us with opportunities to ask new questions about plagiarism, intellectual property, and authorship.

Chapter 1: Actor-Network Theory as Theory and as a Method in Composition and Rhetoric

> …what performs a critique cannot also compose. It is really a mundane question of having the right tools for the right job. With a hammer (or a sledge hammer) in hand you can do a lot of things: break down walls, destroy idols, ridicule prejudices, but you cannot repair, take care, assemble, reassemble, stitch together. – Bruno Latour, "An Attempt at a 'Compositionist Manifesto,'" p. 485

> Who is the actor who might decide between the options? Might, or should, this be a patient-consumer making choices between discrete goods available on a market; or should it be a patient-citizen trying to organize a health care system for the benefit of all? Or again, are the crucial moments not those where 'patients' act as an agent, but rather those where they (we) are defined, measured, observed, listened to, or otherwise enacted? – Annemarie Mol, "Ontological politics. A word and some questions," (86-7).

In this chapter, I trace the brief but significant history of Bruno Latour's Actor-Network Theory (ANT) in composition and rhetoric, namely, ANT's unique contribution to the field in understanding rhetorical agency in complex systems. I consider what implications it has for how we view authors as related to textual objects, and consequently, how we might define authorship. ANT provides us with an opportunity to think about responsibility and agency for writers in all their complexity, while continuing to challenge the notion that we need to understand agency and intention as one and the same. Further, I see ANT as a means of recuperating a sense of both agency and individual voice for authors, and a means of locating the embodied human writer in a network, particularly allowing us to trace intertextuality, our connections with texts and objects, in ways that reveal our capacity for rhetoric and ethics.

Finally, I discuss how ANT and Latour's notion that we should "follow the actors" provides a method for this study in order to understand how the writers in the network interact within textual or citational chains.

Actor-Network Theory and Composition and Rhetoric

Even though Latour has referred to himself as a compositionist, Actor-Network Theory (ANT) is not a theory of composition studies, unless we change our idea of what it means to study composition. ANT is a theory of sociology, one that attempts to change our idea of what it means to study the social. More to the point, ANT is a theory of sociology that argues against the idea of "the social." In *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network Theory*, Latour argues that "social does not designate a thing among other things, like a black sheep among other white sheep, but a type of connection between things that are not themselves social" (5). Rather than focusing on concepts he finds fault with, such as social context or social structures, he asks us to instead focus our attention on the connections between actors, rather than on the actors themselves. As such, Latour posits that the primary work of sociology is "the task of tracing associations," rather than "the project of providing 'a social explanation' of some other state of affairs" (1). Latour sees the work of mainstream sociologists as limiting in that it only allows for study of the visible, stable ties between only a small number of actors (namely, humans). In contrast, for Latour, the social is invisible and dynamic; sociologists should be examining the traces left behind from when connections are formed by actors (human and nonhuman alike). Latour calls for nothing short of a complete overhaul of the methods and object of study in sociology, and, depending on to

what degree we incorporate his line of thinking into composition and rhetoric, it may change ours as well, as we consider rhetoric in terms of relations, in terms of the extra-symbolic, and in terms of the non-human.

ANT has been taken up as a theory and, to a lesser extent, a method - a theory which shifts the objects of study in the field and helps us to reconsider rhetorical agency, as well as a method that can help us to consider how rhetoric can more fully account for that agency in a wider range of practices within context, among a wider range of actors. ANT posits that agency is derived from connections among both human and non-human objects, extending the social turn. If we consider agency to be not the property of individuals or of groups, but derived from relations within the network, we have to consider how agency is distributed further, beyond the social in order to recover a sense of individual agency and responsibility. As Nathaniel Rivers puts it:

> When Latour admonishes sociologists and scientists alike to show their work, he likewise encourages rhetoric to account for the nonhuman, the nonsymbolic, and nondiscursive labor of rhetoric, of identification, of persuasion, and of composition. For rhetoric to fully account for what makes things work, rhetoric must account not only for the human but nonhuman as well (*Enculturation* video).

ANT's call for a broader context for writing and rhetoric has appealed to scholars, who have taken up the argument that both humans and language have dominated our focus for far too long and that as a result we are unable to provide rhetorical explanations for complex events and systems, such as environmental crises or rapid shifts in global capitalism which implicate a seemingly endless range of human and non-human actors and their effects. ANT is but one part of a larger materialist turn in composition studies answering this call; beyond Latour, the field has embraced new materialist theory (from Samantha Frost and Diana Coole), "vital materialism" (Jane Bennett), and speculative

realism (Graham Harman, Quentin Meillassoux). In an oft-quoted passage, Karen Barad notes:

> Language has been granted too much power. The linguistic turn, the semiotic turn, the interpretive turn, the cultural turn; it seems that at every turn lately every "thing" – even materiality-is turned into a matter of language or some other form of cultural representation…Language matters. Discourse matters. Culture matters. There is an important sense in which the only thing that does not seem to matter anymore is matter (801).

These theories provide us with an opening in composition and rhetoric to think more fully about the extra-symbolic world – sound, nature, and physical objects - as demanding of rhetorical study. Object-oriented ontologies are appealing because of this expansion, because, the argument goes, we are no longer caught between studying the tension between reality and our language, but instead can consider rhetoric and agency in ways that resonate more fully with our lived experiences. These theories differ in their conceptions of agency and the way they conceive of the relationships between humans and objects, but any theory of rhetoric that moves us beyond the symbolic represent a sea-change for the field.

Among these theories, ANT and Latour have been viewed as particularly friendly to rhetoric and composition. In their introduction to their collection, *Thinking with Bruno Latour in Composition Studies*, Paul Lynch and Rivers argue that "Latour relies on rhetoric to articulate his notion of knowledge making" and that further, Latour echoes many of our beliefs about writing, namely that writing is not a mere tool or means to an end, but a means of co-creating knowledge (6-7). Latour, they argue, is interested in bringing the nonhuman and nonsymbolic into rhetoric, not jettisoning rhetoric; rhetoric is "Not words *or* things; words *and* things" (3). Objects, people and language emerge from

their relationships with one another, which makes Latour perhaps an easier fit for rhetorical study than object-oriented ontology, e.g., via Harman. As Scot Barnett and Casey Boyle write, “While Latour accepts the idea of things interacting independent of human beings, he argues that things are what they are because of their relations and alliances with other things. In other words, Latour minimizes the problems of withdrawal that Harman foregrounds by emphasizing symmetrical models of relationality" (7). This may be interpreted as merely extending the social turn to include non-human animals and objects, and therefore it may feel more comfortable to rhetoricians as it still feels “rhetorical”- if we don’t mind sharing agency with objects.

Laura Micciche writes that “New materialism reconfigures agency in relation to individuals, things, and publics by delinking assumed relations between action and causality” (491). This reconfiguring asks us to forget about what we know about the subject, what it means to be an agent, and what it means to be persuaded. In a digital network, it may be easy to map what we understand to be agency and authorship onto objects, particularly as digital technologies interact with us and act upon us in highly visible ways. Regarding new media, Jennifer Bay and Thomas Rickert argue that “learning to dwell with new media and its technologies entails a harkening to their ontological weight and rhetorical agency” (213), arguing for the agency of new media and, via Heidegger, that new media are “less tools or valueless objects of our will and contemplation, but active participants and co-shapers, themselves embedded in complex and ultimately interdeterminably rich and varied contexts” (218). The flattened landscape of our networks in these contexts can make the connections that make up our

texts, with texts defined broadly, much more visible, and at the same time, blur the boundaries between us and our tools.

It isn't always clear how this much of this blurring we are willing to accept as rhetoricians. Jenny Edbauer Rice writes, "If rhetoric is mechanical, that it could not be considered an ethical practice, insofar as it relies upon habit versus true judgment or wisdom" (367), noting that this line of thinking might keep us from having a "stronger commitment to engaging the means of production" (368). More recently, James Brown has suggested that "rhetoric is a collection of machines ('whatsits,' 'gadgets') for generating and interpreting arguments" (496). This computational view of rhetoric argues that people and objects are both capable of mediating and being mediated by our networks. "Excavating the machinic dimensions of rhetoric does not reduce it to mere mechanics but reimagines the machinic as something dynamic and fluid" (509). Brown argues that thinking about rhetoric as mechanical "might help us reconsider the distinctions we draw between humans and computational mechanisms" (499). I suggest that if we address the robot as rhetor, it might help us address what makes humans rhetors – or authors – as well. If we understand writing the result of an assemblage of (flexible) rules, it may help us to highlight what roles we can play in those assemblages.

Further, conceiving of agency as an assemblage that emerges from layers of mediation in a network might do help us to access additional opportunities for social change. For example, in her study of a permaculture activist group that has successfully been able to engage oppositional political factions for its cause, Jodie Nicotra argues that this kind of careful attunement to both human and non-human networks can offer pragmatic solutions to bridge divides, as we pay closer attention to the configurations and

reconfigurations of what those factions are. Citing Latour as well as Harman and Bennett, she argues that "Using such a framework, rhetors would plan for attunement as an explicit part of the process by deliberately attending to all of the components in a given situation…in order to 'feel out' the possibilities for action…Such attunement requires what might be thought of as "flex-ability," the capacity to act in medias res or on the fly" (196). Thinking about rhetorical agency via ANT might allow us to locate unexpected opportunities for connection and rhetorical action.

The new materialist turn attempts to solve our agency problem by changing the question. In removing the subject-object binary, we extend the social turn from decentering the subject to "the death of the subject- the death of centered conscious, rational self," as Marilyn Cooper has argued (Rhetorical 420). In doing so, we transform the dead-end debate around agency. It is no longer a debate about how much agency an autonomous subject possesses, but it becomes a debate about how actors, human and non-human, act within complex systems which provide access to agency. Rhetoric is then able to account for not only a richer range of actors and relationships, but it is also able to think about action as separate from intention and free will. While this separation is problematic if we consider agency as individuals who work against constraints, I would argue that this separation is what allows us to finally depart completely from autonomous notions of agency – and authorship.

I see the removal of intention and free will from notions of agency as a move that can only help us as rhetoricians. Intention and free will can and do overlap with agency, but they don't tell us very much about how rhetorical acts occur. Viewing agency as something that occurs against constraints also ignores the ways that our networks and the

objects within them co-produce the possibility of agency. While (fair) criticism has been directed at new materialist theories as not accounting for unequal power relationships and for disenfranchising individuals by removing their agency (at least removing a particular kind of agency), it can also be argued that by understanding the complex networks in which our connections and relationships are what truly enable us as agents. It also allows us to account for more dynamic, shifting conditions in which the capacity for agency and rhetorical action move separately from intention. While I acknowledge that questions about agency and autonomy are far from new for rhetoricians, I see ANT's specific contribution as a framework to think about relational agency and its relationship to ethics for writers.

In fact, aside from enabling us to consider agency in a networked, complex sense, it may be that part of the appeal of non-human rhetoric is that part of our shift in the object of study is that it reaffirms that we don't have to worry about intention – after all, Barthes noted that accounting for intention in our analysis of texts is an impossible task. The social turn celebrated the transformation of dialogic meaning-making as shared between readers and writers, and not attributable to an author's intention. We know that there is no easy path to trace between an author's intention and the effects of rhetoric, and even if there were, it would make for an exceedingly boring object of study. Intention and agency have always posed problems for understanding rhetoric as responsible and ethical, and understanding intention as inextricable from agency has been our primary means for interpreting responsibility and ethics for writers, whether we seek to empower, or to punish, as in the case of plagiarism.

Further, I suggest that to broaden the social turn in composition studies to include the nonhuman, along Latour's lines, serves to highlight the role embodied individual, because to include the non-human is to emphasize in contrast the role of response. As Latour writes in *Pandora's Hope*, "tell the humanists that the more nonhumans share existence with humans, the more humane a collective is" (18). As we work to include the nonhuman, we might highlight both the differences and the similarities between nonhuman and human actors - namely, response instead of intention, or responsibility.

ANT, Ethics, and Authorship

While including non-humans among our objects of study is provocative and game-changing, I believe a more important aspect to this inclusion is that this shift is ultimately empowering for individual writers. Lynch writes about a parallel "apocalyptic turn" in composition studies, in which "contemplation, connection and cultivation supersede critique as the discipline's central values" (464). Like Latour, who sees the task of sociologists as that of moving beyond a small number of actors, Lynch sees the need to widen the scope of our project and to find ways to invite additional voices to shape that project as well as joining in. Lynch argues that the goal of composition teachers is not "to give students the capacity to write or speak" but "to give their worlds the capacity to write or to speak" (468). Lynch suggests here that we should want something more for our students than to equip them to participate in our world.

Lynch's notion of the "apocalyptic turn" is similar to the issue I see with academic conventions of citation - only particular voices are included, and the richer object of study is obscured. A concept of agency that ignores the full range of

connections between actors is to continue to maintain illusions that our students or subjects write and act independently in the world, and moreover that we interact in a world which doesn't interact back. However, while I do agree that traditional critique based on this view is no longer useful, I believe that a focus on a different type of critique will continue to be important to the field in that it is in our capacity to critique in which we locate our ability to speak. That is to say, it is in our ability to make ethical judgments in which we locate agency.

From the Death of the Author to the social turn in composition studies, scholars have been concerned with how to consider actors within their contexts and influences, but yet provide an explanation for how they are able to act in the world at all. Socially distributed agency is at odds with individual action, as it does not fully account for the ways that people still do things in the world, or at least, that they feel like they do things. Speaking of this dilemma, Marilyn Cooper writes, "the possibility of agency seems increasingly impossible" (420). This dilemma has focused on a social vs. individual dichotomy. Scholars have seen ANT as a way to reconcile the notion of distributed agency with individual intention - we both broaden our concept of the network and at the same time, we consider connection, or responsibility, as that which provides us with a sense of individual agency. "One way to perhaps shift away from a focus on subjects is to consider the role of agency in discussions of subjectivity and to recognize that agency is not an issue of the subject but rather an issue of ecological relationships" (Dobrin 78). Cooper further suggests: "Agents do reflect on their actions consciously; they do have conscious intentions and goals and plans; but their agency does not arise from conscious mental acts, though consciousness does play a role. Agency instead is based in

individuals' lived knowledge that their actions are their own" (421). In her theory of agency as "emergent and enacted," Cooper considers both ANT and neurobiology, and suggests an embodied agency that is tied to individual action through interaction in the world. She argues that rhetoric requires individual responsibility, even if it is not tied to conscious will. Agency can be conceived "as the process through which organisms create meanings through acting into the world and changing their structure in response to the perceived consequences of their actions" (426). Cooper's theory of agency would allow us to account for an individual's sense of action and a recovery of responsibility. Lynch also argues that Latour "can help us articulate a way to move composition past the apocalyptic logic of critique and closer to an apocalyptic turn toward responsibility" (459). These theories, using ANT, point us to locating an agency that is primarily rooted in our ability to make ethical choices – for Cooper, our sense of individual action, and for Lynch, our responsibility to respond to catastrophic events.

I think about writers working on digital media projects in terms of how they connect and cultivate texts (Lynch), to see writers working more fully in their contexts (Lynch and Rivers), and finally, to locate the role of embodied agency (Cooper). I look at the writers in DesignLab to see how they curate texts and create connections in relationship to their identities as authors, resulting in greater agency. When we see our relationship to writing as constrained by texts, postmodern agency and authorship really become mainly a question of ethics - ethics as responsibility. As Cooper writes, "we need to hold ourselves and others responsible for what we do" (18). So then, if our agency is the result of our constraints, and our role as authors is derived from the texts that we work with, then our responsibility is also derived from these contingencies.

Textual curation as described by Krista Kennedy is an activity in which we can embody this responsibility as authors. Textual curation focuses on authorship as our ability to engage with sources - the work of finding, selecting and navigating texts as a form of writing. "Curation is writing, regardless of how small or invisible its texts might be. Tracing the work of textual curation helps us consider not only its rhetorical aspects, but also essential skills for functional digital writing that our students must learn in digital writing curricula" (Kennedy 8). When we cite, we take the flattened landscape of the network and make choices as to which aspects are the most important – we work to "unflatten" it. Authors make crucial choices about not only which sources to cite, but which ideas to take up, which ideas to reject, which aspects to emphasize, and which traces to render visible. We start as rhetors with our ability to connect as our primary means to agency.

How, then, does the notion of textual curation help us to recover a workable sense of authorship in our scholarship or in our classrooms? When it comes to considering theories of plagiarism, a continuing argument is that we don't see students as writers, but as criminals, as Howard argues. Perhaps we have been too quick to hold writers accountable given the odd and counterproductive way we treat academic dishonesty, with a continued focus on punishment and responsibility. It seems unfair to treat students as responsible if we don't teach them how to curate texts in the first place. Even if we focus our teaching on telling students how to cite and use their sources properly, rather than avoid plagiarizing, we may still have a problem. Talking about sources only in terms of citations falsely privileges our role as authors over a text and subordinates our sources. Textual curation is different from teaching proper citational practices. It's about locating

our authorship from within our relationships. Speaking of a posthuman conception of composition that draws partially from Latour, Sidney Dobrin writes, ""Postcomposition works to account for subject agency not as independent of writing but as a function of writing. In turn, then, studies that theorize the ways in which writing and circulation convey agency become central to understanding the function of writing" (78).

When we view writers as positioned against the constraints or objects and texts in their worlds, rather than as made possible by those objects, we miss opportunities, as Lynch suggests, to let their worlds speak to us. A view of authorship that asks students to create texts without acknowledging the textual constraints that those texts drive from works to cut students off from their own networks – ways of being and doing in the world that they already know, but that we remove from writing. Rather than saying to a student, this is your paper, I might say to a student, this is the paper you've curated, from sources you've collected, as well as from what you know, and from the places and positions you come from – leading to a much richer understanding of the relationship between author and text.

Textual curation goes further than understanding writing as collaborative, or patchwriting as part of the normal learning process. It suggests that we can separate authorship and responsibility as separate from writing. It's not that we can't write as responsible authors – but the responsibility arrives before the writing. Writing can be automated – but writing can also be ethical. Understanding the choices that we make as embodied authors from the choices we make as networked writers can help us fully engage with the resources available to us in a network. Authorship can still be a useful concept for the field, and if the relationship between texts is really all we have, than

locating ourselves as textual curators is a way of recovering a sense of agency and ethics for authors.

Methods

This study uses ANT as both a theory and as a method. I look at how authors' intention' in general and in the environment of a digital media center more particularly interacts with the other elements in the network in which they write. I look at ANT as a theory in my analysis, but I will also be using ANT as a method to look at writers and what they do in new media contexts, applying Latour's framework to the design and data collection. To apply the theory of networked authorship, I conducted interviews to find out how writers view themselves as authors in a network, and how authors interact within textual or citational chains as curators. My data analysis focuses on how authors view their relationship to their source materials and how those working in the DesignLab view themselves within a citational chains and networks of human and non-human actors.

