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Pens, print, and pixels : gendered writing and the epistolary genre in transitional eras.

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PENS, PRINT, AND PIXELS: GENDERED WRITING AND THE EPISTOLARY
GENRE IN TRANSITIONAL ERAS

By

Keri Elizabeth Mathis
B.A., University of Georgia, 2010
M.A., University of Alabama, 2012

A Dissertation
Submitted to the Faculty of the
College of Arts and Sciences of the University of Louisville
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A Dissertation Approved on

April 17, 2018

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to the late Dr. Carolyn Handa,
a fearless feminist mentor who taught me how to shine
and how to make a difference.

“i stand
on the sacrifices
of a million women before me
thinking
what can i do
to make this mountain taller
so the women after me
can see farther...”
- rupi kaur, *the sun and her flowers*

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ABSTRACT

PENS, PRINT, AND PIXELS: GENDERED WRITING AND THE EPISTOLARY GENRE IN TRANSITIONAL ERAS

Keri Elizabeth Mathis

April 17, 2018

This dissertation proposes a retheorization of rhetorical genres, media, and modes, with a particular emphasis on how this interrelationship reinstatiates and/or subverts deeply entrenched power dynamics over time. Current scholarship often depicts genres and media in a one-to-one relationship that obscures the intricate ways rhetorical genres and media rely on one another to enable (or hinder) writers' participation in particular discourse communities. This project primarily focuses on *gendered* power and analyzes letters—a traditionally feminized genre—in three distinct time periods marked by media transition. Specifically, I explore ways women employ genre and media affordances together to assume positions of greater authority and examine how texts mediate who can exercise power.

The first chapter reviews scholarship on rhetorical genre theory, media studies, and multimodal composition and introduces a new theoretical model. The first case focuses on Renaissance women's manuscript letterwriting in the Bagot family collection (Chapter Two). The second case examines Samuel Richardson's gendered epistolary writing in his vernacular letters, printed manuals, and fiction (Chapter Three). Finally,

Chapter Four examines epistolary conventions of social media posts in Pantsuit Nation. Using these cases, I drew conclusions about how genres and media can continue to exclude *and/or* promote certain writers' voices in and over time—even when the genres and media *appear* more accessible and inclusive.

The project emphasizes how genres and media influence our lives and enable us to make space for ourselves in the world. Genres and media shape each other in recurrent, dynamic processes through their modal affordances and respond to the social and cultural exigencies of a particular moment. As a field committed to inclusivity and the study of power in language, we must retheorize the dynamic processes involved in writing platforms if we are to empower students and other writers and citizens with whom we work.

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INTRODUCTION

A series of letters from Lady Jane Skipwith addressed to her love interest Lewis Bagot, written in approximately 1610, professes that Jane is “ever...true” to her word and that she has “written these lines, [but she] can write nothing of that matter [Lewis] desire[s] to hear of” (Folger MS L.a.851). This letter, like those that follow, contains a mix of references to Jane’s commitment to Lewis and frustration that his father desires that Lewis marry another woman, her concerns with family and other personal business, and her annoyance with Lewis’s delayed messages to her. The series was written in Jane’s own neat, precise handwriting, and each letter was carefully sealed and folded into miniature packets, secured with her own personal seal and various colors of embroidery floss. She establishes intimacy with her reader in several ways: through the content, her individualized handwriting, and her methods for preparing the letter for delivery.

Over a century later, Lady Echlin wrote a letter to novelist and epistolographer Samuel Richardson, accompanied by 157 pages of her own version of his novel *Clarissa*. She writes, “The History of Clarissa, (according to the authors intention & Laudable design), is not a novel wrote merely for amusement & entertainment only; therefore, it ought to be perused with very serious attention: and if every Reader could properly receive, consider, & regard this lesson, it might help to reform the licentious, and mend the present age” (Lady Echlin’s alterations for the improvement of Richardson’s

Clarissa). Lady Echlin's letter and the prolific revisionary text in her own handwriting rely on multiple forms of meaning-making to assert her own authorial presence in *Clarissa's* revisions and to persuade Richardson to amend the novel.

Much later, in 2016, Karen Haycox shares her personal narrative with 3.6 million people with a single touch on her iPhone. Karen's narrative honors her late wife who lost her life to cancer and responds to the harmful rhetoric surrounding women and LGBTQIA communities after the 2016 presidential election. On the third anniversary of her marriage to Trudy, Karen writes, "On this day – my third wedding anniversary. This. This campaign, this election and these seemingly endless tirades of hatred and divisiveness. All of this has brought into sharpened focus for me, the journey of my past three years – of a lifetime, really. The cup of equality is a good cup. Once tasted, it is hard to resist. It is what is at stake here" (Haycox, 2016). Karen's post uses alphabetic text and a wedding photograph of her with Trudy to merge the political and the personal and reveal her raw, emotional reaction to what the new leadership means for her and a community of which she is a part.

Each woman referenced in the opening vignettes has a different story and exigency for writing. What each woman shares with the others, however, is rhetorical resourcefulness—of the genre, medium, and modal resources that help her instigate action on her behalf or on behalf of the communities she values. Specifically, each excerpt included here reveals a complex interrelationship among a rhetorical everyday genre (a letter or social media post), a medium that was most accessible and rhetorically effective at a particular moment of writing (manuscript or digital social media platform), and the modal affordances that the genre and medium carry (alphabetic text, material and

tactile modes, spatial modes, visual modes). My dissertation investigates the nuanced ways rhetorical activities and gendered power dynamics are dependent on such interrelationships among rhetorical genres, media, and modes. The dissertation is grounded in rhetorical genre and media studies and introduces a more robust framework through which to study three case studies centered around one genre—the letter—in moments of media transition, from manuscript to print to digital. Ultimately, this project concerns how texts mediate who can exercise power and introduces a theoretical model that can make such constructs of power more visible when applied to time-bound, culturally-specific historical moments. Furthermore, the project foregrounds instances of how ideologies and gendered power manifest in genres and media—at times becoming more deeply sedimented in genres and media, and at others opening up to allow writers more authority.

My dissertation rests on the following theoretical warrants to make these arguments about gendered power evolving across genres and media in and over time:

- Innovations in media are generally accompanied by the affordances of new modalities, including print, visual, and sound (Kress, 2005; Kress and Van Leeuwen, 2001; Graham and Whalen, 2008; Bolter and Grusin, 1999).
- These new modal affordances and transitions in media can change existing genres and/or promote new emerging genres (Miller and Shepherd, 2004; Yates and Orlikowski, 1992; Bauman, 1999; Herring, et al, 2005; Shepherd and Watters, 1998).
- Genres are essential in shaping power dynamics; consequently, new genres can offer opportunities to reinstantiate *or* subvert traditional hierarchies (Bakhtin, 1986; Bazerman, 2002; Schryer, 2002; Miller and Shepherd, 2004).
- In particular, (emerging) genres are political sites that can be actively exploited by people who are considered expert in their discourse communities and also those who are in some sense, “on the margins”: that is, those who write or speak from

non-authoritative or non-privileged positions that are often the result of demographic or cultural factors, such as race, class, or gender (Bhatia, 1997; Bawarshi and Reiff, 2010; Blair, Gajjala, Tulley, 2009; Bowen, 2009; Jack, 2009; Blair and Takayoshi, 1999). My dissertation primarily focuses on how women can use established and emerging genres to create new positions of authority.

In brief, new media are accompanied by a range of modal affordances—such as new visual, audio, and print affordances—that create opportunities for existing genres to evolve and for new genres to emerge. These affordances, when carefully combined, offer new or different ways for women and other marginalized writers to insert their voices, incite action, and potentially undermine cultural narratives that do not accurately represent their lived experiences. Using affordances (or, rhetorical resources) from old and new media, and from old and new genres, writers can direct how power dynamics shift (or not) over time.

In making these claims about old and new genres and media, I am not suggesting that emerging genres result solely from new media; in fact, I see genre emergence as a broader response to cultural needs within specific communities and contexts. In other words, the genre evolution resulting from media changes follows or responds to changing historical and cultural contexts—contexts that we neglect when we focus too narrowly on the “old” versus the “new.” If, for example, we embrace the now long-standing theory of genre within rhetoric and composition as being “defined by its situation and function in a social context” (Devitt, 2004, p. 698), we must also be attuned to ways that emerging genres promote or discourage access to users in new contexts (Miller, 1995; Devitt, 2004; Bawarshi and Reiff, 2010). This ability of genres and media to continuously re-instantiate the inclusive and exclusive structures shaping a writer’s life and position of authority serves as the primary exigency for my project.

Specifically, the project focuses on how genre/media/modes can offer *women* writers—who often are underrepresented and denied official participation in formal genres—means of creating authoritative positions for themselves. Yet, I also recognize moments where writers use rhetorical resources to participate in and reconstitute traditional power dynamics. In the first chapter, I offer a new way of conceptualizing the relationship among genres, media, and modes; this model, I argue, reveals some of the overlapping modal affordances in historical genres and media that have not been focused on in the field’s scholarship to date. I have selected the letter as the focal genre for this dissertation, primarily because of its feminized characteristics and its flexibility across many domains of activity (vernacular/everyday, commercial, business, etc).¹ In the remaining chapters, I analyze three historical case studies where writers use affordances of overlapping “old” and “new” genres and media to meet rhetorical goals—bound in a specific time and cultural context—to ensure that their voices are heard, shared, and valued in communities they value.

There has been significant work (see above) on genre and media evolution, particularly in the digital age, and on ways genres and media shape power dynamics—who can write, to whom, how, and for what purposes. However, there has been little or no attention given to the simultaneous evolution of media and genres as a historical phenomenon. In particular, we lack research that examines the results of technological innovation—and the genre changes resulting from these innovations—in specific

¹ More specifically, I have chosen the letter for the following reasons: 1) the letter’s primary function to establish relationships and communicative patterns between users; 2) the letter’s presumed ability to offer transparency into the author’s innermost self; 3) the genre’s co-dependence on multiple modes of meaning-making; 4) the genre’s feminized characteristics; 5) and most importantly, the letter’s potential to allow unauthorized or marginalized writers to participate in the genre through striking a balance between acceptance and resistance of generic conventions, ideological discourses, and play with genre and media affordances.

historical moments. As a consequence, we do not fully understand how genres and media change in response to discourse communities' needs or how these historical moments include changes in media/genre traditions that have excluded certain writers previously. Research of the type conducted for this project can thus help us see how transformations (of genre and power) resulting from new media are not unique to digital technologies but are instead historical phenomena inherent in the introduction of any new communicative technology. Furthermore, I understand multimodality to be a historical phenomenon across genres and media that has helped writers gain entrance into discourse communities from which they might otherwise be excluded.

In this dissertation, I argue that genres and media exist on continua, and some *modes* carry across spectra of genres and media. With this emphasis on a more complex interrelationship, I assert that a more robust lens through which to view these transitions can help us see more clearly how power dynamics get sedimented and/or subverted over time. As noted above, scholars in rhetoric and composition and outside of the field have already theorized genre, media, and modal relationships (Graham and Whalen, 2008; Miller and Shepherd, 2004 and 2009; Shepherd and Watters, 1998; Yates and Orlikowski, 1992); however, current scholarship often depicts genres and media in a one-to-one relationship that can obscure the remarkably subtle ways that writing structures can enable *or* hinder writers' entrance into conversations that should include their voices (Graham and Whalen, 2008; Lüders, Prøitz, and Rasmussen, 2010; Bhatia, 1993). Given this context, my dissertation has four primary contributions that I list here and explain in further detail below. This project adds to existing scholarly conversations in rhetoric and composition by:

- Demonstrating complex theoretical connections—rather than historical ones—that are driven by the field’s values of inclusivity and the study of the power of language. It does so by proposing a different theoretical model through which to examine how power gets deeply implicated in genres, media, and modes over time—both in larger systems of genres/media and in the smaller speech acts at work in each text (Bazerman, 1994);
- Examining common assumptions about the letter’s feminine characteristics and challenging binaries, such as public and private letters and permanent and impermanent media, to show how the letter has maintained relevance and adapted to cultural exigencies across various domains of activity (including Carolyn R. Miller’s [2017] vernacular, commercial, administered, and institutional genres).
- Challenging the dichotomous nature of media change through adopting a historical and theoretical argument about how media shifts can open up genres and media to new forms of agentic participation for writers not typically valued in these spaces.

To meet these goals, the dissertation includes detailed examples of overlapping modal affordances in genres and media in the English Renaissance, eighteenth century, and current digital age that *can* allow individuals more agency in new writing platforms.

Drawing conclusions from each case, the project ultimately complicates the established binaries between different media—manuscript/print, print/digital—that prevent us from fully seeing the meaning-making potential that occurs in these transitions.² Several researchers, for instance, often do not fully attend to material and modal affordances of media and simplify how various media and tools (like pens, paper, and the printing press) co-exist and get used simultaneously (Kress, 2005; Jewitt, 2009; Lauer, 2009; Spender, 1995). In the dissertation’s conclusion, I address such assumptions more specifically by arguing that significant material consequences can result from the generalizations we make about what a new technology can do that an old one can’t or

² In the dissertation, particularly in the chapter on manuscripts, I address how early letterwriting literature focused heavily on how the letter should recreate an oral conversation between the writer and his/her recipient.

assumptions about how genres, media, and modes interact with one another over time. For instance, these generalizations can cause us to overlook the intricate relationship between genre, medium, and mode that is important in our considerations of *who* is writing, *why*, and for *whom*—considerations that can ultimately reveal how individuals use various modes across genres and media to shape their lives and position themselves in relation to others who may have more privilege and power. We might similarly overlook how modal and media changes are largely influential in creating genre systems and networks, which also play a major role in how writers choose to represent themselves in genres and through specific means or modes. To adequately address these complexities and potentially open up new avenues for writing studies, particularly in genre studies and theories of media and multimodality, we must complicate the relationship between media—including manuscript, print, and digital media—and the genres and their networks that get taken up and distributed through them.

To investigate these larger issues of genres, media, and modes successfully, I selected the letter as the primary unit of analysis for the dissertation. Letterwriting has a long history of mimicking face-to-face communication and employing rhetorical strategies that make the writer present to her reader, which requires letterwriters to draw on multiple modes to create this presence (Bannet, 2005; Goldsmith, 1989; Perry, 1980). For instance, the writer must rely on many visual and material modes and on other genres participating in a larger epistolary system, such as letterwriting manuals and models. This complex interweaving of modes, afforded by genre systems and the media that distribute them, have great potential to offer letterwriters the means to negotiate power dynamics. For example, women, while they have often been denied participation or authority in

more official forms of letterwriting, have participated in the genre in these ways: 1) by mastering specific conventions, including the letter's rhetorical structure as established in instructive literature and 2) by taking advantage of the genre's flexibility and using a range of modes to position themselves and express their needs to their readers. These gendered letterwriting practices have also been taken up in emerging genres, like the epistolary novel, personal blogs, and social media, which have allowed women and other marginalized writers, whose voices were denied or ignored altogether in other genres, an entry point into conversations they value.

While many issues related to women's historical letterwriting have been taken up in scholarship (Armstrong, 1987; Daybell, 1999 and 2006; Goldsmith, 1989), I examine these issues within the contexts of specific historical moments as the letter transforms and draws on modes from multiple media and epistolary genres at once. By focusing on gendered letterwriting and the complex interactions among genres/media/modes, I have drawn conclusions about how women have been able to navigate and disrupt deeply entrenched power dynamics to create more agentive positions for themselves as necessary. When selecting the genre and the three case studies, I found my rationale similar to Carolyn R. Miller and Ashley R. Kelly's (2017) rationale for selecting cases to include in their collection: "Values are manifested in and reproduced by genres, even as they may enable or provoke genre transformation. The process of genre emergence thus has multiple shaping sources and multiple implications and is difficult to generalize. It is best explored case by case, example by example, in all its historical and situational particularity..." (p. vi). Thus, my dissertation includes three case studies that have helped me study such "situational particularity": letters from the Bagot family women in the

English Renaissance; eighteenth-century manuscript and printed letters, manuals, and novels by Samuel Richardson and his trusted female readers; and posts and reflections from the Pantsuit Nation community in online and in print.

Chapter One reviews scholarship on the interrelationship among genres, media, and modes and introduces the theoretical model that serves as the lens for the case studies. The chapter accomplishes three tasks, in particular: 1) it elucidates the concepts of *affordance*, *genre*, *medium*, and *mode*; 2) it argues for a more robust theoretical understanding of how rhetorical genres and media exist in relation to one another through the semiotic modes that they *share*; and 3) it previews how this theoretical framework can uncover many ways that gendered positions of power evolve in letters. This more dynamic theory of the interrelationship helps clarify how writers work with and against the push-and-pull of genre, media, and modal resources to either participate in traditional, accepted roles *or* break out of the embedded, recurrent power structures that inhibit their voices from being heard, shared, and valued. I pursue this argument empirically in the three case studies that follow.

In Chapter Two, I analyze Renaissance women's letterwriting to argue that a more dynamic interrelationship among genre, medium, and mode resists the limited and flattened theoretical approaches that often erase the agentive ways women use the genre's rhetorical conventions, the precise timing of delivery or response, and the tactile affordances of the paper and pen to negotiate tensions between and among discourses of power. Relying on archival research and qualitative coding methods, I examine approximately 100 letters from the Folger Shakespeare Library's Bagot Family Collection. I first synthesize genre conventions as presented in famous 16th-century

letterwriting manuals to contextualize the Bagot women's letters. I then analyze the letters' material components—such as the type of paper, watermarks, wax seals, ink, and embroidery thread—to show how material modes reinforce the women's rhetorical needs. In studying the letters' content, I use Bakhtin's theory of the dialogic to highlight how the women were pushed and pulled into certain positions of power through language. Finally, references to epistolarity in women's letters demonstrated how women exercised their meta-knowledge to meet their needs. This case study illustrates how the women used the genre's conventions, the kairotic moment of delivery/response, and the manuscript's tactile affordances to profitably negotiate tensions between discourses of power and (un)conventional uses of manuscript letterwriting.

Chapter Three serves as a hinge for the project and focuses on gendered writing as it was taken up by 18th-century author and printer Samuel Richardson: a writer of copious letters in manuscript form, author of an epistolary handbook and novel, and also a printer who experimented with manuscript modes in his printed works in ways that often privileged the authority of print and highlighted the gendered nature of manuscripts. The chapter also relies on archival research methods and textual rhetorical analysis; here, I examine manuscript letters between Richardson and his trusted female friends, Richardson's own printed letterwriting manual, and a selection of printed letters from his novel *Clarissa*. As in Chapter Two, I analyze each of Richardson's texts by looking at material features, the push-and-pull of the dialogic, and the meta-awareness of the epistolary genre as it was practiced during this time period. In the chapter's conclusion, I show how the corollary genres—manuscript letters, manuals, and epistolary novels—work together to both reinforce and subvert power dynamics between male and female

writers/readers and offer insights into how 18th-century emerging epistolary genres were productive, vulnerable spaces that offered potential for change.

The third case study examines epistolary conventions as they have evolved in the digital space of Facebook in the “secret” group Pantsuit Nation. Like the manuscript letter and the printed epistolary novel, blogs and social media spaces have been gendered feminine and privilege many of the same conventions: reverse chronological order, refusal of narrative closure, flexibility, the exigence of relationship-building, and multiple modes of meaning-making. I selected Pantsuit Nation because of its relevant political and personal narratives and its migration into multiple genre forms, including other social media, a printed book, and a podcast. I conducted interviews and solicited written responses from approximately twenty-one of the book’s contributors and was able to discern how the oscillation among genres, media, and even physical spaces resulted in the writers building relationships with other participants in social media and face-to-face settings and assuming authoritative, powerful positions in settings in which they otherwise might not have felt welcomed or valued.

In the conclusion, I reintroduce the theoretical model discussed in Chapter One to explain how the model enabled a more robust, detailed analysis of how power, values, and ideologies become manifested in genres and media over time. The conclusion reiterates how the cases examined in the dissertation illustrate how genres and media influence our lives and enable us to make space for ourselves in the world. Furthermore, it emphasizes that genres and media shape each other in recurrent, dynamic processes through their modal affordances and respond to the social and cultural exigencies of a particular moment. The social and material circumstances can both facilitate and prohibit

vulnerable writers' participation in such spaces. As a field committed to inclusivity and the study of power in language, we must be attuned to the often invisible, dynamic processes involved in writing platforms if we are to empower students and other writers and citizens with whom we work.

CHAPTER ONE

MAKING GENDERED POWER VISIBLE: RETHEORIZING RELATIONSHIPS AMONG GENRES, MEDIA, AND MODES IN LETTERS

Taking a deep dive into three historical moments of women's letterwriting through the lens of rhetorical genre, media, and modality requires a thorough overview of the definitions of these terms and the premises that have been foundational to rhetoric and composition. To date, scholars have identified rhetorical genres, media, and modalities as shaping and being shaped by users and cultural contexts—an argument that I adopt and expand on in this chapter. My approach is first to review relevant literature around concepts of *affordance*, *genre*, *medium*, and *mode* (Miller, 1984; Devitt, 2004; Bawarshi and Reiff, 2010; Frow, 2005; New London Group, 2000; Kress and Van Leeuwen, 2001; Wysocki, 2005; Jewitt, 2009). The theoretical discussions surrounding these terms and ways they are often taken up *together* inform the theoretical framework for the dissertation and are this chapter's focus. I then conclude the chapter by offering my own visual model which depicts the relationships between and among these concepts. The literature surveyed here has allowed me to see particular ways women represented in the following cases and others writing from the margins have utilized rhetorical resources to participate in meaningful conversations and take necessary action. Taking the reciprocal nature of genres/media/modes and cultural contexts as a given, I use this chapter to highlight the capability of genres, media, and modes to reproduce, reinforce, or

change social positions of power in each textual performance. These social positions can include identity markers, such as race, gender, and/or class, but as I explained in the Introduction, I will focus mainly on *gendered* power in epistolary genres.

In short, this chapter accomplishes three tasks: 1) it elucidates the primary concepts that are foundational to the dissertation's argument, including *affordance*, *genre*, *medium*, and *mode*; 2) it argues that the relationships between and among rhetorical genres, media, and modes need to be explored further; and 3) it introduces a model that reflects ways that gendered positions of power are reproduced and modified in and over time through genres, media, and their modal connections. Seeing such connections is crucial to understanding how writers from the margins either *participate in* or *speak back to* power dynamics through their writing practices.

Put another way, I am working from the premises that genre, media, *and* their shared modes—an argument I explain later in the chapter—provide resources for writers either to work within or resist positions of power that become sedimented in genres and media over time. If we accept that genres and media share modal affordances that can shape domains of activity, including shaping writer's positions toward language and to their prospective readers, then we can see how a more robust understanding of the relationships among genres, media, and their shared modal affordances can provide insight into how writers both work within and resist the push-and-pull of these resources—to either participate in traditional, accepted roles *or* break out of the embedded, recurrent power structures that inhibit their voices from being heard, shared, and valued. I argue that it is only by approaching writing genres and media from a more holistic theoretical perspective that we can gain a deeper understanding of how

marginalized writers find ways to participate and move their readers to action. If we only look at a genre *or* a medium in isolation and neglect their points of interaction, we may miss how writers from the margins navigate and take control of their texts.

To support my argument, I rely on scholarship from rhetorical genre studies and research from communication, information science, and rhetoric and composition focusing on gender and power in new media. In rhetorical genre studies in particular, scholars suggest that values, ideologies, and power dynamics become sedimented through language and genre performance in ways that are not always obvious (Miller and Shepherd, 2009; Frow, 2005; Schryer, 2002; Miller, 1995; Bhatia, 1997).³ The often-invisible sedimentation of power relations can be particularly problematic for marginalized writers, as each genre performance can deepen the writer's perceived lack of authority and cause the unequal positions of the writer and reader to become more internalized and embodied over time. While such consequences are serious and should be made more visible, I want to clarify that I do not believe that genres only provide limitations or constraints, that they are stagnant or stable, or that, to borrow from Vijay Bhatia (1997), genres "provide a blueprint for replication" (p. 370). Instead, I adopt the argument that genres provide *resources* to *secure* and *condition* reproductions while also providing *opportunities* for genre transformation, and thus social change. In the opening of *Emerging Genres in New Media* (2017), Carolyn R. Miller describes this dual function of genres when she writes, "Values are manifested in and reproduced by genres, even as they may enable or provoke genre transformation" (p. vi). Yet I still recognize that

³ Carolyn R. Miller and Dawn Shepherd offer a useful explanation of sedimentation in their 2009 article "Questions for genre theory from the blogosphere." They explain that typifications, a focal term in Miller's 1984 definition of *genre*, "...are sedimented and reified in language, socially reinforced, and put to use as interpretive and pragmatic resources" (p. 285). Such typifications become further sedimented as they are "produced and reproduced" over time.

structures of power can evolve *with* the genres. Relatedly, Carolyn R. Miller (1995) and Catherine Schryer (2002) both discuss the power of genres to *structure*. Specifically, Miller (1995) proposes “that we see genre as a specific, and important, constituent of society, a major aspect of its communicated structure, one of the structures of power that institutions wield” (p. 71). Schryer (2002) also highlights structure through her repetition of the term: “...[g]enres are structured structures that structure” (p. 95). The structures that genres shape and are shaped by can cause users to become habituated to the genres and overlook how ideologies, values, and power become sedimented in them with each textual performance. In the case of the letter, I rely on these arguments to examine how positions of power in this historically feminine genre become “settled” in the genre and how this settling can either push writers to the margins or pull these writers closer to the center of genre activity where their voices are heard and valued more widely.

Similar to genres, media provide resources for shaping users’ relations to language and power and can both provide and inhibit opportunities for changing problematic, internalized structures of power. Research has supported, for instance, that gendered spoken conversational patterns appear in computer-mediated communication, even though the digital medium of a social media platform, or the more outdated chatroom, can make communication more accessible and allow women to enter conversations in ways they might not feel comfortable doing in a face-to-face setting (Herring, 1992, 1993, 1994, 2003, 2004; Selfe and Meyer, 1991; Sullivan, 1997; Selfe and DeVoss, 2002).⁴ Susan C. Herring (2003) comments specifically on the fallacious

⁴ Much of the scholarship on gender in new media is dated, as it was most popular in the mid-to-late 1990s and early 2000s; however, a recent call for proposals was released in March of 2017 for a special issue on technoFEMINISM for *Computers and Composition Online* and *Computers and Composition*, asking submitters to respond to the following questions: “In the 20 years since this work emerged in computers

argument that the accessibility of online platforms ensures gender equality; she concludes that claiming “the Internet has lived up to its potential to create gender equality would be analogous to claiming that women and men are equal off-line because both use telephones, moderate meetings, write books, or start their own small businesses...” (p. 218). Examining another form of inequality in media, Cynthia Selfe and Dànielle DeVoss (2002) analyze the exclusion of women in technological development, explaining:

...women, historically, have acquired the *how* needed to perform certain tasks but have been excluded from the *why* and the *whether* (Cockburn 1988)—as well as, we would add, the *how* of machines and technologies themselves. The dangers of training and use practices that exclude certain groups, like women, or keep them from asking and considering such questions are twofold: members of these groups often develop only limited know-how, and those who are not similarly hindered often gain an undue measure of power. (p. 34)

Similarly, in their study of teen chat rooms, Kapidzic and Herring (2011) conclude that while technology and feminism have progressed over the past two decades, “traditional gender patterns in communication style and self-presentation persist in CMC, at least in heterosexual teen chat sites” (p. 41). Obviously, this scholarship focuses primarily on how digital media and its *semblance* of equal access reinforce power relations that continue to exclude women; however, this chapter and the subsequent chapters take a broader view of media by also considering how *older* media, including manuscript and print, similarly show how women operate within or work against the reproduction of gendered power dynamics in manuscript, print, *and* digital letters.

Accepting the aforementioned arguments about the relationships among genres, media, and power, I argue that we must continue to gain insight into the potentials *and*

and composition, have we kept the promises of those early works? How have we extended its values and visions? What technofeminist work remains to be done? How have changes in digital environments (e.g., the emergence of social media tools) shifted the context of technofeminist work?” (<http://www.digitalwriting.org/technofem/>). The recent call indicates a need to reinvigorate this conversation and pay attention to ways gendered writing in online spaces has changed (or not) and what work remains to be done in these rapidly evolving spaces.

pitfalls of genres, media, and their shared modalities to understand more deeply how certain genre conventions or affordances of a medium push and pull at a writer and, as a result, ultimately can inhibit her full control over a text. To do so, in what follows, I identify and analyze specific definitions and theories of *affordances*, *genres*, *media*, and *modes* that inform the argument carried throughout this project. First, I focus on the term *affordance*, which is widely used in scholarship in genre and media studies. Second, I discuss rhetorical *genres as social action*—the definitions of genre that are most relevant to this project, the dimensions of genre, and the ways that authority and power become integral to the makeup of everyday genres like the letter. The third section then focuses on the relationship between *medium* and *mode* since most of the scholarship (especially in digital scholarship in rhetoric and composition) addresses these two terms together. In section four, I examine the complex relations among genre, media and modes which inform the theoretical framework for the case studies that follow this chapter. Here I also offer a theoretical model—specifically tailored to the epistolary genres I study—that visualizes the argument this dissertation makes: that there exists multiple complex relationships between antecedent and emergent genres; older and newer media; and the visual, material, and aural modes that genres and media share and that serve as sites of interaction and intervention between them. Finally, I conclude by explaining how this model informed my analyses of gendered letterwriting in the chapters that follow.

1. Affordances: What are they, and what do they afford?

One way we might explore how power relations are shaped and performed in texts is through a closer examination of genre and media *affordances* that both offer and restrict semiotic resources. In discussing the relationship between rhetoric and

technology, Carolyn R. Miller (2010) discusses the “push and pull” of both:

“Technology, like rhetoric, can both push and pull at us...Technology pushes or manipulates us by requiring us to do certain things and in certain ways...” (p. ix). She then identifies the “ways that technology pushes and pulls at us [that] are called ‘affordances,’” borrowing from James Gibson’s (1979) original use of the term which emphasizes that affordances are not just what a technology (or environment) *offers*, but the ways they can also make some types of (inter)action impossible or difficult.

According to Miller (2010), affordances can “lea[d] us to engage in or to attempt certain kinds of rhetorical actions rather than others. Affordances both enable and constrain, they both pull on us and push at us” (p. x). Although Miller primarily uses *rhetoric* and *technology* in her discussion, I posit that this way of studying both rhetoric and technology requires that we ask *how* and *to what extent* genres, media, and modes all participate in this tug-of-war. If, as I argue, media and genres both have and share modal affordances, then it seems that this trio does have a significant role in how writers participate in the power structures inherent to their texts.

The simultaneous pushing and pulling caused by modal affordances is what I want to offer as one way that writers negotiate power dynamics through written alphabetic text and other visual, aural, and material modes in epistolary genres. In its manuscript form (the medium), for instance, the letter (the genre) includes several modes: the visual modes of handwriting, use of space, inkblots, watermarks, and other extraneous markings, to name a few.⁵ The manuscript letter also relies on the sense of touch—a form

⁵ I define these terms in detail in the chapter’s following sections, but for the purposes of this section’s discussion, I have summarized the definitions here: 1) *Genre*—genres are typified structures that respond to social exigencies; they have the power to shape activity, experiences, lives, and power dynamics in texts participating in the genre. 2) *Medium*—a medium is more than a tool or technology that facilitates delivery

of communication important to creating the letterwriter's presence. The letter is a genre that was meant to move from the writer's hands to the hands of the intended reader, so the physical, material characteristics of the paper, the seal, embroidery floss, watermarks, etc. cannot be ignored. As letterwriting gets appropriated later in the epistolary novel and much later in the digital age, these modes change because of the new medium's affordances, including the speed with which the letter (or similar form) can be transmitted to readers and other material resources that influence the way letters were written and moved among social circles. And with every technological shift, I argue, the tensions of these affordances allow the writer to show us what she privileges about her multifaceted and intersecting roles and, too, what she privileges about her relationship to her prospective reader. Thus, in the midst of the push-and-pull, letterwriters are caught in a space between innovation/creativity and tradition (Miller, 2010, p. x). While in this space, writers must make choices: choices about how much to adhere to or deviate from the conventions of a particular medium and/or genre. Within moments of technological transition in particular, when new technologies and thus new media and genres are emerging, more opportunities for play arise. The choices afforded in these spaces are choices that show the extent to which a writer is willing to assume or reject prescribed social roles. As Miller (2010) states, "...an art of rhetoric can be a worthy complement to the powerful arts of technology, as both arts *push and pull us into our own future*" –or, our own future identities that get created in these places of complicated negotiation (emphasis added, p. xi).

of a message; a medium is a cultural product that, like genres, can shape or direct the writer's message and can condition the ways in which power is enacted, reproduced, and possibly changed over time. 3) *Mode*—a mode is any means of representation; modes are shared by genres and media and often create continuity between old and new genres and media.

Affordances of technology and genre have several explicit connections to gender, as well, as Susan Wells (2010) reminds us in her analysis of power structure reports written by women in the 60s and 70s. In this analysis, Wells argues that “[a]ffordance might therefore be a link between gender and genre” (p. 152). In building up to this claim, Wells writes, “Affordance is a mobilizing concept that orients us to action and interpretation as they play out in the materials of production...the affordances of technology and genre serve as reflexive representations of each other to readers and writers” (pp. 151-152). Although Wells includes “materials of production” in this explanation, the more important take-away for my argument is the possibility for *affordance* to serve as the link between the medium, the genre, and the writer/user’s gendered position(s) that emerge in the text. Through investigating the relationship among genres, media, and modes in this chapter and throughout the subsequent case studies, I offer some further insight into the connection between letterwriters’ gendered positions and their navigation of tacit power structures underlying genres, media, and modes in specific historical moments.