My use of ANT is also informed by Sarah Hallenbeck's feminist-material approach, which "draws from actor-network theory and posthuman agency in order to locate more precisely how embodied practices…can become mechanisms of change and stability" (24). Hallenbeck argues that rhetorics are context-dependent in that not only must we consider the context when studying rhetoric, but we must see it as emergent from those contexts. A focus solely on human rhetors without close consideration of their material conditions and texts encourages us to see rhetors as working against their contexts, or in spite of them. I see this as related to my project in that I'm interested in

thinking about how authors situate themselves within contexts rather than examining how they are oppositionally situated within a given context.

As a form of grounded theory to analyze the data and develop a theory of how authors relate to texts and objects within the network, I take my cues from ANT, which asks us to "follow the actors": "As soon as actors are treated not as intermediaries but as mediators, they render the movement of the social visible to the reader. Thus, through many textual inventions, the social may become again a circulating entity that is no longer composed of the stale assemblage of what passed earlier as being part of society" (RS 128-9). In my interviews, I began with a structured set of questions but I encouraged my subjects to tell their own "stories" about how they composed their DesignLab projects as much as possible. Much of my questioning was to ask for them to reflect on their own ideas about authorship and new media writing so that they could help me determine the object of study, or what "words and things" mattered for them as composers.

I want to acknowledge that I depart somewhat from Latour in at least two significant ways. The first is that ANT places a higher value on description, rather than analysis. Although I followed the actors in my interviews, in my writing and analysis, rather than using description to generate additional description, I followed my own agenda, which of course was still altered by my subjects as it would in any research study.

The second, and much larger violation of ANT, is that my study focuses on human actors and prioritizes a capacity for human agency. I worked with my human interview subjects to help them locate their sense of positioning in the network, and while the ways that they share agency with non-human objects are essential to my argument,

this study is primarily concerned with the human aspect of Latour's collective of humans and non-humans. While this seems inevitable in a study that seeks to recuperate a role for a human author, it does make it difficult to reconcile with using ANT as a method.

For this study, and for the field, I want to suggest that ANT can still be used as a method to study writers and writing. I see the most important aspects of this method of study in the field as its ability to capture more of our lived experiences – which does not mean that we have to follow all of the actors in order for it to be effective. I also want to suggest that even if we cannot reasonably follow all of the traces of all of the actors all of the time as scholars, i.e., we have to stop writing at some point, it is more valuable for us to acknowledge that those traces, those connections, are the object of study and are what allow us to identify our capacity for rhetoric and ethics.

As I further consider how to use ANT as a method, there are four aspects in particular I used to guide my data collection and analysis. The first key idea is the ANT's approach to the object of study. Latour argues that we should shift our object of study and that the object of study becomes the relationships rather than the objects themselves. In using ANT as a method, I hope to examine an author's relationship to the texts they use. Since my study examines authorship in particular, "texts" here does mean identifiable sources, but I also define texts broadly in that I'm interested in the material conditions and context of the projects when interviewing authors.

Another key idea involved in my study is the "flattening" aspect of Actor-Network Theory**.** According to Latour, "ANT has tried to render the social world as flat as possible in order to ensure that the establishment of any new link is clearly visible" (16). Actor-Network Theory allows us to expose the connections between the elements

in the network; in fact, it is the main work of ANT. These connections are identified "using the unexpected trails left by the controversies about group formation" (43). By focusing on authors using digital media, I argue, connections between sources are more visible. In order to view these connections, I attempted to collect and analyze data in a way that does not presuppose hierarchical relationships among authors and texts.

It should be noted that this "flattening" aspect of ANT has been the subject of recent critique, namely, with respect to power relations (Noys). As Latour eschews hierarchy, it might be argued that his theories overlook the very real oppression inherent in and faced by actors amid networks. As Latour's project is arguably one of description rather than critique, I believe he might argue that sociology cannot really account for power structures, and certainly not without the "flattening" that his theory provides. That being said, my project *is* concerned with critique, and I share this concern. I would argue that to ignore hierarchy is not to ignore power, however. As part of her feminist rhetorical project, Hallenbeck posits that if we do not account for a full range of rhetorics we encounter, including nonhuman ones, we cannot hope to understand "the larger systems of power in which they are enmeshed" (12). Hallenbeck argues that "as feminists, we have generally pursued the project of recovering and recalibrating *women's*, rather than *gendered*, rhetorics" (12) - that is to say, our object of study has mainly consisted on the individuals manipulated by their worlds and not so much on their worlds themselves. As we attempt to look at the way individuals are disenfranchised or empowered, a traditional notion of agency perhaps pays less attention to power relations than ANT. Agency and power are not the same thing - but looking at agency more fully can give us greater insight into power relations. By considering how authors are situated

among texts rather than against them, we can uncover more fully what it means to be an author.

A third idea, crucial to considering authorship and ethics, is ANT's approach to conscious intention. Actor-Network Theory asks us to find a comfortable place between conscious intention and a world in which we have no control over events. Latour writes, "Action is not done under the full control of consciousness; action should rather be felt as a node, a knot, and a conglomerate of many surprising sets of agencies that have to be slowly disentangled. It is this venerable source of uncertainty that we wish to render vivid again in the odd expression of actor-network" (44). An actor points us to uncertainty about where the action comes from. It is this uncertainty where we find connections, and the traces formed by this uncertainty allow us to locate something that isn't quite intention, but a matter of response. In using ANT as a method, I have found multiple moments of connection and embodiment in the network in those working in Design Lab, and, presumably, in writers more generally. Although I do not untangle all of the agencies or even locate all of the knots in the network I've examined, I do point out some of these areas of uncertainty and shown how this idea complicates the notion of what it means to do research as well as write. As a method, ANT asks us to examine what is hidden and to reconsider what is meaningful, and for my study, I see the real work that authors do behind their texts and among their sources as vital starting places for research.

Finally, I use ANT as a theory of rhetorical agency. Latour would argue that ANT expands the work of agency. It's true that ANT's contributions to understanding agency further complicate agency and in fact stretches the definition of agency. The question regarding responsibility and agency is not how we hold people accountable, or

where agency comes from, but rather it is our accountability that makes things work. In considering ANT, I identify what Cooper calls "embodied agency" in my analysis. In my next chapter, I will further discuss Latour's agency and its relationship to this accountability.

The study:

I conducted the research for this project in DesignLab, a new learning site at the University of Wisconsin – Madison which was developed "to enhance digital literacies—technological, media, and information literacies" (site proposal). DesignLab works much like a traditional writing center in that users, or authors, meet individually with trained consultants at various stages of their posters, videos, and creative and academic projects incorporating digital media. Though users may receive some technical assistance and advice not provided in a traditional writing center, consultants are trained to focus on the development of ideas and on collaborating with authors on their projects; how-to advice on software or equipment is generally not seen as separate from feedback on content, but as part of the guidance toward achieving the author's goals for the project. This relates back to how we view the object of study in that both consultants and authors do not view the technology only as vehicles for their projects - they are viewed as part of project.

I contend that sites like DesignLab and will become more and more important to composition studies and particularly for the study of writing centers in terms of how we view collaborative writing and knowledge production, as we continue to think about how network technologies disrupt our notions of agency and authorship. Additionally, this is a site where distributed agency is made more visible as well as the constraints that

provide such agency - something that also seems to be a goal for its consultants and users. As it stated in the site proposal, "projects are more dependent on an emerging sense of perception shaped by connections." This dependency refers to the constraints that provide agency to the users of DesignLab. These intertextual projects point to the complexity of agency and the need to highlight spaces for embodied response. Therefore, DesignLab provides a unique opportunity to examine authorship within the mission of the site, and with its focus on design as well as composition, it provides a more expansive view of authorship and its relationship to connections within a network.

I interviewed 10 subjects including users and consultants in DesignLab in order to understand how they might construct themselves as authors and be constructed as authors, and how they view themselves as connected and answerable within their networks. My questions were designed to find out how their agency is mediated by the multimodality and complexity of their projects while considering how this mediation provides opportunities for rhetorical agency. In my attempt to locate some of the knots regarding their agency and responsibility, I asked subjects about how they create their projects - about how they connect one element of a project to another, and how they view themselves in relationship to the materials and the technology they use. I also asked them about how they define authorship in general as well as in relationship to these projects, as well as how they use and view citations.

The answers I received from both consultants and users revealed conscious awareness regarding authorship, but not necessarily conscious intention. Regarding how they viewed themselves as authors, they were comfortable with the idea of themselves as creators of projects which included multiple sources and which were dependent on

connections between those sources. Their answers revealed some uncertainty about where they located their own ideas, but there was a mix of responses in terms of whether or not they felt bound by more conventional definitions of authorship, copyright, or collaboration.

For the rest of this project, I will continue my discussion of Actor-Network Theory and its relationship to authorship. In the next chapter, I will focus on ANT's relationship to embodied agency, arguing that Latour's theory of agency is first and foremost a theory of ethics. In the third chapter, I will focus on authorship in terms of intention and responsibility, further considering how the embodied author might be defined among nonhuman actants, and that we might reconsider ethical responsibility for authors. In chapter 4, I look at the data from DesignLab and use ANT to guide my analysis. Finally, in my conclusion, I will consider the implications of my analysis for ANT within composition and rhetoric. I discuss the implications of a networked view of authorship for our approach to plagiarism and intellectual property, and how a networked view of authorship may contribute to a deeper sense of rhetoric as ethical.

Chapter 2: Actor-Network Theory, Rhetoric and Ethical Agency

> But what about me, the ego? Am I not in the depth of my heart, in the circumvolutions of my brain, in the inner sanctum of my soul, in the vivacity of my spirit, an 'individual'? Bruno Latour, *Reassembling the Social*, p. 202

> You didn't have a personality before, Sheldon. You just had a list of shows you liked. - Leonard, to Sheldon, in an episode of the *Big Bang Theory*

> I can and even must interpret who you are and what you say from within a given rhetorical and sociohistorical context. However, in the language relation called conversation, a gap opens between the 'you' I can attempt to know and understand within the context of a particular speech act and the engaged 'you' who (or that) addresses me, obligates me. – Diane Davis, *Inessential Solidarity*, p.68

Bruno Latour's Actor-Network Theory dismisses any dichotomy between humans and objects, theorizing that agency is the result of many interactions between humans and technology. While engaging ANT in our discussion of agency increases the complexity of our descriptions, it does not provide a robust account of ethics or responsibility. What do agency and ethics look like when everyone is an actant and human intention isn't considered important to agency, or can we still have agency and responsibility without intention?

This chapter first discusses what rhetorical agency looks like via Latour's Actor-Network Theory and then how Actor-Network Theory can help us to reconsider the embodied, ethical human among objects. One of the problems introduced in the previous chapter is the disconnection between distributed theories of agency and the sense that we have as actors that we are doing things in the world - the sense that we are individual, embodied agents, as described by Marilyn Cooper. In response, I argue that Actor-

Network Theory provides us with a framework in which to consider how rhetoric can account for our how we derive our agency from our networks and how this does not deny our humanity, but rather serves to illuminate it. Latour's theory of agency rejects the notion of social-mediation on action, insisting that we need to find "other vehicles that transport individuality, subjectivity, personhood, and interiority" (207). In fact, I argue that Latour's work gives us a way to think about citations as equipment for living: the vehicles that transport individuality, subjectivity, personhood, and interiority. Further, I suggest that thinking about Diane Davis' notion of responsibility or "response-ability" alongside ANT, revives the role of intention and the human writer in regard to the material, through both concrete and ethereal traces. While ANT is less concerned with describing our interior drives and responses than it is with accounting for the use and effects of our actions, thinking about authorship requires that we think about how individual writers operate in a network with regard to a sense of self and intention. Davis' other-oriented rhetoric is a useful way to reconcile the feelings of agency and intention we experience as writers with ANT. As our understanding of rhetoric shifts from one based on agency to one of capacity, thinking about other-oriented rhetoric within the scope of ANT provides us with a compatible framework to think about how individuals operate ethically and rhetorically within larger writing ecologies.

ANT and Agency

In making my case for Latour's Actor-Network Theory as a rhetorical theory, or at least as the basis for one, I argue along with others, as discussed in the previous chapter, that ANT gives us a way to consider agency in ways that are much more

descriptive of our experiences, in that our experiences as agents are inseparable from the tools we have at hand. The case often made in favor of bringing Latour (or other new materialist theories) to rhetorical study is that removing the subject/object binary provides a richer and more accurate account for how action is negotiated in a world of objects and humans. Without ANT, we already know that a person with a computer in DesignLab has a very different authoring experience than someone without one, but a theoretical framework like ANT is promising in that it can support explanations of how people and things share the work of persuasion and, in many contexts, it can more accurately explain how persuasion works by acknowledging that the work is shared. ANT allows us to study how "writing is an embodied interaction with other beings and our environments" (Cooper, Being, 18). If we look at an author, the author does not use materials to assemble a work, but the author is an author because of the materials she uses.

Agency via ANT addresses the complexity of these interactions, not only by the notion of co-agency, but also through Latour's rendering of agency in the network. In ANT, action does not emerge from an actor, human or otherwise, but toward the actor: according to Latour, an "'actor' in the hyphenated expression actor-network is not the source of an action but the moving target of a vast array of entities swarming toward it." (46). Actors can act because of their connections within a network, not in spite of them, that is to say, actions are not the result of individual intentions that take shape against constraints, but rather they emerge through constraints, as the result of many sites of interaction that precede them. "What is acting at the same moment in any place is coming from many other places, many distant materials, and many faraway actors" (200). As one

example, Latour uses the activity of a lecture hall and its connections back to the sources of the materials for the building and furnishings, as well as the long chain of people who designed and then used the space, all of which might come together to frame and invite the action of holding a class. Agency for Latour is never local. By tracing agency beyond the immediate interaction and by taking into account a range of non-human elements across time and space, ANT can then provide a more robust account for events occurring as the result of actions within complex systems.

Agency is then located in these assemblages of human and non-human actors, as Jane Bennett puts it, "the distinctive efficacy of a working whole made up, variously, of somatic, technological, cultural, and atmospheric elements" (447). For example, in her account of the 2003 North American blackout, Bennett describes the electrical grid as "a volatile mix of coal, sweat, electromagnetic fields, computer programs, electron streams, profit motives, heat, lifestyles, nuclear fuel, plastic, fantasies of mastery, static, legislation, water, economic theory, wire, and wood – just to name some of the actants" (448). As Bennett argues that we need to consider this complex web of varied actants in order to trace responsibility for the blackout, tracing the network that makes authorship possible is just as complicated. For a written work, we can imagine that these chains will include the sources of the physical and intellectual materials with enable the writer, paper, printer ink, a computer, a library full of texts - all of these materials make up a kind of larger bibliography for writing, in addition to the author.

Although humans and non-humans carry the same ontological weight in ANT, Latour instead makes a distinction between "intermediaries" and "mediators" in terms of their complexity. An intermediary "transports meaning or force without

transformation… Mediators transform, translate, distort, and modify the meaning of the elements they are supposed to carry" (RS 39). People, ideas, objects and texts can all serve as either intermediaries or mediators depending on the action being traced. These are not discrete entities according to Latour, as intermediaries can become mediators and vice-versa. This distinction is not meant to describe the complexity of the objects themselves, but rather it focuses on the predictability of their effects on the network, meaning that humans are not always mediators. "A properly functioning computer could be taken as a good case of a complicated intermediary…but if it breaks down, a computer may turn into a horrendously complex mediator while a highly sophisticated panel during an academic conference may become a perfectly predictable and uneventful intermediary in rubber stamping a decision made elsewhere" (RS 39). I point this out because, according to ANT, we may or may not be functioning as mediators when we write, and our tools and texts have just as much capacity to be mediators as human authors. As ANT considers the transformations in our networks much more closely in order to trace associations, this is what allows ANT to account for all of the conditions that make our writing possible.

Additionally, some of these transformations will be much more immediate and visible than others, but they are no less important in contributing to the action. And while some connections may be harder to discern, Latour argues that agency itself is always visible: "agencies are always presented in an account as doing something…An invisible agency that makes no difference, produces no transformation, leaves no trace, and enters no account is not an agency. Period. Either it does something or it does not." (52). ANT holds that action can always be traced, whether or not we are talking about

the building of a skyscraper, the history of an idea, or the writing of a research paper. Though some actions are more difficult to trace than others, the crucial aspect is to follow those points of connection - where papers were exchanged, the location where an urban planning board met, or where and how a writer encountered sources on a list of citations. According to Latour, if we do not account for both those less apparent and older or more distant connections, we then lose the ability to fully account for our very real and material circumstances; if we ignore the objects and places of contact that are in play and instead attribute action to vague social forces, we can't explain much of anything. In other words, the more we can see the dislocated and distant sources for our actions, the more concrete and real our explanations for them become.

For Latour, face-to-face, or local interactions are not truly local, because action is always carried out through these actants found in layers of time and space. Through the flattening aspect of ANT, a local interaction is as much an illusion as is "the social order." For Latour, there are no invisible "social" forces that cause actions; action is mediated in concrete, though not necessarily immediate ways. Latour argues that "'social' is not some glue that could fix everything including what the other glue cannot fix; it is what is glued together by many other types of connectors." (RS 5). When Latour dismisses "the social," he means to dismiss ready-made explanations for action that are supported by the idea of an invisible fabric that weaves us together, as he posits that it is the sociologist's primary job to trace the connections or "associations" between actors. He resists the idea of the social as operating within its own "specific domain of reality" (4) in which a limited number of actors, almost exclusively human, can be called

upon to explain phenomena, rather than examining the associations between actors involved in the phenomena to determine what makes up the social network.

The “social” for Latour is also related to the false separation of the world of humans from non-humans. And in trying to remove that artificial divide, and to avoid doing what he calls “interpretive sociology” (206), he sees the differences between humans and other actors, including conscious intention, not as non-existent, but as unimportant in explanations of agency – intention is not agency. ANT might allow us to more fully trace the experiences of writers in light of the somatic, technological, cultural, and even atmospheric elements in their networks. I see ANT as a way positioning the author among the elements in her network as a textual curator, as I will describe in more detail in the next chapter.

On the other hand, intention, whether it is conscious or not, is not always easy to ignore. Latour’s focus on effects vs. motivation can make some accounts challenging. For example, if one of my students raises her hand in my class to ask me a question, I will call on her. Latour is focused on this effect; my attention is drawn to the student because of the action of her hand. However, if she is raising her hand because she is just scratching her head, the effect on me is the same – I will still call on her. Granted, the events will ultimately have different effects – either I get a question, or one or both of us is briefly embarrassed. They might even involve a different set of actors in each scenario – maybe there is a fly in the room buzzing near the student’s head. In the first event, the student is consciously trying to get my attention, and in the second, she may or may not realize what she is doing. The question is whether or not my student’s intention is

important, and the answer is probably not in this case; Latour would likely say it is not, in any case.

But when it comes to questions of ethical authorship, these distinctions become more important. I am not arguing that we need to consider intention as part of a theory of agency, but instead because I argue to be an author necessitates interiority and a capacity for ethics, and a consideration for the desires and drives of individual human writers. If the work of an author is to assemble a text, and to act as a mediator on that text, we do want to account for the network of texts and technology with which the author interacts. However, we still want to be able to think about how individual authors have the capacity for agency and ethics in the network.

As Latour asks sociologists to reject invisible "social" forces, rhetoricians invoking ANT need to decide what to do with our own social explanations for rhetoric and culture, including human motivation and intention. What I'd like to argue here is that it isn't so much that we need to view rhetoric apart from the intention and the interiority of humans, but more that ANT asks us to understand that intention and interiority are the products of our connections. Individual intention is what is glued together by many other types of connectors. It emerges from our connections after the fact, which I will discuss further below.

ANT and Ethics

As I see it, an ANT theory of rhetoric is not incompatible with thinking about intention and the human writer, though it is incompatible with theories that conflate agency with intention, or agency with consciousness. I will explain further on why I

think Latour's ANT is an appropriate lens through which to view a rhetoric which allows for human intention and responsibility, but I will acknowledge that Latour himself is not very concerned with this goal. Latour has consistently argued that any differences between humans and objects are negligible in terms of results or their roles in networks, and this includes ethical responsibility and intention. "For ANT, the difference between humans and technologies is irrelevant since Latour claims that presenting people with good arguments does not alter their actions…Therefore, he concludes that despite this dissimilarity on account of intentionality and the capacity for moral reasoning, human and non-human actions have similar outcomes" (Waelbers and Dorstewitz 28). Latour's view of agency is concerned with the study of visible outcomes and traceable connections, and he deliberately and forcefully leaves the imperceptible ethical motives of humans out of the equation.

For Latour, actors do not possess agency, and intention does not factor into agency, as to consider intention would be to base our tracing of associations in ways that privilege human impacts on the network and therefore the "social." The core complication here is that traditional ethical thought, like much of traditional rhetorical thought, is based on the intentions and morality of autonomous human subjects. "Ethics seeks to define *what* we should regard as morally good and *why* we should pursue the good. The notion of intentionality addresses the 'why' question" (Waelbers and Dorstewitz 29). That does not mean that an ANT agency could not be used in concert with a theory of ethical rhetoric, however. Along with the non-human turn, rhetoric has been shifting from conceptions of normative ethics to ethics as a capacity, one that emerges from our actions after the fact. In what follows, I will briefly discuss what ethics

and intention look like in this recent shift, and then argue for its compatibility with ANT focusing on the work of Diane Davis.

Ethics as capacity involves our openness and vulnerability to acknowledge and respond to each other, and therefore that ethics is derived from our attunement with the world. In *Ambient Rhetoric*, Thomas Rickert writes, " Our ethics are not something exterior we bring in and deploy, but rather a set of comportments that emerge from life as it is lived, from what we do, say, and make," (223). As we think about what it means to be ethical in a network made up of humans and non-humans, a normative ethics is abandoned in favor of openness to the other, including things, perhaps. Scot Barnett suggests that we move from thinking about ethics as morality to an ethics of care, or of "living the good life" which allows us to account for things as well as human beings: "When we frame ethical questions about things in terms of the good life rather than morality, we find that it is increasingly difficult, if not impossible, to distinguish the 'us' vs. 'them' because what qualifies as a good way of living inevitably includes the interests and agencies of both (and more) parties" (214). Barnett argues that not only does can an ethics of care or *eudaimonia* via Aristotle account for the non-human, it can account for allow us to think about the possibilities for living well, and expanding our scope for ethics as well as rhetoric. For an author, this ethical and rhetorical orientation expands the project of writing to a broader understanding of our world, as Barnett, speaking of the BP oil spill in 2010, suggests we must ask, "Not, 'Who was responsible for the Gulf spill?' but, 'What did responsibility mean in this case'? (204).

Part of this shift is also a reconsideration of ethics apart from morality. If we think about an ethics that is set apart from morality, even as we acknowledge the

possibilities, an inevitable question is, how do we hold actors accountable? In her discussion of the blackout, Bennett agrees that a "distributive notion of agency does interfere with the project of blaming, but," she argues, "it does not thereby abandon the project of identifying (what Arendt called) the sources of harmful effects." (463). Bennett acknowledges that the energy corporation involved in the blackout was also happy to accept a distributive account of the event in an effort to escape blame. However, she argues,

> Outrage will not and should not disappear completely, but a politics devoted too exclusively to moral condemnation and not enough to a cultivated discernment of the web of agentic capacities can do no good…A moralized politics of a good and evil, of singular agents who must be made to pay for their sins – be they Osama bin Laden or George W. Bush – becomes immoral to the degree that it legitimates vengeance and elevates violence to the tool of first resort. A distributive understanding of agency, then, reinvokes the need to detach ethics from moralism, and to produce guides to action appropriate to a world of vital, crosscutting forces (464).

We may find it satisfying to assign blame, in other words, but to isolate our accounting of events apart from the networks in which they occur is equally if not more ineffective in creating positive social change. From a rhetorical standpoint, this may shift our responsibility to the connections we follow and describe, and our ethical responsibility to being open to those connections. But, since we can't practically follow all connections all of the time, I argue that part of our attunement is to thinking about which associations to follow, which is better informed by increased attention and openness to non-human elements.

Aside from blame and moral responsibility, which are vital questions, if not new ones, an additional complication arises when we consider what it means to be an individual human actor in a network. ANT may still be faulted for failing to adequately

describe the interiority of human life, particularly in terms of motivation and reasoning. I will discuss how Latour does address, what he refers to as the epigraph as the ego, soul, and the individual in the next sections, but I still argue that ANT as a theory of agency does not account very well for our ethical obligations or for our ability to reflect. As ANT intermediaries, or mediators, if we are lucky, what do we do with our desire and our motivation in our networks, or our sense that we do things in the world? And how do we account for our sense of ourselves as individuals, and our motivations that cannot easily be traced without an idea of the "social," or an ethical obligation that binds us together?

With this in mind, rhetorical scholars have reconsidered what it means to have "intention" in order to account for responsibility. Rickert argues for a "worldly persuadability transcending human intent." (36), against a conception of rhetoric limited to human consciousness. Marilyn Cooper has been interested in this question for some time, arguing that intention is not conscious, and that our intention is linked to our ability to reflect on our actions. "Intentions are enacted in word and deed; they do not exist prior to them as causes" (Cooper, Listening, 22). Intention, as Cooper describes it is a capacity for listening as "a new ontology for persuasion: "believing there is someone or something to listen to, letting beings and things be in themselves in our relations to them; and finding new ways to listen" (20). What Cooper says about listening as an explanation for rhetoric might also apply as an instruction for how we might trace the network as authors, as an ethical approach to locating ourselves among texts as well as letting them speak to one another.

Whether we are speaking of rhetoric as a matter of "dwelling," (Rickert, via Heidegger), "listening" (Cooper), or "response-ability" (Davis), these theories which

invoke agency as distributed notably place a renewed emphasis on rhetoric as ethical, if not always in our control. In an effort to reconcile agency with ethics without an autonomous human subject or without intention linked to agency, we have also continued to think about what it means to embody ethics and rhetoric in a network without imaging a subject positioned against a world of objects. For example, Cooper argues for individual agency while arguing that "a workable theory of agency requires the death of not only of the modernist subject but of the whole notion of the subject" (Rhetorical 423). Drawing on Latour and neurological theories of perception, she argues for an ethical agency which emerges from continuous interaction between embodied individuals and our environments: "The process of assimilation defines an agent as an individual with his or her own intentions and goals; individual agents are determinate, but not determined, in an ongoing becoming driven by the interactions among the components of their nervous system and by their interaction with the surround" (428). The co-agency between humans and non- humans described in Cooper's model elaborates on a role for ethical determination without neglecting its traceability in the network, that is to say, we emerge as ethical, embodied *individuals* from our networks , even while our *agency* is inseparable from those networks.

In this project, I am concerned with the experiences of human writers, and despite Latour's adherence to the symmetry of humans and non-humans, I'm interested in what ANT has to offer to rhetoric in terms of ethical actors and to authorship as a concept for ethical evaluation. Clay Spinuzzi offers a good reminder here, that "symmetry can be a bounded methodological move rather than a totalizing worldview," (23) that is to say, that while we can agree that objects and humans share the same agency, it doesn't

necessarily follow that we then must treat objects and humans as having the same capabilities and responsibilities. While we may find it useful to employ Latour's symmetry to better understand the local/distant interactions as flattened in digital media, people still have intentions and emotions, even if rocks do not. Moreover, if symmetry is a useful method for considering rhetorical agency, we may need to look for another means to engage with the qualities of what make us human, and to supplement ANT in order to make it more viable and ethical rhetorical theory.

ANT and Response-ability via Diane Davis

While Latour's version of ANT by itself does not offer a satisfying account for all of factors involved in ethical authorship, I would argue that this is largely because accounting for human reasoning and ethical capacity in action is largely beyond the scope of his project, but not because ANT is inherently at odds with ethical description. An ethical agency needn't include a modernist subject, be linked to intention, or be limited to humans. However, thinking about ethical rhetoric does however highlight capacities that are particular to humans, or at least to self-aware beings. While ANT is less concerned with describing our interior drives and responses than it is with accounting for the use and effects of our actions, thinking about authorship requires that we think about how individual writers operate in a network with regard to a sense of self and intention.

If Latour's notion of agency and rhetoric has been accused of being bloodless or too close to automation for comfort, considering the similarities (and differences) it has with a more affective rhetoric may help us to further consider the role of humans and ethics within a network, though I would argue, as Jenny Edbauer Rice and James Brown

have, that automation is not at odds with ethical rhetoric. Instead, I suggest that Latour's approach to ethical rhetorical agency is incomplete in that it does not account for our ability to respond ethically, to be open to possibilities beyond those created by our networks. "How can we be morally imaginative about the social roles of a technology, if our moral reality arises also from the interaction with that technology?" (Waelbers 79). In particular, Davis' other-oriented rhetoric might be a useful way to reconcile the feelings of agency and intention we experience as writers with ANT even if we also become more comfortable with "rhetoric within a realm of mechanics insofar as it frames rhetorical work as primarily an ordering, building, constructing, aligning" (Rice 367), experiences of authorship that I describe in chapters 3 and 4. I bring Latour and Davis together to think about how an ethical rhetoric of capacity might be compatible with ANT. If Latour can help us to think about the conditions for writing beyond human agency, Davis may help us to think about the sense of obligation we have to write, an obligation that as writers we continue to hold on to. In considering Davis alongside Latour, I am proposing that Davis' notion of prerhetoricity is a possible answer for those elements of rhetoric, and ethics, that ANT cannot (or rather, will not), explain.

Other-oriented rhetoric, or a rhetoric of response-ability, as presented by Davis, is deeply concerned with ethical rhetoric. Drawing on "ethics as first philosophy" from Emmanuel Levinas, Davis presents the conditions for rhetoric in *Inessential Solidarity* as "pre-rhetorical," both preceding and exceeding language. Rhetoric, she argues, arises from our underivable obligation to respond. Our intention, as well as agency, is bound to and is successive to our ethical obligation to others, that is to say, Davis would argue that our ethical obligation is what makes rhetoric possible, and precedes our subjectivity:

"'I' marks a site of extreme surrender, a passivity beyond passivity that precedes and exceeds any active/passive choice" (110). For Davis, intention is not a matter of agency, but agency is a matter of responsibility, or "response-ability," as she terms it. It is because language reveals our subject position born out of obligation that we have rhetoric. Davis writes:

> "rhetoric" is itself dependent on an always prior rhetoricity, an affect*ability* or persuad*ability* that is due not to any creature's specific genetic makeup but to corporality more generally, to the *exposedness* of corporeal existence. To be affectable, persuadable, is to be always already affected, persuades, which means: always already *responsive* (Creaturely, 89).

For Davis, it is vulnerability and our attunement to the Other that calls "the I" into question: "this radical alterity interrupts me by addressing me, appealing to me, turning me into its addressee" (IS 55). This interruption or rupture of the self is ethics.

Davis and Latour have radically different preoccupations, of course. If Latour is preoccupied with providing the "said" to the "saying," or what Aristotle considers to be the inartistic proofs for persuasion (see Prenosil), Davis points us to that which compels us to speak, an extrahuman and preoriginary rhetoricity which deals in the saying. Agency for Davis, following Levinas, is primal, and intangible, and human, or at least only belonging to the realm of affectable beings, which does not include rocks or lecture halls. For Latour, agency is shared with objects in the network. Below, I outline how Davis and Latour approach agency and related key concepts followed by a discussion of how ANT and response-ability might work together for rhetoric, and how they might highlight what it means to be human.

Agency and intention

Orthodox views of agency have generally held that to have agency is to have intention. Even as we have recognized that actors may have limited autonomy, an actor is generally seen as a starting point for an action, which Latour fiercely resists. Latour is suspicious of human intention in that he sees the concept as being wrongly used to fill what he calls "the gap of execution" to explain agency: "the solution is usually to shift gears and to abruptly bring in 'subjectivity', 'intentionality', and 'interiority' or at least appeal to some sort of 'mental equipment'" (RS 206), that is, when agency is not apparent, there is a temptation to insert an abstraction to explain an action. This abstraction allows us to forget about the objects in our networks and reject the material world in favor of the social world; for Latour, the idea that objects have agency is crucial to avoiding a dichotomy between the human, or "social," world and the concrete world of objects.

For both Davis and Latour, agency is understood in terms of relationality, not conscious intention; the ability to act is derived from our associations and obligations. For Davis, we only have consciousness of our responsibility to the other after we are called into being by that responsibility through radical alterity. "The subject is ethically structured so it has taken up responsibility before it has a chance to choose" (IS 87). Speaking of this sense of ethical agency, via Levinas, Davis writes that "responsibility is grounded in the passivity of the host-age and not in the freedom of a spontaneous or self-determining agent capable of resolute choice" (IS 87).

In contrast, for Latour, actors only exist in a network; they are compiled through a vast array of biological, social and hybrid interactions which make us who we are, providing us with intention and interiority.

> You don't have to imagine a 'wholesale' human having intentionality, making rational calculations, feeling responsible for his sins, or agonizing over his mortal soul. Rather, you realize that to obtain 'complete' human actors, you have to compose them out of many successive layers, each of which is empirically distinct from the next. Being a fully competent actor now comes in discreet *pellets* or, to borrow from cyberspace, *patches* and *applets*, whose precise origin can be 'Googled' before they are downloaded and saved one by one. (Latour, RS 207)

As is the case for response-ability, Latour's view of human intention is understood not as a cause for action or important for studying (rhetorical) action, but something that we may understand or reflect on after the fact. Davis might say that our prerhetorical condition of obligation is present prior to our interaction in networks, while Latour might say that any such condition (if he cared about it) would be derived from our networks.

Subjectivity via exteriority

Davis and Latour share a suspicion of the modernist subject, but for Davis we are called into being as subjects through our obligation, from the interruption from the other. Davis invokes a subject position in her depiction of rhetorical agency, but this is a non-modernist subject which position which is only possible because of our relationality to the other. "Rhetoric is not first of all an essence or a property '*in* the speaker' (a natural function of biology) but an underivable obligation to respond that issues from an irreducible relationality" (Davis, Creaturely, 89).

Latour would also say that rhetoric is not a property in the speaker as well, nor is it something that we own or possess, like any of our other layers or "discreet pellets." As described above, our interiority is dependent on exteriority. "For this, there is only one solution: make every single entity populating the former inside come from the outside not as a negative constraint 'limiting' subjectivity,' but as a positive offer of

subjectivation" (RS 213). For Latour, the more positive offers of subjectivation we have, the more our existence is affirmed. Importantly for the purposes of thinking about response-ability's compatibility with ANT, both Davis and Latour base subjectivity as well as agency outside of the self.

Regarding the materiality of that self, neither Davis nor Latour sees the body as distinct from the self, and or as distinct from exteriority. For Latour, the self is as a gathering of both its material and mental equipment, while Davis sees the body as creating "the condition for your exposure, susceptibility, vulnerability, and therefore responsivity" (Davis, Creaturely, 90). We are only embodied by our ethical relationships and that embodiment is what allows us to have rhetoric. Speaking of "mirror neurons" in the brain, which fire when we act or watch someone else performing the same action, Davis argues that that even our bodies do not distinguish between self and the other (IS 24). For Latour, we are embodied by our networks and we can trace this embodiment as a condition for doing rhetoric. The body is therefore fully implicated in a both response-ability and ANT.

Rhetoric and the non-human

Both Latour and Davis are interesting in thinking about rhetoric beyond symbolic action; neither sees representational language as a requirement for persuasion. For Latour, agency includes materiality beyond the human. His flattening of the networks in order to attribute the same kind of agency to humans as well as objects, along with his description of intermediaries and mediators as equally applicable to both humans and

objects is designed to prevent any conception that “A *human agent* is making sense of a world of objects which are by themselves devoid of any meaning” (RS 205).

In contrast, Davis’ project, based on Levinas’ conception of the Other, makes a distinction between response and reaction, in that the Other who is called must be capable of having vulnerability and exposed-ness. While Levinas limits his conception of who can be called to the human, and to male humans at that, Davis argues that non-human animals may also be implicated in this ethical relation as well. “Any creature capable of even minimal self-reference is already in language, already responding; that is to say, it is both defined by its irreducible rhetoricity and, more importantly for our purposes, already practicing rhetoric” (Davis, Creaturely, 92). In her project of response-ability, Davis distinguishes between reaction and response by thinking about beings that that are capable of auto-deixis, or self-awareness; Latour, needless to say, makes no such distinctions.

Davis does not seem to be interested in thinking about rhetorical agency for objects, but Barnett argues that “her (Davis’) account leaves open the possibility that things, too, have a role to play in constituting the environs in which rhetoric circulates and comes into meaning” (9). Barnett is thinking here about how response-ability might be specifically compatible with Rickert’s concepts of ethical rhetoric as ambient and part of our dwelling in the world, not with ANT. In any case, Davis’ ideas about rhetoric do not involve flattening the landscape between humans, animals, and objects.