This understanding of gendered genres and the push-and-pull of technologies aligns closely with Mikhail Bakhtin’s theories of language and the centripetal and centrifugal forces that cause language to be stratified. In *Discourse in the Novel*, Bakhtin (1981) explains the tensions between unitary language and the individual using this language; he writes, “unitary language constitutes the theoretical expression of the centripetal forces of language” (p. 270). He then identifies “unitary language” as the perceived “correct language,” but one that is operating in the midst of the centralizing and decentralizing forces of heteroglossia (p. 271). Here, Bakhtin recognizes the

simultaneous stability and flexibility of a language as it gets used in various genres, and this tension can prove both productive and restrictive in writing, just as Miller (2010) noted with the constant push-and-pull of rhetoric and technology. Furthermore, the tension, as I see it, is often closely tied to the writer's social position (and thus her gender), and the factors surrounding that social position can deepen the centrifugal forces that pull the writer away from the unitary language of some genres, including letters. Bakhtin explains, "every utterance participates in the 'unitary language (in its centripetal forces and tendencies) and at the same time partakes of social and historical heteroglossia (the centrifugal, stratifying forces)" (p. 272). I rely on this theory and other related arguments from Bakhtin's discussion of discourse and genre in my next chapters, but for now, it is important to consider how the constant movement across domains of genre and media opens possibility, or provides affordances, for users to operate within—and, at times, manipulate—inherent structures of power through language and different semiotic modes.

Using this understanding of the push-and-pull caused by affordances, in the next sections, I define *genre*, *medium*, and *mode*, and later, I explain the interactions occurring among them. Furthermore, in the remaining sections, I use *affordance* (as Miller defines it) to identify the possibilities and the constraints involved in writing and creating texts in genres and media that contribute to, reproduce, or reinvent positions of power in letterwriting.

2. Genres as Social Action

When I use *genre* in this dissertation, I am borrowing Carolyn R. Miller's widely-used definition from "Genre as Social Action" (1984) in which she argues that genres are

“typified rhetorical actions based in recurrent situations...” (p. 159). In Miller’s definition, actions within situations that continue to occur over time can become *types* (and are thus *genres*), but not concrete, stable types; rather, they are types that respond to social exigencies. Miller goes into some depth about *exigence*, as well: “Exigence is a form of social knowledge—a mutual construing of objects, events, interests, and purposes that not only links them but also makes them what they are: an objectified social need” (p. 158). If we accept *exigence* as “an objectified social need,” we can better see how genres are, as Miller insightfully argues, *social action* instead of neat containers or categories that contain stable types of texts.

Building on Miller’s genre theory, Charles Bazerman (2010) comments in his editor’s preface to Bawarshi and Reiff’s *Genre: A History, Theory, and Pedagogy* that genres are “complex regularities of communicative life and the individuality of each situated utterance” (p. xii) and calls genre a “central nexus of human sense-making, where typification meets utterance in pursuit of human action” (p. xi). Bazerman’s insights highlight the tension between regularity/consistency and individuality/idiosyncratic uses of a given genre within its social context. Like Miller and Bazerman, Amy Devitt (2004) emphasizes the dynamic and social nature of *genre*, a definition that also informs this project’s analyses. Devitt writes, “...genres are dynamic constructs evolving from use and context, helping to maintain the stability of a social group while flexibly enabling individuals to adapt to its changing circumstances” (p. 122). Devitt’s addition similarly emphasizes the tension between a genre’s stability and flexibility. For the latter, Devitt goes further to explain the reciprocal nature of genre and contexts: “generic change, like all change, is effected by individuals making decisions

and acting within those changing contexts” (p. 110). Here, Devitt asserts that individuals act and make decisions within changing contexts; I would add that individuals’ decisions not only change the *genres*, but also change the *contexts* in which they are used.

To better understand the history of *genre*, Bawarshi and Reiff (2010) offer an etymology of the term that directly corresponds to the above theories from Miller, Bazerman, and Devitt and identifies the many ways genres function. They explain that *genre* could come from two different, but related Latin roots—*genus* for “kind” or “class of things” and/or *gener*, meaning “to generate” (p. 4). They conclude that genres can *organize* life and *generate* action(s) and response(s). In other words, *genre* does not simply mean “kind” or “class,” both of which might suggest genres are neat containers of stable types of writing; instead, we can look to the other Latin root, a verb, that more fully represents *genre*’s generative potential. This scholarship reminds us to account for the social activity that surrounds and shapes the activity and the people who communicate with certain genres. And most important, for this dissertation, is the understanding that genres are largely responsible for *facilitating and conditioning activity, lives, experiences, and positions of power*.

In short, in this project, I align with the genre theorists who adopt the understanding of genres as socially-constructed and as typified responses to social exigencies. I, like many of these scholars, see genres’ potential to shape meaning-making and writers’ and readers’ lives. Amy Devitt (2004) summarizes this potential power of *genre* in this excerpt:

Genres pervade lives. People use them, consciously and unconsciously, creatively and formulaically, for social functions and individual purposes, with critical awareness and blind immersion, in the past and yet today. They shape our experiences, and our experiences shape them. As we study and teach these

ways of acting symbolically with others, we may be approaching an understanding not just of genres but of the **messy, complex ways that human beings get along in their worlds**. (emphasis mine, p. 219)

Devitt's analysis strongly influences my understanding of genre and the complex ways writers engage with genres and create their lives and their own social positions in them. If we accept this explanation, we can better see how genres shape and are shaped by the people who use them.

Sometimes, this meaning-making occurs because of a conscious effort to use a specific genre convention for rhetorical purposes; yet, as Devitt notes, this is not always the case. Often, we are called into certain authorial positions and utilize conventions without always being aware. Many of our own writing students, for example, may not be consciously aware they are borrowing from a long tradition of letterwriting practices and a repertoire of genre conventions and affordances every time they compose an email, using spacing and formatting practices that have continuously evolved as social contexts and various discourse communities have changed. In other words, writers are often called into certain authorial positions and are thus operating within traditions that have values, ideologies, and power underlying them. Related to this topic, Carolyn R. Miller (2010) uses the term "addressivity," similarly to Bakhtin's use of the term, to explain how "the rules and resources of a genre provide reproducible speaker and addressee roles, social typifications of recurrent social needs or exigences, topical structures (or 'moves' and 'steps'), and ways of indexing an event to material conditions, turning them into constraints or resources" (p. 71). Such rules and resources, in other words, call writers (and readers) into positions of power that are "reproducible"—positions that are often unequal.

It is this point about power in genres that I see closely intersecting with Bakhtin's (1981) theorization of authoritative and internally-persuasive discourse. Bakhtin explains authoritative discourse as a privileged authoritative language that does not allow for flexibility or play. Examples of authoritative discourse include recitations of a religious prayer or political oaths that would prohibit the speaker from paraphrasing or adjusting the text according to his or her own understanding of its meaning. Were such alterations to be made, rhetors would be engaging in what Bakhtin calls internally-persuasive discourse—that is discourse which permits play with the language—thus giving the speaker more freedom from the authoritative word and value system. Bakhtin is careful to explain, however, that a single term can be both authoritative and internally-persuasive, but “such unity is rarely a given” (p. 342). The significance of ideological discourse, then, lies in recognizing which genres and contexts mostly permit authoritative discourse and which ones permit more freedom and movement away from the authoritative word.

Because of genres' ability to structure writers and readers' relationships to one another, it is important to also note how genres change over time and thus can change how writers and readers get called into positions of authority. As noted, genres can change quickly and in response to specific social exigencies; and, for this reason, it can be difficult to analyze the intricacies of how rhetorical genres facilitate and condition writers' meaning-making and action in moments of change. As the previous summary of scholarship indicates, navigating a genre within any given moment is dependent on the social need and thus begs the question of a genre's stability. Catherine Schryer (1993) comments that a genre can be “stabilized-for-now,” indicating that the stability is fleeting and contingent on shifting societal needs. This tension between stability and flexibility

can be difficult to navigate at times and can, especially if a writer is unfamiliar with a genre's conventions, place her in a vulnerable position. It is this vulnerability which I am particularly invested in analyzing in the subsequent letterwriting cases. These cases, I will argue, show us how writers, at times, take risks to resist power dynamics inherent to genres in specific cultural contexts.

To aid my analysis of letter genre and its changes, I found John Frow's (2005) framework of genre dimensions useful in its breakdown of a genre's components.⁶ Frow's structural dimensions of genre include the following: formal features (including visual components), thematic structure ("which draws upon a set of highly conventional topics or *topoi*" [p. 9]), a situation of address (or speaking position), the structure of implication (or, an implied shared knowledge), the rhetorical function, and the physical setting which, Frow argues, "takes on the force of a regulative frame...[that] differentiates the genre of this text from other possible genres..." (pp. 9-10). Frow's list offers a robust framework through which to analyze rhetorical genres not just by their formal features, but also by the rhetorical function within a specific context or frame that also considers the existing shared knowledge of the audience and the speaker's positionality. Most importantly, Frow adds that knowledge of genres and the information they generate are "bound up with the exercise of power, where power is understood as being exercised in discourse, as well as elsewhere, but is never simply external to discourse" (p. 2). As power gets reinforced in particular discourse communities, the boundaries between the insiders and the outsiders continue to deepen, making genre participation for those writing from the margins all the more difficult.

⁶ To clarify, rhetorical genres are not simply discrete parts or dimensions, but Frow's framework foregrounds multiple complex workings of genres.

In the chapters that follow, when analyzing the individual letters and the writers' participation in epistolary genres, I draw on each of the previously discussed genre theories, as these frameworks allow for a holistic genre analysis that includes textual features, social context, and relationships between and among utterances and language users. As this section makes clear, rhetorical genres are influenced by social exigencies and have the power to direct a writer's positionality within a discourse community—an important element of genre that this dissertation addresses. This fluid relationship between genres and the social environment in which they are used is key in the letter analyses that follow, as I want to show how letterwriters and contemporary social media users rely on genres to shape their lives and their relationships to one another.

3. The Significance of Media and Modes

Like genres, media have affordances that can reproduce and/or change positions of power in texts. With the emergence of digital technologies, “new” media and their modalities have become increasingly important to scholars in our field wanting to better understand how such technologies affect students' writing and how digital composing requires similar, yet distinct, processes for creating a rhetorically effective argument that draws on means of persuasion that may not be available to writers in a print medium. In other words, it is understood that innovations in media are generally accompanied by the affordances of new modalities (Kress, 2005; Kress and Van Leeuwen, 2001; Graham and Whalen, 2008; Bolter and Grusin, 1999). “New” media, for instance, have a range of modal affordances—such as new visual, audio, and print affordances—that create opportunities for different types of texts, writing processes, and existing and emerging genres. Such affordances can allow new or different ways of meaning-making in genres,

as this range of affordances includes semiotic resources writers can use to position themselves to their reader(s) and to represent themselves in diverse ways.

To understand better how writers make use of media's affordances, I first want to define *modality* and explain its relationship to *medium*. In this section, I am going to discuss media *and* modes together because most of the theoretical work done so far in communication and in rhetoric and composition has focused on both terms and the relationship between them. For the purposes of this project, I am using Kress and Van Leeuwen's (2001) understanding of medium and mode to theorize the connection between genres, media, and modes in letters. In *Multimodal Discourse*, the authors define modes as "semiotic resources which allow the simultaneous realisation of discourses and types of (inter)action" (p. 21). Kress (2005) then uses a similar definition, writing that modes are "the culturally and socially produced resources for representation" (p. 6). Kress also differentiates between mode and medium, explaining medium as "the term for the culturally produced means for distribution of these representations-as-meanings, that is, as messages" (pp. 6-7). For Kress, in other words, the mode is the means of representation, and the medium is the means for dissemination. Yet another explanation of medium that has been useful in this project is Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin's (1999) definition: "The formal, social, and material network of practices that generates a logic by which additional instances are repeated or remediated, such as photography, film, or television" (p. 273). For my purposes, I appreciate Bolter and Grusin's holistic understanding of the "formal, social, and material network" that comprises a medium and how these networks provide opportunities for repeatability. While I build on these definitions in what follows, these definitions are appealing for two reasons: 1) they

highlight that modes and media are shaped by social and cultural contexts rather than merely technical resources for representation and 2) the definitions help us draw clearer connections and distinctions between modes and media over time, as I explain in further detail below.

Often, the terms *mode* and *medium* are used together and interchangeably. Claire Lauer (2009) recognizes this common conflation of terms and draws on Kress and Van Leeuwen's (2001) definitions of medium and mode to suggest that the primary difference between the two can be understood in terms of "design/process (modes) and production/distribution (media)" (p. 36). This distinction is certainly helpful, and several scholars, including Graham and Whalen (2008), uphold this distinction in their analysis of new media design. My analysis has also benefitted from this distinction in the theoretical model I introduce in this chapter's final section, which depicts the ways that modes overlap with each other and with the genres and media that simultaneously draw on their affordances.

In defining and establishing the relationship between *medium* and *mode*, three arguments repeatedly emerge: 1) that media can use multiple modes simultaneously to facilitate meaning-making; 2) that media, as they evolve, rely on the authority of previous media; and 3) that modes exist in hierarchies, with some modes being privileged over others depending on the context. First, as several scholars (cited above) have noted, each medium has the potential to use several modes simultaneously. Even in print and manuscript texts, writers and readers note the semiotics of space and other visual markings outside of alphabetic written text to construct meaning. The New London Group (2000), in their widely-cited piece "A Pedagogy of Multiliteracies," acknowledges

that “In a profound sense, all meaning-making is Multimodal. All written text is also a process of Visual Design” (p. 29). Here, the New London Group does not focus narrowly on digital multimodal composing, but instead highlights that meaning-making in all contexts is multimodal. Multimodality just looks different in “old” and “new” media. Similarly, Kress (2005) begins his article by restating his assumption “that communication is always and inevitably multimodal...” (p. 5). Even handwritten notes, then, are considered multimodal in the sense that the handwriting itself is visual, and the writer also has to make choices regarding how to use the semiotics of space on the page since space is also visual and thus capable of helping the writer and/or reader construct meaning. This dissertation explores some of these material modes and their effects on constructing and/or breaking down gendered power relations. In the subsequent chapters on letterwriting in early modern and 18th-century England, when manuscript and print were evolving and overlapping, I explain how the use of space on the page, for scribbling, writing marginal notes to the reader, or leaving more/less white space, is an indicator of social status and thus exemplifies how material modes could be used for marking gendered positions and power dynamics in letterwriting. The final chapter examines the digital and print entries of Pantsuit Nation to note how the media highlight different aspects of the group members’ narratives. In short, writing and textual creation, in manuscript/print/digital forms, involve making choices about how and when to use modes, and such decisions are often very telling of a writer’s social position and her relationship to her reader(s).

The second common argument regarding media and modality is that media, as they evolve, often rely on modes from a previous medium. For example, even in today’s

most advanced word processors, we still see symbols that draw on our knowledge of previous modes. We can easily move digital documents to a folder or trash bin, or we can cut a part of the document by clicking on a pair of scissors. Though these folders, bins, and scissors are just icons, they encourage us to recall an interaction with physical tools or printed or written materials. Thus, every new iteration of a medium is drawing on our knowledge of visible—and often, material and tangible—modes from previous media to communicate meaning. Carey Jewitt (2009) calls attention to this connection between older and newer media, writing that “[t]he ways in which modes of representation and communication appear on the screen are therefore still connected with the page, present and past” (p. 311). From this perspective, it seems that the vestiges of previous media and the modal affordances they carry are what help us navigate new spaces and recognize the new medium’s capable functions—the modes do not go away in an abrupt shift to a new medium; instead, these modes provide signs which give us direction in new media platforms.

David Bolter and Richard Grusin’s influential work *Remediation* (1999) addresses this point in detail, theorizing *medium* as:

...that which remediates. It is that which appropriates the techniques, forms, and social significance of other media and attempts to rival or refashion them in the name of the real. A medium in our culture can never operate in isolation, because it must enter into relationships of respect and rivalry with other media. (p. 65)

This definition foregrounds the interdependence of media and the lasting connection existing between older media and newer media. Importantly, too, Bolter and Grusin highlight how appropriation of older media attempt to “rival” or “refashion” them. While this explanation has value and contributes to the theoretical work I want this project to do, I also wish to push against this notion of “rivalry” and instead focus on how media

often use previous modes to *revive* older media by drawing more overt attention to previous forms that cause us to recall our knowledge of and experience with writing and constructing media in those forms.

To this point, Bolter and Grusin's theory of remediation points to yet another significant conclusion regarding media and modality: that often, in the process of transitioning to a new form or appropriating older forms, the ways media use various modes make us more aware (sometimes *hyper-aware*) of the medium's materiality, including its ability to either appear cohesive or fragmented. In *Remediation*, they introduce the concepts of *immediacy* and *hypermediacy*, explaining that "[w]here immediacy suggests a unified visual space, contemporary hypermediacy offers a heterogeneous space, in which representation is conceived of not as a window on to the world, but rather as 'windowed' itself" (p. 34). In other words, immediacy offers the semblance of a single platform or space, and hypermediacy draws our attention to the medium's fragmentation. They offer the accessible example of a computer's desktop screen and the many windows we can have open at once—multiple Internet browsers, Word documents, and calendars all appearing on the screen and making us aware of the many media with which we are working simultaneously.

An awareness of this fragmented, windowed platform makes it more likely to see modes present in a medium (or media) in a hierarchical fashion, with some modes being privileged over others. Kress and Van Leeuwen (2001), for instance, reference hierarchies of modes, explaining that modes can "reinforce each other ('say the same thing in different ways'), fulfil complementary roles, ...or be hierarchically ordered, as in action films, where action is dominant, with music adding a touch of emotive colour and

sync sound of touch of realistic ‘presence’” (p. 20). Later in their book, however, they also acknowledge that a sort of flattening of semiotic resources can take place with the advent of new technology, rendering the processes that go into creating certain texts invisible—a similar concept to Bolter and Grusin’s *immediacy*. They write:

The possibilities of the representation of a variety of distinct semiotic modes in the one digitised, electronic form . . . and providing a technological means of production which at that one level need not distinguish between modal articulation, makes the previously technically, materially and professionally distinct forms of production come together through and in the affordances of the new technology (p. 123)

Paying attention to the hierarchy of modes and how/when modes come together in what appears to be “one level” when new media are introduced can, I argue, lead to important conclusions about how writers draw on modes in different capacities to position themselves to their readers. Furthermore, noticing how/when these representations of modes become flattened in one plane can also help us understand why cultural shifts toward writing and textual production take place and how the visibility of specific modes and processes are a part of these shifts.

4. Genres + Media + Modes

Using the above theories, I want to address a larger question in this project: how does the relationship between genres, media, and modalities set conditions for the reproduction and/or transformation of gendered power relations in texts? To answer this question, I bring together genres, media, and modes in a new model that accommodates the complexities of the relationships among them as they change over time. Although media and genre theorists have already been working toward understanding the relationship among genres and media, too many are doing so in ways that are reductive or not illustrative of how genres and media interact with one another—either by

representing the terms as too discrete *or* as interconnected but without saying *how*. For instance, Scott Graham and Brandon Whalen (2008) discuss the relationship from a design perspective by doing a case study of a new-media designer. In their analysis, they argue, “new-media communication can be a dynamic, creative, intuitive, nonlinear (and sometimes childlike) process” (p. 66). Graham and Whalen make several strides toward integrating genre, media, and mode in their work, offering a visual model of the design process observed in their case study:

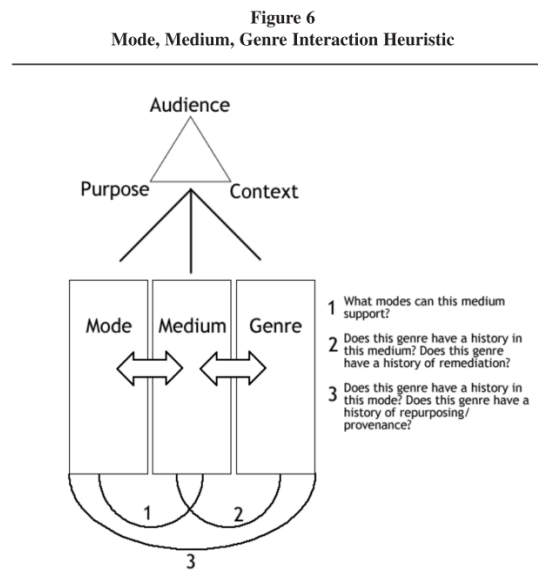


Figure 1: Graham and Whalen’s “Mode, Medium, and Genre”

From Graham, S. S., & Whalen, B. (2008). Mode, medium, and genre: A case study of decisions in new-media design. *Journal of Business and Technical Communication*, 22(1), 65–91.

In this heuristic, they show genre, medium, and mode on the same level and demonstrate possibilities for how the three connect and work together in new media design. Yet, while they draw several of their terms from the same scholarship as I do, the use of terms still seems slippery, as they ask, “Does this genre have a history in this mode?” (p. 88). I

question the phrasing here, as they are using what seems to be a different definition of mode (than the one I adopt from Kress) in alluding to the fact that modes deliver genres (rather than the other way around). I also want to complicate their representation of mode on the same plane as media and genre, as I see modes being shared by genres and media, and argue these shared modes allow for a more complex interaction between the two than what this diagram illustrates. Finally, I want to account for the continua of antecedent and emerging genres *and* older and newer media that exist beyond the neatly confined boxes included in this (and several other similar) diagrams.

Similar to Graham and Whalen (2008), Lüders, Prøitz, and Rasmussen (2010) develop a theory regarding the interaction between genres, media, and modes. Drawing on Miller's (1984) genre theory, the authors see genres as constitutive and generative of social action and processes, but their theory lacks attention to the dynamic interactions occurring between genres and media. They write, "Genres ought to be seen as an intermediary level between the levels of media and text, however influenced by both. They operate as interaction between two interdependent dimensions, conventions and expectations, both of which are afforded by media and specific texts" (p. 947). This theory, like Graham and Whalen's, reinforces genres, media, and modes as existing in simple "levels," to use their term, or hierarchies that illustrate simple one-to-one interactions between media and texts, with genres serving as mediators. Furthermore, perhaps unintentionally, Vijjay Bhatia (1993) posits the relationship as less complex and integrated, explaining that the medium is just one of many factors contributing to a genre's construction. Bhatia explains, "Although there are a number of other factors, like content, form, intended audience, medium, or channel, that influence the nature and

construction of a genre, it is primarily characterized by the communicative purpose(s) that it is intended to fulfil” (p. 13). Although Bhatia includes the medium (or “channel”) as a contributing factor to the genre, it does not, according to this definition, become an integral part of the communicative process that the genre “intend[s] to fulfil” (p. 13). In this case, medium is perceived as being separate from genre—*contributing to* genre but not *working with* it.

Finally, John Frow (2005) uses the term *mode* in yet another way to explain the relationship between modes and genres. He begins with the history of mode in relation to the classical rhetorical tradition (namely, Aristotle and Plato) and then offers another definition of mode for the purposes of his study: “What I would now like to suggest is that the term ‘mode’ be reserved for use in a somewhat different sense... What I mean by this is the ‘adjectival’ sense suggested by Fowler, in which modes are understood as the extensions of certain genres beyond specific and time-bound formal structures to a broader specification of ‘tone.’” (p. 65). He lists some of the modes: “lyrical,” “tragic,” “comical,” “fantastic,” “romantic,” and so on. Here, then, mode is a modifying extension of the genre. What I propose in further detail below is that modes are integral to both genres and media and serve as sites of intervention between them. In sum, I review the above theories of genres, media, and modes here to clarify my argument and use of the same terms—namely, that that neither genres or media exist in a peripheral or intermediary space, and that the modes (semiotic resources for representation) are major actors in defining the relationship between genres and media and thus in conditioning gender positions of power.

In reviewing the aforementioned theories, I found that my argument most closely aligns with that of Carolyn R. Miller and Dawn Shepherd (2009) and Askehave and Nielsen (2005). First, Miller and Shepherd (2009) explain in their analysis of blogs that “...the nature of the medium is bound up in the genre, and our question here is whether that is a rhetorical relationship. What makes a genre ‘native’ to one technology or medium rather than another depends in part upon what the medium allows for, or its affordances” (p. 281). They then conclude that the difficulty of deciding on whether or not the blog was a genre or medium resulted from the fact that “the genre and the medium, the social action and its instrumentality, fit so well that they seemed coterminous...” (p. 283). In other words, the medium of the blog contained technological affordances capable of responding to social exigencies so quickly that it was easy to assume that the blog was the genre rather than the medium. Askehave and Nielsen (2005) uphold a similar argument in their discussion of commercial websites: that genre and medium are integral to one another. They write:

Our research purpose involves a controversial claim namely that *it may be necessary to incorporate the notion of ‘medium’ into the notion of ‘genre’*, i.e. we cannot really account for the characteristics of genres mediated on the net (for example a corporate profile) if we simply analyse ‘print-outs’ of the web profile and treat them as static products and, thereby, neglect the fact that the internet as a medium have a number of characteristics which significantly influence and contribute to the way the web-mediated genres look and are used. (p. 121)

Askehave and Nielsen acknowledge the complex interrelationship between genres and media, noting that media do, in fact, influence how digital genres like websites “look and are used.” They conclude their argument, noting that their model of analysis “...not only suggests a close interplay between medium and genre but claims that media properties influence both the purpose and form of web-mediated genres and should therefore be

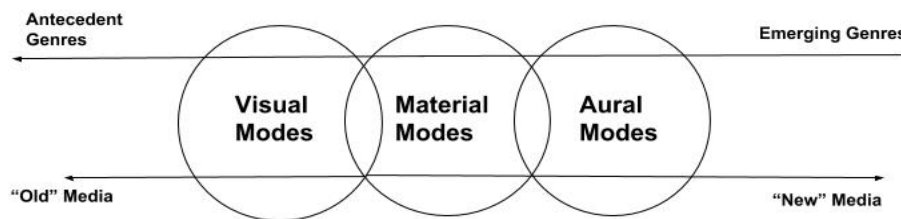
included in the genre identification” (p. 128). I see the theoretical model I introduce next working with and expanding on these scholars’ conclusions, visually showing how genres and media mutually benefit one another and are integral to one another, specifically through their shared modal affordances, or the resources with which they work together to respond to social exigencies.

5. Re-Theorizing Genres, Media, Modes

To examine how power manifests within and across writing platforms, I argue for a different way of understanding relationships among genres, media, and modes. The model introduced in this final subsection visualizes a more dynamic relationship among the three that depicts *how* genres and media are integral to one another, particularly through modes as sites of intervention and overlap. The model centralizes modal affordances in shaping and directing the relationship between genres and media; in other words, I propose that modes can be shared by rhetorical genres and media, and that the use of such modes in specific textual examples can help us better see the complicated decision-making involved in the writing process, particularly for marginalized writers. Furthermore, the model contributes to existing scholarship by visualizing how modes can help us *recognize* genres as they evolve and transfer across various media. Given the arguments on genre and power reviewed above, being able to recognize genres as they evolve is of utmost importance in understanding how power continues to determine writers’ relationships to their texts and to their readers—readers who can determine how much the writers are able to meaningfully participate in the discourse community. Ultimately, I aim for the model to help us see how genres and media always exist in relation to antecedent and emergent forms, how their relationship to one another is

defined by modes, and how this relationship conditions possibilities for new forms of rhetorical participation. Visualizing the relationships in this manner helps us recognize genres, and thus structures of power, as they evolve and emerge across media, and such an understanding can give us a more holistic understanding of writing activities and decisions that can continue to leave out writers whose voices should be heard.

Some of the ways I have seen letterwriting genres and media rely on each other through shared modes and draw on the authority of previous forms (i.e., antecedent genres or “old” media) are represented in this model:



1. **“Material modes”** include the tactile elements of writing *objects*, mainly printed and manuscript alphabetic texts; they also include the digital material modes that enable digital uploads and archiving.
2. **“Visual modes”** include all written alphabetic text, drawings, digital photographs, and spacing.
3. **“Aural modes”** include the sound elements of any digital text *and* include the aural messages that often accompanied written documents in the first two time periods of the study.
4. The model does not explicitly show **rhetorical situation** and/or **language**, but the model shows forms of communication that instantiate language and forms of interaction with language in specific rhetorical situations.

Figure 2: Epistolary Genres, Media, and Modes Theoretical Model

This model has informed my analysis of letterwriting in the following ways: 1) it resists isolating *either* the genre of the letter *or* its various media [manuscript, print, or digital]; 2) it highlights, as very few scholars have done, the continuous progression of genres *and* media through antecedent and emerging forms; 3) it visually represents the significance and *central function of modes* as they serve as a foundation for the relationship between genres and media, while also representing how modes overlap with each other. In accomplishing these three tasks, given all of the capabilities of genres, media, and modes

outlined earlier in the chapter, this model has allowed me to analyze specific moments where women letterwriters (and social media writers) were participating in and/or resisting gendered positions of power conditioned by the complex, integral relationship of genres, media, and modalities.

The model does, of course, have limitations. As I have been careful to say, this model has been applied to only one genre (and its corollaries) in three specific historical moments and was designed specifically for those cases. What this model does *begin* to show, though, is how intricate and complex the writing spaces and the power dynamics that are conditioned by genres, media, and their shared modalities truly are. For instance, this model, as indicated in the legend, only accommodates certain categories of modes, as afforded by manuscript, print, and digital epistolary genres and media. First, my use of “material modes” is meant to characterize the physical aspects of documents—for example, the size and texture of paper, the touch of raised ink or a wax seal, imprints of watermarks, among others. In other words, the tangible aspects of objects, primarily in manuscript and print media, that call attention to gendered letterwriting practices. While the argument can be made that visual and aural modes are also “material,” the use of the term in this project, particularly in Chapters Two and Three, is used to discuss mostly tactile objects. Chapter Four acknowledges other types of material modes—particularly those that allow for immediate uploading of digital content and archiving—but does not do a deep analysis of the technical tools that make this production possible. Furthermore, my use of “visual” modes includes written alphabetic text that appears in all three media discussed here; however, “visual modes” is a much broader category that, similar to some items included in the previous category, also includes wax seals, embroidery thread, use

of white space, handwriting, visual structure, typography, photographs, moving images, and more. Finally, my understanding of “aural modes” applies to all three cases. “Aural” in this project refers to the spoken/oral messages from messengers delivering letters, as discussed in Chapter Two, the textual representations of “aural/oral” in Richardson’s *Clarissa* examined in Chapter Three, and the digital aural modes, such as possibilities for sound bites or music, discussed in Chapter Four.

Another aspect of the model to note is that it does not explicitly represent the entire communicative act, which includes important elements of this project like gender, rhetorical situation, and language. Yet, as indicated above, these pieces are very much a part of the model. As addressed throughout this chapter, genres, media, and modes are bound to their contexts and respond to specific rhetorical exigencies in any given moment; thus, by nature, rhetorical situation underlies and is folded into all three major components of the model. Additionally, theories of language and gendered power relations are used throughout this project to identify moments of tension for women letterwriters; specifically, as addressed above, I understand language as an integral part of rhetorical genres and use Bakhtin’s concepts of the dialogic and addressivity to analyze how gendered power positions are constructed, reproduced, and changed in genres. In sum, while the terms themselves are excluded from the visual, these concepts are implicated in genres, media, and modes, which I understand as the primary agents for shaping how we consume, process, and internalize language and the power that comes with it.

Conclusion

The literature review and introduction of the model here have intended to highlight core definitions and relationships among structures that are central to how power gets circulated (or not) as genres, media, and modes evolve. The model, in particular, has provided a useful framework that clarifies abstract concepts analyzed in each of the following case studies. Furthermore, it provides a lens through which to view gendered power as it is enacted in the epistolary genre across media and has made the *recognition* of genres—that often look drastically different as they evolve over time and through different media (as in the digital “epistles” discussed in Chapter Four)—more possible.

In essence, I see the model as contributing to rhetorical genre theory by expanding on and clarifying theories of the relationship between genres and media through modes. Specifically, the model illustrates genres and media in a dynamic, reciprocal relationship; it also highlights modes as the central means through which genres and media shape one another and evolve concurrently. In other words, the modes are the intervention spaces between the genres and media and play a significant role in how tacit values and power structures become reinstated as genres and media change over time. The chapters that follow draw on the concepts illustrated in the model to show examples of how gendered power dynamics can be further sedimented or subverted in each iteration as the genre of the letter transfers across manuscript, print, and digital media. Chapter Two includes the foundational case study that establishes gendered letterwriting primarily in manuscript; this chapter includes examples of Renaissance women combining visual and material modes to position themselves to their readers in ways that both soften and strengthen their authority as they respond to personal and business matters. Chapter Three then

draws on the above theoretical concepts to demonstrate how gendered authority is represented in Samuel Richardson's epistolary works and analyzes how letterwriting transfers across manuscript *and* print spaces in the eighteenth century. This chapter highlights how the modes shared by genres and media help us recognize the letters' primary rhetorical function in different media to both recreate and challenge traditionally accepted gender roles. Chapter Four then offers the most salient example of how the reconceptualization—particularly of modal affordances' centrality—can help us recognize epistolary practices in social media spaces when the genres themselves look nothing like manuscript or print letters; this case also provides insight into how the speed of technological innovation contributes to how users rely on digital modes to build relationships with one another and establish an activist platform for their shared values. While I do not include the model explicitly in each chapter that follows, I revisit the model and the insights it provided in each case more specifically in the dissertation's conclusion. For now, I merely wanted to introduce this model to show how it informed my thinking about how gendered (dis)empowerment gets represented in textual examples across the genres and media I examine next.