Traceability/the trace

A final comparison to make with ANT with Davis' affective rhetoric is in regard to how Latour and Davis view the traceability of an action. ANT as a method and as a theory holds that we can always trace action through a network of actors. Everything in a network is traceable, or makes a visible change in the network, or it doesn't count. For Davis, the source of our agency is unfigurable; our prior rhetoricity is underivable, or per Levinas, "beyond essence." We can only trace this prior rhetoricity through its interruption. The Levinasian "trace" represents our infinite obligation to the Other, a trace of the saying.

Latour would argue that the source of our agency is figurable, or it isn't an agency – he would consider it to be a vague social account of those drives that cause us to act. However, the "drives" in this case – ethical obligations to one another – are also not of much interest to him in terms of explaining agency, as he is not interested in distinguishing uniquely human capacities from that of objects.

All of this is to say, Davis' notion of "response-ability" can be reconciled to a fair point with ANT. A rhetoric involving an ethics of capacity is compatible with ANT, in the sense that it doesn't violate the primary tenets of ANT which regard agency apart from human intention and the subject as untethered from networks and positioned against constraints, that is to say, our exteriority does not limit our subjectivation, as Latour says, but is an "offer of positive subjectivation." Many of the conditions Latour and Davis posit for rhetoric are parallel to one another. On the other hand, the differences in thought regarding both traceability and considering the role of the non-human point out some of the limitations for the compatibility of ANT and ethical rhetoric, if we want

ethical rhetoric to be able to describe action and motivation from self-aware beings vs. objects.

I argue, then, that an ethical rhetoric of capacity can allow us to get at what it is that compels us to respond within an ANT framework. Latour might argue that our capacity to respond is formed in our networks, but ANT does not do a great job of describing how we choose, how we evaluate, and how we curate in our networks beyond pragmatics – there is something about being human, or at least being a creature that has an ethical capacity - as Davis argues many animals likely do -- that ANT doesn't quite get at. As humans, we do make choices and feel moral obligations to others – and our texts – that cannot be traced without distinguishing between the ability to react vs. respond. I think this is where Davis can best help Latour - whether or not we agree that rhetoric is derived from an untraceable prior rhetoricity or that rhetoric is a product of traceable (and possibly very, very distant) network connections, response-ability is largely compatible with ANT. It does not consider humans and animals as having a different or disconnected agency from objects, though it does consider the capacity to respond as ethical beings as adding something additional to the picture. This is not to return to a pitting of humans against objects, i.e., Latour's worst fear, a fear that many in composition and rhetoric now also share. Rather, response-ability can be seen as accounting, or a tracing, for the different capacities and response-abilities non-objects have in creating the conditions for ethical rhetoric. I argue that as we think about individual writers, incorporating a sense of response – ability might be a way to think about a radical openness to tools and texts as well as the other.

ANT and the Embodied, Ethical Author

In this last section, I think about what ANT has to say about what it means to be an individual human in the network, as in chapter 3 I will discuss how authors in DesignLab assemble texts, and in chapter 4 I will look at how that self emerges in authorship, traceable as voice. To talk about embodied, ethical authors using ANT is tricky, for all of the reasons mentioned above. Even when we shift from a view of ethics as normative to an ethics of capacity, authorship still incorporates having a sense of the self as an individual apart from objects, and a sense of the self as having motivations, drives, feelings and intentions. Here I will discuss how ANT agency works for authors making ethical evaluations and choices about texts.

If we believe that Latour's theory of agency removes even more autonomy from the equation than socially mediated theories of agency, reducing the human to a cog in a machine. However, I argue that viewing ANT in terms of rhetorical agency and authorship gives us an opportunity to identify an actual, more stable form of agency that can account more fully for our circumstances. ANT, with its disregard for human intention, may provide a surprising space for our sense of human autonomy, in fact highlighting rather than concealing what it means to be human in the network. For Latour, intention and agency have little, or really, nothing to do with each other, and yet I would argue, this view still allows us to locate ethical bodies within the network through our ability to trace and evaluate - that is, to cite, and as Davis might put it, our radical openness that precedes our connections in networks.

To reconcile human agency and specifically Latour, Cooper has argued that "agency is an emergent property of embodied individuals" (421). According to Cooper,

there is room for human agency and responsibility in a postmodern world; while the death of the subject is necessary in order to avoid a subject/object dichotomy that separates us from our material conditions, embodied humans enact change even as they do not "have" agency. Instead, Cooper would point us toward a theory of agency that accounts for individuality and humanity without cutting us off from our networks, one that requires thinking of action as the result of "lived knowledge" rather than individual intention:

> Agents do reflect on their actions consciously; they do have conscious intentions and goals and plans; but their agency does not arise from conscious mental acts, though consciousness does play a role. Agency instead is based in individuals' lived knowledge that their actions are their own (421).

In this sense, agency is not synonymous with intention, and intention is not synonymous with consciousness, yet agency is tied deeply to our experience and perspectives. Our "lived knowledge" is also not limited to language, but it is the accumulation of our conscious and unconscious, physical, mental and emotional experiences, which interact with the connections in our networks, resulting in our actions.

As for ANT, it isn't that subjectivity, personhood, individuality or interiority don't exist, but rather that they are not explanations for agency. Because ANT insists upon visible and traceable connections, "lived knowledge" takes on the form of what Latour refers to as "plug-ins," or vehicles that lend those qualities to us, made up of objects and language. We don't own these qualities, but rather we subscribe: "The crucial point is that you are sustaining this mental and cognitive competence as long as you subscribe to this equipment. You don't carry it with you; it is not your own property"

(210). It is in our ability to calculate, to choose, to evaluate - to curate - in which we locate our embodied responsibility and rhetoric**.**

Plug-ins are different from the mediators in a socially-mediated sense of agency, in that ANT asks us to understand the human not as the source of action who pushes up against the world around them. While Latour would say a human-centric notion of agency which argues that it is up to humans to independently make sense of meaningless, inanimate objects is wrong, we are actors in so much as we are assembled as much as the world around us. All actants are empowered by their connections, or our list of stuff we like, not by their intentions.

And yet, the version of agency that Latour gives us is one that highlights the importance of embodied human actors, even as intention is shunted aside. As we acknowledge that humans share agency with objects, we are only left with our ability to make ethical choices. Intention is removed from agency, but ethics is not. Whether or not we argue that rhetoric is only for humans, or whether we believe objects can be embodied, we can locate ethics in how we choose to connect. And if we agree that we have an ethical obligation to respond as a precursor to rhetoric, via Davis, we can begin to construct a theory of ethical, rhetorical agency based on ANT.

Cooper argues for a "pedagogy of responsibility" (443), describing agency as inextricable from embodied individuals as it is connected to our ability to respond and interact. In this view, agency is as much about response as it is interpretation. Or, as Davis puts it:

> there is also a *non*hermeneutical dimension of rhetoric not reducible to meaning making, to offering up signs and symbols for comprehension. This one is subsumable neither by figuration in the standard sense nor by what typically goes by the name persuasion; it counts on a certain

> reception, but not on the appropriation of meaning…it deals in the saying (IS 67-8).

The distinction between action and event is rendered unimportant; highlighting responsibility is what remains. In other words, our responsibility is the key to locating our agency. Additionally, Latour's theory of agency opens up a new space for something that looks like human autonomy in the form of ethics that isn't quite action or event, yet highlights a new role for the individual, locating a space for ethical evaluation: "In doing away both with ungraspable subjectivity and with intractable structure, it might be possible to finally place at the forefront the flood of other more subtle conduits that allow us to become an individual and to gain some interiority" (RS 214). It is only by embracing the notion of ourselves as formed by our networks that gives us access to what is inside - we are not formed by external forces or constantly pushing up against our contexts. Instead, the way that we *interpret* our contexts is how we trace agency and ethics. It is only by tracing concrete connections that we can hold actors accountable.

Latour agrees that humans do bring something particular to the table: the ability to choose and evaluate. ANT is a theory but also a method, and that method places a high value on how actors interpret the world around them. As researchers, actors' account of why they do things is an important aspect that must be traced, and should never be dismissed in favor of our own interpretations. "It would be foolish to ignore that which gave the impression that face-to-face interactions were so 'concrete' and on such a 'real life' scale, and which gave the feeling that it was individuals who were carrying out the action" (205). Though agency within networks is distributed, this "feeling" Latour refers to is important because in ANT, the actor's own interpretation of events is crucial to a good account: "actors are also able to propose their own theories of action to explain

how agencies' effects are carried over." (57). Far from being disembodied cogs, the actors in ANT are conscious. "…sociologists of associations should keep as their most cherished treasure all the traces that manifest the hesitations actors themselves feel about the 'drives' that make them act" (47). Our feelings, then, are external to us - they are "ours" because we can cite them. This may sound cold and unappealing and more disembodied than ever. Yet it may be argued that treating actors' feelings or perspectives on actions as traceable is also to recognize more fully what it means to be human as ethicists, or as writers.

Conclusion

What ANT means for rhetoric is that we need to pay attention to the concrete connections between actants and trace those interactions. Moreover, this also means that actors' own accounts and perceptions of activity are important, traceable aspects for study. This pushes us to consider, as Paul Lynch has argued, responsibility rather than critique, at least if the project of critique is only to separate ourselves from our networks. What this means is that as we pay more attention to the networks actors participate in, their own individual experiences become more visible. As we focus on describing the relationships that actors have within their networks, the work of rhetoric can more fully account for the lived, embodied experiences that actors have, because we are no longer jettisoning the natural, material world for that of an imaginary social; we are also no longer attempting to understand ethics as separate from embodiment.

If author's work is comprised of other places, distant materials, and faraway actors, citations are the nodes in a horizontal network, and asserting the relationships

between these helps us to examine the relationships between speech act and event. In this sense, the mediators that we interact with in a network are all brought in together, giving us greater access and delivery for rhetoric.

What this does to ethics is to diminish its role in terms of individual intention, but gives ethics a more robust role in understanding rhetorical agency. Through the lens of ANT, I see this happening in two ways: first, our "feelings" that we do things in the world are derived from our networks, and second, our presence in the network is material.

For Latour, intention is distributed - our feeling that we act (along with other feelings) is presumably part of our ability to "plug-in." The idea that most of our experiences are driven by human intention is considered a fault of the false split between the world of human subjects and the material, natural world. In this sense, intention can be seen indivisible from our experiences and our perception of events, but not something that drives those experiences and events. Latour doesn't like intention, at least not as a way of explaining agency. In his view, it gives humans (and perhaps animals) a status that they don't really have.

Upon hearing that we are merely cogs in a network, with about the same agency as rock, it makes sense that we would feel otherwise. We feel like we do things in the world. The concept of writing and authorship and indeed, the field of composition studies, are greatly based on personal empowerment, that is, our ability to enact social change through writing and rhetoric. Having humans grouped with rocks and plants doesn't sit well with this ideology. But, I'd like to consider that one of the appealing aspects of Latour is that his take on agency really does seem to describe many of the

actual experiences we have in the world. Often we do feel empowered, as Cooper has argued, but don't we also feel as though we are connected to the objects and the environments around us? Don't we really feel that our actions are determined by our networks and the inanimate objects within them much of the time? I would argue that while we may like to think of ourselves as empowered or independent, and we do often feel like we are doing things, there are many experiences in our daily lives, which highlight the opposite feeling.

For example, being stuck in an airport is a time where we may feel acutely aware of our location in a network. Latour writes, "Flying is a property of the whole association of entities that includes airports and planes, launch pads and ticket counters" (PH 182). Flying is certainly an activity where we may feel like we aren't doing much of anything, from standing on moving sidewalks from being woken by cabin lights. It could be argued that we chose our destination, or maybe even our seats or that terrible sandwich, but the association of entities is what makes these "choices" possible. For Latour, it isn't merely that we navigate the world against constraints with our intentions, but that our intentions come directly from these constraints.

Undergraduate writers, struggling with an incomprehensible prompt in a required course, might also feel like they don't have much in the way of agency. They may have enrolled in the course; they may have even chosen their own topic. But it is the course professor, the college, the lecture hall, the computer they compose on, and perhaps even their parents that make these choices possible. Many advanced student writers often report feeling that they have more agency and that they develop an ability to make successful academic arguments rather than regurgitating course content. But do those

feelings come from a newfound ability to navigate the constraints of college writing more successfully, or do they come from an acceptance or greater understanding of one's place in the network?

When it comes to agency, these "feelings" of intention are often vague, and like Latour and Davis, I am not arguing that we can say that how we feel in any given situation is a way to gauge our agency. But I'd like to suggest three things: 1) that although we feel like we are doing things in the world, those feelings, like any other "choices," come from our networks, and 2) our feelings of intention, though they may be independent of agency, are important as part of our lived experiences and should not be dismissed, and 3) rhetoric necessarily involves ethics as an openness to interaction within our networks.

In *Pandora's Hope*, Latour rejects the idea that there is a real world and a perceived world: "phenomenology leaves us with the most dramatic split in the whole sad story: a world of science left entirely to itself, entirely cold, absolutely inhuman; and a rich lived world of intentional stances entirely limited to humans, absolutely divorced from what things are in and for themselves" (PH 8). However, the solution is not to be rid of human intentions but to understand them more fully in terms of our lived experiences - which involves studying actors within their networks. In resisting the split between humans and nonhumans, agency is something not limited to humans, which perhaps presents one kind of problem. But shattering the "rich lived world" of human intentionality is not to reject that idea that people do things in the world, but rather it is to understand that people do things in the world because they are connected, constrained, and compelled to respond.

Chapter 3: An Actor-Network Theory Approach to New Media, Authorship, and DesignLab

> I'm definitely more comfortable being the author when it comes to writing, just because that's how I've been trained. I think it took me a while to get accustomed to feeling like an author with this Comic Life project, because I was so out of my comfort zone, and the process was so different. I know writing's a process, and I know that in all of my writing I probably should have gone through more of a process, but usually for assignments, I have an outline and that's what I do. But this, this actually transformed, the first couple of drafts I had no idea where it was going, and it wasn't until that I was almost done that I figured out what I was trying to say. So it was a very different authoring experience.
>
> -Danielle, on her experience composing a digital media project

In chapter one, I suggested that being an author is more about assemblage than it is about creating new texts, and that authorship is largely a matter of allowing texts to speak to one another. In chapter two, I argued that agency and intention are separate from consciousness, and individual intention, though not in the way we have traditionally thought of it, opens up a space for us to consider a role for an embodied, ethical author. This chapter will return to my earlier argument that what new media does is to expose the issues regarding authorship in more traditional genres, and highlight the role of networks for authors. I will also examine the term "authorship" itself and consider what meaning it can still have for the field of composition and rhetoric. By examining how looking at authors as part of a network and at their work as inseparable from the mediums and the materials they work with, we can begin to see where the embodied, ethical author emerges, and what rhetoric and rhetorical agency for authors looks like in terms of Latour's Actor-Network Theory.

New/Digital Media and Composing in Networks

Defining new media or digital media is not unlike attempting to define rhetoric itself, in that such a definition can be limited to a narrow range of genres, or it can be thought of as encompassing features of all texts. As we might consider it more useful to evaluate texts in terms of their rhetorical features, it may be more useful to consider what is digital about any given text, rather than choosing to view certain genres as digital or not. Further, when determining which texts are "new media," we should first consider which rhetorical features they share. In new media texts, writing and visual elements can both be considered rhetorical, arguments may become less linear, and the elements that make up the texts may be assembled or juxtaposed in ways that call attention to contrast or lack of harmony. It is through examining means of production and its particular rhetorical effects where we can start to consider the role of the author. My discussion of how we might define new media considers both how new media constitutes a different type of rhetorical object when compared to other forms of media, as well as how new media represents and points us to a particular set of authorship choices, in that producing, delivering, and receiving new media demands a particular type of rhetoric and ethics.

Scholars such as Cynthia Selfe and James Porter ask us to define new media texts as digital, in that the digital medium in which they are *received* and *produced* is key to understanding how they are rhetorical. Regarding this reception, Selfe writes that "These texts generally place a heavy emphasis on visual elements (both still and moving photography, images, graphics, drawings, renderings, animations) and sound, and they often involve some level of interactivity" (43). Although it might be argued that these multiple literacies are not limited to digital texts, as even print demands a certain level of

interactivity, digital mediums disrupt our notions of reading and writing and shift our focus to considering the modes of representation themselves. Further, Porter writes, "Traditionally, rhetoric/composition has typically conceptualized writing from the standpoint of 'composing' (creating the isolated text) and 'reading' it. But when writing enters digital spaces, we need to reconceptualize writing from the point of view of production, consumption, and exchange" ("Recovering Delivery" 219). In other words, what makes new media texts "new media" are the ways in which they highlight the previously invisible workspaces of both composers and readers: the work of navigating the medium as inseparable from content. If we take such a "scenic perspective" of writing, as Porter terms it, closely accounting for the mechanisms for production and the distribution of writing, it also demands that we view writers within a larger network.

Jackie Grutsch McKinney outlines how Anne Frances Wysocki emphasizes that new media authors call attention to the text's materiality (30). Wysocki writes, "Such composers design texts that help readers/consumers/viewers stay alert to how any text—like its composers and readers—doesn't function independently of how it is made and in what contexts" (15). Like Porter and Selfe, Wysocki focuses on the production of a text and its rhetorical effects in her definition, but she also notes that a text that calls attention to its materiality may or may not be digital. This broadens our definition of new media; it also asks to consider the role of the author, or composer in *any* media. Wysocki identifies that at least part of the role of the author is to illuminate a text's materiality, or as Latour might put it, to help us to trace the agency of the text.

I have taken my own definition for new media writing from these scholars to be one that considers any composition that draws attention to its production, distribution, or

consumption for both writers and readers. New media or digital media is more than just discourse, but a discourse that makes it challenging for us to separate from both its material and rhetorical properties conceptually, which enhances its traceability. As I have argued earlier, it isn't that new media texts are unique in asking us to consider their materiality, or that authors haven't always been part of networks. As Lester Faigley writes, "My argument is that literacy has always been a material, multimedia construct but we only now are becoming aware of this multidimensionality and materiality because computer technologies have made it possible for many people to produce and publish multimedia presentations" (175). It is true that digital technologies highlight our awareness of texts' inherent multimodal and material properties. But at the same time, our awareness of these features of texts is the result of the medium and the networks that enable our access to the medium. In that sense, digital texts do not work the same way as non-digital ones - they are unique in their abilities to call attention to themselves.