CHAPTER TWO

GENDERED LETTERWRITING IN THE ENGLISH RENAISSANCE: MAKING MEANING FROM (AND IN) THE MARGINS

In approximately 1606, Lettice Kynnersley wrote a letter to her brother Walter Bagot requesting his assistance to take in her son Thomas until she is able to send for him. She asks, "...if it would not be too troublesome to [Walter]," if he or one of his men could bring her son on Wednesday when Walter has planned to visit, but if not, she would take care of it at "the week's end" (Folger MS L.a.596). Lettice's letter does not deal solely with the logistics of retrieving Thomas, however; she also uses this space to ask about Walter's wife and their mother, and at the letter's conclusion, she laments that she cannot write more because "one of [her] eyes is very sore: [and] that it is troublesome to [her]." She closes the letter saying that she will continue to pray for Walter's health and commit him to God's providence.

I begin the chapter with this letter because it offers a brief snapshot of the types of content a Renaissance woman might include in this everyday genre: logistical matters, requests for information about the well-being of her family, the reinforcement of her religious values, and references to the physical act of letterwriting. Letters like this one offer a glimpse of the physical toll letterwriting could have on writers, and additionally, such references call attention to the bodily interaction between—and merging of—the writer and her text. What's not revealed in the alphabetic text alone are other attributes of

the work such a letter does in facilitating the power dynamics existing between the writer and her reader through the modal affordances of *both* the letter as a genre and the manuscript medium. Drawing on the theories of genre, medium, and modality introduced in Chapter One, I focus on the interrelationship among the three in women's Renaissance letterwriting here, highlighting specific moments in artifacts from this period that demonstrate how genres and media exist on *separate* parallel planes and draw on similar visual, aural, and tactile modes in their interaction to facilitate the reproduction and subversion of gendered power dynamics (cf Fig. 2). More specifically, I draw on the model in this chapter by showing how gendered positions of power are reproduced and practiced primarily in *manuscript* through focusing on interactions among the letter genre, the medium of the manuscript, and their shared, overlapping modal affordances that facilitate women's acceptance of and resistance to common positions of authority during the Renaissance.

In the introduction, I argue that a Bakhtinian analysis allows us to see the complexity of the interplay among genres, media, and modes and the ways that writers get called into certain roles or positions of power. Bakhtin's understanding of the tensions between authoritative and internally-persuasive discourse aid my argument: "[t]he struggle and dialogic interrelationship of these categories of ideological discourse are what usually determine the history of an individual ideological consciousness" (p. 342). Furthermore, Bakhtin's theories of the dialogic and addressivity guide our understandings of how letterwriters were always participating in utterances as they relate to each other—including all past and future utterances—and offer a framework that allows us to see how women navigate and get called into multiple positions of authority as author and reader.

Each of these related Bakhtinian theories thus enables a more robust means of exploring how power gets reinforced, circulated, and circumvented in writing spaces that are much more dynamic than they might appear when looking at the genre or medium in isolation and not considering what modes afford them both.

In sum, this chapter applies Chapter One's theoretical argument to the early modern letter; the tensions between genre, medium, and their shared modalities and the dialogic tensions that emerge in the letters' semantic content show the struggle for women letterwriters to navigate the push-and-pull of multiple forces in shaping their ability to gain authority or take on multiple roles, often within a single text. As I explain in the dissertation's introduction, I chose the letter to apply my multi-dimensional theoretical framework for several reasons: 1) the letter's primary function to establish relationships and communicative patterns between users; 2) the letter's presumed function as a genre of self-reflection and transparency (Perry, 1980; Kvande, 2013; O'Neill, 2015); 3) the genre's co-dependence on multiple modes of meaning-making; 4) the genre's feminized characteristics; 5) and most importantly, the letter's potential to allow unauthorized or marginalized writers to participate in the genre through striking a balance between acceptance and resistance of generic conventions, ideological discourses, and play with genre and media affordances.

In this chapter, I draw on these affordances of the letter and expand on the genre's societal and cultural significance in the English Renaissance. The chapter specifically examines this tension in Renaissance women's letters and reveals how deeply ingrained and influential embedded power dynamics were in shaping women's letterwriting practices and the positions they assumed in their texts. I argue here that genre, media, and

mode need to be reconceptualized as more *dynamic*, rather than *simplified* as we are so wont to do. Resisting limiting and flattening theoretical approaches allows us to see how women used rhetorical conventions of the genre, the kairotic moment of delivery or response, and the tactile affordances of the paper and pen to navigate tensions among discourses of power and conventional *and* unconventional uses of the letter genre and manuscript medium.

By applying this theoretical argument to a set of letters from one family collection during the English Renaissance, I aim to expand on existing scholarship by making this inextricable link between genre, medium, and mode more visible in particular areas of overlap and to show how they reinforce and/or subvert power dynamics in the letters developed primarily in the manuscript tradition. To that end, I examine several uses of modalities in genres and media from early modern women who were writing from the margins (and literally within them) and who often did not have a space within more traditional, authorized, and highly formalized genres to (potentially) gain authority to meet their needs. In sum, the letters analyzed here demonstrate where tensions between formal genre characteristics—including the authoritative discourse as established in the period's letterwriting manuals—and the material affordances of the manuscript push and pull against each other to provide women opportunities for navigating power dynamics that are conditioned by both the rhetorical genre and the medium. The letters included in the chapter show both women's rhetorical savvy in pleading for help *and* in asserting authority over their male counterparts. The conclusions drawn from the analyses show women writers negotiating the de-/centralizing forces of the genre and media affordances; their engagement with these tensions, I argue, reflects their awareness of

how genres—and the power dynamics that are conditioned by them—guide their rhetorical decisions in their requests and responses to family patriarchs.

This chapter's conclusions help fill a gap in existing scholarship that researchers in both rhetoric and composition and early modern letterwriting and history have already begun to address. My project builds on both areas of scholarship, and my primary contribution is through forging an intersection between the two areas of study. First, in rhetorical genre studies, the link between genre, medium, and mode is often illustrated as fairly simple and reductive bidirectional relationships, and often, the terms are conflated (Graham and Walen, 2008; Lüders, Proitz, and Rasmussen, 2010; Bhatia, 1993). My study complicates these theories by exposing the “messiness” of how genre, media, and modes—and the language practices they secure and instantiate—push and pull against one another to open up meaning-making possibilities for women writers to accept and resist the often narrowly defined and accepted roles of Renaissance women—roles which were also beginning to shift around the start of the 17th century.⁷

Second, in early modern research on letterwriting, scholars have made significant headway in analyzing the social and cultural contexts of letterwriting and have focused on features of the manuscript medium that reveal aspects of the writer's gender, social position, and class (Gibson, 2001; Steen, 2001; Burke, 2007; Daybell, 1999, 2001, 2009, and 2012). What the early modern scholarship does not do, however, is bring in theories of language, rhetorical genres, and media that more adequately show the dynamic writing processes that these women writers were navigating in each letterwriting performance.

⁷ In the previous chapter, I use Gunther Kress's definition to explain modalities as “semiotic resources which allow the simultaneous realisation of discourses and types of (inter)action” because it explains modes as products of cultural *and* social contexts rather than merely technical resources for representation, and this definition helps us distinguish between media and modalities (p. 21).

My chapter, in particular, adds this component to existing conversations by examining women's savvy use of all rhetorical means—through their language, their use of the genre, and their use of the media—to practice and perform agentive, authorial roles in kairotic moments, even when material circumstances are working against them. The interplay among genre, media, and their shared modalities, for example, reveals women's struggles to balance exercising authority and showing deference to recipients of higher status, using resources—like paper and other writing tools—more strategically and economically than some male writers, and demonstrating an awareness of genre and epistolary culture that often gets referenced explicitly in their letters. In short, this chapter on early modern women's letterwriting adds to the current conversations by bringing together two realms of scholarship that have yet to intersect. By further investigating the interplay among genre, media, and mode, this chapter reveals possibilities for further understanding how marginalized writers, like these Renaissance women, made space for their voices and engaged in letterwriting performances that are sometimes overlooked when approached through narrow or flattened theoretical lenses.⁸

The chapter starts with a discussion of my particular case study, the Bagot women. Here I describe the collection I chose to analyze and provide an overview of my methods. Then, using Carolyn Miller's (1992) and Christy Beemer's (2016) theoretical

⁸ Also in the period-specific scholarship on epistolary culture and its reliance on several parties to write, send, and receive letters, several scholars encourage us to ask questions about privacy and "authentic" self-expression (Daybell, 2009 and 2012; Schneider, 2005; Earle, 1999). Looking further into the intersections of genres, media, and modes, I believe, helps us challenge common beliefs and assumptions about the genre's ability to reveal the writer's innermost self and related issues regarding letterwriting as a private act—both of which are often posited as reasons for the letter's feminization. Because of the parameters of the project, I am not able to delve as deeply into this aspect of letterwriting as I would like, but I do attend to some visible and tactile material modes that were tied to authenticity in the chapter's final sections. In addition, this topic of authenticity does become more pronounced in Chapter Three when I discuss the social exigencies for and resulting successes of the epistolary novel and similar forms in the eighteenth century.

explanations of kairos and Bakhtin's concepts of the dialogic and addressivity, I explore the letters from five perspectives. In section two, I place the case study letters in the context of Renaissance letterwriting culture and consider how the period's most popular (printed) letterwriting manual—Angel Day's *The English Secretary*—established the authoritative discourse, or the formalized letterwriting conventions, and consequently shaped the letterwriters who adopted those conventions during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Next, in section three, I examine the manuscript letter as a salient example of a *material, multimodal* space that allowed women to take on multiple roles (with varying levels of agency) in a single text. In section four, I view the letter as a site for emotional and intellectual risk-taking that offers at least temporary relief from domestic strife; Section five analyzes the letter as a space for performing authoritative roles, including that of the knowledgeable, self-sufficient businesswoman. Finally, in section six, I look at writers' references to an acute genre awareness or consciousness that explicitly shows women either successfully obtaining or struggling for authoritative positions in ways that influenced later appropriations of the letter, particularly in terms of how power dynamics have been further solidified or subverted in emerging epistolary forms in the time periods focused on in Chapters Three and Four.

What follows, then, pulls together multiple threads—historical context, a thorough investigation of the early modern letter (the genre), the affordances of the manuscript (the medium), and specific examples of rhetorical dexterity—to ultimately show how the tensions and push-and-pull of genre, medium, and modalities all contribute to the gendered power dynamics that shaped the women's textual performances and their complex, richly-layered lives that fill the letters' pages.

1. The Bagot Women's Letters: Material and Methods

To demonstrate tensions women negotiated between the letter genre and its formal conventions and the manuscript medium's many modal affordances, I look at a sample of women's letters from the Bagot family collection. The Bagot family was one of the most prominent families in England during the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. The family's place in the upper social class was largely due to the family's patriarch, Richard Bagot (c. 1530-1597), who served as the sheriff and deputy lieutenant of Staffordshire, and who in addition to these duties, was also known for having a number of responsibilities to the Crown. After his death in 1597, his son, Walter Bagot, received many of these civic and royal duties—in addition to his father's patriarchal responsibilities. In assuming the patriarchal role, Walter was not only responsible for his mother and his siblings, but he was also responsible for overseeing their children and spouses, making sure that all of the Bagot family, and those members connected to it, were provided with appropriate care. Walter's multiple responsibilities—to the Crown, to Staffordshire, and to his family—emerge in nearly all of his letters included in the extensive Bagot family letter collection. The Bagot family archive offers a unique glimpse into a close-knit epistolary community over the span of 114 years. Housed at the Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington, D.C., the collection's 1,016 total papers range from secret, personal letters about domestic disputes to land transactions and business dealings with members of the royal family and cabinet. This collection written by several family members remains one of the largest preserved collections from the period and offers a unique and very insightful example of how the genre was constructed and used during the Renaissance. As Rosemary O'Day (1994) notes in her study of

sixteenth and seventeenth-century families, “the Bagot collection is unique in offering detailed information about a sixteenth-century family of this social status” (p. 71). She also comments on the lack of existing letter collections when she states, “Collections of correspondence tend to be distressingly thin for this time period” (p. 71).⁹

We are able to see several relationships being shaped in the Bagot letters, even though a vast majority of the collection’s letters were written by male family members and dealt with political affairs related to their governmental offices. Writers and recipients of these correspondences outside of the Bagot family included King James I of England, Robert Cecil (Earl of Salisbury), and George Abbott (the Archbishop of Canterbury). This group also included officials to the crown such as Lord Burghley, Sir John Fortescue (Chancellor of the Exchequer), Richard Ensore (bailiff of Bromleyhurst), and George Talbot (Earl of Shrewsbury). Yet a number of the letters were written among family members regarding issues blurring private and public spheres, including domestic matters that sometimes challenged traditional views of what a family of this caliber might look and act like and also some letters which show several family members, including women, helping with business arrangements regarding finances and possession of land.

In particular, the Bagot collection afforded me the opportunity to look for specific moments where one epistolary community followed and departed from generic structure and material practices to participate in and change positions of power and authority to meet their rhetorical goals—goals that often meant changing their physical and emotional well-being. It is important to acknowledge, however, that selecting this archive and this

⁹ Ideally, a large collection of letters from women of a lower social standing would show even further how marginalized members of society navigated genres, media, and modalities; yet, because of Walter’s position within this community, and because he carefully catalogued so many of the letters to him and other family members (from men and women alike), this archive is one of the best options for this study because it offers opportunities to study how even upper-class women had to be rhetorically savvy to participate in this genre and to meet their rhetorical ends.

time period does not mean that I am positing the history of letterwriting began in the English Renaissance or that women were not writing letters prior to the period. Rather, I have chosen women's letterwriting in this particular period, and, more specifically, women represented in the Bagot archive, for several reasons: 1) for a genre study, the Bagot collection shows generic diversity of letterwriting in a single family over a long time frame; 2) because of the overlapping media of manuscript and print, letters were being printed in manuals but mostly written in manuscript form, making issues of media and modality more pertinent in this period than in previous ones; and 3) patterns of gendered power dynamics become visible through the letterwriters' consistent use of *modalities* of space, handwriting, and visual markings of textual changes made in-process and the semantic *content* explicitly about letterwriting.

Analytical Methods

The Bagot collection, while beneficial to this study in its copious amount of material, also posed methodological challenges for the same reason and required that I narrow my sample significantly. To meet my goals for the chapter, I selected ninety-four letters from the Bagot family of Staffordshire, England, with dates from 1570 to 1623. The collection's 1,016 total papers have been digitized and individually summarized in one of the library's finding aids. I used the finding aid to locate all of the women's letters and letters from their female and male correspondents to select the focal texts for this analysis. I then transcribed the letters using the Folger's LUNA digital imaging system and coded each letter based on particular words or phrases that concerned epistolary culture, gender roles, and the material elements of the text, including the style of handwriting, the use of space on the page, and other characteristics of the medium that

could shed light on the writer's gendered position of authority and her relationship with the recipient.

My preliminary codes then became a finalized list of conceptual codes after a second reading of the transcriptions; the categories of codes included “materiality,” “modality,” “gender,” “time” (lapsed between correspondence or expected waiting time for future correspondence), and “intermediary contributions” by secretaries, messengers, etc (Saldaña, 2016). As expected, the codes began to overlap in several instances, and these moments, visibly marked by different colors I selected for each code, revealed specific themes (further described below) and led me to choose the letters I describe and analyze in the chapter's concluding sections. The places of overlap helped me visualize more clearly moments of acceptance of and departure from the formal genre rules and expectations described in the contemporary letterwriting manuals. While studying these specific moments of overlap and what they represented, I concluded that the Bakhtinian framework would be most useful for analyzing the women's letters, because I located several moments where the writers were clearly engaging in dialogic discourse and oscillating between multiple positions of authority. Furthermore, Bakhtin's understanding of centripetal and centrifugal forces seemed particularly relevant to the letterwriters' engagement and play with language, genre, and medium. In short, the letters selected for the chapter resulted from two rounds of coding that showed important moments of tension—of give-and-take between the material medium, the generic features and expectations, and between ideological discourses—and led me to rely on the Bakhtinian lens to analyze the complex negotiation of power dynamics in which these marginalized writers participated.

For my transcriptions, I initially used the digitized archive for documenting content and making early assessments of the manuscripts' materiality, but I also traveled to the archive in Washington, D.C., and stayed for eight days to study each manuscript's material features and to double-check my transcriptions of particularly difficult documents. After rechecking the transcriptions and fine-tuning my coding, the final themes that I derived from my conceptual codes include (but are not limited to) women's petitions for secrecy—particularly tied to situations of domestic unrest—and petitions for help and/or demands for resources. I chose a thematic approach for this case because of my reliance on John Frow's dimensions of genres, which includes "thematic structure" as one of the dimensions that participates in genres' ability to facilitate the exercise of power (p. 2). The themes formed the basis of the letters chosen for the chapter and informed my study of how the rhetorical functions of the letter genre and the manuscript medium contributed to the productive push-and-pull that enabled women's experimentation with gendered power dynamics reinforced in the genre. The analysis that emerged from this research reveals how women relied on and departed from the authoritative discourse of prescriptive manuals and model letters and how they constantly shaped women's performances of authority in letters they wrote themselves (i.e., autograph letters) *and* in letters written by a third-party secretary.

Theoretical Perspectives

In the following sections where I more specifically investigate ways the Bagot women both accepted and rejected authoritative discourse, formal genre conventions, and other modalities afforded by the letter genre and manuscript medium, I argue that we are able to see the meaningful negotiation of gendered power dynamics that exist in the

Renaissance letter and transfer to the epistolary form's later iterations. My research of the Bagot family archive shows that women often used material resources sparingly and used spatial modalities to either show deference or exercise authority (or both), depending on the specific kairotic moments in which they were writing. To support this assertion, I rely on Carolyn R. Miller's (1992) understanding of *kairos*, which she explains "calls attention to the nature of discourse as event rather than object; it shows us how discourse is related to historical moment; it alerts us to the constantly changing quality of appropriateness" (p. 310). Though Miller is speaking to *kairos* as it necessitates scientific progress and its reception, this classical rhetorical concept is also useful in my genre and media analysis of letters, as it opens up the artifacts to a more robust interpretation of gendered power dynamics and how they become reinscribed or altered.

For my study, then, what tools are appropriate for the women writers to use or what specific roles they elect to enact in any given letter depend entirely on the event to which they are responding in a single moment. *Kairos*, in other words, creates an entry point for the writer to make such choices. Christy Beemer's (2016) analysis of *kairos* in the mercy letters of Queen Elizabeth and Mary Queen of Scots draws on similar understandings of *kairos*; she writes, "For a kairotic response, the rhetor must respond to a mutating situation with appropriate force, encompassing the complex and nuanced implications of the term *kairos* as an artistic strategy that reflects politics, justice, and adaptability" (p. 76). Beemer, like Miller, draws on the long-standing understanding of *kairos* as an opening or aperture through which a writer can pass if and only if the *moment* is right and what is *done* in that moment is right (p. 76). For my analysis, *kairos* also determines how women elected to use or depart from generic convention—

convention which often reinforced the genre's centralizing forces and thus left a narrower window of opportunity for effective letterwriting.

With this understanding of *kairos* as an opening for action, I look at the specific moments in which the Bagot women perceive *kairos* and strategically construct their letters to take advantage of such moments. As the analysis shows, the material and rhetorical means they used to seize such opportunities varied widely. For example, in several of the Bagot women's letters, there is evidence that the writers used whatever writing tools they could find in desperate times, making the writing extremely difficult to read and thus visually reinforcing their need for help. On the other end of the spectrum, some letters show women taking control over men's letters by not writing their responses in separate letters or even on separate pages, but by writing in whatever space was left on the page—in other words, taking over the remaining “significant [white] space” ordinarily used to reinforce the hierarchy between the writer and recipient. Along similar lines, women's letters noticeably written by a third-party included post-scripts or marginal notes in their own hand with their own more direct messages to the reader, which were arguably intended to be their own stamp of authenticity or mark their “real” interior selves (Daybell, 2012). Looking at the intersections of the medium's materiality and rhetorical conventions of letterwriting together can help us see *why*, *how*, and *when* women letterwriters chose to write to their correspondents and how they negotiated and interacted with existing power dynamics in their letters.

2. Letterwriting Manuals in the English Renaissance

An examination of the early modern letter as a genre, including those of the Bagot women, must be attuned to the ways the media (both print and manuscript) drew on

modalities that conditioned power dynamics and helped writers negotiate multiple roles in a single text. Indeed, the printed manuals of this time period provide an example of a nexus of multiple modes. Eve Bannet (2005) argues that “Letter manuals taught and represented the many ways in which voice, manuscript and print were deployed as complementary modes in epistolary writing” (p. 314). In addition to providing examples of multiple modalities coming together, the manuals were also significant in the epistolary genre system because they offered prescriptive models for letterwriters to presumably follow closely. In fact, the Renaissance manuals, most of which were born out of the even more prescriptive *ars dictaminis* tradition, reinforced the authoritative discourse that Bakhtin understands as a “privileged language that approaches us from without; it is distanced, taboo, and permits no play with its framing context (Sacred Writ, for example). We recite it. It has great power over us, but only while in power; if ever dethroned it immediately becomes a dead thing, a relic” (p. 424).

The manuals reviewed in this section represent both centripetal and centrifugal forces as they occur in letterwriting. Day’s manual, for instance, contains both authoritative and internally-persuasive discourse by providing models marked very specifically with rhetorical tropes that should be practiced in each section, but he also acknowledges the need for flexibility by admitting that no manual can provide models for all possible situations. Thus, centripetal forces are at work in Day’s manual through the rhetorical tropes and language provided for certain sections of the letter, calling the reader into a tradition of letterwriting that appears inflexible. In contrast, centrifugal forces are also in motion throughout the manual through the models presented *as models*

rather than as texts to be duplicated verbatim; yet, as discussed in further detail below, these models were often seen and used differently by readers of different genders.

To expand on some of the aforementioned functions of the manual, I rely on several scholars who have theorized the early modern manual, many of whom note the inconsistencies in how the manual was used or perceived by male and female readers. For instance, even with the manuals' prescribed rules for letterwriting, the letterwriting manual as a genre has been said to open up "new forms of authority" for the (likely male) user; according to Bradin Cormack, manuals "...enabled the reader to assume new forms of authority...By positioning readers as actors, by requiring them to actualize knowledge by performing it, these books promised a transformation of identity" (p. 79). Cormack's assessment of the manual shows the potential of this literature to create new forms of meaning-making and agency. Yet as a genre intended primarily for men, it is unlikely that the manuals themselves would have enabled such an immediate and straightforward transformation of identity for women. Furthermore, as noted previously, manuals did not and could not accommodate *all* letterwriting situations, even though manuals proclaimed to be completely comprehensive. The absent situations are important to address because these omissions reveal the manual's limited point of view, and thus also ignore gendered conventions and women's struggle in adapting to such forms of prescriptive organization. Consequently, the manual's prescriptions reinforce men as the main readers and writers participating in this genre.¹⁰ Taking the letterwriting manual's history into account, I have

¹⁰ Also, as a result of not being as comprehensive as promised, manuals often were not followed very closely at all, as some scholars have noted (Daybell, 2012; Schneider, 2005; Steen, 2001). Gary Schneider, for instance, comments on the economic value of the letterwriting manual and writes, "Letter-writing manuals, unlike real letters, were market-driven commodities; they had a vested interest in the ideas and material they attempted to peddle, and this fact might bias them" (p. 18). In addition, Sarah Jayne Steen concludes from her research experience that "early modern letter-writers rarely follow Fulwood's or Day's or any of the letter-writing manuals' rules precisely, and it would be surprising if they did, so we must

identified three issues with the manual's role in the epistolary genre system, especially regarding women's writing and the intersections among genre, media, and modality: 1) the manuals promised a "transformation of identity" primarily for the intended male readership; 2) though manuals exercised both authoritative and internally-persuasive discourse, the manuals' authoritative discourse and limited examples excluded gendered conventions and thus did not minimize women's struggles to adapt to prescriptive organization or to lessen the tension between submissive and authoritative writing; and 3) the manuals were printed and, of course, printers during this time did not have the affordances of digital media (or even photography) that we currently have to render an image of an actual manuscript and include it in their texts. Thus, the important transference between modalities of print and manuscript would be difficult, especially for women, who may not be as fluent in or accustomed to letterwriting convention.

Notably, the letterwriting manuals' limitations for women were not necessarily a matter of their limited access to the manuals. In fact, literate female readers likely would have had access to the manuals and would have had the opportunity to learn and appropriate conventions that would provide them with "new forms of authority" for performing traditionally "male" roles in business matters and/or adopting feminine roles to elicit more sympathy in moments of crisis. Yet even with these possibilities for helping women assume authority and force action that would ultimately benefit them, many manuals, some of which *were* intended for women, as Linda Mitchell (2003) and others (Perry, 1980; Myers, 2003; Bannet, 2005) note, were used as didactic literature often

interpret space [on the page] loosely and, again, within the context of the writer's usual practice if we can." (p. 63)

intended to threaten or frighten young women into good behavior. Furthermore, Mitchell comments on *how* the manuals were used and how these uses varied for readers of different genders: “Men were given tools to make decisions; women were given strategies for following the rules made by others” (p. 334). To support this point, she comments on how some letterwriting manuals titled for *women* were actually geared toward men’s writing situations instead (p. 335). Manuals did not, for example, include conventions for addressing matters of domestic unrest and petitions for help and for secrecy, which if not upheld could put the woman letterwriter in danger, as several letters discussed in this chapter attest. In a sense, then, literature that was intended to guide readers through their writing and “moral” decision-making often failed to attend to the lived experiences of women and the nuanced situations in which women actually found themselves writing, and such manuals were, unfortunately, some of the only resources (aside from letters received from other women) that women would have had to learn appropriate conventions.

Keeping the manuals’ limited scope of experience in mind, this section considers the context for the manual genre and ways its conventions were reinforced throughout the English Renaissance. More specifically here, I address certain modalities prescribed in early modern literature on letterwriting that had significant influence in actual letterwriting practice. First, an early English manual on epistolography titled *The Enemy of Idleness* (1568) by William Fulwood laid the foundation for many letterwriting conventions, namely those that described how the writer should use space and specific wording to represent the appropriate social hierarchy between writer and addressee. Borrowing much of his material from slightly earlier French epistolography manuals, and

thus reinforcing the authoritative discourse of this manual and its antecedents, Fulwood comments on specifics such as leaving significant space between the body and the signature, which should be placed at the “right side in the nether end of the paper,” to show one’s utmost deference to the reader (as cited in Gibson, 2001). On this topic, Jonathan Gibson (2001), summarizing the significant conventions espoused in Fulwood, Day, and contemporary French manuals on epistolography, argues: “All of these regulations amount effectively to the same thing: the requirement that socially superior addressees be honoured with as much blank paper as possible” (p. 2). Such references to space serve as evidence of the manual’s priority to emphasize authoritative discourse and the centripetal forces that continuously reinforce the writer’s and the recipient’s social standings.¹¹

The significance of blank space, much like the white space we use in modern genres such as résumés and other technical documents, illustrates how modal affordances of genres have historically deepened social hierarchies and conditioned power dynamics between correspondents. In other words, leaving space and visually organizing in a way that is pleasing to the reader who is in a position of authority continuously reinforces the distance between the writer and the reader and thus strengthens the centralizing and homogenizing forces of the language *and* the genre and medium that deliver the message. Yet leaving ample space could pose challenges to men and women alike because of how expensive paper was during this time period. Even still, what *women* letterwriters did

¹¹ As a reminder, I am using the Bakhtinian definition of “centripetal” and “centrifugal” explained in *The Dialogic Imagination*: “These are respectively the centralizing and decentralizing (or decentering) forces in any language or culture. The rulers and the high poetic genres of any era exercise a centripetal—a homogenizing and hierarchicizing—influence; the centrifugal (decrowning, dispersing) forces of the clown, mimic and rogue create alternative ‘degraded’ genres down below. The novel, Bakhtin argues, is a de-normatizing and therefore centrifugal force.” (p. 425)

with marginal space is especially telling of how they positioned themselves to their readers; for, as I show later, many women used space to reinforce self-effacing tendencies and submit to their husbands, brothers, and fathers, but in other cases, women who could have afforded to use their own paper, chose to assert their authority by responding in the margins of the letter they received. Furthermore, as indicated above, one of the problems with some of the manuals' instructions to use space—and other modalities that were even more difficult to render successfully in print—is that they do not account for the difficulty both men and women writers would have had in switching back and forth between a printed model and an actual handwritten letter. While space might have been rendered fairly accurately in type in some manuals, visual and spatial modes such as handwriting or the use of the margins to add one's own messages to a letter written by a third-party would not have been possible.¹² Because the modalities of space and visual handwriting were so important to epistolary continuity and establishing textual authority and a relationship with the recipient, the absence of these modes in published printed manuals is significant in terms of the larger intersections among genre, medium, mode, and power.

Further evidence of the manual's centralizing and homogenizing forces is that the manual was not only intended for male letterwriters, but that it also mostly leaves women out of the model letters altogether—as writers and as subjects.¹³ In fact, the only women

¹² Though space could have been rendered somewhat accurately in these printed manuals, the examples of letters in Angel Day's texts were not. In fact, although Day includes several chapters on the superscription, salutation, the manner of taking leave, and the subscription, the example letters often did not include some of these parts and thus did not indicate how much space should be left between the different sections.

¹³ Commenting more specifically on Day's intended audience, Robert O. Evans (1967) notes in his introduction to the 1599 edition that the primary audience for the publication was the "secretary." Evans writes, "The book was not of course a manual for secretaries of our modern sort. In an obsolete sense the word secretary simply meant one skilled in letter writing" (p. vi). Moreover, during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the secretary often was a third-party male writer—one who "physically penned, and

readers/writers included in Day's examples were in the consolatory and amatory epistle chapters. Two examples of consolatory epistles were written *to* gentlewomen grieving the loss of a son and the death of a husband.¹⁴ Further, the only example of a woman *letterwriter* is included in the amatory epistle chapter in which she is simply *responding to* the love letters from her suitor. As such examples suggest, female readers/writers were largely excluded from Day's manual, but literate women (especially those in upper class families like the Bagots) nevertheless were likely still reading and using such examples and prescriptive content to learn certain generic conventions that do show up in many of the letters analyzed in the following sections.

Thus, despite the author's intentions, the text's foundational principles for letterwriting were certainly used by a much wider audience—or, at the very least, the principles trickled down to everyday letterwriting through various models from male writers indoctrinated with humanist education. Indeed, the generic conventions Day prescribes were very likely extended to female writers through their exposure to letters they received from their male correspondents, who held high social positions. Furthermore, conventions such as significant space between the body and the letter's signature, the start of the letter's body in relation to the salutation, and the careful execution and style of handwriting that I discuss in the following analysis are marks of an

possibly authored" many letters and was an "integral part of letterwriting in the Renaissance," especially for members of the royal family and/or families occupying the upper ranks of society (Stewart and Wolfe, 2005, p. 55). Furthermore, the secretary (or *secret-ary*) was often so close to the families or persons for which he worked that he knew their innermost secrets. The duty of the secretary to pen his master's letters also often required that he knew the master's handwriting and particular way of forming letters so that the handwriting of the master and secretary were indistinguishable (though, according to my analysis, this was not always the case).

¹⁴ More specifically, the two examples written to gentlewomen included these headings from Day: 1) "An example consolatorie of the first sort, wherein a Gentlewoman is comforted of the death of her sonne"; 2) "A consolatorie Epistle of the third sort, wherein a Gentlewoman is comforted of the death of her husband slaine in the warres."

established letterwriter who was able to navigate the tensions between homogenizing and decentralizing conventions and discourse *and* to adeptly use visual modes to show herself both as an authority figure and one who respected the reader's superiority. The women's use of such modes and their uptake of the genre reveal how they were able to perform and make textual identities that sometimes were at odds with one another and potentially enact change that could benefit them and their families, friends, and acquaintances.

3. Manuscript Materiality: Creating Physical Presence in Letters

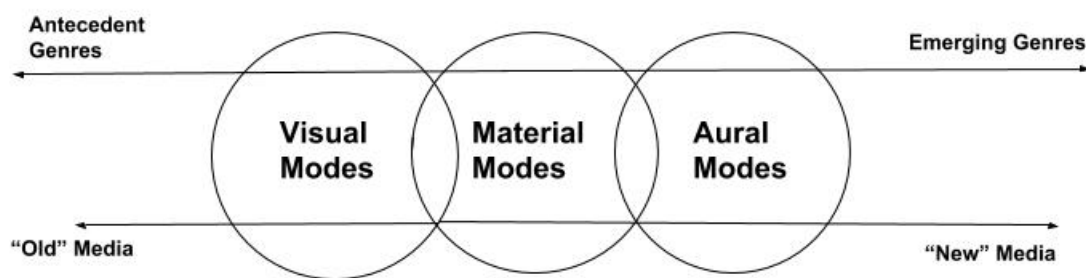
For reasons explained above, the Bagot women are the focus in this analysis. The women include Elizabeth Bagot (Walter's wife), Lettice Kinnersley (Walter's sister), Isabel Kinnersley, Ursula Wardwicke, and Anne Broughton (Walter's sister), who were balancing multiple roles—as mothers, wives, sisters, lovers—in their texts. Their letters show the extent to which the centripetal and centrifugal forces of language that become embedded in genres over time influenced how agentic (or not) the writers could be in each textual performance when experimenting with complex power dynamics between them and their male counterparts (or, in some cases, female correspondents). On this point, though not explicitly mentioning genre or using Bakhtinian theory, James Daybell (1999) references the importance of examining the “mechanics of letter writing” to more fully understand how letters shaped women's lives; he writes:

Clearly, the mechanics of letter writing are of fundamental importance when looking at a range of interesting issues relating to women's writing and their lives. These include women's persuasive and rhetorical skills, the degree of confidence and authority that they displayed, self-fashioning and the creation of personas, empowerment and female agency, as well as the intimacy and emotional content of social and family relationships... (p. 162)

Following Daybell in my analysis I explore ways the Bagot women negotiated tensions of the inherently dialogic letter and the range of modal affordances provided by the letter

genre and manuscript medium either to subvert or strengthen gendered power dynamics in specific, kairotic moments. I examine not only the Bagot women’s semantic content, but I also look at ways they used extratextual elements, including the handwriting (whether it was their own or a secretary’s) and their use of marginal space and the material resources of writing (such as paper and writing utensils).

In this section specifically, I draw conclusions about the Bagot women’s negotiation of power dynamics by examining materiality alongside letters’ semantic content. As noted in Chapter One, there is an important overlap among language/content and the visual and tactile modes afforded by the manuscript medium:



Modes of the 17th-century Letter:

1. “**Material modes**” specifically include the tactile elements of writing *objects*, including paper, ink, seals, embroidery thread.
2. “**Visual modes**” include handwriting, cancellations, additions, ink blotting, space on the page.
3. “**Aural modes**” include the aural components of letter delivery, including the messenger’s additions to the text in face-to-face conversation with the recipient.

Figure 3: Epistolary Genres, Media, and Modes in the English Renaissance

I contextualize some of the analyses that follow by using James Daybell’s (2012) understanding of “social materiality.” Daybell explains that social materiality “contextualises epistolary practices, establishing the conditions of writing and reading, the range of literacies (written, visual and oral) associated with letter-writing, the role of secretaries, amanuenses, servants and bearers, the environments and spaces in which

letters were composed, received and read” (p. 16). In other words, acknowledging social materiality helps give us a broader picture of letterwriting practice, including the people who were writing, sending, and receiving letters and the actual spaces and contexts in which writing was happening. Also, like Daybell, I do not wish to *privilege* material analyses of letters; rather, I hope to use my material readings as a means to enrich my analyses of the letters’ content and to complicate the relationship between genre, medium, mode, and power (p. 86). Doing so, I argue, can help us resist flattening dynamic epistolary writing practices and the complex roles of letterwriters, and consequently reveal broader trends in gendered power as it appears in seventeenth-century letterwriting and that resurfaces in subsequent periods that are the focus of the remaining chapters.

The material modes that are most commonly referenced in relation to letterwriting include tools (such as ink and paper), handwriting, spacing, seals, and other evidence of the receipt of the documents. Admittedly, most of the modes associated with manuscript are visual, tactile, and spatial ones; yet, the ways the visual modalities of handwriting, use of margins, and others in the aforementioned list get appropriated in later periods are central to this dissertation’s overall argument and to our understanding of the Bagot women’s textual performances that show complex navigations of power dynamics existing in the 17th-century letterwriting tradition. Analyzing the modal affordances of the manuscript medium can, for instance, tell us many specifics about the letterwriter, recipient, and context of writing, including whether or not the letter was written spontaneously and sent quickly because of convenience or need for immediate help. Such visual modes can also confirm the writer’s position of authority or his/her authorization

of the letter's content. The writer's handwriting is arguably most telling here; on this topic, Gary Schneider (2005) comments, "The hand was [...] associated with authenticity and authorization, and could likewise represent intimacy and demonstrate emotion. Both the handwritten letter and one's signature, therefore, were socially significant" (p. 121). The nuanced ways the writer formed alphabetic letters and marked the letter as her own with particular flourishes or other characteristic markings was a way of presenting herself, unmediated by other writers, to the reader.

Handwriting practices also can lead to many conclusions regarding one's relationship to the recipient, including the writer's class or social standing—or, the specific gendered roles and the noticeable distance between readers and writers of different genders. Daybell writes, for instance, that "[i]t was perfectly acceptable for noblemen and noblewomen to write with scrawling almost illegible hands, a mark of aristocratic reserve...Women and children in particular often received censure for their poor handwriting and orthography" (p. 89). One telling example of this expectation comes from Walter Bagot's son William Bagot. In a letter dated around 1622 that was responding to a letter from Walter, William characterizes his father's letter as both "kind" and "fatherly." William writes that the letter is "fatherly in that you by a fatherly admonition command a reformation of a thing amiss, to wit, the form of my writing, which if I had known before I could easily – have altered, and hence forth will daily show that I can easily change it..." (Folger MS L.a.181). This exception for noblemen and women to write less precisely represents ways that social hierarchy and power play into what is or is not acceptable in a given genre and medium. In other words, this example reinforces the common argument that those who have already been authorized as genre

participants and have supposedly learned the rules of the game are also authorized to bend those rules.

Similar to marking the writer's social standing, "an autograph hand [...] might [also] be interpreted as a marker of affect, duty and obligation, or represent a desire for secrecy" (Daybell, 2012, p. 87). For instance, all but one of Lettice Kinnersley's letters (discussed in depth in the following section) are autograph letters, and many of them deal with sensitive information relating to her marital strife. The letters being written in Lettice's own hand reinforce the severity of her situation and the importance of these matters being kept from her husband. Other women in the collection also include references to autograph letters as being able to reveal the "truth"; for example, Jane (Roberts) Markham writes a letter to Walter explaining a situation involving her step-daughter and Walter's son and mentions that her step-daughter has also written to Walter in her own hand. Jane, also called Lady Skipwith, writes, "And for your better satisfaction she hath written to you to let you understand the truth, under her own hand" (Folger MS L.a.850).

Under much different circumstances, the letters from Ursula Wardwicke similarly attest to the importance of handwriting *and* the writing tools and materials available to women in threatening situations (Folger MSS L.a.453 and 454; See Figure 4). Furthermore, Ursula's letters indicate the extent to which *kairos* influenced early modern women's correspondence. Ursula has two letters in the archive, which when contrasted with one another, show important differences in her writing situations and the resources available to her for her response. In Folger MS L.a.454, Ursula reports that she has been wronged by her husband and is writing to Walter hopefully to receive assistance—

specifically, she asks Walter to have his wife send for her and her servants and have her neighbors testify on her behalf. She opens the letter saying that she is “forced to make [her] complaint unto so good a friend and kinsman as [Walter].” She writes the letter in the italic hand, most commonly used by women since it was deemed by contemporary epistolographers to be the “easiest to learn,” but the handwriting is different than in her previous letter (Folger MS L.a.453); the handwriting in the second letter is very lightly penned, almost to the point of being illegible.¹⁵ The poorly written handwriting in Folger MS L.a.454 results from her time-sensitive situation, of which she is aware and references directly in the letter: “I am sorry to trouble you with this rude letter being so badly written which was written in no small haste.” Recognizing that she must take advantage of this kairotic moment, Ursula also asks Walter to remember his promise to be her friend and offer her help, and she requests “hasty news.” As the handwriting, blotting, additions, and cancellations in this letter attest, Ursula was forced to be resourceful in the materials she used to write the letter and to write quickly. The comparison of Ursula’s letters is evidence of how important available material resources and the resource of *time* was to women writing in situations such as this one. Whereas the first letter is written legibly and concisely and refers to a simple business meeting, the second reveals a much more time-sensitive matter not just in its content, but also in the visual presentation of the letter as a whole.

Quite literally, we can see the stress under which Ursula was writing in the second letter because of the many ink blots and amendments to the text. Taking such a broad,

¹⁵ Martin Billingsley wrote in his handwriting manual *The Pen’s Excellencie* in 1618 that women should be taught the italic hand, also known as the Roman hand, because it was the easiest to learn: “...it is conceived to be the easiest hand that is written with Pen, and to be taught in the shortest time: Therefore it is usually taught to women, for as much as they (having not the patience to take any great pains, besides fantastical and humorsome) must be taught that which they may instantly learn? Otherwise they are uncertain of their proceedings, because their minds are (upon light occasion) easily drawn from the first resolution” (p. 10r).

comprehensive view of seemingly minor visual modes opens up the text and makes visible the many negotiations a woman must make in any given moment, again highlighting the very narrow window of opportunity to enact change for herself and/or others. This combination of the content and the visual modes in both letters, then, shows Ursula using all available resources to carefully pass through the available aperture (to use Beemer’s metaphor). This example truly reflects how *kairos* is not merely a moment, but what is *done with* that moment (Beemer, 2016, p. 76). Ursula’s use of material and rhetorical tools offers a concrete example of how modal affordances of the genre and medium participate in taking full advantage of these opportune times.

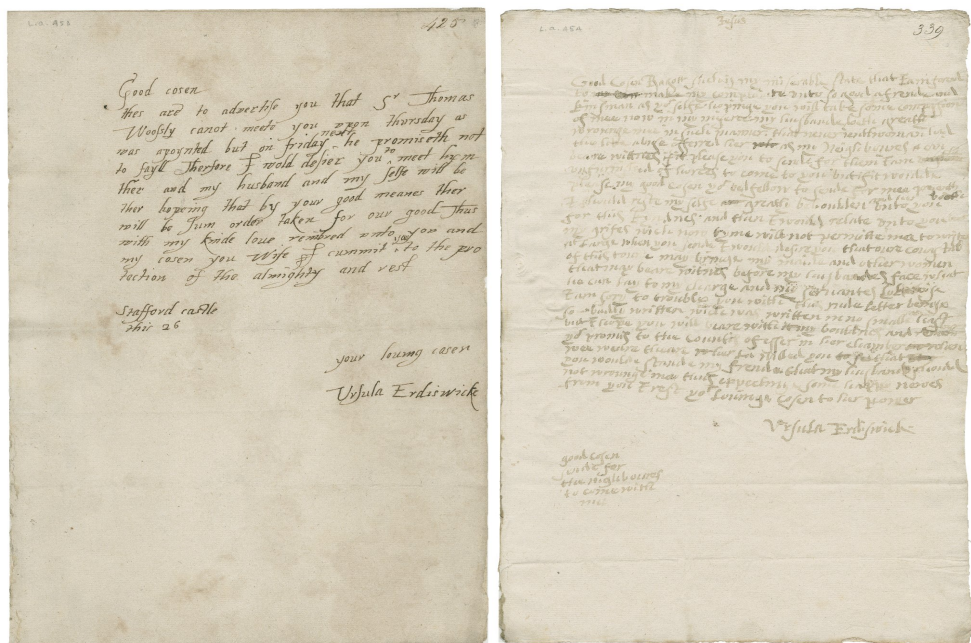


Figure 4: Folger MS L.a.453 (left) and L.a.454 (right)
Ursula Wardwicke to Walter Bagot, ca. 1618

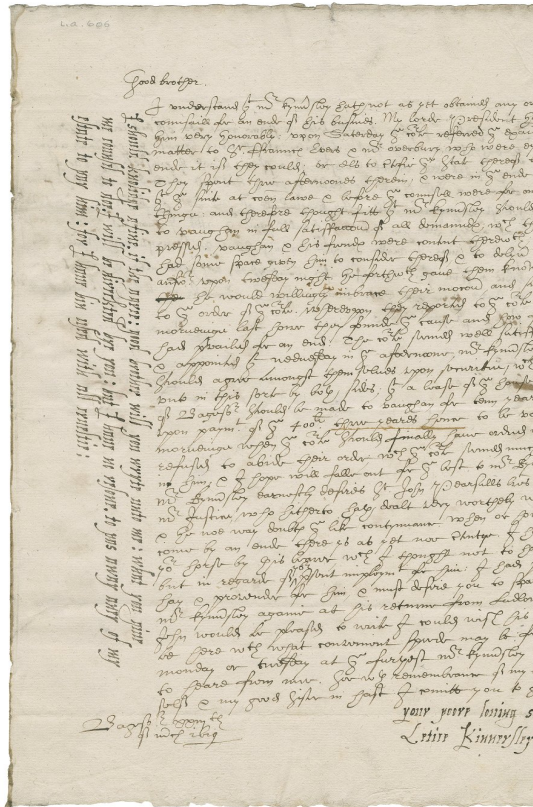


Figure 5: Folger MS L.a.606
 Lettice Kynnersley to Walter Bagot, 1619/20 March 23

In addition to handwriting practices, the way space is used (or not used) on the page can be telling of the writer's engagement with social power dynamics. As discussed in letterwriting manuals, how a letterwriter used space could signal to the recipient how much respect the writer had for him/her and underscored the inherent hierarchy. In most cases in the Bagot women's letters, the women left ample space in the left-hand margin and at the bottom of the document, possibly showing the extent to which the letterwriter abided by the authoritative discourse and centripetal forces of language established in the manuals discussed above. Yet in some cases, like in Folger MS L.a.606 (Figure 5) which is the only extant letter in Lettice's collection not written in her own hand, she still finds ways to use page's space to authorize the letter as her own. Here, she not only includes

her own signature in the bottom right-hand corner, but she also uses the left margin to write her own request to Walter—one that is much more direct than what is included in the body written by a secretary (See Figure 5).

In examples like this one, we see the letterwriter's text as a dialogic response to what would otherwise conform to the manuals' authoritative discourse by using space that "should" be left to show deference to the recipient and by marking her words as her own—not just through the content, but also through her own handwriting that contrasts the secretary's hand. In the note, Lettice requests, "good brother will you write unto me: what you give me counsel to do. I will be directed by you: but I have no reason to pass away any of my estate to pay him: for I have been used with all cruelty." This brief marginal note resists the letter's formal, mostly descriptive body that the secretary penned; thus, in this text, the utterance is a dialogic response that reflects the tensions between the "psyche and ideology" (as cited in Holquist, 1981). In other words, the tensions here between two ideological discourses help us better see this writer's "coming-to-consciousness" by adding her own interpretations to the message and thus resisting fully assimilating into the authoritative discourse that, as explained above, neglects her lived experience.

Adding to the tensions existing between Lettice's and the secretary's writing, both *visual* modes (her handwriting and use of space) represent centrifugal forces at play in the letter and show Lettice exploring the dialogic space to insert her voice and to make her appeal for help more authentically her own. What is particularly interesting and significant about spatial modes is the immediacy with which the writer's recipient could likely identify the authenticity of the writer's hand, the degree to which the writer was

showing her respect and her acceptance or rejection of her inferior position, and the level of input by third parties. This immediacy and the visual markings of one's own hand, or one's own interaction with the document, also helped fulfill the classical understanding of letterwriting as a genre that makes the writer present to the reader. Without taking important visual modes like these into account, we risk missing several elements of the writer's textual performance that, as Daybell argues, point us toward important issues of authenticity, secrecy, and the writer's duty to the recipient—a relationship that reveals the power dynamics at play in this gendered genre.

4. Risky Letters: Women's Emotional and Intellectual Risk-Taking

Several texts examined in this chapter show evidence of letters as a gendered space—one whose flexibility and its history of “transparency” and authenticity shape textual authority and performance in unprecedented ways. For instance, according to the classical rhetorician Demetrius of Phalerum, the letter “should abound in glimpses of character. It may be said that everybody reveals his own soul in his letters” (as cited in Henderson, 1983). This section explores how the Bagot women achieve “authenticity” through rhetorical means; the letters included here demonstrate that authenticity was conceived through careful and thoughtful rhetorical decisions, rather than through natural presentation, as Demetrius and other classical rhetoricians presumed. Here, several of the Bagot women rhetorically represent authenticity in their heartfelt and desperate petition letters to Walter and other (mostly male) members of the Bagot family. These texts show the women letterwriters encountering difficult situations and using the combined forces of genre and the modal affordances of the manuscript medium to petition for assistance.

More specifically, the letters provide examples of the Bagot women carefully navigating centripetal and centrifugal forces of language and participating in “contact zones” of the double-voiced discourse inherent to this genre. While the previous section looks predominantly at visual and material modes afforded by the manuscript medium, the next two sections focus more narrowly on the language and genre conventions in a couple of themes that emerged in my analysis. Yet, although I focus primarily on semantic content here, I also draw on the letters’ material and visual modes to reinforce the project’s central argument that modes, media, and genres interact with one another in dynamic ways and are never discrete. For example, aside from language, many women had limited material and financial resources or available letter carriers, as shown in the previous section, and thus their risk-taking is revealed not only through the letters’ content, but also the unconventional aspects of letterwriting, including messy handwriting, additional notes that were added *after* the letter’s body was penned by a third-party, and the visible evidence of unusual writing utensils being used. Most of the situations discussed in this section involve domestic unrest, usually the need to get away from an overbearing husband, mother-in-law or father-in-law, or someone else living in the same household who poses a threat, and the material and visual modes shared by the genre and medium reinforce the severity of desperation. In other words, like in the previous section, the content, material, and visual modes overlap in ways that make the gendered power dynamics more visible and help us better see the push-and-pull of these modes in each kairotic moment.

To analyze the letters' content, I primarily rely on Bakhtin's understandings of the dialogic and addressivity.¹⁶ Using these concepts, I mark moments where women are making meaning for themselves in this dialogic space by both participating in and speaking back to discourses of power. Furthermore, specifically using addressivity, I analyze how the writers are called into positions of authority through anticipating specific responses from their readers. Doing so has allowed me to more clearly see some of the nuances of women's authority in their texts and the extent to which they are pushed and pulled into specific positions in texts that could affect their mental and physical well-being. Some thematic characteristics include secrecy and requests for resources (either money or people) to help remove the writers from their current situations. The letter, as the following examples show, thus becomes a gendered space where women could take risks by revealing themselves and their situations through the genre's formal features, embedded language practices, and material modes. Furthermore, the very nature of these letters as *secret* correspondence puts the writer in a particularly vulnerable position and leads the women writers to refrain from "speaking back" to increase their chances of having their voices heard and their emotional and physical needs met; yet, completely succumbing to their readers' authority was rarely the case.

¹⁶ In Chapter One, I explain the usefulness of these theories. Specifically, I explain, "all dialogue is connected and participates in an ongoing system of communication that conditions repetition and language users' relationships to language and to each other." Furthermore, I explain addressivity to be helpful to investigating gendered power relations in texts: "using [Bakhtin's] understanding of addressivity to address the issues of gendered power dynamics in letterwriting, I analyze how women writers are pulled into multiple positions (as authors and imagined readers) causing tensions that directly affect the way female letterwriters negotiate positions of power in their text—through their acceptance and/or resistance of certain conventions that mark their gendered roles. In sum, addressivity is a dialogic act, with the voices of the writer and the imagined reader constantly communicating and playing off of one another in every act of writing—acts that can deepen the existing positions of power or change them.

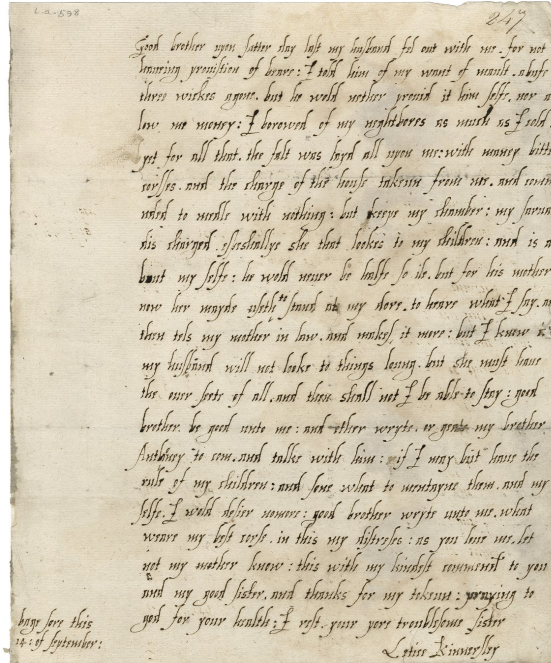


Figure 6: Folger MS L.a.598
 Lettice Kynnersley to Walter Bagot, 1608?
 September 14

One example of a desperate plea for help comes from Lettice Kynnersley, the same writer referenced in the chapter’s opening and Walter Bagot’s sister, who has fifteen letters in the collection, most of which offer details of domestic unrest and petitions for secrecy from her husband. Lettice, born in 1573, was the youngest of the Bagot children and married Francis Kynnersley, Esquire of Loxley on October 26, 1601 at twenty-eight years old. From the early days of their marriage, Lettice was under the direct supervision and control of Francis’s father Anthony Kinnnersley, who was resolute in controlling where the couple lived and *how* they lived. By 1605/06, after her father Richard passed away, Lettice was living in Badger against her father-in-law’s wishes, but Anthony was persistent and enacted revenge by using the couple’s land for timber without Lettice’s permission. Shortly after, Lettice began petitioning to Walter for help,

wanting to live away from her husband and her parents-in-law with her children.¹⁷ Of Lettice's fifteen extant letters, there are thirteen to Walter, one to his wife, Elizabeth, and one to her father, Richard.

Lettice's letters provide an interesting case in that she performs several roles: namely, a passive woman in need of resources *and* an authoritative presence who demands action be taken on her behalf. Presenting several co-existing roles in a single letter, Lettice is revealed to be an incredibly resourceful, rhetorically savvy letterwriter; her ability to perform multiple roles in her texts reveals how she navigated the letter's dialogic space through adopting and resisting certain conventions and making the space her own even in times of need. Her letters offer a glimpse of how the complex gendered power dynamics could be navigated through the combined forces of the rhetorical genre's formal and thematic conventions *and* its modal affordances to create a space that could help her create real action to benefit her and her family. Her language also adopts the privileged discourse of her husband and father-in-law (and the authoritative discourse of the letterwriting literature) *and* at times resists it to make her voice heard. In other words, Lettice's collection of letters offers a strong example of the productive "contact zone" resulting from the double-voiced discourse.

The manuscript in the archive that best captures Lettice's various positions is Folger MS L.a.598, written to Walter Bagot on September 14, 1608 (See Figure 6).¹⁸ The letter begins by rejecting a formal salutation (traditionally separated from the letter's body) and immediately dives into the matter at hand: "Good Brother upon Saturday last my husband fell out with me. For not having provision of beer, I told him of my want of

¹⁷ For more detailed information on Lettice's background and her marriage to Francis Kinnersley see Rosemary O'Day's *The Family and Family Relationships, 1500-1900*.

¹⁸ The year is an approximation, dated by the curators at the Folger Shakespeare Library.

malt, ...but he would neither provide it himself, nor allow me money.”¹⁹ In her opening, Lettice rejects a formal genre convention, but in doing so, she does not necessarily assume an authoritative position, as she privileges her husband’s authority by making him the subject of her sentence. Lettice continues to assume a passive position in the sentences that follow, explaining the details of the falling out in this description: “the fault was laid all upon me with many bitter crosses, and the charge of the house taken from me, and commanded to meddle with nothing, but keep [to] my chamber.” Removing herself from the active position in the letter’s opening, Lettice adopts a stance that relegates her to a submissive position in her own household and in her request to Walter, further distancing herself from the male authority figures through her language. The grammatical and syntactical constructions of her sentences reveal Lettice’s careful navigation of the letter’s dialogic space and her thoughtful consideration of her reader’s position and the likely success of her request.

To represent her lack of authority, Lettice ensures that she does not take an authoritative position in any part of her opening statement. But because of her desperation for help, later in the letter, she assumes a more commanding and authoritative tone when she says, “be good unto me: and either write, or get my brother Anthony to come and talk with him: if I may but have the rule of my children...I would desire no more. Good brother write unto me what were my best course in this my distress.” Shortly after, she also requests that Walter keep this information from their mother, presumably so that her mother would not be concerned for Lettice’s well-being. In short, Lettice’s transition from a passive position to a commanding one shows her navigating the push-and-pull of her own multiple roles and the roles of writer and reader that Bakhtin

¹⁹ Spelling has been modernized for the reader’s convenience.

theorizes in his concept of addressivity. In the letter's opening, Lettice retreats from an authoritative position through emphasizing the actions taken *against* her, thus placing her husband in a domineering, threatening position. Lettice thus utilizes the letter's dialogic potential by shifting to blatantly requesting—or demanding—that Walter take action; this shift shows the double-voiced nature of her letter through assuming positions that productively push against one another.

Supplementing her language choices, Lettice employs modalities of space and her own handwriting to create her presence in the letter. The slight slant of the characters and their elongated ascenders and descenders—the parts of letters that go either above or below the main portion, as in the letters “b” or “g”—are characteristic of Lettice's autograph letters. Similarly, she often leaves a considerable amount of space in the left margin (see Figures 5 and 6), visually marking the page as an autograph letter and thus authentically hers. While the wide left-hand margin was fairly typical during this time, Lettice's margins, as Figure 5 shows, were seemingly left strategically larger so that she could amend the text's body if needed. Furthermore, while Lettice does not leave much space in the bottom margin, possibly because of a lack of material resources and time, she nevertheless leaves “significant space” in other areas to present herself as subservient to her brother (as established in the contemporary letterwriting manuals' instructions) and to indicate that she, without the aid of an amanuensis, is requesting his help.

While Folger MS L.a.598 shows Lettice in one of her most desperate states, most of her other letters also include requests for resources or evidence that Lettice is concerned about her marriage and relationship with her husband's family. The differences in the severity of her situation are shown through the combined forces of

language and modal affordances. For instance, another letter to Walter, Folger MS L.a.599, written characteristically in Lettice's italic hand but dated a few years later, describes Lettice's lack of resources and her husband's unhappiness there. Similar to the previous letter, she begins by privileging her husband and his father's positions: "Good Brother I am afraid there is some disagreement between my husband and his father: that he makes no more hast home: having such earnest oration and his day of appearance." Although she places herself in the subject position in the first sentence, the opening line nevertheless privileges information regarding her husband's happiness rather than her own needs. Later, also similar to the previous letter, Lettice moves to her request for "God of his great mercy [to] help [her]," but immediately after making this request, she reverts to discussing her husband being "weary of tarrying here." In fact, Lettice does not take command of the message and request action from Walter until her post-script: "I pray you tell my husband / what I have written unto you, and good brother let him have your counsel."

This letter, when compared to the previous one to Walter, reveals Lettice consistently submitting herself to a more passive position throughout the letter's body and making less direct commands; in other words, the kairotic moment of her writing is less time-sensitive and allows her to be more submissive and less demanding. Yet, this letter is an interesting one to study because, unlike some of her others, Lettice asks that Walter share this letter's information with her husband rather than keeping it a secret. For this reason, Lettice complicates the position she creates for herself in the letter's body, as she initiates communication with her absent, unhappy husband through her brother. This particular letter, then, demonstrates a less "even" push-and-pull of the positions of the

writer and the imagined reader than the previous letter to Walter. Here, Lettice primarily privileges the positions of her husband, father-in-law, and the “imagined” reader (or rather, the audience she invokes in her response).²⁰ Thus, I argue here that Lettice’s letter deepens the existing positions of power because of the rhetorical choices she makes; yet, this decision is intentional because of her need to communicate with her absent husband through another patriarchal figure—a position she cannot assume in her own writings to her husband.

The complex nature of Lettice’s positioning is further revealed when she mentions, yet again, the distance between Lettice and her husband Francis in the single letter written to Walter’s wife, Elizabeth Bagot. This letter offers different examples of power dynamics at play through modal affordances in the genre and medium, as it is one of the few letters included in the collection between a female writer and female reader. In Folger MS L.a.600, dated around 1610 (the same year as Folger MS L.a.599), Lettice laments her inability to write to Elizabeth sooner: “Good Sister I thank my good Brother ~~for~~ and for your kind letter: I had no leisure to write unto you, when I sent your oranges.” Noticeably, Lettice’s opening to Elizabeth reveals a more agentive, authoritative position than the openings to her letters to Walter; she assumes the subject position several times in the introductory sentences, showing that the gap between writer and reader in terms of authority or social standing is narrower in this particular letter, most likely because of the writer and reader’s shared gender. Furthermore, the main content of the letter concerns a diamond ring which has come into Lettice’s possession and is an asset she wishes to sell. She tells Elizabeth her sister (Dorothy Okeover) sent a letter by “her man Francis

²⁰ Because of space limitations, I cannot fully address the nuances of “audience addressed” and “audience invoked,” but I do want to make clear that I adopt Ede and Lunsford’s (1984) understanding of the fluidity between a concrete audience and the audience as constructed by the writer.

Normand” to see how she was doing and also sent the “ring with a diamond in it, which for need of money / I must sell.” She continues, “if it please you, you shall have the refusing of them / before anyone. My husband shall not know I have them til I have sold them and paid the money where I owe it, although I did borrow it for his use.” This letter, like several others of Lettice’s, carries a secret that should not be revealed to her husband. Yet, she writes the letter anyway.

Unlike others of Lettice’s letters that contain secrets, however, this one to Elizabeth shows Lettice taking more ownership and control over this text throughout the entire letter. Toward the letter’s conclusion, for instance, Lettice remarks that her “husband shall not know [she has] them.” This statement reveals Lettice taking command of the situation by not just making a request, but by making a statement that has a threatening connotation and seemingly only one outcome: that her husband *shall not* find out about her possession of this ring. Lettice then closes the letter adopting a similar stance as the letter’s opening when she writes, “I take my leave remaining ever / Your loving sister.” Unlike most of her letters to Walter, here, Lettice does not label herself as the “poor troublesome” or “poor loving” sister. The closing to Elizabeth, in short, demonstrates Lettice’s ability to adapt to a different rhetorical situation that includes a female reader, assuming a more agentive stance, rejecting a passive position and dismissing the privileged positions of the male authority figures that mark her letters to Walter. Furthermore, Lettice’s letter to Elizabeth highlights how differently Lettice navigated the gendered, dialogic space of the letter when the reader she was addressing was not the Bagot family patriarch—instead, she can minimize the gap between her own and someone else’s words, wishes, and/or authority.

Like Lettice, other women in the collection make petitions for help and for secrecy that show them using the letter's productive dialogic tensions—speaking back when necessary and/or safe and assimilating to the privileged discourse(s) when the risks are too great. For example, Folger MS L.a.593 written in 1609 by Isabel Kinnersley to Walter Bagot, references a business matter, rather than a primarily domestic one, that she wishes to see resolved (See Figure 7). Written in a fairly neat italic hand, Isabel's two-page letter begins by describing this letter as a continuation of a face-to-face conversation she had with Walter at Loxley: "Thus Good sir having dispensed some part of my mind at your last being at Loxley I had thought to have said those things unto you that now I am forced to write upon that instant being then put in danger of my life." The opening of Isabel's letter accomplishes several rhetorical tasks that reveal conflicting but productive dialogic tensions. For instance, Isabel, like Lettice, plunges into the letter's content without a salutation. She also puts herself in a dominant subject position (at least grammatically), making it clear that she remembers giving Walter "some part of [her] mind" at their last meeting and wanting him to remember it, as well. In the same opening sentence, Isabel explains she is "forced to write" to him now because she is in danger. She continues describing the direness of her situation, expressing that she must write to Walter very hastily and that she is locked up in her chamber "as a poor prisoner" and unable to "go abroad." And, she discusses the danger she is in just for writing the letter: "I beseech you as I have made myself bold to trouble you so I pray you that that you will not let this letter be seen nor that any of this should come from me..."

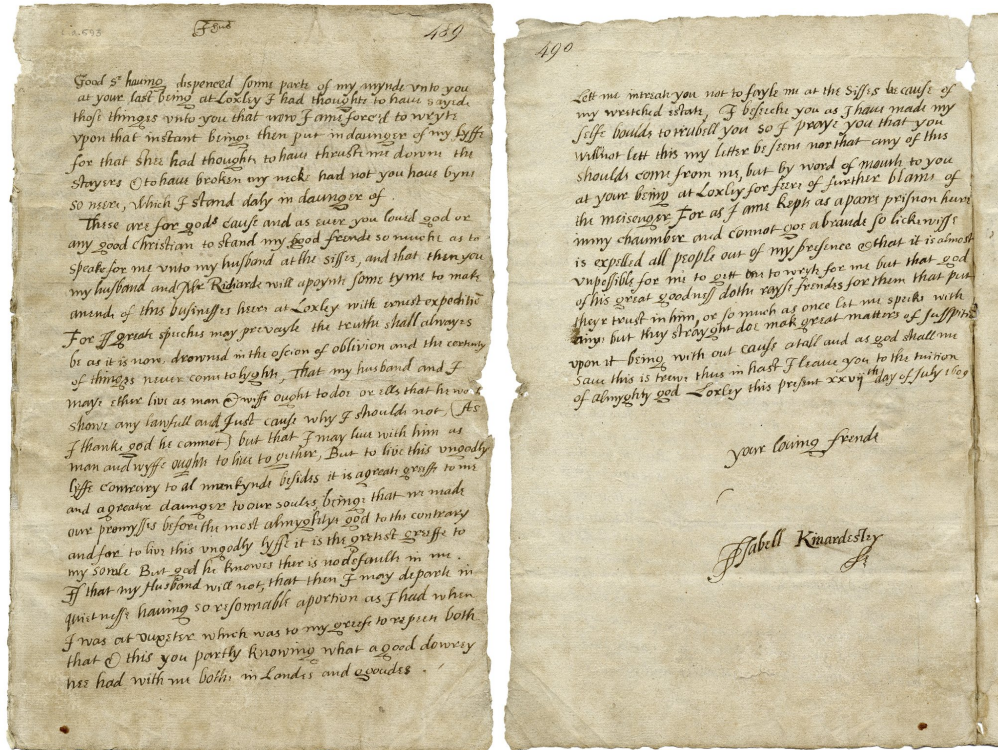


Figure 7: Folger MS L.a.593
Isabel Kinnersley to Walter Bagot, 27 July 1609

Here, Isabel owns her boldness in making this request. She also expresses her desire that this news not come from *her* but rather from “word of mouth.” This part of Isabel’s request is particularly interesting because she is deferring her control over the situation to mere *gossip*. The knowledge that she was able to write a letter (or to get a secretary to write for her) would put both her and her messenger in further danger.²¹ Gossip thus offers a much safer alternative. In sum, like Lettice, Isabel has to remove herself from a position of authority because of the risk involved in her situation; to do so, she strikes a balance between agentive and passive positions through engaging in the dialogic—she assimilates to the discourses of power as much as necessary, but then resists this

²¹ Stewart and Wolfe (2004) comment on the need for assistance in writing and sending the letter. The scholars describe this letter as one that shows the “importance of the mechanics of lettering in the period: how Kinardesley [alternate spelling] needs someone to write for her, someone to deliver the letter, and for all involved to deny that such a letter ever existed” (p. 163).

discourse in reminding Walter of their previous interaction when she more freely gave him “some part of [her] mind.”