For the purposes of understanding authorship via an Actor-Network-Theory lens, I would therefore turn to Wysocki's definition of new media, which accounts for both digital and non-digital texts, but with a caveat that platforms are not mere delivery systems, and that we must always consider that the nature of what makes the texts material may affect how we understand a text as being rhetorical. Porter argues that the techne of digital rhetoric includes both "productive how-to knowledge" as well as "ethical phronesis" (Recovering Delivery 220). We must be aware of how texts are produced and we must be aware that part of the rhetoric of a text is techne. Porter's caution to us to avoid "technological instrumentalism," is a reminder of both the importance of technology to writing, but is also a reminder of the importance of

production. Although I would continue to argue that new media exposes issues regarding authorship and rhetoric that are present in all genres, they are unique from an ANT perspective in that more actors and the means of production are rendered visible.

An awareness of production is integral to our understanding of rhetoric regarding new media. Porter writes:

> "Writing is not only the words on the page, but it also concerns mechanisms for production (for example, the writing process, understood cognitively, socially, and technologically); mechanisms for distribution or delivery (for example, media); invention, exploration, research, methodology, and inquiry procedures; and questions of audience, persuasiveness, and impact. From the scenic/contextual perspective, writing technologies play a role—especially in terms of production (process) and distribution (delivery). If you see writing as an action (directed at some audience for some purpose in some social context), then you are more likely to see computer-based Internet writing as having a dramatic, even revolutionary impact on writing." ("Why Technology" 386).

Technology matters to rhetoric, of course, whether or not we are talking writing with a pencil or a computer. But when we use the computer, our writing is networked in ways that is immediately more traceable to our sources and our working materials. As Porter argues, "…the computer per se is not the revolutionary technology. Rather the revolution is the networked computer and the social/rhetorical contexts it creates and the way its use impacts publishing practices. All that is revolutionary" ("Why Technology" 385). The networked computer is a mediator, which in terms of ANT does much to flatten the landscape in terms of making connections and following both distant and local actors. Our interaction with these objects demands that we employ techne and understanding of these objects, or we risk being as disconnected as Latour's cat prowling the Acropolis, unable to interpret the setting. The technology demands a different level

of rhetorical engagement and understanding. It is a way of un-blackboxing composition and rendering traces visible once again, as well as accessible.

When we consider digital texts in particular, we can more closely examine the relationship between these mediums and the writing process. Further, “It forces us to think about writing as involving labor, as being involved in an economic system of exchange, as having status as a commodity with value (both use value to the reader, but also exchange value)” (Porter, Recovering Delivery 219). Or, when we ask students to submit a paper online or provide them with handwritten feedback on a draft, we are doing more than using a medium - we are engaging in rhetoric through our choices, and we are asking our students to situate themselves in a particular way according to the medium we assign. A digital text and the way it is produced, shared, and received in a traceable network demands that we consider the author’s ethical and rhetorical position. It demands that we locate the body of the author.

Porter has argued “for a cyborgian, posthumanist view of writing technologies” (“Why Technology” 375). Drawing from the work of Donna Haraway, he argues that “such a view does not isolate the technological tool as an abstracted machine apart from human use, but insists on defining technology as use —as the human and machine working in concert (joined at the interface) and writing in a particular social, political, and rhetorical context” (375). The view of the author as a cyborg acknowledges the close relationship between machine and writer and echoes certain aspects of ANT (constraints, networks) but, it also asks us to consider what the human brings to the machine, as well as what the machine brings to the human. In the humanist point of view, we only consider how humans arranges themselves around and use the machine, which tells us

very little about rhetoric and ethics because it gives very little space for rhetorical action and ethical evaluation. On the other hand, the posthuman view that Porter advocates can tell us a great deal about rhetoric and ethics because it allows us to understand agency with regard to our relationship to the material. Our identity as authors and the choices we can make is not only shaped by our tools, but we are only authors as much as we can connect with our tools. In this sense, we can finally see the fully networked author.

Authorship and Plagiarism via Latour

The term authorship itself is generally synonymous with a view of agency that is individual, romantic, and autonomous, and above all, human. However, even when I think about it through the lens of distributed agency, I still feel committed to the term, perhaps because the notion of "authorship" is a way of thinking about our entanglements: the concept of authorship is a tacit acknowledgement of that our writing is connected to us, and that we have a responsibility to behave ethically. For example, Danielle, as quoted above, echoes an ethical capacity to respond to the technology and her text as it developed, but it was still an "authoring" experience.

I have argued that the separation of authorship from the notion of creation or intellectual property allows us to view something crucial about an author's role in the network. For Latour, the texts we work with and the networks we evolve from always act as constraints on our writing, which in turn grant us agency. Our relationship to the text involves engaging with these constraints rather than working against them. However, responsible authorship has traditionally been considered a matter of individual responsibility even when we acknowledge writers as socially mediated subjects. For Foucault, "the notion of the 'author' constitutes a privileged moment of individualization

in the history of ideas" (141). We punish plagiarism when it violates that individuation, but we don't reward citation, our tracing of associations. In other words, there is a tension between what we might think of as authorial responsibility (plagiarism and copyright) and how authors really create texts.

Rebecca Moore Howard's notion of patchwriting has done much to help the field understand our conflicting notions of authorship and to help us to reconsider writers' relationships to source materials. The notion of "patchwriting" is the idea that insufficient citation or partial paraphrasing is really a stage in drafting. Recognizing patchwriting as a process rather than a crime allows us to focus on how writers assemble their sources into a format that is acceptable by the academy via paraphrasing and adhering to citational rules. One of the arguments that Howard makes is that patchwriting is really "a discursive operation aimed not against the source but toward the context in which the operation occurs" (19). Though we may think of plagiarists as autonomously engaged in committing crimes against "original" autonomous authors, the issue of plagiarism is one of context. To view patchwriting in this way, we must say that we are autonomous writers first, then plagiarists. In contrast, Howard would say that our subjectivity and identity as authors is actually derived from the context of the writing situation – in a sense, authorship and plagiarism fall on a continuum and a writer's position on that continuum is shaped and informed by context.

With regard to ANT, I would argue that citations and patchwriting can provide us with traces to the work that authors do. Citations give us a way to trace the network and the choices that we make as authors – that is, citationality is authorship. It is in our citations that we can locate our ethical agency as writers, which in turn has consequences

for the ways in which we view authorial intention, plagiarism, individual voice, and rhetoric.

Constructions regarding ownership and intellectual property bleed over into our ideas of what it means to write and cite, and these constructions that only hint at the full range of ethical choices in our embodied experiences. To steal or not to steal (or to use a sort of "get out jail free" card by including proper citations) seems to be our main task as authors. Authorship is largely determined by what it is not, that is to say, that we have a tendency to identify authorship for non-published writers as the absence of plagiarism. This concept of authorship is largely based on legal and institutional frameworks far disconnected from the ways that we actually compose. We can't talk about authorship very well in a positive way because it doesn't really exist as a concept outside these entities which privilege ownership and assume that our primary ethical responsibility is not to steal. "Recent copyright decisions show that even as scholars in literary studies elaborate a far-reaching critique of the received Romantic concept of "authorship," American lawyers are reaching out to embrace the full range of its implications" (Jaszi 36). And interestingly, the legal and institutional frameworks that protect authorship are largely unconcerned with many of the material aspects of composition, at least in terms of production, while they are concerned with distribution of the final product and material gain and loss in terms of royalties and copyright: an emphasis on material consequences without an emphasis on the materiality of composition.

It follows, then, that any discussion of authorship requires a discussion of plagiarism. Even if we examine plagiarism in rhetorical terms, as Andrea Lunsford and Lisa Ede have suggested, I would argue, that by limiting our notion of authorial

responsibility to citation, we fail to see authors as ethically embodied**.** The rhetorical view of plagiarism put forward by Lunsford and Ede considers issues of authorship and plagiarism as rhetorical and collaborative from a socially-constructed perspective. They write,

> …all writing is in an important sense collaborative and that 'common knowledge' varies from community to community and is collaboratively shared. From this perspective, attribution of sources becomes not a means of avoiding the heinous sin of plagiarism, but of building credibility or writerly ethos, of indicating to readers that the that the writer is a full collaborative participant in the scholarly conversation surrounding whatever topic is at hand (437).

However, this at once privileges the individual as an author without examining the interactions which go into such collaborations, or the material conditions in which authors compose. Additionally, authorship is viewed as an act for or against social constraints. Such a view is incompatible with the type of agency and individual responsibility we might access via ANT, where authorship and agency are experienced as an assembly and a capacity to respond.

Howard points out that that the properties of new media create fear surrounding uncontrolled access to texts. "This fear arises from a belief in widespread plagiarism—plagiarism that, because of boundless access to text, cannot be controlled. This belief arises from the availability of text online not just to writers but to readers. It is readers' access to copious text that makes them believe in writers' plagiarism (7). As a field, we have been quick to agree that texts are not created in a vacuum, but access makes us nervous. (The fear of access and of delivery also points out a reluctance to view access and delivery as a part of the content of a text.)

Part of me would like to dismiss this fear of access - as Howard and others have

pointed out, cheating in the digital age isn't necessarily more widespread, just easier to trace. However, I think some of this uneasiness surrounding access is due to how we don't know how to define the difference between passing off an entire paper we buy off the internet vs. assembling a paper drawing from easily accessible sources from the internet. Is cheating just a matter of degree then? Where do we draw the line? If we're comfortable with the notion that all writing is collaborative, are citational rules all we have to define what is authorship and what is plagiarism?

Howard suggests that such fear should be countered by recalling that all writing is intertextual. Since we are always collaborating with a text, she argues, our goal should be to teach writers how to do this properly. This sounds reasonable, and while I wholeheartedly agree that writing is intertextual, I think that only tells part of the story. Writing is intertextual, meaning that an audience can help to determine the meaning of any given text, but this still doesn't help us with our problem of "authors who feel like they do things in the world" and in fact returns us to the idea of an author as having individual and limited agency. Instead, I would say that we also need to consider that writing is not only intertextual, but it is also traceable, and the ways that authors use relationships and traces between texts are what make them authors. To teach writers which types of appropriation constitute plagiarism and which do not keep us locked into a narrow range of choices for writers.

Applying Actor-Network-Theory to authorship may give us some much needed distance from plagiarism. The main problem with our fixation with plagiarism is that it may prevent us from getting at the ethical and rhetorical questions involved in authorship.

To define authorship is as the act of an autonomous author is to limit the ethical and creative possibilities for writing, and problematic because it reinforces authorship as dichotomous with plagiarism. Even a plagiarist is still an author from the perspective of ANT. That is to say, that someone who buys a paper off the internet and submits it as her own is still an author of a sort. This idea, while perhaps distasteful, helps us to see what makes a writer a writer in terms of ANT. Authors assemble and evaluate, which the "cheater" is still doing - we may not like her choice, but that is the work that an author does. The author in this case, however, is only making one kind of ethical evaluation (taking a single work that is already assembled and presenting it as her own) instead of engaging with the sources, those distant actors. In terms of degree, then, this student represented other author's ethical evaluations and textual work as part of her network when it was not. To distinguish academic misconduct from accomplishment, we might create criteria for evaluation that focuses on students' interactions with texts explicitly. Perhaps instead of page length or word count, we might demand that students make a minimum number of traceable ethical choices per paper.

At any rate, viewing authorship as merely dichotomous with plagiarism may be an extremely limited view on what it means to be an author in terms of the network, in that plagiarism represents only one of the ways that one becomes an author. And yet, plagiarism represents a lack of responsibility or response-ability - insufficient citation indicates insufficient response and engagement. From the perspective of ANT, citations are a big deal, though not in terms of separating the "real" authors from the plagiarists. Citations are a way of tracing the network and the choices the author has made - citationality is authorship. Therefore, I would argue that plagiarism is a pedagogical

problem not because of intellectual property, but because of rigor and lack of awareness of access. We do have boundless access to text, but we also have boundless access to actants and their traces. This is where, I argue, the focus should be when it comes to considering the work that writers do.

Many genres of academic writing are set up so that we don't have to show this work, or at least we don't have to show it very well. Although some attention has been paid to the ways that citation can act rhetorically in different genres, as a signal from the author to the reader that she is immersed in the field and to lend credibility to her statements, academic writing for both novices and experts is still conventionally thought of as the author joining a community of practice in which we use citations as a means of belonging and a way of bolstering our own arguments, rather than considering that our relationships to the materials we use (cited or not) *is* the argument. The rhetoric of citation then becomes largely about signaling our "in" with a specialized audience and our ability to do this signals our novice or expert status, rather than signaling the ethical evaluations we made in the process of assembling a text.

When we cite, we take the flattened landscape of the network and make choices as to which aspects are the most important. Latour's networks are flat, but authors make crucial choices about which ideas to take up, which ideas to reject, which aspects to emphasize, and which traces to render visible. Perhaps this reduces the work of an author to that of someone who can create a good annotated bibliography, which doesn't sound like the worst thing in the world to me. Perhaps viewing authorship in this way ignores the other work that writers do - analysis, synthesis, and argumentation. If you ask an author about their writing process, you may talk to authors who insist that they come up

with their own analysis and argument and then use outside sources to support that argument, or that it is some combination of both approaches. However, those "own" analysis and arguments are also a reflection of many distant actors and actants in the author's network, some traceable and some very likely not.

This is not a suggestion that academic citations should start including traceable lists to an author's complete history, as I certainly don't want to read that. In fact, I'm not sure that citational conventions need to be changed at all, as long as we understand what they can and can't tell us about a particular piece of writing. From the perspective of traditional, albeit socially-constructed authorship, students are viewed as writing against constraints as they navigate genre, the assignment, and writing conventions. They bring their histories, their literacy, and their agency comes from their ability to navigate and resist institutional structure. Our ethical positions are derived from our responsibility not to plagiarize, to cite properly, and are an afterthought or a subaspect of our individual agency. Instead, I am suggesting that while academic citations begin to hint at the real work that writers and composers do, they don't give us a satisfying rhetorical or ethical outlook on the work of writers.

Krista Kennedy has claimed that "Curation is writing, regardless of how small or invisible the texts might be. Tracing the work of textual curation helps us consider …its rhetorical aspects" (24). In her work on authorship and agency in Wikipedia and Chamber's Cyclopaedia, Kennedy identifies "textual curation" as a significant form of writing and rhetoric. Kennedy argues for the work of finding, selecting and navigating texts as a form of writing, and a form of labor that is often hidden:

> the labor of distributed authorship is accomplished not by just the usual suspects denoted by the authorial signature and the publisher's imprint,

> but a broader collective of humans and nonhumans who perform the work…Members of this collective include human writers, editors, publishers, coders, funding donors, and readers, but also technological agents such as printing presses, the web, and robots who edit, create maps, and write text. This inclusive definition of curatorial collectives leads us to a fuller consideration of the articulated labor of authorship (3).

As Wikipedia is written by both non-human bots and humans writers, it provides a case for non-human agency, but in doing so, it isolates and highlights the human contribution of evaluation and ethical choice – that is, those moments of interruption in which we emerge through our networks as agents.

In terms of Actor-Network-Theory, then, we have a much more robust view of what it means to be an ethical, embodied author. A new media author in DesignLab assembles a project using available materials. Meaning may be made out of the ways these sources interact with one another as well as how the author interacts with the text. Our agency is shared within our networks among human and non-human actors. Our intention and our ethical embodiment are traceable in the choices we make to assemble these texts. Our ability to make ethical choices is what makes us rhetors. Ethics, in this sense, when applied to authorship, is not about stealing or misappropriating work, or whether students are doing their "own" work. Ethics instead refers to the ways in which we critically evaluate and make use of materials available to us, or, the ways in which we are open to those materials.

Therefore, the kind of digitally enhanced composition we see in DesignLab is both more and less intentional that we might think, because of the ethical embodiment of the authors positioned within, rather than against, the network. Authorial intention is disconnected from individual agency and autonomy, in the sense that writers have access

to agency only from their networks, but composing in a network is more intentional if we consider authorial intention to be a matter of curation and citation.

How Authors in DesignLab View Authorship and Make Ethical Choices

> *Well, in the beginning, I had an intro paragraph that said, 'Dear Reader, I've created this project to do this, with this intention.' So I think as an author, my intentions were clear right away, my angle was clear.*
> -Megan, on her digital media project

My interview subjects shared their insights on authorship with me, providing some insight on their ethical embodiment as authors in a network[1]. Both the undergraduate and graduate students that I spoke with had all been enrolled in a class in Library and Information Studies course which was crosslisted as part of the Digital Studies Certificate at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. The course involved a semester-long service learning project with various community partners that culminated in a digital media project; the assignment for the projects asked them to either showcase the community members' voices or to help advertise the community partner's services. For example, Danielle, a graduate student in Library and Information Studies, worked with a teen program for first-time offenders in the criminal justice system and created a project with the Comic Life program using their photographs and reflecting their experiences. Another student from the course, Megan, had recently graduated with a degree in English and European History, and she also worked with youth offenders, though her group was limited to girls only while Danielle's group included both boys and girls. For her project, she created a Buzzfeed-style list reflecting what she had learned

[1] I interviewed 5 DesignLab users and 5 DesignLab consultants for this study; I discuss my method of 'Following the Actors" via Latour in my first chapter.

from her experience with the group, intended for the group as an audience. Huan, another graduate student in Library Studies, created a video to advertise the media lab in a branch of the local public library where he had been working as part of his practicum.

Though the projects represented a range of genres and media, part of the assignment for all of my subjects was to consult at least twice with UW-Madison's DesignLab, a digital media studio. DesignLab works much like a traditional writing center in that users, or authors, meet individually with trained consultants at various stages of their posters, videos, and creative and academic projects incorporating digital media (DesignLab generally uses the term "smart media"). Though users may receive some technical assistance and advice not provided in a traditional writing center, consultants are trained to focus on the development of ideas and on collaborating with authors on their projects; how-to advice on software or equipment is generally not seen as separate from feedback on content, but as part of the guidance toward achieving the author's goals for the project. This relates back to how we view the object of study in that both consultants and authors do not view the technology only as vehicles for their projects, but rather the technology is viewed as an integral part of project.

When I spoke with my interview subjects about the projects they created in DesignLab, they revealed views of authorship that reflected traditional views regarding ownership and originality, even while considering the work of assembling sources as authorship. Danielle said of her project, "I felt like I was creating something that was my own," and that "to be an author is to create something that uses your unique voice." Like Danielle, Huan referred to authorship as ownership and creation several times in our conversation. Probably due to their recent experiences with digital media assignments,

none of my subjects seemed to consider the work of an author as limited to textual writing. Huan, whose project involved making a video rather than creating a web project, said, "I feel like me, painters, writers, we all produce something out of abstract ideas and then express it in a very concrete way. We tend to think about it (authorship) as a form of writing, but I feel like it can be extended to a broader context." Huan viewed creating his video as an act of authorship, and similar to Danielle, he defined authorship as an act of individual expression.