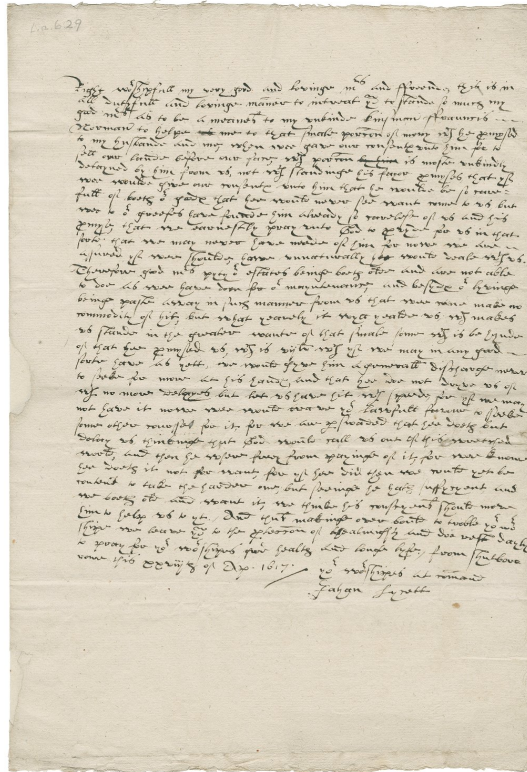


Figure 8: Folger MS L.a.629
Jane Lycett to Dorothy Okeover, 28 April 1617

Aside from the language she uses, Isabel also expertly plays with conventions referenced in some of the manuals regarding the significance of space, as she leaves ample room between the body and her signature: “your loving friend / Isabel Kinnersley” (See Figure 7). In using this mode, Isabel visually marks herself as subservient to Walter and reinforces the letter’s consistent pathetic appeals. Further evidence of the spatial significance includes the amount of paper she allocates for this letter, especially since paper was such a valuable commodity during this time. By using two sheets, she is able to leave significant space for “white space,” revealing that this letter and its recipient are worthy of the extra material resources needed for it. In short, Isabel’s letter—through the

rhetorical moves in the content *and* in the visual markings of her “presence”—is one that responds to a real, threatening situation. Isabel’s letter emphasizes her desperation and her skill in engaging gendered power dynamics in her writing—she carefully acknowledges Walter’s authority (through referencing previous conversations), while simultaneously highlighting her current vulnerability through adopting certain conventions that reinforce the power dynamics in the letter.

Slightly different from the aforementioned petitions for help is Jane Lycett’s letter (Folger MS L.a.629; see Figure 8), written to Dorothy Okeover, another of Walter’s sisters. The letterwriter’s and recipient’s positionalities make this letter useful to study—the writer and recipient are both women, and the two do not appear to have as close of a relationship as some of the other female correspondents. This letter explains a situation in which Jane and her husband, who have become less independent in their old age, have been denied an owed payment by Francis Norman.²² She writes to Dorothy:

Right Worshipful my very good and loving mrs and friend, this is in all dutiful and loving manner to entreat you to stand so much my good mrs as to be a means to my unkind kinsman Francis—Norman to help—me to that small portion of money which he promised to my husband and me when we gave our consent unto him for to sell our land...which portion by him is most unkindly detained by him from us.

Jane’s salutation praises her friend and emphasizes her message is meant to be “dutiful” and “loving.” But within the same sentence, Jane introduces her request: her need for Dorothy to make sure that she and her husband get the sum of money promised to them. Toward the middle of the letter’s body, Jane shifts into a more vulnerable position that emphasizes her age and inability to take this matter into her own hands: “There good mrs pity our estates being both old and are not able to do as we have done...” As she moves

²² Francis Norman was described in one of Lettice’s letters as Dorothy Okeover’s “man” (cf Folger MS L.a.599).

into the letter's closing, she makes her final request that resembles many of Lettice's requests to Walter: "Now we would crave your lawful favor to seek some other courses for it, for we are persuaded that he doth but delay us thinking that God would call us out of this wretched world and then he were free from paying of it." This last portion, through the use of references to God and language like "wretched world," underscores the pity she is trying to evoke from Dorothy and also reveals her reliance on authoritative discourse for her final plea for assistance. In other words, Jane opens the letter using her own authority and relationship with Dorothy to explain the matter at hand, but by the letter's conclusion, she has shifted to authoritative discourse, relying on references to God and the Almighty. As in the letters from the other Bagot women, Dorothy engages in the productive tension of the dialogic to make meaning for herself and for her reader.

The letter's materiality also sheds light on Jane's negotiation of power; Jane does not leave the recommended amount of white space before her signature to show the relationship between someone in need and one who can grant a favor to meet that need, even though she closes the letter with the deferential "your worships at command" (See Figure 8). I drew two conclusions regarding this lack of additional space: 1) the writer takes more liberty with conventions because she is writing to another woman and/or 2) she wants to leave more space at the bottom of the page so that her reader can respond in the margins if necessary. While I can only speculate about the author's intentions, the letter nevertheless shows all of the text on the page in essentially one block; the salutation, though very respectful and polite, is not separated from the body, and the writer's signature is just barely removed from the letter's body, as well. Because of the letter's overall visual elements, it is easy to detect a misalignment between the writer's

request and the visual representation of her reverence to her reader. This misalignment, I argue, indicates the wide range of possibilities for women to negotiate positions of authority and power in a medium that is seemingly simple and “flat,” or monomodal.

Though each situation varies, this sample of women’s letters reveals how the writers used affordances of the genre and medium to create opportunities for risk-taking and to assume multiple positions within a single text. Lettice’s series of letters, for example, demonstrates a prolonged petition for assistance and reveals subtle but significant differences in the language she uses in letters to her brother and her single letter to his wife; her letters reveal a great deal of play with subject position and with specific phrases that show a fluctuation and productive tension between discourses. Other women writers in the collection, like Isabel or Jane, only have one to two extant letters in the collection, which could be a result of quickly resolved problems, *or* their other letters might not have been kept and preserved. Nevertheless, these women’s letters show similar instances of playing with positionality and with assuming or deferring authority depending on the situation – or their ability to take advantage of a kairotic moment – and how they assumed the reader would respond. In sum, through a combined analysis of language practices and the uses of the material space’s modes, the wide range of potential for resisting and assimilating to discourses of power in an individual letter becomes much clearer and reduces the tendency to flatten the letters’ meaning.

5. Women Taking Control: Assuming Authority Through Letterwriting

As the previous section suggests, even women who found themselves in desperate situations were able to assume multiple positions of authority through thoughtfully using a range of rhetorical means available to them: the inherently-dialogic letter and the

medium's materiality. The central modes afforded by both the genre and the medium were used to help these women receive emotional or physical relief. Other letters, however, show women taking on more explicit authoritative positions in the household—mostly as active and knowledgeable businesswomen. This section discusses such positions by focusing on both the actions described in the letters (i.e., what is supposedly happening in real life), and more importantly, ways the women rhetorically emphasize their business expertise. One letter that serves both functions comes from Elizabeth Bagot, Walter's wife (Folger MS L.a.48), the only extant letter from Elizabeth in the Bagot collection. The letter opens with a conventionally brief salutation and a focus on Walter and his journey. She writes, "My good Watt; I have received your letter, and give god thanks for your good health; and safety in your journey." She continues by focusing on Walter's request to her: "You writ to me to send you a black box of writings, which I have sent you by this bearer." Elizabeth's introduction, as these couple of sentences attest, clearly ascribes the agentive role to Walter—his journey and his request for a box of specific documents; however, the grammatical construction places Elizabeth in the agentive position. *She* receives the letter and expresses gratitude for Walter's well-being. The opening, then, sets up dialogic tensions resulting from Elizabeth's roles as dutiful wife and a savvy, resourceful businesswoman.

In the next lines, Elizabeth more clearly takes ownership and authority over the text. She explains that she has entered Walter's study and is navigating his office space using her own knowledge of the space and the documents he needs. She writes that she has sent him a "black box of writings" and then details what is included: "parcels, 2 fines, one feoffment and one exemplification...I found [them] at Blithefield myself in your

study this day, and by chance knew them withou[t any] help.” Because this letter appears to have been penned by a secretary (discussed in more detail below), this particular line is an important rhetorical maneuver in the letter. First, Elizabeth includes the correct names of each document she is sending to Walter, showing her participation in these business genres, even if just from the marginal position of a housewife. Second, again, she places herself in the subject position of the next sentence and adds the pronoun “myself” for emphasis: “I found [them]...*myself*” (emphasis added). Yet, Elizabeth then adds that she “by chance knew them withou[t any] help” at the end of the sentence, which I argue shows a tension between authoritative positions in the text. By adding “by chance,” Elizabeth momentarily relinquishes her control and knowledge, and even her own literacy, by explaining that it was merely *chance* or *luck* that she was able to find them without assistance. In this one line alone, the double-voiced discourse of Elizabeth’s letter is clear: her authority in finding and reading the documents pushes against her typical place in the household and marginal participation in her husband’s business matters.²³

In addition to Elizabeth’s rhetorically savvy writing, the letter’s materiality reveals conflict among the many positions that Elizabeth assumes in the text. For instance, Elizabeth has a secretary pen the letter’s body, which she then signs in her own italic hand.²⁴ Daybell (2012) writes that in contrast to autograph letters, “Scribal letters

²³ On this specific document, Rebecca Laroche writes that Elizabeth’s letter:
...depicts a purportedly rare foray of the wife into her husband’s study...Lady Bagot’s pride in knowing these documents ‘without help’ hints that she has had some exposure both to the space of the study and to such documents but was expected not to be comfortable when confronted with either. One can imagine, however, that Walter Bagot’s absence from the household puts much of the estate affairs in the hands of his wife. (n.pag.)

²⁴ This manuscript actually contains *four different* hands. Rebecca Laroche writes, “The original manuscript reveals the presence of four hands within this one everyday artifact. Hand A, a secretary hand, composes

[...] represent a more formal mode of writing, connected to government, ambassadorial, legal and business spheres” (p. 87). Here, Elizabeth visually displays her knowledge of this more specific subgenre of letterwriting by having a secretary write the letter, and by conforming to generic convention in making this letter concise (just 12 lines). In this instance, Elizabeth acquires a secretary to adhere to generic convention to further demonstrate her rhetorical knowledge and skill, whereas in some of the other cases discussed above, the secretary was needed because the writer was physically unable to pen the letter *or* was perhaps not literate. In short, Elizabeth uses a secretary in addition to her own signature to complement the rhetorical maneuvers made in the letter’s body.

As Elizabeth Bagot does in her letter, other women writers used the manuscript letter as a space to display their knowledge or authority in the home; however, some women writers used the space to more directly usurp control over male readers/writers. In other words, some women took more risks by combining genre and media affordances in kairotic moments where they had the upperhand over their male readers. For example, in a letter from Walter Bagot to Barbara Crompton dated July 6, 1616 (Folger MS L.a.145), Walter asks Barbara and her daughter to extend a loan they made to him, writing “if you can conveniently spare it to continue in my hands six months more I will be thankful to you for it.” Significantly, on the same page in the space Walter left in the bottom margin, Barbara writes her response in a joking manner, explaining that “Bagot’s mulct for breaking his time will be a piece of venison for her daughter, for ‘many times, great-

the body of the letter, the closing, and the address. Hand B, an italic hand, comprises the signature. While the signature pressure presumably belongs to Elizabeth Bagot herself, the secretary hand could very well belong to a household secretary or amanuensis, given the relative wealth of the Bagot family” (n.pag.). Laroche also notes the steadiness of the body’s secretary hand in contrast to the “hesitancy in the signature,” which she concludes means that the secretary hand (Hand A) was not Elizabeth’s own handwriting.

bellied women think of such novelties.’ (“Bagot Family Papers Finding Aid”).²⁵ Mocking Walter in this line is another example of the double-voiced discourse in the letter: by relying on humor here and ignoring the seriousness of Walter’s request, Barbara subverts traditional gendered power dynamics.

In addition to her mockery, Barbara assumes an assertive role by displaying little care for minute details like neat handwriting that would show her respect to Walter. In fact, her response is nearly illegible as it is scribbled in a large, sprawling italic handwriting at the bottom of the page (See Figure 9). Furthermore, Barbara fails to use space to show her deference to the reader (presumably intentionally), as her signature placed tightly in the bottom left-hand corner suggests. I argue that the only conventional aspect of Barbara’s response is the closing before her signature: “I pray remember my love to your good wife your ever true the loving friend / Barbara Crompton.” Because Barbara has financial power over Walter, then, she engages unconventional uses of the letter (in content and form) to further enact her authority. The combination of her skilled use of humor *and* refusal to participate in traditional conventions in her handwriting and use of the paper itself provides yet another example of how the genre and medium work together through modal affordances to help women writers create multiple positions of authority—in this case, by usurping control through every means available.

²⁵ This reference contains a joke specific to the cultural moment; the meaning of the joke itself is unimportant here, but I have included this excerpt to show that Barbara Crompton “punishes” Walter and uses humor to assert her authority over him. Crompton uses material and visual space *and* language to speak back to traditional power dynamics in the letter.

The image shows a handwritten letter on aged, yellowed paper. The paper has the number 'L.a. 45' written in the top left corner. The text is written in a cursive hand and is divided into two main sections. The first section is a longer paragraph of text, followed by a date '6 July 1616' and a signature 'Walter Bagot'. The second section is a shorter paragraph of text, followed by a signature 'Barbara Crompton'. There is a small vertical mark on the left side of the second section, possibly a reference or a mark from a reader.

Figure 9: Folger MS L.a.45
Barbara Crompton to Walter Bagot, 1616 July 6

Other letters from the collection similarly reveal women asserting authority in business transactions, though often in less direct ways than Barbara Crompton. For example, Anne Broughton, another of Walter's sisters, has eleven letters in the collection, most of which contain references to material goods she has sent with her letters. Unlike Barbara, Anne is not in a position of direct authority and thus must navigate the modal affordances of the genre and medium more carefully. In her letters, she explains sending her father provisions for her mother and materials to make multiple family members clothing (Folger MS L.a.223) and sugar and pepper that she has obtained for the family (Folger MSS L.a.224 and 225). In Folger MS L.a.227, Anne begins the letter, as many other Bagot women do, by responding directly to her father's letter and his wish for her to get a

chain weighed and appraised for him with some money her uncle loaned to her. Throughout the letter, Anne assumes the role of a dutiful daughter, often using phrases like “if it please you” and “craving your daily blessing.” Such phrases reveal Anne deferring authority to her father; yet Anne makes her savvy business nature known throughout the letter, explaining how she will get a loan, negotiate rates for fish, and buy spices for her mother. Additionally, Anne’s letter (and several others in her collection) utilizes the letter’s common “gift-giving” function, which could also be perceived as an authoritative move. Sarah Jayne Steen (2001) comments that the “physical letter itself [was] a token of personal affection,” so Anne’s letters with accompanying provisions and material goods for the family could be perceived as gift-giving on several levels (p. 59).²⁶ Finally, out of eleven extant letters, only one is autograph, and typically, *autograph* letters were primarily perceived as gifts because of their assumed authenticity. What this suggests about Anne’s letters, I argue, is that there are several tensions at play: 1) the dialogic tensions that reflect the conflicting, dual positions of businesswoman and dutiful daughter; and 2) the tensions between the letter as a gift and as a space for business matters. In other words, even though Anne also includes other personal matters and writes about sending provisions and other goods as gifts to her family, she might have chosen to use a secretary to deliver this information because it was, as Daybell (2012) notes, customary for letters regarding business to be written by an amanuensis. In sum, Anne assumes multiple positions—the dutiful daughter and the savvy businesswoman—through her expert use of letterwriting conventions and careful language choices, and her

²⁶ Gary Schneider (2005) similarly supports this argument, writing “...letters were crucial material bearers of social connection, instruments by which social ties were initiated, negotiated, and consolidated. Indeed, letters frequently accompanied gifts, and the relationship between letters and gift giving was a close one” (p. 27).

letters create an opportunity for the movement of goods *and* for continued communication and community within her family.

Other women's letters in the Bagot collection include business matters and contain evidence of engaging in dialogic tensions to meet their needs; such tensions are different in these letters, however, because of the relationships between writer and recipient. For instance, Judith Basset (also known as Lady Corbet) is a correspondent of Walter's, but the distant relationship between them is evident throughout the text and shows more nuanced ways of negotiating gendered power dynamics. Lady Corbet writes a letter dated October 15, 1608 and explains that a Mr. Basford has written a petition to attain some of her land that she assures Walter is false. She begins the letter: "Good Mr. Bagot I have seen (by you and Mr Wright) the petition of Basford, and my Lord's letter unto you in the same; and have thoroughly noted the same, *because I find no truth in his petition*" (emphasis mine, Folger MS L.a.394). Her opening places herself in the position of authority, explaining she has seen and comprehended the content of both Basford's petition and her lord's letter to Walter. Establishing herself as the subject of the sentences and then claiming to know the "truth," which she claims not to have found in Basford's petition, Lady Corbett uses the letter's space to *take*, rather than merely *record*, her authority on this matter. Even here, however, the letter's double-voiced discourse is apparent: Lady Corbett assumes the authoritative position in the sentence through her grammatical choices, yet she also draws on Walter's patriarchal authority by referencing his part in Basford's petition. After accusing Basford of taking advantage of her husband's death, she engages in varying positions of authority through asking Walter to consider her "credible information" and to "charitably think of [her], that [she] will

always carry [her]self in [her] businesses, [and] that [she] will not any way be...occasion of the trouble of so honorable a person.” Hoping that Walter perceives her as a credible and trustworthy source, she then states her desire for Walter to give her “encouragement to punish so lewd a fellow.” She only asks for encouragement from Walter, however, and clearly wants to enact the punishment herself. Lady Corbett’s letter contains more evidence of a woman writer vacillating between a position of vulnerability and one of authority by requesting permission and help, but also claiming authority through her knowledge of the “truth” and her desire to take action for herself to protect her family from further injustice.

Like Lady Corbett’s letter, letters from Margaret Trew, another of Walter’s sisters, display an assertion of authority and an attempt to reclaim what she knows is rightfully hers and her family’s. Because Margaret is Walter’s sister, however, she uses modal affordances and the dialogic slightly differently than Lady Corbett. In one case, Margaret reveals her frustration with Walter, but she shrouds her displeasure by opening and closing the letter with conventional ingratiating remarks—another clear example of dialogic tensions at play in the letter. Specifically, in Folger MS L.a.901, Margaret subtly chastises Walter to encourage him to pay her son Sale the full amount Walter promised. She starts the letter, written in secretary hand, rather conventionally with “Good brother, I thank you for letting my Son Sale...have his money at his coming over.” Her gratitude, however, abruptly ends when she shifts to describing her displeasure with Walter’s lack of follow-through. She writes, “Now if you do well remember at your being at Snelston [her home] I put you in remembrance of ten pound more,” and she continues, “I hope you will remember it, or if you cannot I make no doubt but I shall easily put you in mind

thereof at our meeting; and thus much having a convenient messenger *I thought good to let you understand*" (emphasis mine, Folger MS L.a.901). Here, Margaret makes it clear that she is assuming the authoritative role and is, in a sense, doing Walter a favor by "let[ting him] understand" that she remembers his promise. Right after this statement, however, Margaret reverts to a polite and gracious tone, wishing Walter and his wife good health and signing her name with "Your poor loving sister," thus bookending the letter with conventional, formulaic statements and displays of gratitude and respect, even though she is clearly dissatisfied with the matter that makes up the letter's body. In doing so, Margaret engages in the letter's dialogic capabilities by oscillating between adhering to conventions like the genre's salutation and closing and her own stance on the position, which she must insert carefully and thoughtfully to ensure that the reader takes action on her behalf.

As this sample of letters demonstrates, women not only wrote to male family members for assistance, but also took advantage of letterwriting to display their knowledge of certain matters—most of which required them to be literate—and to assert their authority in moments in which they felt slighted. Their rhetorical dexterity in making humorous comments and moving between deferential remarks to their readers and commanding language shows that they have authority and *confidence* in that authority and can take advantage of the centripetal and centrifugal forces that the dialogic space of the letter offers them. Additionally, they use the material means to assume an authoritative and agentive position, through taking over margins, neglecting the "usual" amount of space left for the signature, and subverting the expectation for neat, polished handwriting. The letters in this section, then, reinforce the argument that studying

semantic content alongside materiality shows the possibilities that genre, medium, *and* modalities carry and often leads to uncovering a complex reinstatement and/or subversion of gendered power structures that exist in the letter.

6. Genre Awareness: Consciousness of Epistolary Culture

Writers' explicit references to letterwriting culture and to the letter's visual modes further show gendered power dynamics that are sedimented and/or subverted through references to the length of time between correspondence, or the absence of certain information from the written letter (but with references to the messenger's responsibility to relay that information in person), among others. This rhetorical awareness and knowledge of the epistolary tradition are the subjects of this last section and, I argue, once again reveal tensions existing among multiple positions of authority between the writer and her reader. A couple of examples addressed in previous sections include references to "sloppy" or "crude" handwriting and how it corresponded with the writer's physical and/or emotional state (see Figure 4). Such references are typically accompanied by apologies, as the women writers are acutely aware of how important the letter's visual appeal was to the reader. The acknowledgement of such features, I argue, strengthens the conclusions regarding women's practice of this rhetorical genre and their meta-awareness—or "conscious reflexive knowledge"—of the genre that shows an even deeper understanding of how rhetorical *strategies*, rather than merely *conventions*, are used in genre performances that can subvert sedimented gendered power dynamics (Freedman, 1994; Devitt, 2012).²⁷ In this section, I point to some of the areas where this broader

²⁷ Aviva Freedman's (1994) explanation of genre consciousness is used primarily in a pedagogical context but has direct import for any study of marginalized participants learning, practicing, and reflecting on genre use and performance. She writes, "...such critical consciousness becomes possible only *through* the [genre] performance: full genre knowledge...only becomes available *as a result of having written*. First comes the

knowledge of genre strategies is present, and I also focus on aspects of epistolary culture, including other *modes*, that are not inherent to the letter itself to uncover other ways women were balancing a delicate line between taking and relinquishing authority in any given text.

First, letters examined in this section include references to the presence of and reliance on messengers and mentions of the amount of time it will take to deliver and receive a response. Gary Schneider (2005) comments on the importance of such mentions of letterwriting in “preserv[ing] epistolary continuity”; he notes “common phrases [such] as ‘I answered your letter of the letter of the 24th of July from Askot, where I since received another of yours of the fift of August...’ –dates, place, and bearer often stated explicitly” (p. 56). Schneider suggests that these references reveal apprehension about the post and successful transmission of letters during this time, but anxieties about delivery may not have always been the cause for these references; rather, in some cases, it could be concluded that women made such references to instigate a speedier response, to take authority over the correspondence, or to privilege aural/oral modes rather than written ones. In such a case, the mention of the time or speed would be a rhetorical move—one that reveals genre consciousness that goes beyond the written word or piece of paper being delivered. A slightly different example of this consciousness includes women specifically referencing or naming their messengers and describing the directions they have given to the male carriers. The letters from women that contain secrets or seek relief from oppressive situations and name the men who wrote or carried the letters are

achievement or performance, with the tacit knowledge implied, and then, through that, the meta-awareness which can flower into conscious reflexive knowledge” (p. 206). Similarly, Amy Devitt’s (2004) definition of meta-awareness in *Writing Genres* focuses on a broader knowledge of *strategies*, rather than mere conventions or practices. She explains, “meta-awareness of genres, as learning strategies rather than static features” (p. 197).

particularly important; these carriers were trusted with the women's secrets and with their livelihoods. These men also often mediated the women's gendered authority by presenting the woman's situation or story with their own inflections through a different mode: oral communication. The women letterwriters (discussed below), then, appeared to have understood the significance of the secretaries and messengers' oral additions—knowledge that I argue reveals more than tacit genre knowledge, but instead a deeper understanding of the broader culture surrounding the genre.

Importantly, such reflections and references to other participants in a letter's delivery help us better see how some conventions transfer to later epistolary genres, like the epistolary novel analyzed in the next chapter, and reinforce the letter's connection to gender. For example, Folger MS L.a.593 by Isabel Kinnersley analyzed above reveals that her letter was written by a third party when she says, it was *almost* “impossible for [her] to get one to write for [her].” But aside from the secretary, there were many other people involved in getting the letter and its message to the recipient. In fact, messengers were often named in the letters, and several references to giving the messengers more information than what the writer felt comfortable writing in the letter are included, as well. Because of the messengers' vital role, James Daybell (2012) remarks that the messengers or bearers could be thought of as “corporeal extensions of the letter; meaning was therefore generated orally and materially as well as textually. The exigencies of dispatch, the sudden arrival and departure of a bearer, could encourage an urgent immediacy among letter-writers” (p. 24). Because the bearer had such a critical role in letterwriting culture—through not only delivering the letter, but extending the letterwriter's message (and extending the *letterwriter's* presence) in face-to-face

communication—references to these messengers offer insight into how letterwriting culture facilitated deeply complex genre performances *and* was multimodal in ways that often go ignored in scholarly conversations.

Many of the Bagot letters support this conclusion with their references to bearers, convenience of the messenger's arrival/departure, and the writer's desire for the messenger to orally deliver additional information. Elizabeth Bagot's letter to Walter (Folger MS L.a.48, analyzed above), for example, includes this note: "For our friends in these parts, and the state of our business in these parts here, I refer to the report of this bearer." Given that this statement is included at the end of the letter, after the important information regarding the "black box of writings" that Walter needed, we can assume that Elizabeth is not using the messenger because of her anxiety about the letter's delivery as Schneider posits, but instead she is using the messenger to convey information that she deems irrelevant to the letter. Elizabeth makes a rhetorical choice here—the choice to relegate this less important information to the messenger delivering her letter. References like this one thus reinforce Elizabeth's genre consciousness and further reflect the dialogic tensions as explained in the previous section: sharp tensions that reveal conflicting positions of authority existing in a single text. Furthermore, this detail reveals another modal affordance—aural modes—that are not directly connected to the manuscript itself. This one example, then, reveals how a broader view of epistolary culture and genre consciousness reinforces analyses of the content and the paper's material and tactile form.

Like Elizabeth, Lettice also has a letter in the collection in which she has her messenger convey information to Walter for reasons presumably other than her fear of

the letter being misdirected or intercepted by the wrong hands; instead, Lettice uses her messenger to verify information about her current situation. In Folger MS L.a.605, Lettice mentions that the bearer can attest to her emotional state. She writes, “This bearer can tell you in what a distressed case I am in: and much worse I had been but for him.” Here, Lettice uses the messenger to validate her credibility and the authenticity of her emotional state; and importantly, she notes that he had a part in helping her alleviate some of her suffering. In a sense, this letter is unique in that it shows the messenger as not only a “corporeal extension of the letter,” but also as an extension of the letterwriter and her distress. The bearer’s task to affirm the sender’s emotional state and presumably report other details regarding his involvement in helping relieve her are evidence of Lettice’s knowledge of the messenger’s unique function in the epistolary community—she recognizes him as someone who can transport the physical letter *and* one who has a deep enough knowledge of her current emotional and physical needs to confirm her credibility. As in the previous example, Lettice’s use of the bearer and references to his presence and participation in her situation add yet another layer to her authority.

Finally, as noted in Gary Schneider’s excerpt, many writers comment on the date and time of the last letter they received from the correspondent. Schneider argues that these references serve to strengthen epistolary continuity, and many of the Bagot letters show evidence of this. Some of the references are quite complicated like this one from Walter to his sister Margaret Trew: “Good sister I am very glad to hear of your good health by this bearer by whom I understand you are desirous to know my answer unto that message delivered from you unto me by your son” (Folger MS L.a.150). Others contain simple references to the time and date of the last letter sent or received, such as a

letter from Walter's step niece Jane Skipwith to his son Lewis Bagot. Three days after her previous letter, Jane writes to Lewis in a frustrated state because she has not heard from him yet. She writes:

You may see what slight occasions I take to write you; although I writ but two days before, I received no letter from you by our carrier, which I do much wonder at because you promised me I should and if you knew but how welcome your letters are to me, you would not be so sparing of them. (Folger MS L.a.853)

What seems most significant here is that Jane's reference to the lapsing of time since she received a letter from Lewis reinforces a theme of indebtedness to the letterwriter that occurs frequently in letters from this time period (Earle, 1999; Schneider, 2005). This time stamp also places her in an authoritative position—she has now written him twice in hopes of a response. During this time period, the relationship between writer and recipient was at risk if one wrote more frequently to the other—hence Jane's apparent frustration that her letters have not been “repaid.” Subtle notes like the time and date of the last response offer us yet another piece of evidence into women writers' generic consciousness and expert use of traditional epistolary practice that, in some cases, helped women subvert traditional gendered power dynamics in these texts.

In sum, the letters referenced in this section reveal a consciousness of certain generic conventions and multimodal epistolary practices that provide a fuller picture of how women used letterwriting to place multiple positions or roles in productive tensions with one another. Furthermore, for many of the women included in this chapter, the messengers and secretaries were their lifelines and were essential in helping them receive assistance needed to get out of danger, and their reliance on these men offer evidence of the direness of their situations and how well they understood epistolary culture. They knew, for instance, that these men could verify and expand on their emotional and

physical well-being, adding credibility to the women's stories that might, for whatever reason, be questioned.

Conclusion

The letterwriters presented in this chapter make some of the invisible practices of letterwriting more visible and accessible, allowing us the opportunity to draw conclusions about complex negotiations of power as they were written into the letters—in content and form—and sometimes extended in a corporeal form. The Bagot letters included here also reveal important practices about epistolary writing in a period that was so influential to generic change in the subsequent time periods to which I turn my attention next. By combining theories of genre, media, and modality, we are better able to see the letter's potential for providing resources for women to balance carefully their submissive roles and their desires to be heard through assuming an authoritative stance.

What also results from this conclusion that the letter's potential for meaning-making was much broader than we might have previously considered is that the genre of the letter tends to resist simple theorization. This conclusion aligns with Gary Schneider's (2005) assessment of early modern letters: "Although letters were present everywhere, they seem to exist nowhere: they were frequently the 'invisible' means of a great portion of sociocultural interaction, yet are rarely analyzed in and of themselves." (p. 286). By taking a closer look at the letters themselves through a multi-pronged theoretical lens that considers the dialogic genre, media, and modes, we can draw richer conclusions about the women's expert use of their rhetorical knowledge and the strategic ways they made their voices heard from (and in) the margins. In the case of the Bagot women, the detailed analyses of individual texts show how each woman drew from a range of rhetorical

choices—from genre and media affordances—to privilege specific roles in the household and in business matters and to position themselves carefully depending on the reader and the kairotic moment. In each case, the letterwriter’s choices reveal how her positions of power could be subverted or strengthened. In the cases that follow, similar rhetorical choices are required, but the resources available look different and become more complex as genres and media proliferate, further complicating how gendered power dynamics become reinscribed as genres and media evolve.

CHAPTER THREE

EPISTOLARY CHANGE AT THE CROSSROADS OF PRINT AND MANUSCRIPT: (EMERGING) LETTER FORMS IN EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY ENGLAND

Introduction

In *Epistolary Bodies* (1996), Elizabeth Cook asks this question of the eighteenth-century letter: “If the rhetorical structure of the letter always makes us ask, ‘Who writes, and to whom?’, the eighteenth-century letter-narrative provokes a more specific question: ‘What does it mean to write from the crossroads of public and private, manuscript and print, at this particular historical moment?’” (p. 5). In response to Cook’s question, this chapter is in many ways about *crossroads* and *change*—specifically the media and modal changes that facilitated emerging genres in the eighteenth century and fostered opportunities for shifting gendered power in these “new” spaces. The chapter explores some of these changes in depth by examining the writings of epistolographer and printer Samuel Richardson, whose works—including handwritten personal letters, printed letterwriting manuals, and printed epistolary novels—drew on the authority of both manuscript and print media to respond to personal and cultural exigencies. The analysis shows several forces that pushed and pulled these epistolary corollary genres into being and into a relationship with one another—a relationship that facilitated sustainable

relationships, authentic expression, and opportunities for gendered authority that were central to the letter's success across media transitions. In providing evidence to support these claims, the chapter considers historical and contextual factors in its analysis, including the following: 1) Richardson's obsession with hierarchy and power dynamics [not just social class, as several scholars have noted, but also with gender]; 2) the epistolary genre as viewed and practiced by Richardson who had the dual positions of author *and* printer; 3) and the recursivity of genre/media/modal processes that were shifting to provide conditions for different forms of gendered authority—conditions that made the author's presence seem more authentic and that fostered consistent and sustainable epistolary exchanges and relationships between writers.