In contrast, Megan seemed to subscribe to a poststructuralist interpretation of authorship. Of using other voices in her project, she said, "I don't think anyone ever has a truly original idea. I mean, you're always drawing on influences from somewhere." When I asked Megan if she thought that someone who just used only existing materials and put them into a project without adding text was still an author, she said, "I think so, because you still search for something specific, you found what you were looking for, and you put it into a medium in a way that you wanted in order to present something." Although Megan stated these thoughts explicitly, throughout the interviews my subjects referred to this type of curative composition work as the means in which they expressed their individuality, their voices and their ideas.

Interviewees also revealed a more complex view of authorship that underscored both intertextuality and engagement within the personal, technological, material and textual networks in which their projects were produced. In addition to authorship, our discussions focused on design elements and technology, the means of production, sources and citation, and the sensation of agency. I describe four main recurring themes below:

Interacting with the resources and materials in their networks helped the students to determine what they wanted to say. One example of this was Danielle's description of how the features of Comic Life influenced the direction of her project, which involved a storyboard depicting colorful puzzle pieces and images taken by both her and the teens in the project. Finding puzzle piece shapes as one of the option in the program, she said, "so you can put pictures in the puzzle pieces, and so my project was about how we were only getting pieces of these teens, and so when I found out there were these puzzle pieces it clicked –I got it, now I know what I want to say." Danielle was surprised at how the project came together and how the design options built into the Comic Life program played a role in determining the thematic content of her project, which she described as a very different from her experiences with textual projects in which she would start with an outline; this project transformed through her process and interaction with Comic Life. Similarly, Megan was on Buzzfeed's website and was inspired to create a Buzzfeed list to connect with the teen girls in her group because she realized it would be a great format to connect with them via pop culture references. Both projects relied heavily on these pre-determined formats, but both authors were also able to clearly point out where their contributions began and end because of these traceable interactions in their networks.

Textual curation was an important, if not the most important, factor in the means of production. The students were aware that they performed acts of curation as they created the projects, and often those acts of curation were quite labor-intensive. Megan spoke of the many hours she spent both selecting and arranging links and images for her relatively simple Buzzfeed project. Danielle sorted through hundreds of selfies and pictures of each

other her teens had taken, and because her teens were in the criminal justice system, she had to be careful to edit and crop the images as needed. Of making his video, Huan said of his own interview subjects, who spoke of either using or working in the public library's media lab:

> It's their voices, it's their stories, I'm not going to dispute that, but I needed to create something that I thought would be meaningful for the public. I have to put those voices out. I have to make them say--sometimes I had to ask them an awful lot of questions if I felt they were not giving me a very strong piece for me to use in my work. And so, I guess me coming up with the research questions, that was also part of the work and also me coming up with follow up questions. There was behind the scenes work and some people may not realize that there was a lot more going on besides the videography and editing.

Huan described the other difficulties he encountered with his project, such as when a participant who was to be the most heavily featured in the video decided that he only wanted Huan to use his voice, and not appear on camera. Huan also realized during his first attempt at editing that the existing video he had recorded didn't really get at the message he wanted to share, and he was forced to partially re-record some of the participants. Although most of the interviewees were able to easily manipulate the materials in their projects, Huan was hampered somewhat by the video format and the limited material he could collect; he also had a specific vision regarding the video which may have made it challenging to do while incorporating other voices. Nevertheless, much of the work that the authors did regarded evaluating texts (with "texts" defined broadly) and sources.

Intertextuality was emphasized through a heightened awareness of source material and citationality. Though interviewees generally all acknowledged the need for citations to

give credit for to other people, and occasionally mentioned copyright or legal issues, DesignLab does not police producers regarding citations; citations for the projects were dictated by the course instructors. And yet, the interviewees had a sophisticated and expansive view of what, how and why they might cite in their projects. Huan said that he only included credits at the end of his video because they were required by the course professor, but he saw citation as mainly a formality. Huan noted that "There are things that we definitely can cite, but we don't," and also noted that personal judgment plays a significant role in citation, even in academic papers.

Both Danielle and Megan used citation to establish intertextual relationships with their materials. Regarding the photos taken by the teens in her group, Danielle said that they often used specific photo filters on their phones. "If a teen used a specific filter, and if I tried to maintain that filter, I would make sure in my citation that I said, "filter chosen by teen…because I felt that it was their specific decision to make it look a certain way." Danielle told me that the goal of her project was to give her teens a platform for their voices, and she felt obligated to provide that information as integral to that goal. Megan said of using GIFs in her Buzzfeed list, "It (using GIFs) gives you credentials you can rely on, work that already exists, right? So if I put in an image, or GIF of a popular TV character, now my audience isn't just listening to me. I'm drawing on that person's credentials as well." Megan was also savvy about the role of network technologies to emphasize relationality between texts. "At least when you're doing multimedia, or you're writing on a blog, or something like the (Buzzfeed) list I created where you can add in links, so you have ability to network your piece, whereas with the text-only piece, you don't necessarily have that relationship right off the bat."

The interviews suggested a stronger sense of agency and ethics. Similar to their notions of authorship, the students I spoke with invoked topoi of ownership and individual autonomy when speaking about their roles in creating their projects. Although these topoi do not support a Latourian theory of authorship or agency, much of the individual freedom they referred to was attributable to the lack of established conventions for their digital projects, and digital projects in general. Danielle said, “I feel like in a certain regard, I feel more ownership of this (digital media project), because, with a paper format, it’s even more set up for you. It’s even more structured. It’s not like you can suddenly not have a paragraph.” Megan said, “There’s less of a precedent with multimedia projects. You really have to find your own way.” Though both Megan and Danielle also noted how the platforms they used shaped the content and direction of their projects, having the freedom to choose a format perhaps gave them a sense of individual agency.

Danielle also spoke of working in multimedia as having a stronger command over her message and increased rhetorical power through visual features. “With DesignLab, you really do get to nail down what your message is with every little detail. So, even if you’re not doing it with your words, sometimes the images, or even the colors – it’s so great to have a kind of back-up where you aren’t relying only on the words on the page, because sometimes the words on the page just don’t do it.” By using the tools of digital media, Danielle felt a greater sense of control in conveying her message, but I would argue that this increased sense of control is derived from her interaction with the tools in

her network. I would argue that Danielle is an author because of her ethical embodiment in the network, and her ability to curate her resources.

At the beginning of her project, Megan included a note to her reader declaring her intention for the project, which was to reach out to her teens and reveal disparities in the County's juvenile justice system, something she was very passionate about. While her intention was not agency in a Latourian sense, it is arguably ethical. As Megan said of authorship, "Whenever you create something, you always have an angle. And to have an angle is to have ideals and beliefs, and if you have those, then you are an author because you are perpetuating some kind of value."

Conclusion: An Actor-Network-Theory Approach to Plagiarism and Authorship: Responsibility and Response-ability

Mark Taylor writes in chapter 7 of his book, *The Moment of Complexity: Emerging Network Culture* that "I, Mark C. Taylor, am not writing this book." When pressed about this statement in an interview with Thomas Rickert and David Blakesley, Taylor notes that while he does consider himself to be a writer, but that the arguments he is making are drawn from several theorists, and that those theorists also draw on others for their work. He responded, "It is, therefore, too simple to say 'I write' or 'I have written this.' It is more accurate to say, 'In writing, I am written as much as I write.' Others write through me even when I am not aware of it. I call these others "my" ghosts," (806-807). This idea of ghosts is perhaps a good way to get at the idea of what we can and can't trace in our networks; we know the actants in our network are writing us even when we can't immediately trace them, but drawing on Diane Davis as discussed in the previous chapter, we feel compelled to respond.

The question regarding responsibility and agency is not, "how do we hold people accountable?" Rather, it is "how does our accountability that makes things work?" Or, as Megan put it, "The whole point of these projects is to grow a voice, to gain self-expression, and develop yourself as a person with an identity who can speak for themselves on issues that matter." Through the opportunities for ethical choices in their networks, students using DesignLab were able to locate themselves in the network and find ways to enact agency. Latour would argue that ANT expands the work of agency without privileging human intention; while students in DesignLab approached their projects with ethical intentions, they derived their agency from their tools and resources.

Textual curation goes further than understanding writing as collaborative, or patchwriting as part of the normal learning process. It suggests that we can separate authorship and responsibility as separate from writing. It's not that we can't write as responsible authors – but the responsibility arrives before the writing. Writing can be automated – but writing can also be ethical. Understanding the choices that we make as embodied authors from the choices we make as networked writers can help us fully engage with the resources available to us in a network. Authorship can still be a useful concept for the field, and if the relationship between texts is really all we have, we still have quite a lot. Locating ourselves as textual curators is a way of recovering a sense of agency and ethics for authors.

Chapter 4: Tracing Ourselves: Authorial Voice in the Network

> This might be the only real difference between the 'hard' and the 'soft' sciences: you can never stifle the voice of non-humans but you can do it to humans. People have to be treated more delicately than objects because their many objections are harder to register. Whereas subjects easily behave like matters of fact, material objects never do. -Bruno Latour, *Reassembling the Social*, p. 124-5

> When we write, we cannot help brushing against the identity issue and noticing whether or not our words feel like us or ours -Peter Elbow, Landmark Essay on Voice and Writing, xliv.

> I think to be an author is to create something that uses your unique voice.
> – Danielle, defining authorship

In chapter 2, I discussed how Actor-Network Theory might be used as a theory of rhetorical agency in combination with considering an affective rhetoric, and in chapter 3, I discussed how ANT might be considered as the basis for a theory of authorship. In this chapter, I consider how ANT might highlight a particular role for human authors, in particular, by recuperating the concept of voice in writing, based on the ways it emerged from my interviews conducted with DesignLab users on their experiences with multimedia projects.

Voice is a significant, if not well-interrogated, concept in both the writing classroom and in non-academic writing settings. In my interviews with DesignLab users and consultants, voice emerged as a dominant theme when my subjects were asked about authorship. This is not surprising, as voice is a catch-all term for many different ideas about authorship and writers, one that particularly tied to different facets of identity and individuality; voice is often used in a vague sense to describe how we express ourselves in writing. But vague or not, I suggest that this notion of self-expression is one that is

compatible with a network theory of rhetoric and authorship. How writers experience and think about voice in their own writing, as inscribed as it is, is reflective of how we experience ourselves as authors in the network.

In particular, I will argue that voice is compatible with ANT as it functions as a trace of ourselves as mediators in the network, and that it both broadens and narrows what we mean by voice. Additionally, here I employ a tenet of ANT as a method: learning to feed off controversies. By examining the conflicting ideas we have about voice as teachers of writing along with the conflicting ideas my subjects shared about voice, I argue, following Latour, that we might then start to trace between the points of these controversies in order to locate a definition and rehabilitate a better working definition of voice. This allows us to describe how we experience voice as writers within a network theory of agency and authorship.

When we cite in the network, we act as mediators on a text even as we are mediated by that text. The network may be flattened, but authors make crucial choices about which ideas to take up, which ideas to reject, which aspects to emphasize, and which traces to render visible. Digital media projects point to our voices as a trace of that mediation. Thinking about our voices in the network is a way to trace the self as part of our capacity for ethical choice and our obligation to respond.

Rethinking Voice

Actor-Network Theory and related theories of agency may seem unrelated to those theories of composition or pedagogy which focus on human, individual voices. Voice is tied to expressivist and perhaps theoretically passé theories of writing which are

closely connected with theories of the subject, socially constructed or otherwise, and privilege human agency. However, in chapter 2, I argued that ANT is compatible with ethical agency, and similarly, I argue that voice is also compatible with ANT, and that ANT can help us expand our definition of voice as well as make the term more meaningful. If an ANT perspective asks us to have agency without intention, it also asks us to have voice without "naturalness," that is, we do not start with an unmediated voice. If the voice, as I will argue, functions as a trace of the self, that self emerges from our interaction in networks. The authentic voice via ANT is not "natural" or unconstructed, that is, there is no voice that is untethered from our networks. This doesn't mean we do not experience having a "voice," however, as we "experience the lived knowledge that our actions are our own" (Cooper 421). I will first discuss how I see voice as in need of recuperation for writing studies, and then discuss why voice makes sense for ANT. I then talk about my interview data in relationship to voice, before I conclude to consider how voice functions as a trace in the network.

My interest in recuperating voice is that I am interested, as many of us are, in empowering students to do good in the world, and I see voice as a means of articulating students' experience as ethical mediators of texts. I see thinking about ANT, in particular thinking about ANT as an ethical rhetorical theory as discussed in chapter 2, as helping writers to tap into a more authentic, if not more natural voice, one that offers a more stable ethical orientation then a modernist conception of voice, and one that reflects the lived experience of writers as shaped by both human and non-human influences.

I discuss the challenges of defining voice further on, but above all, to consider voice is to consider who we are in relationship to our texts. Voice has long been a critical concept for writing studies, connecting the act of writing to a kind of self-actualization. In *Upsetting Composition Commonplaces*, Ian Barnard notes, "The idea of students (and other writers) 'finding their voice' or "coming to voice' continually served as a 'raison d'etre' for composition and creative writing pedagogy" (70), and was seen as "an antidote to social conformity" (69). Such essentialist conceptions of voice have been used as important justifications for composition curricula, for which a key goal was often understanding of writing's relationship to the self. Voice is central to expressivist theories of writing that posit that texts exist within the student, and that composition is about expressing that interior self as a means to invention, in seen in teaching guides from Ken Macrorie, Donald Murray, and from Peter Elbow, who has long advocated for students and teachers to engage with voice.

The postmodern writing classroom holds that selves are constructed, and the idea that we all have a stable, authentic voice that we inhabit in our writing is now a problematic one. By 2007, Elbow lamented that voice has largely fallen out of favor in composition studies, writing "The concept of voice in writing seems to have been successfully discredited in our journals and books: who can find a writer arguing for voice (much less "true self" or "real self") in any enthusiastic, nonironic or noncritical sense in the pages of College Composition and Communication or College English for the last ten or fifteen years?" (169). Criticisms of voice include that it is fuzzy and anti-intellectual, that it is non-rhetorical in that it ignores the role of audience, and that the concept is too vague to teach; voice also seems firmly rooted, like authorship, in an

autonomous view of agency, particularly when viewed as an expression of an authentic, original self.

Responding to these criticisms, scholars have attempted to reconcile voice with a decentered subject, while also addressing voice's vagueness. Elbow has also noted that voice refers to many different, though related, ideas. In the introduction to 1994's *Landmark Essays on Voice and Writing,* Elbow identifies four distinct but related aspects of voice: *audible voice, dramatic voice, recognizable or distinctive voice, and voice with authority*, arguing that each of these are identifiable in a text, and that these four aspects can be discussed apart from the question of authentic voice and self (xxxiii). "If I have a 'recognizable voice,' that voice doesn't necessarily resemble me or imply that there is a 'real me.' Recognizable voice is not about 'real identity'" (xxxi). However, Elbow then goes on to write about a fifth aspect of voice which is about real identity, "resonant voice or presence." He acknowledges the tension around voice, between the socially constructed subject and the authentic self in writing, referring to this unsolvable tension as "the swamp." (xxxiii). Resonant voice is "real voice" for Elbow, and although he acknowledges the debate, he argues that we do not have to settle it in order to teach and enact voice in writing, only pointing to our own instincts about our own identities. This outline of voice using these five aspects feels unsatisfying, as separating voice from identity makes the first four types of voice sound more like superficial style than the complex rhetorical modes that they are. As for the fifth voice, the "resonant voice," it is true that we do have a sense of what it is and isn't "us," and I would not discount that sense in an exploration of what voice is. However, this doesn't address the main question, i.e., do we have an "authentic" voice or not? It also creates a separation

between our texts and who we are, forcing us to shuffle back and forth between our identities and our writing.

Despite these issues, voice lingers in our classrooms and in our conceptions of writers and writing. Barnard notes that "essentialist conceptions of voice are still ubiquitous in composition scholarship and teaching" (74), citing its inclusion in recent textbooks, and that contradictions abound, as these same texts reflect a "nostalgia for ontology" while simultaneously interrogating the notion of authentic voice (75). In the *Mythology of Voice*, Darsie Bowden writes, "the term (voice) invariably emerges, often sheepishly from one of my students and more frequently than I'd like to admit, from me as I stumble over my own inability to describe what I mean" (285). Elbow notes that while the debate seems to have stalled, "Students at all levels instinctively talk and think about voice, or their voice in their writing, and tend to believe they have a real or true self' (170). This was true of my interviewees. While the DesignLab users' responses about writing and their relationships to their texts and tools reflected a sense of co-agency, voice, as "real self," or connected to a real self, was important to their experience of authorship.

If the gap in our scholarship on voice has occurred because of theories positing a deconstructed subject, voice still hasn't gone away. I argue that the disconnection between current scholarship and our continued need to talk about voice goes beyond "nostalgia for ontology," and that it is also symptomatic of our inability to satisfactorily articulate how writers experience voice. Further, that experience defies definition. Voice is messy and nebulous. The concept operates as stand-in for many ideas about writing –writers and teachers use it to mean tone, or force, or intention; it can mean a

sense of ownership in the authorial sense. It can refer to what (the "what" isn't usually defined) makes writing enjoyable and exciting to read, vs. dry and dull. Aside from visible aspects of writing, it also generally refers to aspects of the writer: voice can be seen as identity, personality, soul, or in the case of finding oneself among non-humans, it can be a way of marking us as human, or perhaps how we mark ourselves as human. As an ethical orientation, it can be "authentic" or sincere. It is challenging to teach about voice when it is nearly impossible to explain what it is, and yet it is difficult to avoid talking about it when the term hints at so many aspects of the interiority of individual writers. As Kathleen Blake Yancey writes in her introduction to *Voices on Voice*:

> One of the more frequent metaphors employed in rhetoric and composition is voice. Working from an analogy to the spoken context, we use the metaphor of voice to talk generally around issues in writing: about both the act of writing and its agent, the writer, and even about the reader, and occasionally about the presence in the text of the writer. Sometimes we use voice to talk specifically: to talk about the writer composing text, in the process addressing both a fictionalized audience constructed by the text and a human audience that is itself recreating text and writer. Sometimes we use voice to talk specifically about what and how a writer knows, about the capacity of a writer through "voice" to reveal (and yet be dictated by) the epistemology of a specific culture. Sometimes we use voice to talk in neo-Romantic terms about the writer discovering an authentic self and then deploying it in text. These three specific conceptions of voice seem at odds with each other, and they are at odds too with still other interpretations of voice (vii).

Yancey is not alone in noticing that there are many competing ideas in the network of thought and practice around voice, and they overlap with Elbow's outline of the different aspects of voice as well. We could approach these contradictions by breaking the notion of voice into related, but separate components. We could even just substitute different words for voice depending

on which aspect we mean, e.g., style, tone, intention, self, authenticity, and engagement.