To examine these phenomena in the eighteenth century, I rely on the theories of media, modes, and rhetorical genre theory introduced in Chapter One and add a focus on genre *systems* (see definition below), which I argue become increasingly important in this time period because of the proliferation of epistolary forms. Furthermore, I apply Bakhtin's theories of the dialogic and addressivity to Richardson's personal letters, his manual, and selected letters from the novel *Clarissa*. In this chapter, I argue that Richardson's epistolary texts are participating in two types of letter genres that are not mutually exclusive—vernacular, everyday genres and commercial genres—and that each of Richardson's epistolary texts shows the close, parallel relationship between rhetorical genres and media and their shared modal affordances, as explained in Chapter One. Richardson's careful use of the multiple available modes offers him the necessary semiotic resources to perform gendered characterizations and personas in his texts and solicit feedback from his community of readers. Examining both manuscript and print

epistolary forms from an individual participant—whose activity spanned genres, media, and gendered discourse—illustrates the nuanced ways writers during this transitional moment were navigating and appropriating the authority of both media to shape opportunities for new gendered power dynamics in three distinct, but corollary, epistolary genres.²⁸ Ultimately, as I argue here, Richardson’s use and careful navigation of genre, media, and modes allows us to see moments where the interplay between manuscript and print create both a space for a new gendered authority and empowerment *and* its continued subversion. Richardson’s practices in both print and manuscript and his deep knowledge of epistolary authorship offer glimpses of Richardson using his own male authority to create new possibilities for the female voice in a printed commercial epistolary genre that relies heavily on its roots in the oral tradition *and* in the personal, vernacular manuscript genre.

This chapter necessarily adds a new layer to the rhetorical genre theory that has been laid out and applied in the previous chapters: the relationship between and among genres participating in the same *system*. Certainly, genre systems are not unique to this particular case study, but I chose to focus on them more narrowly in this section to show Richardson as a central figure who was orchestrating a complex epistolary system. By contrast, in the previous chapter, the Bagot women, even as they were drawing on conventions established in popular printed Renaissance letterwriting manuals, were not participating in the emergence of the different genres as Richardson was. Richardson, however, was a central actor in the development and emergence of several epistolary

²⁸ Throughout this chapter, I use the term *corollary genres* to describe the letters, manual, and novel. I am borrowing the definition of *corollary genres* from JoAnn Yates and Wanda Orlikowski (1992) who use the term to examine the PowerPoint genre in a larger system of business presentation genres. They define corollary genres as “variants of an established genre that are enacted parallel with it” (p. 69). The term is useful in thinking how genres relate to one another and participate in and across multiple media, as Yates and Orlikowski make clear in their work.

genres spanning across manuscript and print forms, and the texts explored here show how the genres draw from and interact with one another to reinforce the ideologies and values of letterwriting, such as sustained relationships and authenticity. On the term *genre systems*, John Frow (2005) offers a useful definition that highlights the values that shape and are shaped by rhetorical genres as they work with one another: "...genres exist only in relation to other genres, and that these relations are more or less systemically ordered at any point in time. Genres belong to an economy: a set of interdependent positions that organise the universe of knowledge and value" (p. 4).²⁹ Charles Bazerman (1994) adopts a similar definition, explaining that systems of genre are "...interrelated genres that interact with each other in specific settings," and that, unlike genre *sets*, the system of genres implies a wider range of user participation (pp. 97-99).³⁰ Genres, of course, can belong to systems or economies of genres that do not necessarily "look" alike but work together to meet a rhetorical end. In the case of the letter genres studied here, the genres often clearly and explicitly participate in the same epistolary genre system, but in some instances, they do include additional genres, such as handwritten revisions to the novel, prefatory materials, and other editorial content that might be considered peripheral to the epistolary novel. The genre system investigated in this chapter includes Richardson's

²⁹ Later in Chapter Six called "System and History," Frow expands on this idea, adding that "the 'system of genres' is neither closed nor stable, and indeed we should perhaps not speak of a single system. Rather, we should posit that there are sets of genre systems organized by domain, those of film or television or literature or architecture, for example; that they are open-ended; and that they are more or less constantly shifting and evolving" (pp. 124-125). Frow's theorization is important for my argument, as I do not wish to contend that the genres or the epistolary system included in this chapter are closed off to influences from other genres or are static entities. Rather, just like my understanding of genres included throughout the dissertation, I see all of the examples here as participating in a dynamic and shifting system that responds to and is sustained by the cultural and societal needs of this particular moment in history.

³⁰ Bazerman draws on Amy Devitt's understanding and examples of genre sets to make this distinction. He explains that a genre set, in Devitt's own example of tax accountant documents, includes letters and documents that only the tax accountant participates in; a *system* of genres, on the other hand, would include documents produced by other parties, including a "full file of letters to and from the client, from and to the government, from and to the accountant" (p. 99).

participation in his own epistolary community through *manuscript* letters, his *own writing and printing* of instructional manuals, and his *writing and printing of epistolary novels*; his participation in all three corollary genres that are a part of the same genre system points to the dynamic relationship occurring among the epistolary genres and offers insights into how epistolarity was changing more broadly and why, including the value systems and gendered power and authority that are reinforced and/or subverted through each performance in any one of the aforementioned genres.³¹

In examining Richardson's participation in this genre system, I attend to several changes occurring in the letter genre during this historical moment. Even though I study Richardson's manuscript letters that include similar generic and material features to the Bagot women's letters of the previous chapter, for instance, it is important to note, as Carolyn R. Miller (1995) does, that "...a genre that seems to occur in two rather distinct times and places will not really be 'the same' in an important sense..." (p. 68). This is true of the eighteenth-century letter and its corollary genres for several reasons, and one of the ways we can see these visible distinctions is through the mutual reliance on and authority of both manuscript and print traditions—a coexistence that was not as pronounced in the previous case study. In fact, this "crossroads" is most important to this chapter's development of the dissertation's argument regarding the dynamic relationships among genres, media, and modalities and the reinstatement and subversion of gendered power dynamics that occur because of these relationships.

³¹ While this chapter considers these genres as part of a genre system, it can only offer a slice of Richardson's participation in the epistolary tradition—in three examples—and certainly does not consider the much wider range of participation from women (and men) letterwriters who were in much lower social classes.

Drawing on the model of genre, media, and modes presented in Chapter One, I delve more deeply into the ways that textual production relies on shared modes along the spectra of genres and media and what this dynamic interplay means for gendered power constructed and (re)produced in texts. In doing so, I rely on widely accepted arguments about genres and technology, including those recently expanded on in Miller and Kelly's 2017 edited collection *Emerging Genres in New Media Environments*. Miller and Kelly assert that genres not only can respond to cultural and technological change, but they can also create change themselves; media, then, are not the primary reason for the emergence of new genres, but they do often create conditions for change and possibility (p. 19). Furthermore, newer media—like the printing press or digital, web-based spaces—make affordances of previous media and genres more visible (p. 21). For the purposes of this project, I am not merely tracking genre and media changes across the two time periods, but I am more importantly considering how cultural exigencies facilitated genre and media change in these moments. The importance of visibility and messiness here and in the other case studies is that it further shows the ways various modalities of manuscript and print were coming together to create sustainable conditions for changing power dynamics in a specific cultural moment.

In addition to the chapter's goals and argument, I also want to address the limitations and scope of this chapter. This chapter does not, for instance, promise any new *literary* insights into *Clarissa* or Richardson's other epistolary novels. Nor does it offer a detailed biography of the author or attempt an argument about authorial intentions. Furthermore, it does not promise a comprehensive history of the eighteenth-century literary marketplace or offer a revisionist textual history of *Clarissa*'s many editions and

their circulation. Instead, it relies on the framework of rhetorical genres, media, and modes to make visible some of the possibilities for facilitating and subverting gendered power dynamics at a moment defined, in large part, by its being in the midst of major changes in literary fiction and in textual production, more generally.

The chapter begins with some relevant historical context and discusses the blurred lines between public and private *and* fictional and real letters. Underlying the blurred themes is the attention to immediacy and authenticity that became increasingly important as the letter underwent changes throughout the eighteenth century and is a common reason for the letter's feminization (Nixon and Penner, 2009; Brant, 2006; Bray, 2003; Goldsmith, 1989; Ezell, 1999). After addressing these topics that have been central to literary theorists' conversations for decades, I then offer an analysis of three epistolary genres that Samuel Richardson participated in: 1) his own personal letters to trusted female readers, with specific attention given to the extensive correspondence with Lady Echlin; 2) Richardson's model letters in his manual (written and printed by him) titled *Letters Written to and for Particular Friends, on the most Important Occasions*; 3) and passages from his novel *Clarissa, or the History of a Young Lady*. I use the analyses of Richardson's work in manuscript and print to ultimately show how the shared modalities across media and epistolary genres create and secure conditions for new forms of gendered authority, while at times, also reinforce traditional women's roles in which their voices are undervalued. The chapter's key takeaway is that uncovering the complex modal interactions across the genres and media by a single author—straddling print and manuscript textual production and masculine and feminine writing conventions—reveals

the deeply complex ways gendered power shifts with each textual performance in “new” genres and media.

1. Historical Context: Vernacular Letterwriting and the 18th-Century Literary Marketplace

In Carolyn R. Miller’s introduction to *Emerging Genres* (2017), she delineates four types of genres: 1) “marketed” or “commercial genres”; 2) “administered genres”; 3) “institutional genres”; and 4) “vernacular genres” (pp. 23-25). I understand eighteenth-century epistolary genres to fall into two of these categories: the marketed/commercial genre and the vernacular genre. Miller explains the social exigence for the marketed genre as a “cultural expectation or desire that is satisfied by the product category: in other words, these genres emerge and survive if they offer something that ‘sells,’ either to a mass market or to an audience with more specialized aesthetic criteria” (p. 23). The chapter’s current section goes into further detail about how the personal or private letter (an inherently vernacular genre) helped fill that need and how this reliance on the letter shaped the relationship between the producer/author and the consumer/reader. For instance, writers and printers saw aspects of the letter as a vernacular genre—a genre that “emerge[s] and survive[s] when a community finds a configuration of features that satisfies or pleases those who interact together, addressing some communally recognized exigence” (p. 25). Though Miller’s categories are applied primarily to digital genres, I have found that using this set of genre categories to study the intersections of the commercial and vernacular letter, the (“new”) medium of print, and their shared modes can tell us a great deal about the underlying gendered power dynamics that were being reproduced and challenged at this historical crossroads. More specifically, the epistolary

genre's dual functions were reciprocally influencing the uses of print and manuscript media; not only was print proliferating and creating new possibilities, but the printed, commercial genres were being reproduced and reconfigured in ways that made certain manuscript modes more visible—for example, the ability to merge the body with the text and to use the marginal spaces for notes that offered insight into the writer's "true" message and/or current mental state. The main point that I want to make here, and that will be explained in greater detail in the examples that follow, is that the modes shared by the eighteenth-century epistolary genres and media were constantly participating in a reciprocal and recursive process that opened up and made visible the nuanced ways in which gendered authority was shifting (or not) in specific texts.

This dissertation's argument rests on the premise that both genres and media are culturally produced and work together through their shared modalities to respond to users' needs at any particular historical moment. In the eighteenth century, cultural changes were influencing the production and success of letterwriting manuals and novels, and many changes were responding to gendered reading and writing practices. To better understand how and what changes were occurring during this historical moment, I want to offer a brief overview of change in women's literacy and the changing literary marketplace. These cultural shifts were social exigencies for the letter as a commercial and a vernacular genre, many of which ultimately rely on views of gendered writing during the time. First, the eighteenth century saw a distinct rise in the number of reading and literate women and an overall increase in the leisurely activity of reading (Watt, 1957; Perry, 1980). Boyd and Kvanne (2008) note that "women's daily lives and work show that they were not simply repressed and silenced, but were active, engaged

participants in all spheres of their culture” (p. 23). Though the Bagot women (discussed in Chapter Two) were also actively engaged in a wide range of affairs and were mostly literate (as a result of their social class), the rate of women’s literacy drastically increased during the eighteenth century and allowed for much wider participation in literate activities than in the Renaissance. According to Cheryl Nixon and Louise Penner (2009), at least half of women in England were able to read by the end of the eighteenth century, as opposed to the 10% of women who could sign their names in 1640 (p. 162). Yet, as this project suggests, literacy and access do not necessarily offer a clear path to empowerment or authority for marginalized writers.

One specific obstacle for women’s authority and control over their own literate activity was the new literary marketplace, largely driven by the print medium and controlled by men (Boyd and Kvande, 2008; Ezell, 1999; Nixon and Penner, 2009). More specifically, since the market, rather than patrons, came to control literature, speed and copious writing became valued and expected. Privileging these aspects of writing also shaped the content: literature became more focused on desire, thoughts, feelings, opinions on daily events and became more leisurely and self-reflective—all reasons why this writing was deemed very feminine in nature (Watt, 1957; Kvande, 2013; Armstrong, 1982 and 1987). Goldsmith (1989) specifically focuses on what was attractive about women’s writing in this new marketplace, explaining that publishers “were quick to recognize the easy marketability of a woman’s private correspondence, and ultimately of a literary genre based on women’s letters” (p. vii). Goldsmith further explains that for this reason, many male authors—like Richardson—began exploiting the female voice in their narratives and fiction.

The privacy and seeming authenticity of women's correspondence was, in other words, seductive to authors participating in the new printed medium and changing marketplace, and the letter was a genre that encapsulated all of these attractive characteristics. The ability to use a medium and its modal affordances—including references to handwriting and other manuscript writing tools *and* printed text at angles and in typically blank margins—demonstrate how authors and printers, like Richardson, were using the medium to shape the private, inner thoughts of their protagonists. In other words, the medium and the epistolary genre together drew on similar modal affordances and a larger epistolary social network that spanned across print and manuscript to provide the public with a voyeuristic-like pleasure from seeing the letters on display.

This appeal of authentic letters as models for epistolary fiction in the eighteenth century has been discussed at length (Kvande, 2013; Goldsmith, 1989; Perry, 1980; Bannet, 2005; Brant, 2006; Cook, 1996; Flynn, 1982; Dussinger, 1989; Watt, 1957); however, I do want to mention briefly the letterwriting conventions that were appropriated from the longer epistolary tradition that valued the seeming *presence* of the writer, especially since several of these conventions have been deemed “feminine” and are important for this chapter's argument. Authenticity was deemed “marketable” for reasons similar to those discussed in the classical rhetorical tradition. Rebecca Earle (1999) notes, for instance, that readers depended on the “belief that the familiar letter represented the truest, least affected form of written expression,” and this belief “fuelled the custom of presenting fictional letter collections as genuine correspondence that had inadvertently fallen into the hands of an editor” (p. 5). In other words, the letter served as a window into the writer's innermost self and allowed the writer to create his or her

presence through the performance on the page. As the examples I include below demonstrate, this immediacy and presence are created through a careful negotiation of modal affordances in the genre and medium. Furthermore, as Ruth Perry (1980) notes, “The revelatory possibilities of private letters were certainly promoted by publishers of epistolary fiction, who were at great pains to assure their audience that the letters being printed were from real people undergoing real stresses, and that the evidence had not been prepared for public eyes” (p. 72). Even more specifically, female characters’ intense suffering and stresses were of particular interest, and women’s presumed skill at self-examination and reflection on “emotional particulars” made their letters especially attractive to publishers and authors (Perry, 1980, p. 72). Publishers, in short, sensed a need from readers to engage with the letterwriters on a realistic level—one that had not been manipulated for the public and was relevant to their lived experience. And again, one of the ways in which publishers and authors exploited female suffering was through appropriating specific modal affordances—marginal writing, spacing, references to the material conditions of the paper and the ways that the female body had interacted with the text through handwriting or through their tears mixing with the ink applied to the page.³²

The notion of authenticity was highly complex and, as I discuss at length with my examples in this chapter, should be considered alongside a range of modes across three media traditions: oral, manuscript, and print.³³ This sense of authenticity and immediacy

³² For example, Clarissa writes in a letter to Anna Howe: “These griefs, therefore, do what I can, will sometimes burst into tears; and these mingling with my ink, will blot my paper—And I know you will not grudge me the temporary relief” (pp. 566 and 567). This example is discussed in more detail in the chapter’s final section, along with others that demonstrate the merging of the body and the manuscript.

³³ Again, the assumption that letters were meant to be read in private is important here. Often, letters were read aloud in social circles, showing how modes oscillated across oral and manuscript media. Eve Tavor Bannet (2005) offers a helpful summary of this letter-reading practice: “What has been forgotten—both by

from the original letterwriter to the reader of epistolary fiction also challenged traditional assumptions about the privacy of the letter, already discussed at length in eighteenth-century epistolary scholarship (Ezell, 1999; Boyd and Kvande, 2008; Brant, 2006; Earle, 1999; Watt, 1957; Cook, 1996; Nixon and Penner, 2009; Cook, 1996). The public and private distinctions, as many of these scholars have addressed, are noticeably bound up in similarly problematic binaries of print and manuscript. On the print/manuscript binary, Brant addresses the problematic notions of print-as-public and manuscript-as-private, writing “Not everything in print is public, and not everything unpublished is private” (p. 6). She adds, “...distinctions between manuscript and print can create a false dichotomy. Most eighteenth-century readers were literate in the conventions of both manuscript and printed letters” (p. 7). Similarly, Margaret Ezell (1999) argues that we need to revisit certain aspects of manuscript and print culture, specifically arguing for the need to reconsider who participated in manuscript culture, taking note that it was not confined to the upper classes and was certainly not attributed solely to women. Yet, we must also recognize that the manuscript letter—in both public and private domains—was a more suitable and accessible “space for women’s opinion,” largely because of the limitations of the male-controlled print medium (Nixon and Penner, 2009, p. 161). In what follows, I rely on this historical context to challenge these binaries and to argue that an ongoing, recursive process across media enabled the letter to sustain its primary generic functions in vernacular and commercial epistolary genres and facilitated new opportunities for gendered power and authority across the genres and media.

historians of rhetoric and by literary critics who followed a limited reading of Richardson in identifying letters with the solitude of the closet and the secret converse of the heart—is that vocalized reading practices extended to the reading of letters. Letters too were a script. The expectation in the eighteenth century was still that letters would be read aloud to family, friends, and acquaintance, and/or shown around, to give everyone something to talk about” (p. 47).

2. The Vernacular Letter: Richardson's Manuscript Correspondence

The manuscript correspondence between Richardson and his trusted female correspondents is the focus of this first analysis section. I start with his manuscripts because they offer a useful segue from the previous chapter's focus on manuscript materiality and the printed forms that Richardson produced which heavily appropriate the manuscript tradition, particularly in his creation of his female characters. I also see the manuscript correspondence between Richardson and his female coterie being of utmost importance in revealing how he interacted with women writers and developed his ideas about women's writing that ultimately emerge in his popular printed manuals and novels. In this section, I first describe my archival research methods and then analyze the rhetoric and modal affordances of Richardson's correspondence with Lady Echlin that he ultimately draws on in his published works to contribute to the public consciousness about gendered writing and power dynamics.

Methods

The texts analyzed in the chapter's subsequent sections were chosen because they provide insights into three corollary epistolary genres at a time when the printing press was becoming more widely used, thus making the affordances of manuscript and print more visible as they were often drawn on simultaneously in texts. The texts chosen for this subsection and the subsequent ones include correspondence between Samuel Richardson and Lady Echlin, his 1741 manual of familiar letterwriting titled *Letters Written to and for Particular Friends, on the most Important Occasions*, and selections from his 1748 novel *Clarissa: Or, the History of a Young Lady*. Each epistolary genre discussed here illustrates how Richardson's work spanned epistolary genres across media

and ultimately contributed to and sustained presentations of women's epistolary writing. Toward this end, because of the limitations of studying one *man's* appropriation of women's writing in his manuals and epistolary fiction, I chose to respond to Goldsmith's 1989 call to study real women's writing in which she states, "Any study of the female voice in epistolary literature, then, must examine male ideas of what it means to write as a woman, along with the writings of real women" (p. vii). Although the writings of real women during this period are not always readily available, I was fortunately able to access material from some of Richardson's female correspondents in manuscript form; doing so has offered a more comprehensive understanding of what women's writing *looked* like (in content and form) and how women's writing as appropriated by a male author and printer reinforced *and* subverted traditional understandings of what it meant to be a woman writing in eighteenth-century England.

I relied on archival research methods for the first subsection of Richardson's letters to Echlin and Carter. To access these materials, I travelled to the New York Public Library to study the small collection of Richardson's letters in the Berg Collection—a collection acquired by the library in the 1930s, from the Bergs, whose Hungarian ancestors were avid book collectors and donated a vast collection of multiple manuscript and print sources from British and American authors. In addition to the Richardson holdings, the collection also contains works from Donne, Wordsworth, Shelley, Keats, Tennyson, Dickens, Carroll, Conrad, Kipling, Woolf, Auden, Hawthorne, Thoreau, Emerson, Whitman, and many other prominent canonical authors. In reviewing this list of holdings, one of the limitations of this archive became immediately clear: it contains very few artifacts of everyday, vernacular writing from "ordinary" citizens. In fact, even in the

Richardson collection, most of the letters were written by Richardson, and the collection includes relatively little writing from his female correspondents. In transcribing and analyzing the collection's materials, I became acutely aware of both the promises and limitations of studying the epistolary form in the commercial realm, rather than as an everyday genre that shaped writers' and readers' lived experiences.

The Richardson collection is also small, consisting of only twenty pieces, including letters, letter books, and early editions of Richardson's novels. Because of the archive's limited scope, I spent only two days in the Berg Collection reading room. While there, I found all of the materials in the card catalog and transcribed each of the letters, taking notes on both content and material aspects of the letters. Unlike my experience at the Folger, I had not encountered these documents in a digital space and was not able to access a list of holdings in an online database. Thus, my time in this reading room was spent reading and transcribing the documents for the first time. Most of the coding and analysis reported in the following section was completed after returning from the archives. To code the letters, I chose categories similar to those used for the analysis of the Bagot women's letters in Chapter Two, such as "materiality," "modality," "gender," and "time." Additionally, because of the Bakhtinian framework I adopt throughout the project, I coded for moments of tension or "speaking back" in the correspondence between Richardson and Lady Echlin, whose letter includes a revision of Richardson's conclusion to *Clarissa*. Also, similar to the previous case of Renaissance letters, I coded references to epistolary culture—including time lapsed between letters and references to specific epistolary conventions, such as handwriting practice—that show Richardson's positioning within his own epistolary community and demonstrate Richardson's devotion

to the epistolary practices he espouses in his letter manuals and draws on in *Clarissa*'s characterization and plot.

For this subsection on Richardson's vernacular letters, I organized the topics similarly to those in Chapter Two: references to materiality and tactile aspects of the letters, specific moments in the content that reveal dialogic tensions, and finally, references to epistolary culture that demonstrate Richardson's (and his correspondents') genre awareness and consciousness. Each of the categories was chosen because of how they show the complex interrelationships among rhetorical genres, media, and modes. In the first section, I focus primarily on the *visual and spatial modalities* afforded in the manuscript medium that illustrate specific feminine appropriations of and interactions with the letter. This section, more specifically, addresses the question of how rhetorical genres and the media that deliver them share modal affordances to ultimately create a gendered presence in ways that subvert or sustain traditional structures of power. The dialogic tensions, discussed in the second subsection, provide a closer focus on the *alphabetic* transcription and use of *language*—as a visual semiotic mode—that works with and against other modalities. For instance, sometimes a woman's language creates an identity and a presence that contradicts the ways she uses other modal affordances (for example her own handwriting or other markings on the page). Finally, the genre awareness and consciousness demonstrates writers' metawareness of genre and media in epistolary culture that provides evidence of how writers considered many modalities—including time and material conditions—in their transmission of letters.

Again, I want to start with the caveat that none of these three “categories” is inherently more important than the other, nor are they discrete. Rather, materiality,

semantic content, and the genre awareness/consciousness inform one another and ultimately make the implications of all three on gendered writing more apparent, and consequently make the underlying structures of power in genres and media more visible.

Materiality

With this caveat in mind, I focus first on the material aspects of Richardson's letters that serve as evidence of the merging of body, mind, and soul that was a common theme throughout Richardson's handwritten and printed works and reveals Richardson's close, emotional connection to the manuscript tradition (Kvande, 2013). More specifically, Kvande (2013) explains that Richardson's character Clarissa sees the body, mind, and soul as integral to one another. Kvande writes, "Clarissa thinks that the body must give a true account of the self or soul... Clarissa understands the language of the body as completely transparent, and believes the body is a 'site of truth'" (p. 244). The vernacular letter, like the body, offers a platform from which to view the writer's innermost character and soul—a theory that pervades Richardson's printed epistolary novels. In a manuscript letter written in Richardson's hand to Lady Echlin dated June 23, 1758, he admires Lady Echlin's previous letter for this very reason; he writes, "How arduous has been your Task, employed as you have been in the past months, *Heart, Head, and Hand* in laying the Foundations of the Temporall and Eternal Good of your hopeful Nephew-Ward..." (emphasis mine, A.L.S. to [Lady Eliza Echlin?]).³⁴ This reference highlights Richardson's fundamental values of letterwriting that appear in both his manuscript and printed works, and I argue, rely on the complex interplay of the genre,

³⁴ I am interpreting "heart, head, and hand" to be interchangeable with the "body, mind, and soul" that Kvande discusses in her 2013 article. In other words, the heart is the soul; the head is the mind; and the hand is the body. The heart/soul can be understood as the core identity or self that is unchanging. The head/mind is a manifestation of how one's self interacts with the rational world. Finally, the body/hand is the physical interaction between the body and the letter that is meant to provide a window into the writer's core self.

medium, and modes. Furthermore, privileging the letter's ability to bring together the "heart, head, and hand" also reinforces the notion of authenticity that Richardson and so many of his eighteenth-century readers desire. The push-and-pull of modal affordances and references to the merging of the "heart, head, and hand" provide insight into the ideas and values that pervade the epistolary novel, particularly the visual affordances used to craft the female identity and gendered power dynamics existing in each of Richardson's printed works.

The remaining examples emphasize the last of the three—the hand—and references to the physical act of letterwriting that appear in Richardson's manuscript letters to his female coterie. In one of his last letters to Lady Echlin included in the collection, dated 1761 (which was the same year as Richardson's death), he writes, "I owe you dear Madam, a much longer Letter; But my staggering Fingers — You see how it is with me! — Best respects to the good Lady I have named to you with my wishes, and those of my wife. I must Close here, tho with great Regret" (A.L.S. to Lady Echlin. London, April 5, 1761. 1 p.). Indeed, Richardson's handwriting visually reflects his declining physical state. The lettering is small and inconsistent, showing evidence of a weary hand.³⁵ In this case, then, Richardson's actual penning of the letter reinforces the message and adds credibility to his message regarding his delayed response and his declining health, showing very clearly how semantic content, visual, and material modes interact with one another to convey the writer's message and offer a visual manifestation of the body's weaknesses. The moments in his personal letters become noticeably important in the final section on *Clarissa* when we see Richardson applying the same

³⁵ Because of the restrictions of the Berg Collection archive's photography policy and lack of digitally archived materials, I was unable to obtain images of these manuscripts and must rely on written description of these documents and their visual modes.

references to physical weakness emerging in Clarissa's letters as her mental and physical health decline.

A few years prior to this letter, Richardson wrote a letter to Lady Echlin wherein he transcribes some of "Lady B's" writing, which I argue is possibly one of the ways that Richardson came to embody and perform the female letterwriter so well in his later works. The letter references personal matters of a mutual acquaintance and requests updates on a visit from Lady Echlin's daughter. Richardson begins the letter without a salutation—showing, as in the previous chapter, a close relationship between the letterwriter and his recipient—and dives right into an update on "Lady B." whom Richardson is sure that Lady Echlin contacts quite frequently. Most significantly, though he is certain of regular correspondence between the two women, Richardson transcribes Lady B's letter here, saying "Our dear Lady B. no doubt acquaints your Ladship from time to time with the state of her Health. Nevertheless, I cannot forbear transcribing from her last Favour to me of Oct. 30, from Bath, the following Lines, and congratulating her beloved Sister upon them..." (Autograph letter of Samuel Richardson 1689-1761 A.L.S. to Lady Echlin. Nov 9. 1756). Richardson then transcribes seven lines of Lady B's letter to him, marking each line of Lady B's letter with a quotation mark ("). While Richardson's rationale for transcribing these lines is unclear, it nevertheless shows him performing a woman's writing with his own hand and framing it within his own writing. Such a performance is very similar to Lovelace's in *Clarissa*, which I discuss in further detail in the chapter's last section, and is one of many ways letterwriters take control of others' language and use it in ways that benefit them rhetorically in their own letters.

Richardson's collective correspondence with Lady Echlin, I argue, demonstrates his process of learning and enacting gendered writing in the manuscript form that surfaces in his printed manual and epistolary novels. Put another way, Richardson is learning and enacting all available means of (gendered) persuasion through a combination of material modes and the centripetal/centrifugal forces of language. In a separate letter to Lady Echlin this same year (1756), Richardson attempts to gain access to one of the three important parts of the self that he views as central to 18th-century epistolary writing: the (female) mind. He begins the letter characteristically with an apology for his long silence and makes several references to her "mind." Richardson immediately concedes to Lady Echlin's authority by mentioning that he has carefully followed her detailed instructions for the letter's delivery and then apologizes for the state of his handwriting: "Excuse this bad writing from an unsteady Hand, and increas'd Nervous Maladies; and believe me to be, your Ladiship's Ever-grateful and obliged Humble Servant S. Richardson" (Richardson, S. A.L.S. [fragment] to [Lady Eliza Echlin] London, Feb. 20, 1756). Richardson's incessant apologies to Lady Echlin and his references to the careful sealing and delivery of this document reinforce his relationship to this valued female reader and arguably reinforce the close connection between the head, heart, and hand that permeates much of his writing across the epistolary genre system (personal letters, manuals, and novels). By drawing on a number of semiotic modes in his correspondence to Lady Echlin—the visual appeal of his handwriting, the spacing of his transcribed material, and the rhetorical conventions of the personal letter—Richardson's manuscript correspondence demonstrates ways he was trying to access and embody women's writing in each epistolary performance.

To conclude the discussion of the letters' material characteristics, I offer Lady Echlin's letter—a lengthy response to Richardson's request—as an example of how letterwriters referenced the physical act of writing to reinforce or subvert their readers' expectations. In this particular letter, Lady Echlin's handwriting is in a mostly-legible, large italic form and is lightly penned, showing her practicing normed feminine handwriting. The letter introduces her revisions to *Clarissa*, as Richardson requested, but like Richardson, she makes a few apologies and self-deprecating comments regarding her revisions. In her cover letter to the revised text, she describes her revision as:

...being nothing more than a jumble of ill-connected thoughts
a peice of a story, badly told; or rather the contents, & imperfect narrative
interspersed with abrupt conversation peices — if we were so happy to
be sat snug together, I should with great pleasure read the whole long
scribble to such a friend; but to send the lump by post is impracticable —
either can I have patience to cobby all the stuff I have written —
a part, you shall have — & thus it is introduce'd, at mrs moors house Hamstead.
(Echlin, Eliza, Lady. Lady Echlin's alterations for the improvement of
Richardson's *Clarissa*. Holograph, mutilated, unsigned and undated. pp. 3v- 4r)

Such a response indicates the push and pull of dialogic language (discussed further in the next section); more specifically, Lady Echlin oscillates between self-deprecating language (centripetal forces) and deeply critical commentary (centrifugal forces). To be clear, Lady Echlin has authority here—through her class and through the accumulative praise and respect she has received from Richardson in his previous letters. Yet there are still instances, like this one, when Lady Echlin is seemingly being pushed and pulled by her varying positions of being upper-class but also being a woman writer. This excerpt also includes the reference to “scribbling,” her references to copying the text, and the impractical option of sending the entire narrative through the post. First, Lady Echlin's acknowledgment of her narrative as “jumbled” and as a “long scribble” implicitly

describe handwriting (as “scribbling”) and her “piecing together of the story” as the “to-the-moment” style of writing that Richardson privileges in his own letterwriting and in his representation of letterwriting in *Clarissa*. Most significantly, regarding the material and physical components of letterwriting, Lady Echlin notes the patience with which she rewrote, in her own hand, a section of Richardson’s novel—157 pages of his novel. Lady Echlin’s handwritten revision and the incredible amount of material resources this revision required signify how deeply she was invested in the novel and, arguably, how much she was invested in her friendship with Richardson. Here, she embodies and enacts the values of letterwriting—of merging the heart, head, and hand—to rewrite the story to privilege her own religious values. Although Richardson does necessarily adhere to her rewrite, Lady Echlin nevertheless uses a combination of resources—time, materials, her own gendered experiences—to offer Richardson an example of a virtuous, religious female writer. Furthermore, her decision to transcribe such a significant section of the novel, I argue, reinforces Lady Echlin’s desire to take control over the text in ways that Richardson (and his character Lovelace) does in his letters. Much like the Bagot women who used the space of the page to rescript or override their male correspondents’ authority (see letters in Chapter Two from Lettice Kinnersley and Barbara Crompton), Lady Echlin uses the physical paper and exerts a considerable amount of energy into rescripting Richardson’s conclusion. In doing so, she draws on all available means of persuasion—particularly the manuscript letter’s visual and material modes—to challenge Richardson’s authority and to negotiate tensions among her multiple gendered positions.