But I think Elbow is on to something when he argues, "There are substantive differences between the various kinds of voice in writing—but more often than not, they go together. And surely the richly bundled dimensions and connotations of the human voice are what hold them altogether" (xlvii). I disagree with Elbow that "we don't have to agree on the nature of self" (xlvii) in order to discuss voice, and that no more work needs to be done to investigate the connections between different aspects of voice. But I do agree that these aspects of voice that he and Yancey and others discuss do go together, in all of their contradictions. I propose that when we look at voice through an ANT lens, the differentiations between these ideas of voice do not demand that we separate them into distinct aspects, but rather that we can trace most if not all of these dimensions of voice back to our embodied self in the network, as that self becomes traceable via our mediation on the text, and the text's mediation on us.

The voice operates as a trace of our sense of self, or feeling that we do things in the world. I argue that we tend to think about style, tone, intention, authenticity as compartmentalized aspects of voice as it stems from the modernist subject that guides much traditional thinking about writing and the self makes a distinction between our (generally) conscious actions and our (generally) unconscious reactions. Because agency, and therefore writing for Latour both originate from interactions in the network, and not our intentions, it allows us to reexamine the connections between these ideas and the distinctions between these

elements become blurred. What we are left with is our sense of self, our sense of mediation within our networks which applies to both the unconscious and conscious effects we have on a text.

Thinking about voice through the lens of ANT may help us to address these issues, and to think about how individual voices resonate in a network. My goal in talking about voice here is not to pin down a narrow definition from among the vast menu of choices, nor is it to ignore the tension between individual voice and networked authorship. Instead, first I will argue that voice is instead a gathering of many of these ideas; it is best-defined as a means of tracing our humanity and our ethics in the network. My definition of voice is that voice is a way of mediating our position in the network – it is the identifying the gathering that is “me” in the network. Authorial voice necessarily encompasses a range of aspects, conscious and unconscious, that are connected to our sense of self in the network and our ability to recognize that self.

Then, in the spirt of ANT, and “following the actors,” I want to move toward a theory of voice built from these seemingly contradictory ideas, as well as what my subjects had to say about their voices. These mismatches signal our experience of voice as writers; that is, we’ve always existed in networks, and the ways that we talk about voice reflect our sense of self, our connections, our experience of force, and our experience of authoring in those networks. In other words, voice feels contradictory because we have tried to map it onto a traditional ontological subject. To resolve these controversies, I suggest that we reconceive of voice as emerging from our networks.

In chapter 2, I talked about Latour’s equipment for living, the plug-ins, or vehicles to which we subscribe which contribute to our lived knowledge. With these plug-ins, we

lack what Latour refers to as "primeval interiority," but we "depend on a flood of entities allowing them to exist. To be an 'actor' is now at last a fully artificial and fully traceable gathering" (210). In this sense, the self is a gathering of our "plug-ins" within the network, and when mediation or transformation occurs in those networks, it is traceable. Voice through ANT can be seen as operating as a trace of that gathering of all of the connections that make us who we are, that mediator that is "I," via Davis. As other actors, human and non-human, we function as assemblages of all of those plug-ins, a hub for inputs and outputs. And as the kind of creatures we are, we leave particular types of traces on a text, some conscious and some not.

And if we are who we are through our networks, that doesn't make us less unique, or less authentic. Arguing to reconsider what mechanical thinking might add to writing studies, Jenny Edbauer Rice has noted that "the 'anti-mechanical defense' has become a disciplinary trope" (367). Part of our previous thinking about voice, to be sure, is a reflection of that anti-mechanical defense, in the way that we think about our own voices as unique, in the Romantic sense. However, that does not mean that our voices aren't created as unique through our practices. Our gathered self as it emerges from our networks has its own unique DNA, its own inputs and outputs. The conscious and unconscious traces we leave on texts and that they leave on us are therefore as real and unique as fingerprints.

Further, our inability to limit our definition of voice to one particular aspect of it also signals something about our lived experience as writers, even if we do not consciously experience of all of our inputs and outputs, or even experience them as inputs and outputs. We've always been authors in networks of human and non-human objects,

and we have always been able to write because we are part of these networks. However, we have thought about writing as occurring through an autonomous ontological subject, which I would argue does not echo our experiences of writing, our assemblage of texts. The concept of "voice" isn't messy because we've been too lazy to come up with more precise language, but because we haven't been able to come up with a satisfying way to connect these different aspects of voice when considering the author as a sole ontological subject, because these ideas of voice describe our echoes of our humanity within a larger network – they are all traces of what it means to be human in a network.

I believe that we have talked about voice as inexplicit and at times to replace that is which is beyond our articulation largely because we never thought about ourselves as acting in a network with nonhumans in our earlier conceptions of the term. Conceiving of voice as a trace of our mediation on the text and the text's mediation on us might help us to capture these ideas about voice – our sense of ownership, our identity, our personality, and our ethical and moral interiority. With this in mind, Elbow's categories of voice, audible voice, dramatic voice, recognizable or distinctive voice, and voice with authority, as well as authentic voice can be seen as connections to our unique self in the network. For example, we can see the voice that we might consciously "put on" for an audience as inseparable from the voice that others sense in the texts we write, or the voice that is connected to what we believe and do is inseparable from what we own.

Further, if we conceive of voice as a mediator in a network, we can think of voice as more seamlessly describing both our own sense of self as well as our codependency in our networks. Voice as a mediator can help us think about how to talk about individuality within a network. For example, voice has been charged with anti-

intellectualism, or "sentimentalism," according to Elbow. "At one extreme, the 'sentimental' position says, 'Hold fast to your 'you' at all costs…At the other extreme, the 'sophisticated position says, your sense of 'you' is just an illusion of late Romantic, bourgeois, capitalism. Forget it. You have no self" (xliv). Elbow argues that we don't have to choose between these two positions but that we can go back and forth in our writing process and in our teaching, which doesn't fully address the contradiction. Viewing voice in a network is a means of reconciling the feeling that there is any "you" to hold on to with the understanding that we are positioned in a network. This feeling of self is part of how we are assembled by our networks. I argue that yes, students do have a real or true self, though not in the traditional, ontological subject sense – our authentic self is found in our own sense of who we are. Via ANT, our "sentimental" or "authentic" self is not an illusion; the illusion is that it cannot be traced, or that we have the ability to hold on to that self as a possession.

Moreover, an ANT voice is more descriptive of how we actually write. The vocabulary of voice is perhaps one that we have taught our students (e.g., to find our voices, let our voice come through, to say something in your own voice, etc.). The way we talk about voice in the classroom is one that encourages a sense of the writer as an artist out of the Enlightenment, far removed from our modern digital networks. Yet, when we write, our sense of self is inseparable from the task; the act of writing is an act of ourselves as a mediator of many interactions, even though that self is also mediated by those interactions. This differs from a postmodern subject in that this mediator is relatively stable. I am suggesting that perhaps voice has been challenging for us to pin down precisely because we have thought of it as "authentic," "natural," and stable, but by

viewing voice through an ANT lens, we can see ANT as a product of our networks – it is through our networks that we locate a sense of self; our voice becomes an mediator for our obligations in the network.

Perhaps the most important reason why it is important to reconcile voice with ANT has to do with how we help our students think about identity and personal empowerment – i.e., we still need to do this. Since the Death of the Author, thought on voice, as argued above, has not provided a very satisfying explanation for whether or not we have an authentic self. Barnard notes the contradiction between simultaneously acknowledging poststructuralist conceptions of the subject while encouraging students to find their "authentic" voices as a means to empowerment (74). This contradiction is one that I've experienced in my own teaching. I want my students to feel empowered and to "find their voices," or to find their own mandates to speak, as Jacqueline Jones Royster puts it. As I've encouraged students to find their own way into academic writing and discourse, I encourage them to reflect on themselves as writers, and to express their identities. In doing so, I sometimes have a nagging feeling that I haven't quite figured out how to reconcile self-expression with teaching them how to assemble texts, or teaching them citation as writing. This goes beyond vocabulary or which concepts to emphasize in the classroom. I want to recognize my students' individuality while at the same time I want to teach them to separate themselves from their writing and to be engaged rhetorically. As a teacher of writing, I try to empower writers to locate themselves in their networks, but I am still focused on their individual positions, whether I think of them as ontological subjects or networked entities. Voice's connection to the self is political, and while our project in composition and rhetoric may have changed

from one that teaches voice as a call to non-conformity, I argue that we must be necessarily concerned with individual empowerment in our networks.

The ways that my subjects talked about voice reflected all of the above messiness of voice, but they didn't seem to think it was nearly as messy as I did. I didn't plan to ask them about voice, but it became clear that even when they saw their texts as a product of co-agency and viewed their ideas as emerging from their networks, as Danielle did in the previous chapter, that voice was a significant part of their experience as authors and a tracing of their ethical capacity; I couldn't ignore it. I'd argue that most if not all of the ideas they expressed about voice can be located under an umbrella of what makes us human: a capacity for ethics and a desire or obligation to do good in the world. Even though I would argue, as Latour does, that our individuality and interiority emerge from our relationships in the network, we experience that individuality and interiority only as a sense of who we are, and while we are willing to acknowledge that we share agency, as writers we are reluctant to let go of our individual voices. Although it could be argued that this attachment to voice is largely a social construct, I want to consider that from a networked perspective, voice is a reflection of our own ability to respond in our networks. Voice is a means of finding where our human-ness begins in the network.

Voices as Mediators in DesignLab

The DesignLab projects my student subjects created were all service-learning projects, and rhetorically speaking, they were designed to reach an audience for a particular purpose, such as promoting a particular library service or to collaborate on a

project with and for the benefit of a community youth group. I point this out, as a longstanding critique of focusing on voice in writing is that an emphasis on personal expression does not give enough weight to considering audience and attend to the rhetorical aspects of writing. I did not ask my subjects directly about how audience may have affected their authorship, but the purpose of their projects did come up in our interviews, including as part of their discussions of voice.

To conduct an ANT investigation through interviews with DesignLab users certainly does not account for all of the actors involved in their projects. It could be argued that voice only emerges as an important concept because of the undue weight placed on information and self-reflection from human actors. However, the purpose of my project is to consider what happens to human authorship when examined from a networked perspective, and part of that project is to consider what the authors themselves have to say about how they are assembled by the objects around them. For my purposes, I am considering voice as uniquely human, in part because there is no existing controversy around the authentic voices of objects to follow. To clarify, non-human objects are also capable of mediation, and are capable of leaving traces of their interactions on the text. I am thinking about voice as related to particular types of traces related to a human sense of self, and to the human author.

As I followed the human actors in my interviews, the concept of voice emerged over and over again. I found myself using the word in our discussions when talking about authorship, but my subjects often mentioned it unprompted, particularly when I asked them if they saw themselves as the authors of their projects. This in part may be merely reproducing familiar language surrounding authorship and writing; but to dismiss

this reproduction would be to violate the tenets of ANT. I want to give weight to my subjects' accounting of how they saw themselves. Additionally, in my analysis, I think about voice both as my subjects talked about it using the term; I am also thinking about voice as pertaining to points where my subjects alluded to an authentic self without using the term specifically.

As discussed in the previous chapter, my subjects' responses frequently indicated a sense of co-agency, an agency that was shared with their materials, their collaborators, and their software tools in our discussions, but they were firmly attached to the idea of voice. Subjects working in DesignLab were not new to working in networked environments, but at the same time, they are also part of educational networks, as well as social contexts where a modernist conception of voice is still a common concept. Their attachment to the notion of authentic voice suggests that individuality and ethical motivation are vital to their experiences of authorship. Their responses perhaps reflect the position of current networked writers who operate in a contact zone between traditional views of authorship and authorship as informed by practice with digital media tools. As "dual citizens," the ideas they carry over to digital projects related to voice suggest that voice is unshakeable from a concept of authorship; or at least more unshakeable than agency.

An example of this from the DesignLab data is how subjects viewed voice as "authentic" vs. constructed. Some of their responses regarded voice as a direct reflection of an authentic self, while other responses understood voice as unstable and malleable. Similarly, Barnard relates having a first-year composition class in which the majority of the students recognized that the voices they used on Facebook were constructed, but

thought about those selves in opposition to their "real" selves (85). My subjects talked about voice in ways that reflected a sense of real self, but not in opposition to the work they did to construct voices. This real self was apparent in the ways they talked about self-expression, their relationships to technology, personal empowerment, and claiming authorship. Below, I discuss these main themes or controversies related to voice using examples from my interviews.

In my discussion, I use Elbow's five aspects of voice to provide some of the vocabulary for the ways my subjects viewed voice. They are: (1) audible voice or intonation, referring to vocality of speakers and of texts; (2) dramatic voice in writing, referring to persona or character; (3) recognizable or distinctive voice, referring to uniqueness and style; (4) voice with authority or "having a voice," referring to force, assertiveness, and expertise; and finally, (5) resonant voice or presence, referring to the authentic self, which relates to our instincts about "real" self, our own and that of others. Elbow's categories, while still broad within themselves, provide a shorthand for discussing the complexity of voice. Not everything my subjects said about voice fits into these categories, however, and some of their ideas refer to multiple categories.

Voice as a self-expression vs. voice as constructed

The idea that voice, and authorship, was about individual, unique expression was consistent among my interviewees, if not throughout my interviews, as subjects' responses concerning voice vacillated between ideas of constructed voice vs. natural voice.

As discussed in the previous chapter, Danielle discovered what she wanted to say through her interactions with the technology, and her responses indicated her comfort with sharing agency with the technology in DesignLab. Yet Danielle was particularly explicit about how she saw the role of her voice in her project, which she consistently described as hers. "I tried to make my voice very clear. I talked about everything from my lens. It's from my perspective. Even the way that it's worded is how I actually talk," she said. "I think to be an author is to use create something that uses your unique voice." Here, Danielle invokes several of Elbow's outlined aspects of voice: an authorial intention (voice with authority), style (recognizable or distinctive voice), vocality (audible voice), as well as authentic voice (resonant voice or presence). Additionally, when asked about her own definition of authorship, Danielle said that copying and adapting was part of her idea of writing, but that in order for her to feel like an author, she needed to use her own "spin." For Danielle here, an authentic voice is central to her experience of authorship. It seems to be about a conscious effort to make her interaction with her text visible, that is, to render traces of herself on the text.

Megan also expressed a sense of authentic voice, and she used the term "authentic voice" in our interview several times as something she valued about writing, and that digital writing in particular was a way to express her values. For Megan, as stated in the previous chapter, the point of her multimedia project was to "grow a voice, to gain self-expression, and develop yourself as a person with an identity who can speak…on issues that matter." Her response here is indicative of voice that is both a natural voice, in the sense that it is something it can be acquired, but it is also something that can be developed through writing. Megan was also my subject who most acknowledged voice

as something that she could manipulate to get her message across, analogous to dramatic voice. Megan talked about how she wanted to “play on her youth” in creating her voice in her Buzzfeed list for her teen group, describing how she chose her voice: “I didn’t want to come in as an analytical theorist.” She felt that Buzzfeed gave her project a “realistic edge” that would lend authenticity to her voice for the teens, and she mentioned drawing on other voices, in particular by inserting GIFs, to lend credibility to her project. As she viewed voice as something that she could construct, Megan was also my subject whose answers had the strongest rhetorical focus (recalling the tension between writing for oneself and writing for an audience). For Megan, voice includes her authentic self-expression *and* rhetorically connecting with an audience.

Voice via ANT allows us to reconsider many debates about voice, including whether or not voice we have our own natural voice, or if voice is artificial. For Latour, there is no distinction between what is natural and what is authentic, and therefore we – and Megan- do not need to make a distinction between Megan’s resonant voice (“real self” for Elbow) and her use of dramatic voice (with the goal of voice with authority). “Since we are all aware that fabrication and artificiality are not the opposite of truth and objectivity, we have no hesitation in highlighting the text itself as a mediator” (124). Through an ANT lens, voice is mediated by the text even as it traces back to the self as a mediator. Danielle’s answers about voice respond mainly to her mediation on the text, but Megan’s answers relate to both her mediation on and by the text. Megan’s answers reflect a richer understanding of voice in which construction and authenticity are not at odds, but for both subjects, the resonant voice was inseparable from their sense of themselves as authors.

Voice in relationship to digital technology vs. text-based formats

Subjects reported viewing their DesignLab projects as providing a platform for their voices, and that this was different from their experience with traditional paper formats. Danielle thought of her voice as something that existed apart from her tools, saying that "The medium isn't as important as having a unique voice." However, she felt that her voice was much stronger in her DesignLab project using the Comic Life 3 program than it was in her text-based writing: "There's no comparison with papers." Danielle felt that she could express herself much more powerfully using the affordances of the technology. Similar to having a sense of increased agency, digital projects were seen by the subjects as increasing the resonance of their voices. Danielle felt that her voice was apparent in the design of her project, and this really mattered to her. She felt that she could carry her voice over to all aspects of the project. "It was noticeable even in my preference for color schemes and font choices." She thought of her piece as "bright and bubbly" in contrast to most of the projects from her peers. Through her use of the technology, Danielle sought to make her project uniquely hers.

Megan said, "There are certain trades, or tricks you have to know in order to be able to write well. Whereas, with multimedia projects, it's not about that, it's about having an authentic voice." Megan did not seem to think of the ways that she could and did appropriate other voices as being a "trade" or a "trick," or as counter to having an authentic voice. She felt that this flexibility allowed her voice to be authentic as well as constructed. Her assertion that multimedia projects allowed her to express her authentic voice point to how she equated writing conventions with mediation on her writing, but

new media technology was seen as highlighting her self-expression, i.e., her resonant voice.

Of course, the projects that the students were working on in DesignLab were not traditional, thesis-driven papers, and we often equate academic writing and writing conventions with stifling voice, and digital projects may be seen by authors as more creative and offering more opportunity for self-expression. Barnard also points out that voice has been viewed as an opposing force to academic discourse, implying a "natural vs. unnatural binary." This idea that our voice is always emerging in opposition to constraints echoes ideas of an autonomous subject, and it also echoes a division between a human world and a non-human world of institutional forces.

But, I argue, the more visible presence of other voices and objects in our digital media networks complicate matters while at the same time shifting us away from this debate. Digital media projects create more opportunities for visible interactions, and for more visible traces of the self. Authors working with new media are working with a different set of constraints. Because of the visibility of their networks, they are not operating under the illusion that that their writing is only their voice and theirs alone, they are free to think about the relationship of their voice in a particular context. Latour argues:

> Information technologies allow us to trace the associations in a way that was impossible before. Not because they subvert the old concrete 'humane' society, turning us into formal cyborgs or 'post human' ghosts, but for exactly the opposite reason: they make visible what was before only present virtually (RS 207).

At the same time, working with new media technologies may at times create more of a (sense of) separation between self and materials, as that self is rendered more distinct

with increased mediation in the network. I believe that this is due to less “blackboxing” then with a pen or pencil, as the new media technology highlights for these writers where their materials end and they begin, as their awareness of materials, technologies, and resources is heightened in a network. From a user’s standpoint, a pencil or even a keyboard, screen, and Microsoft Word may seem to function as more of an intermediary for writing (until they break down, as explained in Chapter 2). DesignLab affordances offer more complex and less predictable interactions with our texts. For example, when Danielle chooses her bright color palette, this is not an option she likely has or recognizes as easily when creating a text-based project. With digital projects, we are less accustomed to this particular configuration of which particular tasks for writing are ours and which tasks are that of the technology.

Multimedia technologies can certainly act as blackboxes within network connections as well, for example, as Jenny Rice writes, “audio recordings can often give the illusion of being ‘truer’ than printed words, since we can here the evidence for ourselves. We can easily forget the rhetorical decisions made in the processes of recording, editing, and tinkering with sound” (384). However, digital technologies both flatten networks and make more choices visible to the user.

Voice as ethical commitment

Particularly for Megan, voice at times seemed to operate as a stand-in for ethical position or a mandate to speak. Megan felt that this was a stable orientation. “Well, for, me, I’m always writing about the same things, I’m always caring about the same things, so in that yes. I am the same author when I use pen and paper as I am using Buzzfeed.”

Megan equated herself in her writing with her ethical commitment to "write about issues that matter." Megan equated her sense of authentic voice with her ethical motivation. "Whenever you create anything you always have an angle. And to have an angle is to have ideals and beliefs, and if you have those, then you are an author because you are perpetuating some kind of value." Megan felt that even when she approached writing as an assemblage of other voices or texts, it was her values that made her projects feel like hers.

Voice as ethics or writing with ethics the way Megan describes it relates at least in part to Elbow's "voice with authority," as for Megan, her voice reflects the assertion of her convictions. Elbow, however, argues that voice with authority may or may not be sincere and "does not entail any theory of identity or self" (xxxii). If we consider how we emerge from our networks as individuals as part of our capacity for ethics, Megan's instinct that her identity emerges in her writing via her ethical commitments makes sense. If the self is called into being by our capacity to respond to others, via Davis, or via our connections with others, via Latour, our voice, our angle, or our "spin," as Danielle put it, is a matter of ethics.

Voice as citation

Regardless of whether students were conscious of their ethical commitments to others, thinking about voice often led them to engage in certain practices that nonetheless were attuned to relationships to a host of others in their networks. Huan created a video, which consisted of assembling other voices from the library he worked at, including a narrator. When I asked Huan of his video, "Where's your voice, where's Huan in this

video?" he looked puzzled. He said to me, "I did put my name in at the very end. That this video and videography were done by Huan." For Huan, part of his voice was about claiming authorship. I want to suggest that putting our names on our writing is part of a self-citation or trace. Citations are a way of implicating ourselves in the networks. I would argue that Huan's adding of his name is a conscious act of mediation, though not all and probably not most traces of mediation are. From an ANT view, Huan may have regarded adding his name to his project as a thoughtless act, or just a way of adhering to a convention, but it was nonetheless a visible transformation on the text.

Citation was about giving credit to other voices as well. Speaking of her teen group, Megan said, "They're not normally going to have a chance to be heard. And through these projects, they could do that. They could not only be heard, but they could hear themselves." Citation is a way of getting to our connections, and to our voice, but also to cite, and to "unflattening" other voices.

These responses on voice mirror many established contradictions of what voice is, and it would be fair to suggest that the subjects are only reflecting a cultural and educational tendency to use voice as a handy expression, like "flow" in writing. But in the spirit of ANT, I would argue that these accounts of voice are worth following, and I see them as connected concepts because my subjects did. Moreover, I don't think it changes the fact that as writers we experience a sense of real self so strongly that voice is impossible to ignore. And that we experience that voice as a desire to express ourselves in our networks. Voice is not agency, but it does reflect our ability to respond to the other and to show ourselves in the world. The central issue is no longer, do we have an

authentic voice or not, but how do our networks enhance, highlight and provide us with resonant voices?

Conclusion

The presence of technologies, or the awareness of the presence of technologies, lends itself to illuminating voice, or the presence of the human author. “Voice is even more elusive in electronic writing modes, given the collaborative nature of much digital media, dissolving boundaries between authors and readers, and endless revision possibilities defining always unstable texts” (Barnard 71). Here I would like to suggest that while voice as authentic and autonomous is indeed elusive, the network does allow us to find traces of an authentic human voice.

I suggest that ANT might be a useful way to recuperate voice – a notion of voice that is no less complex and broad, but perhaps less nebulous if we can become more comfortable with the networked self, and voice as a trace of that self. Elbow writes, “For there is a momentous asymmetry between reading and writing. As readers we only have access only to the text, not to the writer (assuming the text is not our own); but as writers we have access to both the text and the writer (ourselves). We can hear the sound of our text and we can also hear the sound of “us.” Digital networks blur these sounds; as writers, do not experience ourselves as a distinct sound; we experience traces of that self.

We don’t have to choose – between a socially constructed voice and a natural voice – they are both our authentic voices. The stamps we choose to put on our writing and the stamps we leave behind beneath our consciousness are all part of our voice. By bringing these aspects of voice together, we can reconcile ANT with voice, but we can

also think about how it is that we can locate our agency only through our ties in a network and still have a voice we can call our own.

Conclusion

> …attending to the vibrancy and otherness of things is not only a speculative endeavor, it is an ethical project of the highest order, on that, as Adorno suggests, is in good keeping with concerns about alterity and responsibility that have characterized so much of the work on ethics in the postwar period – Scot Barnett, *Reclaiming Rhetorical Realism*, p. 187

Regarding network culture, complexity theorist Mark Taylor has said, "We are coming to understand that physical, biological, economic, and political processes are to a large extent information processes. This recognition increases the importance of cultural process and, accordingly, underscores the significance of the humanities. Never has it been more important to have thoughtful agents who are informed about and sensitive to humanistic ideas and values. The decentering of the subject does not result in the dissipation of agency but leads to nodular subjectivity in which self and other are inseparably bound together" (Rickert and Blakesley, 809). If we understand all of the workings of our world, from our individual cardiovascular systems to global industries to systems of rivers and streams, as all part of these flattened information systems, we may become more, rather than less connected. Network theories do not allow us to ignore the material connections we have with others, and they in fact highlight an ethics of capacity within those connections. As we move towards understanding both our physical and biological processes as equally important with our political and and economic processes, viewing them as intertwined), the role of the ethical, obligated actor emerges.

The aim of this project has been to discuss about what happens to individual writers in networks and to think about what ANT can - and can't -do for understanding how it is that we are able to write, but also what it means to write and what it means to be

an author. As a description of how tools, texts and human authors, ANT provides us with an opportunity to more fully explain agency for writers even as it presents challenges. Scot Barnett and Casey Boyle argue that "turning our attention back to things may constitute a *post*-human turn, but it need not be an antihuman one" (6), and my hope is that not only is it not antihuman, but that thinking about ANT is a way to think about both the way that our texts are assembled and what our particular role as human authors looks like.

I ultimately argue that citations give us a way to trace the network and the choices that we make as authors – that is, citationality is authorship. It is in our ability to trace the conscious and unconscious judgements we make as we write that gives us our ethical agency as writers, which in turn has consequences for the ways in which we view authorial intention, plagiarism, individual voice, and rhetoric. In the first chapter, I discussed how ANT is part of a larger material turn in composition and rhetoric, but one that is particularly useful for rhetoric as it focuses on relational forms of agency, and suggested that ethical authorship in a network is a matter of embracing our role s textual curators. As discussed in chapter 2, ANT is not compatible with much of traditional ethical thought (although Scot Barnett has convincingly argued recently in the book quoted above that traditional rhetorical thought is more compatible with a world of things than we may have previously thought). But ANT is compatible with views of ethics as capacity, and can be reconciled with our ethical obligations to the other if we conceive of those obligations as functioning with radical alterity in the network and less about intention. Further, a description of individual self and agency as assembled by the network is more closely reflective of the ways that we experience agency. Chapter 3

examined the ways that new media composing might make connections in the network more visible, and argued that the ways that we think about authorship limit us from understanding the interactive, curational work of authorship, considering how users in DesignLab experienced intention and agency. Finally, in chapter 4, based on my interviews, I argue that a sense of individual, authentic voice is important for authors in a network, and that by thinking about how individuals emerge as mediators in a network, ANT can help us to recuperate a viable conception of voice.

One continuing problem for thinking about ANT and writing, one that my project does not address and in fact can be taken as reinforcing, is that to look at the roles of individual writers is to see them as apart from their writing. As Sidney Dobrin writes,

> attempts to embrace a postmodern concept of a fluctuating subject have been difficult for composition studies simply because no matter the openness to a postmodern thinking about subjectivity, composition studies manages to reduce the postmodern shift of subject to a codifiable, recognizable subject that can be identified as somehow operating out of writing – still a subject (65).

My view of authorship as curatorial via Kennedy still emphasizes our ability to play a role outside of our texts, to some degree. I would defend this by saying that part of our ability to respond and be responsible necessitates a self, even if that self is emergent and enacted, and that human authors emerge from their networks as self-aware creatures, even if we can never separate from those networks. It is in this space where we see ethical capacity when we become aware of our connections, via Davis, in this interruption of the self.

This project is also based heavily on writers' self-reflection. I am concerned with DesignLab users' sense of intention as described by Cooper as well as Latour, as emerging from the action rather than prior to it. In doing so, it may reinforce the importance of the human actor, though my hope it reinforces the human actor as an ethical author only made possible by networks. To see writing as a part from the self and to see writing as something that we reflect on are important pedagogical practices for composition. The recent collection *Naming What We Know: Threshold Concepts of Writing Studies* emphasizes metacognition and an understanding of how writing works as just as important if not more important for teaching writing than practice, particularly in terms of transfer.

Such an approach has been recently critiqued by Casey Boyle: "If writing and writers are codependent with things and all sorts of others, then metacognition and reflective practice (both entrenched in humanist notions of a literate self) have the potential to become bad habits, since each reflective exercise persuades a writer to separate herself from all those things with which she is codependent" (533), and that "As we are embodied and embedded as an ecological body, a practice absent moral imperatives is itself necessary because we cannot avail ourselves of critical distance to impose such ideals" (548). While I agree with Boyle to an extent, as I have argued here for thinking about agency outside of intent and outside of consciousness, I'd like to suggest that reflection is a part of ANT in providing accounts for our actions, and that a reflective practice, like any practice, has the ability to make us feel both more and less separate from our networks. An ANT approach might ask us to keep asking questions, to understand how and where separations and connections occur in the writer's experience.

What then, does ANT authorship mean for the classroom? To return to Paul Lynch's point from chapter 1, ANT changes the project of rhetoric from critique to description. Moving our discussions about authorship beyond the author as an autonomous creator to a networked textual curator, can help us consider the ways in which authorial interactivity with context, media, and material is less about appropriation and more about interactivity. As I suggested in chapter 3, we might create criteria for evaluation that focuses on students' interactions with texts explicitly. Perhaps instead of page length or word count, we might ask students to demonstrate a minimum number of traceable ethical choices per paper. To think about ANT as a teaching practice for writing is to think about all of the activities and labor that go into writing, such as reading, thinking, cutting and pasting, and breathing – connecting and responding, and feeling like we do things in the world.

To consider what ANT means for individual writers is to consider how writers embody ANT in their lived practices. John Law and Vicky Singleton write, "Perhaps, then, ANT is best understood as a *sensibility*, a set of empirical interferences in the world, a worldly practice or craft" (486). While network theories ask us to examine how we dwell in larger ecologies of actors, individuals, as delineated and emergent from their practices, enact an ANT sensibility that both describes and intervenes in our networks. Whether ANT is thought of as a theory, a method, or a pedagogical stance, this sensibility can be seen as an attunement to the other nodes that populate our networks as well acknowledging that this attunement is a way of intervening in the world, through the ways we choose to pay attention to particular connections, the relationality around us.

Writers in DesignLab visibly enact this sensibility through citation, that is, the interactions they have with their sources, materials, and objects in their networks, as well the awareness of their contexts. In order to create a digital media project, writers must engage with the materiality of their networks in both an immediate and a distant sense, whether it is equipment, such as the the keyboards their fingers touch, manufactured far across the world, the applications, such as Comic Life, that have been selected by administrators for purchase and/or for teaching, or the assignment put forth by the instructor which asks them to engage with particular community networks. Digital or new media projects involving a networked computer do not necessarily involve more complex networks, but they do make it more obvious that we compose with and are being composed by actors. Because of the heightened sense of interaction with these materials with an increased number of nodes and connections to those nodes, it is much more difficult for new media composers to imagine themselves as sole authors, or to imagine authorship as purely human. As I have previously argued, it isn't that networks of non-human actors are only found in digital composition, but instead that digital composition makes some non-human actors more visible. New media contexts like DesignLab create an environment where composers are attuned to this sensibility because the labor of writing in digital environments encourages an understanding of how our resources act with us and upon us in acts of authorship, bringing increased attention to non-human actors in the composing process. That isn't to say that what digital contexts render all or even most of the involved actors visible, but rather that digital environments present writers with a layer of visible traces that they are attuned with as they compose.

Within these multiple contexts, DesignLab users assemble texts by creating new connections, new assemblages of materials. An ANT sensibility asks authors to compose within a particular network context, with that context making composition possible, but an ANT sensibility also requires authors to make sense of their worlds through this attunement. For example, when Danielle created her Comic Life project to talk about "how we were only getting puzzle pieces of these teens," she brought forth colors, design elements, and individual voices made possible by these networks, but also through her ability to imagine an alternative assembly of these materials, to provide a richer description of her subjects. Being attuned to not only the affordances of the Comic Life program, but also by being attentive and by citing with regard to how her subjects used the affordances of their cell phones to choose particular options for their selfies is a way of rendering their choices more visible. Danielle did not make the assumption that one's choice of photofilter is unimportant. As Danielle was attuned to what was important to her subjects and attuned to how non-human technological elements played a role in both her and her subjects' compositions, Danielle enacted an ANT sensibility. Such a sensibility is a way of being open to connections, and a way of practicing an ethical capacity or response-ability.

ANT in the classroom is to emphasize description; we might attempt to replace the teaching of critique then with the teaching of ANT as a sensibility or an attunement to networks. Such a sensibility would ask students to both consider how they share their agency with the tools in their networks, and to be aware of how networks produce and limit empowerment in order to highlight particular network nodes. We can consider how thinking carefully about who and what we pay attention to, but also to think about what

might happen if we follow actors in a different context without a particular set of assumptions of what actions are important to follow, and looking more carefully at how we interact with distant and non-human actors. As writers, this care and this labor involved in writing is what makes us authors in a network.

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Questions for DL Users

Basic demographic data

Major (if undergrad) or program (if grad student, staff or faculty)
Ask about writing experiences prior to college and/or prior to using Design Lab
Ask about experiences with digital media, text and non-text

Working in Design Lab

Tell me a little about the project or projects you've done in DesignLab, or other multimedia projects.

What does it mean to be an author to you? Do you consider yourself to be an author? Why/why not?

What, in your opinion, is an author's relationship to the materials they use?

When you do a project in DesignLab, do you think of yourself as an author? Why? Why not? If not, how would you describe what you are doing when you create projects in DesignLab?

What kinds of things do you do when you do when you author a text or a project?

What can you do in DesignLab that you can't do with a text only project?

Please tell me about your process for a project using multimedia elements and/or written text, from start to finish.

Questions about a particular project:
(Why did you put the elements together this way? How did you make these choices?
What are you trying to communicate with these written and multimedia elements?
What was your intention?)

What happens between the planning stages and the finished project? What happens between these two stages?

How much control do you exert over the finished project? What other objects, sources, or ideas affect the control over the finished project?

Does the project change in unexpected ways? Why?

Citations

What are citations for? Why do we cite?

Aside from legal and academic ramifications, do you think citations are important? Why or why not?

How do you handle citations in Design Lab? Which materials and sources are cited? Which ones are not? How do you make decisions on what to cite?

What do you see as your connection with what you've created and the sources that you've used? What, if any, is your obligation to these sources? Why do you see it that way?

What is your relationship to the technology that you've used? Do you view the objects/technology in your project as an important part of your process? Tell me about it.

Do you think about citations more or less when you work with multimedia projects, as opposed to text only projects? Why?

Do you feel more like an author when you create multimedia projects or when you work with text only? Why?

How is your own experience of authorship different when you work in an multimedia project or with a text only project?

Is this (particular project) an experience of authorship?

When you're making something digital, what is your role?

Questions for DL Consultants

(Ask name, degree, background as teacher and background with design lab technology.)

As we go through these questions, please feel free to answer as a consultant or as a client if applicable.

1. Please tell me about what it is you do as a consultant in DesignLab.

2. Tell me a little about the multimedia projects you've worked on in DesignLab.

3. How do multimedia projects come together? Please walk me through the process for a project using multimedia elements and/or written text, from start to finish.

4. How does this compare to a text-only project? Can you compare the process of text only and of multimedia, from start to finish?

5. What can you do or express with multimedia that you can't do with a text-only project?

6. How would you define authorship?

7. Is being a video maker, a (web) designer, creator of a multimedia project authorship? Do you think of DL clients as authors? If not, how would you describe what clients are doing when they produce multimedia projects?

Citations and sources

8. What types of sources and materials go into multimedia projects?

9. How do you handle attributions or citations in DesignLab? What materials and sources are cited? Which ones are not? How do you make decisions on what to cite?

10. What are creative citations or remixes for? Why do we remix materials?

11. Aside from creative and critical significance, do you think remixes are important? Why or why not?

12. How does DesignLab encourage remixing? What common resources and tools are available? Which ones are not? How do you make decisions on what to cite?

13. What do you see as your connection with what you've created and the sources that you've used? What, if any, is your obligation to these sources? Why do you see it that way?

14. "What is your relationship to the technology that you've used (cameras, laptops, software, books, printers)? How are these objects/technology/media important to your process?

15. Do you think about where your sources come from more or less when you work with multimedia projects, as opposed to text only projects? Why?

Questions about a particular project:

16. Describe project(s) that you've created in DesignLab.

-Why did you put the elements together this way? How did you make these choices?

-What are you trying to communicate with these written and multimedia elements? What was your intention?

17. What happens between the planning stages and the finished project? What happens between these two stages?

18. How much control do you exert over the finished project? What other objects, sources, or ideas affect the control over the finished project?

19. Do projects ever change in unexpected ways? How and why?