Dialogic Potential of the Letter

By transcribing Richardson's novel in her letter and providing a frame for her revisions, Lady Echlin's letter and take on *Clarissa* also make visible the centrifugal and centripetal forces that make this genre dialogic. Toward that end, this section shows moments where Lady Echlin asserts her authority over Richardson and over the text in ways that privilege her own ideologies and moral values. For instance, her grammatical and syntactical choices, much like the authoritative women represented in the Bagot collection (see Chapter Two) privilege her own positions toward the text over Richardson's and his other readers' and demonstrate rather explicitly how she is assuming an authorial position that she has derived from her class, rather than her gender, and from the incessant praise she has received from Richardson. Even with this authority, however, we continue to see Lady Echlin wavering between praise and criticism, often in the same utterance:

Every sensible reader must allow, this History contains many Excellent Things; and it's bearely possible any one can be so blind as not to discern It's beauties? But tho' the word deserves admiration, it is not a faultless Peice: I mean not to lessen the merit of the ingenious author, nor Do I pretend to correction — but I must freely object against some parts of the story, which in my opinion, serve only to wound good Minds, & can not probably contribute, towards mending corrupt hearts... (Echlin, Eliza, Lady. Lady Echlin's alterations for the improvement of Richardson's *Clarissa*. Holograph, mutilated, unsigned and undated. p. 2r)

She similarly remarks later: "I acknowledge the authors great ability, & applaud him, for many good things written by his inimitable pen—but I absolutly disagree with him In several material points, which I presume to think faulty.—" (Echlin, Eliza, Lady. Lady Echlin's alterations for the improvement of Richardson's *Clarissa*. Holograph, mutilated, unsigned and undated. p. 2r).

In both examples, Echlin separates her approval and disapproval of the text only by dashes. Such moments offer evidence of Lady Echlin, even though she is in a position of authority as one of Richardson's primary correspondents, being pushed and pulled into two positions; on the one hand, she feels compelled to point out Richardson's success because of his position as a successful male author, but on the other, she resists this praise and quickly retreats from this position by immediately offering her "absolute disagreement" on several fundamental aspects of the narrative.

Overall, Lady Echlin's critiques of the novel (and of the rape, in particular) stem from her religious beliefs and from her own understanding of the female sex. She draws on her religious convictions, for instance, when she makes this recommendation (or demand): "I cannot allow Mordent [sic] to kill Lovelace—no good instruction, either Moral, or Religious can be drawn from anything so Contracdecitory to Christianity—besides a breath of promise to the dead.—" (Echlin, Eliza, Lady. Lady Echlin's alterations for the improvement of Richardson's *Clarissa*. Holograph, mutilated, unsigned and undated. p. 1v). Here, in addition to the authority she has derived from her class and from Richardson's trust in her judgment, Lady Echlin subverts traditional gendered roles by drawing specifically on the authoritative discourse of her Christian religion. Using these religious convictions, Lady Echlin also specifically mentions the author's treatment of *Clarissa* as a woman and pushes against Richardson's understanding of her sex. She explains:

I am offended also with what is done directly opposite to the Religious system—taken notice of above—Clarissas conduct may convince vile Rakes there is virtue in woman, which can withstand all temptation; that will not be seduced, not conquer'd as they imagine, according to their false notions of our sex—clarissas virtue was sufficiently tr'd & prove'd to be insuperable, before she fled from Lovelace to Hamstead. (Echlin, Eliza, Lady. Lady Echlin's alterations for the

improvement of Richardson's *Clarissa*. Holograph, mutilated, unsigned and undated. p. 2v).

In this preface, Lady Echlin takes a very direct approach to meet her rhetorical needs; she quite literally is speaking back to Richardson in these moments, showing the letter's dialogic potential to challenge his authority. Yet it deserves reiterating that the power of the dialogic here is coupled with the other modal affordances of the manuscript: her own handwriting on 157 pages of her revised text, for example. Unlike Richardson's printed novel, in this manuscript revision, we cannot see the revised text without seeing the visible presence of Lady Echlin's hand. Her authorial presence is thus not just a result of the dialogic tensions in the language, but of also of her physical inscription of her heart, head, and hand on the paper.

Genre Awareness and Consciousness

The final category of the manuscript letters that I want to cover here includes eighteenth-century letterwriters' genre awareness and consciousness. In Chapter Two, I discuss how references to time lapsed between letters and mentions of messengers show letterwriters' broader knowledge of epistolary culture that extends the letter's rhetorical success beyond the bounds of the paper. Such references show an acute awareness of rhetorical strategy that further enforces and/or subverts traditional class and gender power dynamics. In this last subsection, I focus on areas where Richardson, Lady Echlin, and another female correspondent named Elizabeth Carter are drawing on their own broader genre awareness to negotiate the tensions between author/reader and male/female letterwriter.

The first examples of genre consciousness are rooted in the manuscript tradition and were pervasive in the Bagot case study, as well. Like the Bagot letters, Richardson's

and Lady Echlin's letters include references to time and how the time lapsed between correspondence conditions and establishes the writer and recipient's relationship—in particular, a relationship of constant indebtedness to one another. In the letter to Lady Echlin discussed above, for example, Richardson explains that he “owes” Lady Echlin a much longer letter but cannot complete this “transaction” because of his declining health. The theme of indebtedness pervades Richardson's earlier letters to Lady Echlin, as well, and again is specific to the medium of their correspondence. This transactional relationship-building becomes especially significant in appropriating the manuscript letter in *Clarissa*, as the letterwriting tradition becomes collapsed into single printed volumes. In other words, Richardson heavily relies on the references to indebtedness and time in his fiction to draw on the manuscript's ability to physically bring acquaintances together through material means. Furthermore, in a letter from Richardson to Lady Echlin dated 1755, Richardson allocates the first sixteen lines to justifying his silence. He begins, “If my dear and good Lady Ehiln guesses not at the cause of my long silence, when Two of her Ladiships Traveners had reached my Hands; one dated Dec. 21, the other Jan. 22. What will she think of her unworthy Correspondents I had written ^a Letter^ Dec. 7. Which your Ladiship had not received, when you wrote that of the 21st” (A.L.S to Lady Echlin. London. Feb. 14-18, 1755. 2 l. p. 1r). Following these details, Richardson explains that he has read more than half of Lady Echlin's papers: “I have read more Than one half; and am impatient to read the other, to see what your Ladiship does With Lovelace, with Clarissa, with the Harlowes -” (A.L.S to Lady Echlin. London. Feb. 14-18, 1755. 2 l. p. 1r).³⁶ What seems most significant about this statement is that

³⁶ Lady Echlin's letter and revision (discussed at length in this section) is undated, and the manuscript is damaged; however, based on the references to Lady Echlin's narrative in this letter from Richardson, I

Richardson privileges writing a response to Lady Echlin over actually completing his reading task. In sum, timely correspondence in the manuscript tradition outweighs the completion of the task at hand, highlighting the extent to which expectations of epistolary culture have conditioned and reinforced his relationship to his reader. Richardson's *genre consciousness*, as observed through his references to the delivery process and the specific letters to which he responds, also reinforces his *self-consciousness* about his performance in this genre—a self-consciousness that I argue clearly demonstrates that Richardson understands and appreciates how the *manuscript* letter's modalities and material restrictions shape, condition, and reinforce relationships between the correspondents, and these modalities become an important part of *Clarissa*'s success.

Another of female correspondents—Elizabeth Carter, also known as Miss Caribaret—wrote a response letter that, like Richardson's aforementioned letter, includes several references to the delivery of her letters; Elizabeth's letter was written just four days after Richardson's initial letter to her. In Richardson's letter, he tells Elizabeth to expect two volumes of *Sir Charles Grandison* within a few days and asks her not to share them with anyone until after they are advertised: "Two volumes of Sir Charles Grandison in half binding, will soon court your Acceptance. But you must not suffer them to go out of your Hands, till you see them advertised in the London Papers" (A.L.S to Elizabeth Carter, p. 1v). This announcement shows the letter (and Richardson's novel) straddling public and private domains and offers an example of the letter serving a slightly different function than we have seen in the other letters: as a conditional agreement to Elizabeth that underlies and exists in the gaps among the genre, media, and modal affordances of the manuscript letter correspondence. In Elizabeth's response, she acknowledges this

believe Richardson is responding to Lady Echlin's 157-page revision referenced throughout this section.

expectation and describes in detail the processes of delivery, though she strikes through her first reference:

I need not tell you with how much Pleasure I shall receive Sr Charles Grandison. ~~He may come very safely directed to me at Deal; by the Canterbury Coach. He is used to travel that Road you know.~~ You may depend on my not showing the Book nor even mentioning that I have it to any mortal but my Sister till it is publicly advertised. Indeed it will be quite necessary upon my own Account as well as yours that I should keep this Affair a secret. For all your Readers here Which to the Honor of Deal ^this place^ be it spoken are many, are so very impatient that if it was known Sr. Charles was in the town I apprehend there would be so much scratch-ing & clawing that it would be impossible to keep him in possession & he would run some Hazard of being scatterd to the four winds of Heaven.—The Canterbury Coach lets out either from the Cross Keys or Spread Eagle in Grace Church street & the prefer[?] Days to send any thing to Deal are Tuesdays & Thursdays, for I think they have not done [...]" (A.L.S. from Elizabeth Carter[?], Oct 6. 1753, p. 1r)

I have included this lengthy excerpt from Elizabeth's letter because it is richly laden with references not only to how she will uphold Richardson's wishes, but also to her knowledge of the readers' expectations for the novel and specific instructions for how to get the text to her safely. This letter, I argue, supplements the novel and bridges different genres and media in this epistolary system. The letter, for instance, provides insight into the transmission of the letter and novel *and* to the broader function of the manuscript letter during this period of publishing—as an ancillary genre that both responds to and conditions the reception of emerging epistolary forms. Much like the correspondence between Richardson and Lady Echlin, the manuscript correspondence supports the success of the novels to which they respond. Furthermore, this letter contains visual modes that communicate Elizabeth's writing process to the reader. For example, she has several cancellations and additions in this draft, all of which are alterations to the text that are evidence of Elizabeth's writing process and her "to-the-moment" style that was so popular during this time. Through multiple modes and epistolary references, Elizabeth

thus simultaneously demonstrates her genre consciousness *and* seems to privilege a timely response over the text's visual appeal. In short, Elizabeth draws on material and modal affordances and her knowledge of epistolary conventions and culture, and the combination of these rhetorical resources makes the push-and-pull of several external forces on the letterwriter much clearer and the connections across the genres and media in the larger epistolary system more visible.

The material and visual modes, dialogic tensions, and references to genre consciousness further demonstrate the dynamic interplay among genres, media, and modes at a moment when manuscript and print were being drawn on simultaneously in more pronounced and visible ways than in the Renaissance. By focusing on the correspondence between Richardson and these two trusted female readers, some of the means by which the epistolary genre shaped and conditioned the relationship between real writers and how this *real* correspondence played into the emerging print forms become more intelligible. Furthermore, this section reveals the extent to which all of the categories studied here—materiality, the dialogic, and genre consciousness—overlap to strengthen or subvert the gendered characteristics of writing for which Richardson became so well known. Importantly, too, this combination makes visible how women and men appropriated a range of semiotic resources across genres existing in the same system to ultimately create gendered positions that sustained the letter's primary functions and its feminine characterization. This closer look at manuscript letters in the eighteenth century thus serves as an ideal transition into discussing the "new" medium of print and ways that the authority and nostalgia of manuscript were appropriated in both the printed letterwriting manual and the epistolary novel to which I now turn.

3. The Printed Letter: Richardson's *Letters Written to and for Particular Friends, on the most Important Occasions*

Often the introduction of print is presented as a clear break from the manuscript tradition and is characterized as *public*, *static*, and more *controlled* than manuscript. Yet as many scholars have noted, and as this project makes more evident, print and manuscript did not exist in siloed traditions (Kvande, 2013; McKitterick, 2003; Bannet, 2005 and 2007; Ezell, 1999; Brant, 2006; Cook, 1996; Watt, 1957; Penner and Nixon, 2009). The letter as a genre also highlights several of these genre, media, and modal intersections quite clearly as it crosses over multiple domains of communicative activity. In this chapter alone, we see personal letterwriting, didactic letterwriting, and fictional letterwriting primarily for entertainment. On the letter's production in both media, Kvande (2013) writes, "The letter as form, then, helps to highlight the crux where manuscript and print meet, as an instance in which a manuscript could be turned into print and back again, participating in both modes of production and exchange" (p. 241). Contrasting traditional narratives of print's stability, Kvande highlights the dynamic interplay between print and manuscript tradition. What the remainder of this chapter aims to do is to demonstrate how manuscript and printed epistolary genres were participating in a complex, recursive process and all drawing on modalities of various media, often simultaneously: the oral, manuscript, and printed traditions which make the epistle's possible.

The printed manual certainly participated in this recursive process, drawing on material, visual, and aural modes of various media in the epistolary system. Eve Tavor Bannet (2005) notes this dynamic interplay of modes and between manuscript/print in her

study of eighteenth-century transatlantic epistolary manuals: “These letter-writing manuals taught users the need to switch between various modes—visual, aural, etc—to conceive of the letter as a genre” (p. 15). Significantly, Bannet notes that the contemporary manuals took the modal affordances of both print and manuscript media into consideration to help teach writers how to navigate the various modes that essentially characterize “the letter *as a genre*” (emphasis mine, p. 15). In her piece, Bannet considers the many modes of letterwriting across manuscript and print and insists that print actually *revived* and *reinvigorated* the manuscript tradition by making models of letterwriting more accessible to a range of users, rather than causing manuscript to fall away or become less important. In particular, eighteenth-century printed letterwriting manuals expanded to include scenarios of people of all ranks and genders; Bannet notes that printers—like Richardson—were “among the primary and most successful promoters of script” (p.18). While I take issue with Bannet’s ultimate conclusion that the *genre* of the letter is a more “inclusive category” than the medium, I do find her overall assessment of the many modal affordances at play in both media to align with this project’s overall understanding of genres, media, and modes and how they interact with one another as genres and media change over time (p. 28).³⁷ The reliance on references to media and modal affordances—like the manuscript’s visual and tactile modes—to teach

³⁷ Bannet’s conclusion ultimately elaborates on the genre in a way that is far less dynamic and conditioned by external factors than what I describe throughout the dissertation. She writes, “As a copy of writing more efficient than scribal publication, print could rapidly insert itself into the letter’s trajectory through different media. A letter could easily travel from oral speech to writing, from writing to print, and from print to the ‘vocalized speech’ of reading, where it functioned as a script. As a genre, then, the letter resembled the drama where, as Arthur Marotti and others have shown, the dialogue variously took on oral, written and printed forms, and where the ‘same’ play was altered over time, by performers in rehearsal, and by imitators and adapters, to suit changing social circumstances and tastes. This suggests, at least in these cases at this time, that the genre (the letter, the drama) rather than the medium (manuscript, print or voice) should be viewed as the more inclusive category” (p. 28). My contention is that this explanation of the genre being able to be inserted and to travel back and forth across media is too reductive and misses the argument about the dynamic interplay of genre, media, and modes on which this dissertation relies.

letterwriting through a printed medium demonstrate how deeply intertwined genres, media, and modes truly were during this pivotal period of emerging epistolary genres.

This section of the current chapter considers the dynamic relationship between print and manuscript letters as representative of how Richardson—as a *male* printer and writer—learned to combine semiotic modes across epistolary genres and media to perform *women's* writing. Described in detail below, Richardson pulls together multiple resources in his printed manual to show how he, like his female correspondents, was creating opportunities for subverting *and* sustaining traditional gender roles. And as I show later, such examples—in content and form—transferred into Richardson's epistolary novels, further revealing the extent to which modalities *and* genres within the same genre system overlapped to reinscribe and disrupt traditional positions of power. To consistently track the intersections of modality, genre, and media, I have organized this section similarly to the section on manuscript letters: 1) references to material modes (or, modes specific to the manuscript tradition that get appropriated in the printed manual); 2) examples of dialogic tensions between letterwriter and recipient included in the model letters; 3) references to epistolary culture that represent the importance of a broader genre consciousness and the external factors that contributed to the letter's success across genres and media in this complex epistolary system.

Before analyzing Richardson's examples, I want to call attention to some key distinctions between letterwriting manuals in the Renaissance and the eighteenth century and address some recent scholarship on the limitations of the eighteenth-century manual in regard to gender. First, as discussed in Chapter Two, letterwriting manuals of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries presented models that strictly adhered to a classical

rhetorical structure. Angel Day's manual, for instance, was organized into categories of situations (consolatory, petitionary, persuasive, admonitory, etc), and each model letter's rhetorical tropes were annotated in the margins. Day's manual, then, certainly helped to establish and reinforce authoritative discourse through engaging in the centripetal forces of the classical rhetorical tradition; Richardson's manual, however, takes a different approach to this genre that supports Bannet's conclusion that the eighteenth-century letterwriting manual expanded to wider audiences and veered away from the authoritative discourse of earlier manuals like Day's. Richardson's manual thus provides a more direct window of opportunity for women to learn letterwriting conventions, but it nevertheless has limitations because it lacks the real, lived female experience that Richardson could not fully embody or perform in his model letters.

Written in 1741, Richardson's manual *Letters Written to and for Particular Friends, On the most Important Occasions* is not organized into categories or types of letters, but instead offers 173 model letters responding to a wide range of situations, or "important occasions." Not only are the situations more varied, the writers and respondents are at varying levels of class and are both men and women. Richardson's preface to the manual rationalizes this structure:

THE following Letters are publish'd at the Solicitation of particular Friends, who are of Opinion, that they will answer several good Ends, as they may not only direct the Forms requisite to be observed on the most important Occasions; but, what is more to the Purpose, by the Rules and Instructions contained in them, contribute to mend the Heart, and improve the Understanding. (n.pag.)

He continues, "NATURE, PROPRIETY of CHARACTER, PLAIN SENSE, and GENERAL USE, have been the chief Objects of the Author's Attention in the penning of these Letters" (n.pag). Here, Richardson uses the term "penning" to highlight the

manuscript tradition and thus participates in the common narrative that even printed epistles were simply found and reprinted versions of authentic, everyday letters. Richardson also explicitly notes what he has privileged in the manual: moral character. Finally, he addresses how the manual privileges *action* and *thought*, perhaps even more than the writing itself. He explains, “*that the Letters may serve for Rules to THINK and ACT by, as well as Forms to WRITE after*” (n.pag). The references to the heart, thought, and action all point to the larger social context to which Richardson was responding: namely, a tradition of didacticism and deep concern for moral character that undergirds all of Richardson’s epistolary performances.

Yet even with the promises of flexibility and the range of the “most important” situations that apply to a wider audience—of which there are apparently 173—Richardson’s manual risks flattening the lived experiences of *real* women through his appropriations of gendered letterwriting. Such scenarios predominantly include responding to overbearing parents, aunts, and uncles; permitting or rejecting male suitors’ advances; and sharing stories of their character being threatened. In their comparison of women’s manuscripts to eighteenth-century letterwriting manuals, Nixon and Penner (2009) offer evidence to support the argument that such manuals failed to provide real guidance to women writers because the model letters did not contain the depth and complexity of navigating and balancing multiple roles and positions of authority, as many women were in real life (pp. 169-170). While the authors acknowledge that eighteenth-century readers and writers did privilege “authenticity over formula,” which seems promising for creating new forms of gendered authority, Penner and Nixon also emphasize how the performance of gender in printed letter manuals was problematic.

While I find Nixon and Penner's conclusions helpful for seeing the interplay of gendered writing across manuscript and print, I argue that Richardson's manual does provide more space for dialogic and modal tensions through which women might have been able to create non-traditional forms of gendered power. In other words, although Richardson does model his manual's characters after fairly traditional, accepted gendered roles, he nevertheless offers potential moments for his readers to potentially read between the (printed) lines and negotiate the modal affordances of the genre, medium, and mode in their actual letterwriting practice (in manuscript).

Materiality in the Manual

First, I analyze references to materiality in the manual's printed letters. To be clear, this section's discussion of materiality includes references to the *manuscript's* modal affordances and thus commonly mentions writing objects and processes that are specific to manuscripts: pens, paper, handwriting, etc. Such references, as Bannet and others note, sustain and even revive the manuscript tradition; by calling attention to the writing process, the reader can visualize the writing process and the merging of "heart, head, and hand" that was so central to the success of the epistle's evolution in print. One example from the manual is a response to a friend who has grown concerned about the writer because of his silence. The writer dismisses his own excuses in his response: "To say I had Business one time, Company another, was distant from home a third, will be but poor Excuses, for not answering one of your kind Letters in four long Months. I therefore ingenuously take Shame to myself, and promise future Amendment. And that nothing shall ever, while I am able to hold a Pen, make me guilty of the like Neglect to a Friend I love so well" (Letter LIX, p. 76). This model letter contains references that show

the writer's understanding of epistolary culture more broadly (genre consciousness) and the physical act of handwriting a letter (its materiality), both of which help establish the relationship between writer and recipient. In this case, the writer acknowledges that as long as he is physically able to hold a pen, he will not neglect writing to his friend.³⁸ In this particular instance, we can more clearly see the recursive and dynamic process of modalities potentially across three different media. For instance, this particular printed example relies on the authority of both the manuscript tradition and the oral tradition's importance of *presence* in delivery. In this example, the letterwriter is physically absent, as are the letters which *could* stand in his/her place. In this letter, then, Richardson is pulling together three media traditions to highlight the importance of presence and intimacy to create sustained relationships in letterwriting.

The importance of presence and intimacy emerges in other examples and contains other semiotic resources to create the subject's presence. One letter includes a reference to having the primary letterwriter's niece, who is the subject of the letter, actually write her portion of the response herself. The letter titled "Ridiculing a romantick Rhapsody in Courtship" offers a clear example of the merging of real and fictional letters that has been the focus of scholarly conversations and is written from an aunt or uncle to his/her niece's suitor (Mitchell, 2003). The opening of the letter explains that the niece requested that the writer respond on her behalf and offers a description of the niece reading the initial letter and being affected by the letter, resulting in her acting "elevated" and "superior" after reading it. The letter's introduction contains several references to Ovid's

³⁸ This particular example (and a few others in this section) were written from a male author's perspective; however, unlike Angel Day's manual discussed in the previous chapter, Richardson's manual includes a significant number of letters written from the female perspective, allowing for deeper insight into how he was oscillating between the two gendered positions throughout the manual.

Metamorphosis and then transitions to the niece's own addition to the letter: "Here she put on a Royal Air: We will conclude Our own Letter Ourselves, said she; so, taking Pen in Hand, she writes as underneath" (Letter LXXXIX, p. 124). In her own conclusion, the niece assumes an authoritative position through adopting the elevated language of Ovid's text referenced in the letter's opening. She begins by giving the reader instructions, saying "Don't let me, when the Car is quite in Readiness, be rudely disturbed: But tell Mercury, I would have him tap softly at my Window. I will rise in all my Glory, whip into my starry Calash, and rush through the Regions of Light, till, despising Mortality..." (Letter LXXXIX, p. 124). The niece establishes her authority in several ways here. First, although she does not write the first section, she remains the central subject and actor throughout the letter's entirety. The language used here, as odd as it may be, also enables her to assume an authoritative position through calling on references to classical literature's themes and tropes, offering a clear illustration of the dialogic in this model letter. Furthermore, by adopting this language and having someone else write the letter for her, the woman's scribe (either her aunt or uncle) further remove her from reality and place her in an elevated position, reinforcing the overall theme of the letter. Most notably for this section, however, is the niece's own addition to the letter; by making her own visual mark on the page to conclude the letter, the writer takes control of the text in a literal way—by merging her body with the physical page being delivered to her suitor. Yet because these visual modalities cannot be presented in the printed manual, Richardson relies on references to the material and visual modes in the language—a very common practice of his in the manual and in his novels.

As shown in the previous section on manuscripts, references to materiality like the ones included here were also used in handwritten letters; however, because the pen was not actually being used to create the printed manual, the references to these materials and the physical act of handwriting become more apparent and actually help strengthen print's influence by demonstrating how this manual can be used as a practical guide for hand-writing letters. In reading the manual, then, the user is encouraged to recall interacting with tools and conventions specific to the manuscript tradition, much as we are encouraged to recall using physical objects, such as floppy disks, trash bins, and scissors, when interacting with a computer interface. Although some scholars, including Marta Kvande (2013), argue that the printed references to manuscript's materiality limit the manuscript's true potential, Richardson appropriates manuscript modes to create the semblance of presence that is of utmost importance for the personal letter and is thus important for creating new forms of gendered power through his printed manuals and novels. In other words, in drawing on these modes to create presence, Richardson also provides ways to materialize the female body and female power in the manuscript letters that are modeled after his manual, and this materialization becomes even more apparent in *Clarissa*.

The Dialogic in Printed Manuals

As in the manuscripts discussed above and in Chapter Two, several of Richardson's models provide evidence of the centripetal and centrifugal forces of language, showing very clearly how writers were expected to use the dialogic space of the letter to participate in the "contact zones" of double-voiced discourse. This subsection draws attention to salient examples of the dialogic in Richardson's manual, particularly in

relation to gender, showing how he appropriates semiotic resources to develop gendered power and nuanced identities in his printed works. Because of the focus on the dialogic, this subsection necessarily privileges the *language* in Richardson's models; however, when relevant, I show how the dialogic tensions in the language are reinforced by other modal affordances. I also specifically focus on the dialogic tension's ability to facilitate and sustain epistolary correspondence between writers. For instance, often, moments of addressivity or the imagined response of the reader instigate further response from the reader, as demonstrated in the examples I turn to next. In other words, addressivity conditions the writers' multiple positions in their letters and conditions the responses to the letters, as well. The first example that illustrates the dialogic's implications for negotiating different positions and imagined future correspondence is in a model letter from a woman who is unhappy with her suitor's hasty letter accusing her of coquetry. The letter titled "the Lady's Angry Answer" displays dialogic tension as she oscillates between traditional rhetorical moves as performed throughout the epistle's history. She begins with the brief salutation "SIR" followed by this statement: "BY the Letter I just now received from you, I fancy you have been a little too hasty." The combination of the salutation and the abrupt opening establish the writer's position toward the suitor and her displeasure with his hasty accusations. The woman letterwriter here explores dialogic tensions in the language much like several of the Bagot women in that she uses accepted generic conventions only to then flip those conventions and take control of the text and the relationship with her suitor.

Additionally, in the same model letter, the writer further assumes an authoritative position when she explains (in a direct and rather inflammatory manner) that she and her

suitors are both capable of acting as they choose; she writes, “For Goodness sake, Sir, let me do as *I* think proper: I see, *you* will. I sent not for you, nor asked you to be one of the Number [of men] you mention” (emphasis theirs, Letter LXXXVI, p. 120). In this statement, she is invoking an imagined response from him and commands him (through her use of the understood “you”) to let her act and think as she deems necessary and appropriate. The anticipated response thus conditions the position she assumes in the letter. She ends the letter with this summary: “In short, Sir, you are your own Master; and Heaven be thank’d, I am, at present, my own Mistress; and your well-manner’d Letter will make me resolve to be so longer than perhaps I had otherwise resolved. You see Follies in my Conduct. Thank you, Sir, for letting me know you do. I see your Sex in your Letter. Thank you, Sir, for that too” (Letter LXXXVI, p. 120). The conclusion offers a particularly strong example of directly speaking back to her reader’s sex that she sees emerging in his letters; not only does she explicitly state her (and her reader’s) independent positions, but she also engages in the dialogic through her acts of “gratitude,” or rather, through her mockery and sarcasm. Finally, the writer thanks him for allowing her to “see [his] Sex in [his] Letter.” This statement adheres to the sarcastic tone—another result of the dialogic—that the writer has already established and acknowledges the letter’s transparency, as she sees the letter as a clear window not only into the reader but also into the male sex. In all of the aforementioned ways, then, the female letterwriter—that Richardson creates and performs—challenges traditional gendered power dynamics in its dialogism and addressivity.

The dialogic becomes more apparent when juxtaposed with the reader’s reply: we can quite literally see the female correspondent’s language pushing against her suitor’s

response, as the letters are put into conversation with one another and are meant to be read in succession. Titled “The Gentleman’s submissive Reply,” the letter immediately indicates the success of her angry reply. The gentleman begins by admitting that his response was hasty and claims that he wishes he would have recalled it before it was delivered: “I BEG ten thousand Pardons for my rash Letter to you. I wish’d, too late, I could have recall’d it.”; “Don’t let me undergo too heavy a Penance for my Rashness. You can mould me to any Form you please” (Letter LXXXVII, p. 121). His rationale for his letter relies on his deep devotion to her, saying that he has never loved another woman as much as her. In effect, the man overturns the woman’s authority through his apology and his permission to shape him into anything she pleases. These moments push against her authority—by justifying his rash letter in this manner, he negates the severity of his first accusation. Such moments provide insight into how epistolary continuity is achieved. Furthermore, examples like these show Richardson fashioning dialogic responses that make his process of developing spaces for new types of gendered authority in the eighteenth century more possible and more visible. The suitor’s response is also another example of ways that addressivity facilitates continued letterwriting; addressivity, more specifically, keeps the exchange between them open and in flux, and this volatility is reinforced by the dialogic performances in the individual letters themselves.

This particular correspondence between the woman and her suitor continues, ultimately being resolved through the suitor’s apology. Without analyzing the entire exchange, the point I wish to make here with this brief example is that such exchanges in Richardson’s manual offer insight into how dialogic tensions and moments of addressivity are crucial for the continued correspondence among letterwriters. These

tensions, of course, mostly exist in the language itself, but I argue that other modalities reinforce and support the positions that are being assumed in the language (as addressed in the previous and subsequent sections). Unfortunately, however, in the print medium and in a text written and performed by a sole male author, the modalities and nuances of the writers' positions are not quite as apparent.

Genre Awareness/Consciousness in the Printed Manual

In addition to the dialogic tensions present in the language, the printed manual's representation of genre awareness and consciousness shows the extent to which multiple modalities and intersections of old and new genres and media are working together to establish connections between people and reify and challenge hierarchies already existing between writers of different classes and/or genders. Specifically, Richardson regularly references epistolary social conventions that existed outside of the letter itself. As in the Renaissance manuals and letters, references to messengers, delivery, time, and material conditions for reading and writing are included. Furthermore, Richardson adds editorial notes in his printed manual (and novels) that provide deeper insight into his careful navigation across oral, handwritten, and printed media. Such references show Richardson's deep knowledge of the larger epistolary system: from his experience as a letterwriter, printer, and author. Much like the references to material and tactile modes addressed above, Richardson's manual similarly relies on references to a meta-knowledge of epistolarity that create conditions for gendered letterwriting much like what we have seen in his personal letters to Lady Echlin. The two main ways I see these connections being made and genre awareness being put to work in Richardson's manual are through references to the messengers—or, the corporeal extensions of the letters and

letterwriters (Daybell, 2012)—and references to multiple modes, including handwriting and oral communication. Thus, to conclude the section on the manual, I offer examples that show modal intersections creating conditions for writers to assume multiple gendered positions and levels of authority in their writing.

The first example of genre consciousness—or awareness of the external epistolary actors/actants influencing the letter’s success—comes from a series of letters from a sailor to his love interest, Peggy. Most notably, this example calls attention back to the material letter’s core purpose of standing in for the letterwriter. In Letter CXXVI, said to be written in Barbados, the sailor mentions the messenger who will deliver this letter into her own hand. He writes, “John Arthur, in the good Ship Elizabeth, Capt. Winterton, which is returning to England, (as I hope we shall soon) promises to deliver this into your own dear Hand” (p. 163). Then, most interestingly, the writer explains that John shall receive a kiss from Peggy for his trouble in delivering the letter: “John says, he will have one sweet Kiss of my dearest Peggy, for his Care and Pains. So let him, my best Love; for I am not of a jealous Temper. I have a better Opinion of my Dearest, than so.” In this instance, the messenger takes on a role much like Lettice Kynnersley’s messenger in the previous case study—rather than just delivering the letter, he serves as a surrogate for the letterwriter himself, acting in ways that the sailor himself likely would if he were physically present. In other words, the messenger is a corporeal extension of the letter and its writer in not only delivering the documents, but also in physically demonstrating the sailor’s love in his absence.

This particular example also references spatial modes in the letter itself when the sailor ends by telling Peggy that he has to stop writing because he has reached the end of

the page. He says, “For I have an hundred things crowding in upon me, when I write to my Dearest; and, alas! one has so few Opportunities!—But yet I must leave off; for I have written to the Bottom of my Paper” (Letter CXXVI, p. 163). By acknowledging that he has much more to say but too little time and materials with which to communicate it, this letterwriter demonstrates the full range of modalities and contexts that influence the writer’s and reader’s correspondence. The letter, in this case, represents the possibility for the genre and the manuscript medium to be an outlet for emotional expression, but it also calls attention to the material limitations of the reflective, “to-the-moment” style of writing that Richardson enacted across all of his letterwriting practice. Yet, even in calling attention to the limitations of the *manuscript*, Richardson indirectly highlights the manual’s *printed* form—a form that does *not* have the same limitations (especially for someone who works as a printer). In this one model letter, then, we can get just a glimpse of how complex the interplay across media is in this text and the implications that it can have on two of the letter’s generic functions during this period: to re-create the writer’s presence and to provide a platform for free, introspective writing.

The complex interplay among modes, genres, and media and the manual’s participation in a long tradition of letterwriting’s aim to mimick face-to-face communication and create the writer’s presence are particularly obvious in model letters that reference oral communication versus written communication. In Letter XXI, for instance, a male suitor writes to request that his mistress let her parents know that she has no “aversion” to him (p. 36). The letter itself contains common tropes and rhetorical moves of a typical love letter; in it, he reaffirms his affection toward her and his honest intentions. Yet, Richardson follows this letter with an editorial note to the reader,

explaining that the correspondence between the suitor and his mistress will not continue because the next steps in this scenario require face-to-face, oral communication to determine whether or not the suitor is actually suitable for the young lady. Richardson adds:

As this puts the Matter into such a Train, as may render more Writing unnecessary; the next Steps to be taken, being the Inquiry into the Truth of the young Man's Assertions, and a Confirmation of his Character; and then the Proposals on the Father's Part of what he will give with his Daughter; all which may be done best by word of Mouth, or Interposition of Friends; so we shall have no Occasion to pursue this Instance of Courtship further. (Letter XXI, p. 36)

This editorial addition overtly privileges oral communication in determining the man's character, validates what has been said in letterwriting, *and* eradicates the need for the woman's own voice in a response. In fact, the note replaces the woman's voice with Richardson's. Thus, this note represents the printed letter's potential as a performative space that *can* further exclude women's voices. Furthermore, the editor's note explicitly calls attention to the movement of the manuscript letter into a printed, bound collection (Schneider, 2005; Cook, 1996). Gary Schneider (2005) comments that "[s]uch paratexts are exceedingly valuable in assessing the transition of letters from manuscript to print, and in understanding the logic behind particular gatherings of disparate epistolary material, letters recontextualized (actually or imaginatively) from their original time and place of production" (p. 187). The transparency of production and collection, I argue, corresponds with Bolter and Grusin's (1999) theory of hypermediacy; much like the windowed nature of our desktops, such editorial notes interrupt the text's immediacy and call attention to its fragmentation. In other words, notes like this one orient us to how Richardson perceived a situation like this one should be addressed *and* draw us into the "windowed" transition of manuscript to print.

Similarly privileging the oral mode and calling attention to the text's printed nature through his editorial note, Richardson includes another letter that pulls together multiple modes to combine factual and fictional letterwriting, making it a useful segue into the current chapter's final section on *Clarissa*. The manual's letter is labeled "A young Woman in Town to her Sister in the Country, recounting her narrow Escape from a Snare laid for her on her first Arrival, by a wicked Procuress" and summarizes how the young woman was almost tricked into staying at a brothel in London (Letter LXII, pp. 79-84). The letter describes a deceptive woman who lured the writer into the house as being of a "credible" appearance, and upon arriving, being given a "warm liquor" that made her feel physically ill. After recounting the whole story of being lured and then escaping when another guest enters, the writer states, "I am sure, Sister, you rejoice with me for my Deliverance. And this Accident may serve to teach us to be upon our Guard for the future, as well against the viler Part of our own Sex, as that of the other" (p. 84). Following her signature, Richardson adds the following editorial note: "N. B. This shocking Story is taken from the Mouth of the young Woman herself, who so narrowly escaped the Snare of the vile Procuress; and is Fact in every Circumstance" (p. 184). This letter is significant for several reasons: 1) it contains a narrative much like the long narrative letters in *Clarissa* that serve a similar function of offering guidance or moral advice for women, in particular; 2) it clearly shows Richardson's acceptance of a common cultural fear of the crowded city (Watt, 1957); 3) lastly, it includes another note from Richardson as the editor and compiler of the manual, insisting that what is represented in the letter is *fact* because it came straight from the young woman's mouth. Thus, this particular example brings together common cultural themes and upholds the

oral mode as the most genuine; in other words, Richardson relies on the authority of the oral tradition to compensate for letter's inclusion in print—a medium that was largely viewed as threatening and insincere (Kvande, 2013). Yet this editorial note, like the previous one, also brings the reader out of the text for a moment and reminds him/her of the media transitions that are being accommodated in this text.

Examining this performance of the model letters and all of the participants and links to epistolary culture, we are able to see how Richardson as a printer and epistolographer was taking multiple layers of letterwriting into account—through the references to the delivery process, the manuscript's material limitations, and the letter's roots in the supposedly more authentic oral tradition. As a whole, the manual also straddles and complicates many dichotomies: manuscript and print, fact and fiction, and private and public—all of which respond to the eighteenth-century's growing need for introspective and reflective writing. Furthermore, Richardson calls attention to the media transition himself through his editorial notes, carefully placed throughout the manual. In sum, the manual lies at the intersection of the everyday, vernacular letter and the emerging fictional letter best characterized as a commercial genre. This generic versatility and the range of media and modal affordances emerge even more in Richardson's novels and, through the extensive exchanges among the various characters, show opportunities for gendered authority and expression that emerge from this complex interaction.

4. Emerging Epistolary Forms: *Clarissa, Or the History of a Young Lady*

Much like his manual, Richardson's *Clarissa* pulls together many of the modal affordances of the letter genre and oral, manuscript, and print media to create a character

and narrative that respond to eighteenth-century cultural exigencies. In its newness, the novel calls attention to its status as an emerging genre through its references to media, revealing how the novel also lies at the crossroads of manuscript and print, public and private, and vernacular and commercial letters. In the current section, I analyze *Clarissa* through the same theoretical lenses used for the other letters: references to materiality, the dialogic potential of the novel-in-letters, and the genre awareness/consciousness that emerge in Richardson's references to writing space, epistolary continuity, and oral modes. Such references are important because, again, they offer insight into the letter's core functions that span across the three media and the various genres in the epistolary system, such as creating the letterwriter's physical presence. In short, the focus on these topics intends to uncover the complex, recursive processes of face-to-face communication, manuscript, and print and how it influences the way writers, particularly women, position themselves and gain new opportunities for authority.

Materiality in the Novel

The novel's material references, much like the manual's, recall a certain version of manuscript culture that reinforces the letter's feminine characteristics. According to Marta Kvande (2013), "*Clarissa* constructs a particular vision of manuscript culture as a means of authorizing Richardson's printed work; it signals one way in which print culture uses epistolary fiction to misappropriate manuscript culture by creating a nostalgic idea of direct linkage between letter, body, and self which ultimately disempowers the manuscript author and points toward print" (p. 239). Kvande essentially concludes that Richardson draws on manuscript authority only to privilege the print form; yet, I find Richardson's position toward manuscript much more nuanced. In *Clarissa*, for example,

the manuscript references not only show the protagonist's weakness and vulnerability at crucial moments in the plot, but such references also disrupt that narrative and allow Clarissa to break out of the oppressive epistolary exchange, as the examples analyzed below demonstrate.

For this project, I use this description of the characters in Richardson's editorial frame—Clarissa as a paragon of virtue and honor and Lovelace as a free and strategic writer—in conjunction with the material elements of manuscripts referenced throughout the novel. I argue that the success of Clarissa and Lovelace's characters often rests on the manuscript references and Richardson's connection between the "letter, body, and self" that become evident in these moments. Clarissa's vulnerability, for instance, is often reflected in weak handwriting or torn fragments of letters, whereas Lovelace's character frequently and excessively writes and attempts to take control over Clarissa through his letters. Yet, I also draw attention to her moments of vulnerability as opportunities for authority and freedom, as well—even if this kind of authority and freedom look different from Lovelace's. For the remainder of this section, then, I will point to several places in *Clarissa* where Richardson includes references to—and even some *visible* markers of—the letters' material features. These material references show the interrelationship among the emerging and antecedent letter genres, print and manuscript media, and the modes that they share. Ultimately, this complex interplay disrupts traditional expectations for the male and female characters and ultimately shows Clarissa's vulnerability as her weakness *and* her strength.

In this nearly 1500-page novel, Richardson includes many references to handwriting and writing tools in lines like "Once more I resume my pen" (Letter 436, p.

1265) or “Here I am obliged to lay down my pen. I will soon resume it” (Letter 2, p. 44). Such references call attention to the physical act of letterwriting and often mark the beginnings and ends of the novel’s letters. Even more significantly, however, references to the hand and pen correlate with characters’ health, much like the references Richardson includes in some of his last letters to Lady Echlin. For example, in Letter 436, in which each section is marked with the time, Clarissa exclaims, “...but I am very ill—I must drop my pen—a sudden faintness overspreads my heart—excuse my crooked writing!—Adieu, my dear!—Adieu!” (p. 1265). Additionally, in Letter 312, the references to the pen show the strain that hand-writing has on Clarissa’s diminishing health. She writes to Anna Howe: “I was very ill, and obliged to lay down my pen. I thought I should have fainted. But am better now—so will proceed” (p. 1001). The letter closes with a similar reference: “I must here lay down my tired pen! / Recollection! Heart-affecting recollection! How it pains me!” (p. 1005). This last reference suggests that the *tool* (the pen) rather than her *hand* is tired; and what seems to be happening is a merging of the tool and Clarissa’s body. Her physical pain and the recollection of her unfortunate situation mark the letter’s beginning and end and draw attention to how deeply Richardson sees the physical act of inscribing paper with a tool controlled by the writer’s hand linking the letter to the body. And in Clarissa’s case, it highlights the connection between the body, mind, and soul that ultimately reinforces her vulnerability and her resilience.

Clarissa’s enactment of vulnerability and resilience intensifies as the novel progresses, and the visual and material references reflect both her physical weakness and her authority in responses to situations that challenge her values and morality. Perhaps

the most visible markers of complex emotional state are in the fragments of letters after she is raped by Lovelace. In this section, rather than letters, Richardson identifies Clarissa's writings as "Papers," most of which are very brief and describe the paper as "torn in two pieces" or "scratched through, and thrown under a table" (p. 890). Several of the "papers" also intersect with another genre: poetry. As this section continues, the papers themselves become more poetic and less letter-like, and furthermore, Richardson typographically adds poetic annotations in the margins, just as if these were letters that Clarissa had marked and altered herself.

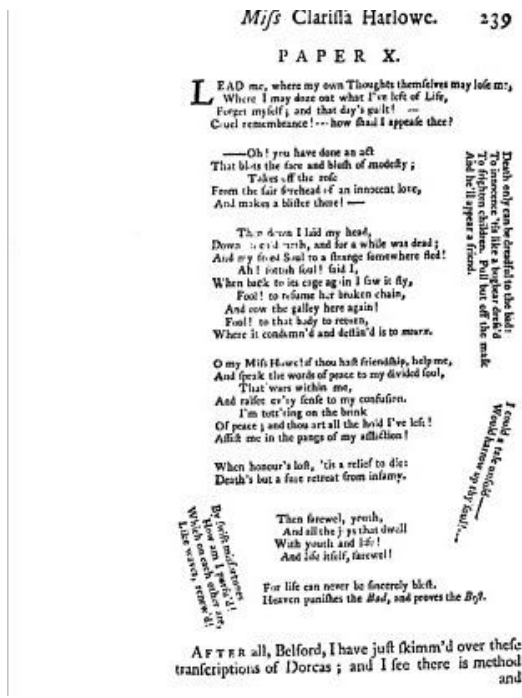


Figure 10: *Clarissa's* Paper X

Paper X, for example, includes fragments of poetry typed in the margins—several lines of which are attributed to literary authors, including Shakespeare and Dryden. One example of the annotated excerpts includes, “By swift misfortunes / How am I pursu’d! / Which on each other are, / Like waves, renew’d!” (p. 893). This section of papers visually shows Clarissa's mental decline after the rape through the typographical

placement of the poetic annotations and is a unique overlapping of manuscript and print. Richardson's play with the genre here—as letters, papers, and poetry—and the play with the medium, I argue, have two key results. First, through the combination of editorial remarks and the unique typography and placement, Richardson actually calls attention to the *printed* nature of the text and, as a result, highlights the vulnerability of manuscript. In other words, the “papers” call attention to their own fragmentation and thus are “hypermediated,” to borrow Bolter and Grusin's (1999) theory and terminology, in the way that the editor's notes and play with the genre and the medium call our attention to the medium itself and potentially interrupt our processing of the narrative and of the character's development. Second, as a byproduct of the papers' hypermediacy, Clarissa's vulnerability intensifies. Her vulnerability, however, is not just a display of her weakness; instead, it highlights the ways she draws on other texts and genres and the material means of the manuscripts to give herself authority and freedom from the exchange with Lovelace that has challenged her identity and her character. Thus, the intersections of multiple genres and media here provide insight into how Clarissa, the character, is far more complex than even Richardson himself describes in the opening preface. Yes, her physical and emotional well-being are declining, but she also displays her resourcefulness in using material means to give herself an outlet—much like we saw in some of the Bagot women's letters in Chapter Two.

Other visible evidence of the intersections of genre and media reinforces Lovelace's character as the dominant male who uses the “manuscripts” to control both Clarissa and Anna Howe. For instance, Lovelace's letters include printed replicas of hand-drawn manicules (a type of punctuation mark visually represented as a hand or fist

[☞] to call attention to important passages). Enclosed in one of Lovelace's letters to Belford is an annotated letter from Anna Howe to Miss Laetitia Beaumont. Lovelace explains that this letter, "put into [his own] hands by Wilson himself," has enraged him on multiple points (p. 742). Rather than transcribing the letter, which he admits "is too long to transcribe," Lovelace instead marks the margins with manicules to reference areas of the text that are "devoted for vengeance, or requiring animadversion." Lovelace admits that Belford will "see the margin of this cursed letter crowded with indices (☞)," and he upholds this promise, as nearly every paragraph in Anna's letter is marked with a manicule (p. 743). The excessive markings call attention to Lovelace's presence in the letter and his desire to control the interpretation of Anna Howe's letter and perhaps Anna Howe herself. Furthermore, like the fragmented annotations in Clarissa's "Papers," the manicules call attention to the letter's printed nature, as every manicule is identical and placed very precisely at the same point along the margins; manicules in the manuscript tradition, by contrast, were all unique and nuanced. In sum, the appropriation of a manuscript "device" in this instance further points the reader toward the printed nature of the text and the level of control that Lovelace assumes over the novel's female characters.

Lastly, before moving on to the discussion of the dialogic tensions in *Clarissa*, I want to close with an analysis of the bodily interactions with the material letters.

Richardson's novel explicitly merges the body with the act of letterwriting in multiple instances that not only highlight Clarissa's weakness and physical decline, but also her resilience and authority. In Letter 174 to Anna Howe, Clarissa's emotional state is represented by her pen and the merging of her tears and the ink with which she writes. She explains that "the vapourishness which has laid hold of [her] heart should rise to

[her] pen,” and then in an effort to explain her grief, she writes, “These griefs, therefore, do what I can, will sometimes burst into tears; and these mingling with my ink, will blot my paper—And I know you will not grudge me the temporary relief” (pp. 566 and 567). In the first example, Clarissa merges her emotions with her writing tool, suggesting that her nervousness and anxiety about her current situation are the substance of both her heart and her pen. The second example carries out the metaphor and adds an extra layer to her grief and to the merging of her body and the page—a bodily trace or physical manifestation of her grief, marking and mixing with the material of the paper to be delivered into the hands of her friend. Such an example also draws attention to the modal affordances that come together her to fulfill the letter’s purpose of creating Clarissa’s physical presence to her friend. In it, her body literally mixes with the writing materials she uses, and this example is a convincing one of how powerful manuscript references in the printed form could be. With this reference, Richardson reinforces the extent to which Clarissa and her manuscript letters come together to portray the protagonist’s fragility *and* her authority. This example is one of many where we see Clarissa resourcefully and strategically writing to her friend against her parents’ wishes. She finds ways to acquire writing tools and keep the letters in secret and intimate places that reflect the relationships she develops throughout the novel. In considering the modal affordances and all of the material conditions of Clarissa’s letterwriting—and the added layer of how it gets presented in a printed and bound volume of letters—we are better able to see how Richardson engages in a recursive process across genres and media to create a bodily presence for his characters. This careful crafting and negotiation across genres and media ultimately sustains the manuscript letter’s form in the printed medium and allows us to

see how Richardson was drawing on many semiotic resources to provide new forms of authority and meaning-making for his female characters who found themselves in isolating and threatening situations.

The Dialogic in Clarissa

As in the sections on the manuscript letters and the printed letterwriting manual, the references to the materiality of the letters overlap with the push-and-pull of the dialogic in *Clarissa*. In fact, the novel is the place where Bakhtin (1981) sees the dialogic's full range of potential. In his essay "Discourse in the Novel," Bakhtin argues that the dialogic reaches its "fullest and deepest expression in the novel," as it is characterized by heteroglossia and reveals language as social and ideological (p. 275). The novel is unique in its use of language; more than poetry, the novel is shaped by its centrifugal forces, or a pulling away from the central, unified, authoritative language. Likewise, the novel is formed by a stratification of genres (e.g., this stratification is particularly visible in *Clarissa*'s "Papers"). Bakhtin writes, "This stratification [of literary language] is accomplished first of all by the specific organisms called *genres*...Certain features of language take on the specific flavor of a given genre: they knit together with specific points of view, specific approaches, forms of thinking, nuances and accents characteristic of the given genre" (pp. 288-289). Furthermore, in the instance of *Clarissa*, the novel allows for the characters' language to always push against the language of the author; for example, Richardson often frames the letters with editorial commentary, sometimes deleting entire letters that the reader is to assume exist. In other words, Richardson's choices to fill in the gaps show a dialogic tension that exists between the characters and author. For the purposes of this project, these aspects of Bakhtin's

theorization of the novel have helped me identify particular moments where the dialogic further provides openings for gendered positions that we might not expect, especially for Clarissa whose mental and physical states steadily decline.

The novel-in-letters facilitates the dialogic through its stratification of genres and the characters' and authors' constant engaging with each other's dialogue, as seen in the characters' references to each other's previous letters and interactions *and* in the directive editorial remarks about the characters' interactions or letters that Richardson chose to summarize rather than include. The first selected example shows the epistolary novel's dialogic potential and comes from Letter 186 from Clarissa to Anna. Clarissa opens the letter with "Mr Lovelace has sent me, by Dorcas, his proposals, as follow..." (p. 596). After this brief introduction, Clarissa immediately transcribes all of Lovelace's proposals directly, as indicated by the single quotation marks, marking each individual proposal. Lovelace's first proposal encourages Clarissa to share the proposals with Anna: "To spare a delicacy so extreme, and to obey you, I write: and the rather that you may communicate this paper to Miss Howe, who may consult any of her friends you shall think proper to have entrusted on this occasion" (p. 596). He then follows this proposal with details about Clarissa's estate and his plans to negotiate these terms with her father. After Lovelace delineates his offer, Clarissa writes, "You see, my dear what he offers. You see it is all my fault that he has not made these offers before—I am a strange creature! To be to blame in everything, and to everybody!" (p. 598). In reflecting on the proposal, Clarissa engages directly with Lovelace's proposal and with Anna. The reader can see through Clarissa's reaction that, because of Lovelace's savvy rhetoric, she is being pulled from her previous interpretation of Lovelace's intentions. Yet she indicates her own

expectations were not met when she initially read Lovelace's conclusion, and she anticipates Anna's similar reaction: "Would you not, as you read, have supposed that the paper would conclude with the most earnest demand of a day?" (p. 598). In this moment, then, it seems that addressivity is conditioning Clarissa's own oscillation between multiple positions—a position of authority and power that sees Lovelace for what he is and a less authoritative woman succumbing to her suitor's manipulative advances. Thus, tensions in the language reveal Clarissa's multiple positions and show her considering Lovelace's proposals even from Anna's (anticipated) perspective; through transcribing and embodying Lovelace's proposals and then reflecting on his message with Anna as her intended reader, Clarissa navigates the authority and expectations of her friend, Lovelace, and herself—all while being mediated or refracted through Richardson's authorship.

Although the previous examples in this subsection primarily focused on dialogic tensions in the language, the examples in the subsection's conclusion appear after the rape. These particular examples offer strong evidence of the novel's centripetal and centrifugal forces of language intersecting with other genre and media affordances to create new forms of power and authority for Clarissa even as her health worsens. In addition, there are several examples of letters being transcribed or bound with other letters, offering another layer that intersects with materiality and genre awareness and consciousness. For instance, included with Paper X is a transcribed letter from Clarissa to Lovelace in which she explicitly questions his truthfulness about certain matters regarding Miss Howe and Mrs. Sinclair and other disjointed thoughts and concerns. The text itself is very fragmented by its sporadic punctuation, including many long dashes and

excessive exclamation points. In this letter, transcribed by Dorcas and included in Lovelace's letter to Belford, Clarissa's punctuation visually breaks up the text and shows the extent of her mental and emotional decline *and* highlights the extent to which she pushes against Lovelace. This letter includes many direct questions and commands (through the use of the understood "you"). For instance, Clarissa opens the letter with "I never intended to write another line to you. I would not see you, if I could help it. Oh that I never had! But tell me of a truth, is Miss Howe really and truly ill?—very ill?—and is not her illness poison? And don't *you* know who gave it to her?" (p. 894). The opening of the letter sets Clarissa in stark opposition to Lovelace through the words themselves and the grammatical construction. More specifically, here, Clarissa asks Lovelace directly about Miss Howe's health and implies through her repetition of the words "truth" and "truly" that she anticipates him being deceptive based on his previous correspondence. What this opening suggests, then, is that Clarissa is both appropriating and speaking back to Lovelace's own tactics. Furthermore, the disrupted text represents that not only is Clarissa engaging in a dialogic response with her intended reader, but it also represents that "[her] head is gone," as she admits herself, and that she is engaging in a dialogue in her own mind. The following example shows Clarissa directly opposing Lovelace and engaging in the "to-the-moment" writing that reveals Clarissa's internal dialogue:

Yet [Mrs Sinclair] may be a very good woman—
What would I say!—I forget what I was going to say.
Oh Lovelace, you are Satan himself; or he helps you out in everything; and that's
as bad!
But have you really and truly sold yourself to him? And for how long? What
duration is your reign to have? (p. 894)

In this excerpt, we can visually see the brokenness of Clarissa's language through the punctuation and see how she engages with multiple discourses with herself and with

Lovelace. This moment in the novel also reveals the stratified nature not only of language, but of the genre itself as it departs from the letterwriting formula that Clarissa adheres to more closely in earlier letters. Furthermore, her manipulation of the text ultimately reinforces her oppression and steady mental and physical decline but also shows her creating opportunities for herself in the language and through the material conditions to find an outlet and to assume authority. In sum, this example shows the generic potential of the letter to facilitate multiple forms of communication with oneself and with others, the dialogic potential of the novel-in-letters through the layering and bringing together of the characters' voices and the author's, and the ways in which the dialogic can reveal and reinforce the ways the female protagonist simultaneously assumes vulnerable and resilient positions.

While the reader can fairly safely assume that the letter included with Paper X is transcribed exactly as Clarissa wrote it, it is important to remember that this letter was transcribed by Dorcas and included Lovelace's own letter to Belford in the middle. This packaging and transcription, then, give Lovelace the chance to shape the reader's interpretation of the text as he writes the introduction to Clarissa's letter and then responds to it. In other words, I argue that several layers of dialogic interaction occur in this "single" letter. In particular, Lovelace engages with Belford's anticipated response and with Dorcas's transcription in what follows the excerpt from Clarissa. After the letter's signature ("The miserably abused Clarissa Harlowe"), Lovelace follows with this response to Belford: "I will not hear thy heavy preachments upon this plaguy letter. So, not a word of that sort! The paper, thou'lt see, is blistered with the tears even of the hardened transcriber; which has made her ink run here and there" (p. 896). His response

offers two insights into how he is engaging with the dialogic potential of the letter: 1) he anticipates what Belford will say based on the included letter and tells him not to make “a word of that sort!” and 2) he engages with Dorcas’ emotional response by describing the blending of her tears and the ink. After this description, Lovelace then offers another opposition to Belford’s anticipated response:

I know thou wilt blame me for having had recourse to *art*. But do not physicians prescribe opiates in acute cases, where the violence of the disorder would be apt to throw the patient into a fever or delirium? I aver that my motive for this expedient was *mercy*; nor could it be anything else. For a rape, thou knowest, to us rakes is far from being an undesirable thing. Nothing but the law stands in our way, upon that account... (p. 896)

Again, this excerpt shows Lovelace anticipating Belford’s counterargument and attempting to justify his action by offering his account of the events and relying on his “rakish” character. In compiling the transcription of Clarissa’s letter and Lovelace’s response in this way, we can see not only how Richardson complexly designs his characters, but also how he frames and situates Clarissa’s response to the rape within Lovelace’s own writing, conceptually and materially. Thus, Richardson’s use of the dialogic and the affordances of the medium and genre that he relies on to build this narrative reveals the continuation of complex gendered power dynamics—here, Clarissa’s voice falls away and is framed by the male character who has physically and emotionally controlled her.

Genre Consciousness and Awareness in the Novel-in-Letters

As an emerging genre, the epistolary novel often draws attention to its makeup of antecedent genres, including the letter. Relatedly, the letter draws attention to itself through the novel’s inherent dialogism and heteroglossia. Some of the ways this manifests in *Clarissa* is through the characters’ references to the manuscript’s material

components (e.g. being self-conscious of messy handwriting, as discussed above), the spaces in which letterwriting occurs, details about the delivery process and epistolary continuity, and references to other modes, such as oral communication. This chapter's last section discusses an example of each to show how the references to epistolary culture throughout the novel deepen the characters' (and the author's) genre awareness and how this knowledge allows them to take ownership of the text in ways that both contribute to and subvert the gendered power dynamics inherited from the novel's antecedent genres. As in the previous section on the printed manual, references to a broader epistolary culture demonstrate writers' acute awareness of all of the genres, media, and modes that come together and participate in a recursive process to sustain the letter's primary functions: re-creating the writer's presence in his/her physical absence and the opportunities for new forms of authority, even for Clarissa.

Bakhtin specifically comments on the novel's reliance on letters in his description of the "Sentimental psychological novel," a category in which Bakhtin places Richardson's epistolary fiction. He describes this novel type as relying on psychology and pathos, the latter of which engages with privacy and intimate relationships and directly responds to the rise in 18th-century individualization and subjectivity (p. 396). Specifically, I am interested in Bakhtin's understanding that the Sentimental psychological novel relies on contexts and spaces in which the writing occurs; using this framework, I contend that the references to writing space in *Clarissa* offer insights into a larger awareness of epistolary culture that reinforces the letter's gendered nature and participates in the emergence of new forms of authority for the protagonist. Much like the manuscript's materiality is coded as feminine because of its fragility and malleability, the

writing space underlines the private letter's feminization. Furthermore, the constriction of space (physically and emotionally) becomes a major theme in the novel. This idea of space and privacy is central to Bakhtin's understanding of pathos in the Sentimental psychological novel:

Pathos becomes associated exclusively with the kind of privacy found in one's own room. When this occurs, there is a change in the interaction between the novelistic language and heteroglossia: their interaction becomes less mediated, and the purely everyday genres of the letter, the diary, casual conversations move to the fore. The didactic purpose behind this Sentimental pathos is tied to more concrete situations, descends to the depths of everyday life, its smallest details, to intimate relations between people and into the internal life of the individual person. (p. 396)

In *Clarissa*, references to writing as a practice done in private rooms pull the reader into the particulars of Clarissa's daily life and affirm the letters' authenticity and immediacy. Such references call attention to the many external material conditions that also participate in the complex processes—across genres, media, and modalities—from which new, nuanced forms of gendered authority emerge in the novel, even when the material conditions seem oppressive and restrictive.

One of the most salient examples of this seeming oppression occurs early in the novel when Clarissa is confined to her bedchamber and forbidden from seeing or writing to Lovelace and Anna. Her confinement is represented through the language included in the letters, but we also see references to available material resources and the process of secretly delivering her letters that show Clarissa creating her own opportunities for freedom and authority—even if not in a physical sense. For instance, at the close of Letter 78, Clarissa explains to Anna a recent encounter that she had with the family's servant, Betty. Betty came to Clarissa and announced, "...your pen and ink (soon as you are to go away) will not be long in your power, I do assure you, Miss. And then, having

lost that amusement, it will be seen how a mind so active as yours will be able to employ itself” (p. 320). In this instance, Betty’s reference to the loss of Clarissa’s writing tools could mean the loss of Clarissa’s authority and the only outlet from which she can relieve her mental and emotional stresses; however, after this conversation with Betty, Clarissa explains her plans for hiding these materials: “This hint alarms me so much, that I shall instantly begin to conceal, in different places, pens, inks, and paper; and to deposit some in the ivy summer-house, if I can find a safe place there; and, at the worst, I have got a pencil of black, and another of red lead, which I use in my drawings; and my patterns shall serve for paper, if I have no other” (p. 320). In this moment, much like Ursula Wardwicke’s letters analyzed in Chapter Two, we can see Clarissa close to the point of despair, but her own resourcefulness and knowledge of space and all of the materials she needs to hide ultimately gives her an authority that extends the agency she assumes in her letters.

The importance of space then continues in Clarissa’s next letter to Anna Howe and more specifically references the intricate processes of delivery required as her confinement becomes more severe. The next letter also shows evidence of epistolary continuity by referencing the previous letter and establishing the time of day at which the letter was written. Letter 79 begins, “I must write as I have opportunity; making use of my concealed stores: for my pens and ink (all of each that they could find) are taken from me; as I shall tell you about more particularly by and by” (p. 320). This particular line shows the importance of both materiality and the opportunity of the present moment, both of which show Clarissa taking advantage of the kairotic moment with whatever means she has available. She then continues to describe the process and timing of delivery:

“About an hour ago, I deposited my long letter to you; as also, in the usual place, a billet to Mr. Lovelace, lest his impatience should put him upon some rashness; signifying, in four lines, ‘That the interview was over; and that I hoped my steady refusal of Mr. Solmes would discourage any further applications to me in his favour’” (p. 321). In this moment, Clarissa’s reference to the timing and specificity of the delivery, coupled with the inclusion of her quoted lines from her note to Lovelace, demonstrate the level of detail and, I argue, the *layering* and *continuity* of epistolary correspondence in the novel that contribute to the narrative’s success and to Clarissa’s own authority even in desperate moments. In other words, in these opening lines, Clarissa not only references her previous note to Anna, but she also interweaves lines (presumably taken *verbatim*) from her letter to Lovelace, revealing a carefully woven tapestry of epistolary correspondence that brings together the materiality, dialogic potential, and genre awareness and consciousness that contribute to the letter’s effective appropriation in this emerging genre. Such references to the range of epistolarity are necessary reminders of not only the connections being made between the characters, but they are also a helpful reminder for the readers that the novel is composed of *letters*, with each reference to epistolary culture pulling us back into the correspondence and reminding us that the letter form itself is largely responsible for propelling us (and the characters) forward throughout the novel.

In addition to space, timing, and delivery processes, the novel’s references to oral communication in many letters provide insight into the recursive process of oral, manuscript, and print modalities that are similar to those in Richardson’s letterwriting manual and call attention to specific ways both manuscript and print letters draw

authority from the spoken word or “primary genre” of dialogue. In fact, the heterogeneity of the speech genres represented in *Clarissa* is made more evident through the interaction between different primary and secondary speech genres, which Bakhtin (1986) refers to in “The Problem of Speech Genres.” Bakhtin writes, “During the process of [secondary genres’] formation, they absorb and digest various primary (simple genres) that have taken form in unmediated speech communion” (p. 62). I would argue that the success of the epistolary novel’s seeming authenticity is owed to the ways the primary genres like dialogue are “digested” in the letter and the novel as a whole. In other words, the oral modes are incorporated in a way that makes the reader feel as if he or she is witnessing the primary speech act firsthand—again privileging the longstanding belief that the letter’s primary function is to make the absent writer present to the reader. Bakhtin comments on the novel’s presentation of these everyday genres when he writes, “The novel as a whole is an utterance just as rejoinders in everyday dialogue or private letters are (they do have a common nature), but unlike these, the novel is a secondary (complex) utterance” (p. 62). Furthermore, he remarks, “The very interrelations between primary and secondary genres and the process of the historical formation of the latter shed light on the nature of the utterance (and above all on the complex problem of the interrelations among language, ideology, and world view)” (p. 62). The latter statement even more specifically underlines genres’ connection to ideology and power; thus, Bakhtin’s theory of speech genres and the ways they come together in the novel’s artistic form are significant to this study of genre and media’s reinstatement and subversion of gendered power across time and highlight the implications of privileging specific modes over others in these “hybrid” spaces.

In *Clarissa*, specifically, oral communication and gossip are mentioned in the first letter from Anna Howe to Clarissa. Anna opens with the following lines: “I am extremely concerned, my dearest friend, for the disturbances that have happened in your family. I know how it must hurt you to become the subject of public talk...I long to have the particulars from yourself, and of the usage I am told you receive upon an accident you could not help and in which as far as I can learn, the sufferer was the aggressor” (p. 39). She then details the names and interactions with individuals from whom she received these updates about Clarissa, including Mr. Diggs, Mr. Wyerly, and Mr. Symmes. In this particular instance, Anna synthesizes the gossip in her letter and privileges Clarissa’s own perspective on her situation. In this case, then, intersections of modalities are referenced, but Anna clearly prioritizes written correspondence from Clarissa over the gossip circulating in her social groups, ultimately valuing Anna’s and Clarissa’s voices and perspectives over the town’s fabricated stories.

Again, Richardson’s narrative techniques in *Clarissa* offer a glimpse into the recursive processes of modalities drawing on one another—at times, written dialogue is privileged, and other times, oral dialogue receives preference. For instance, in Letter 197.1, Anna describes and includes a letter sent by Clarissa’s Uncle Anthony Harlowe to Anna’s mother, which contains several references to Anna’s unsatisfactory behavior. Anna includes Anthony’s letter in full and then transcribes the dialogue that occurred between Anna and her mother, which she has marked with “M” for *mother* and “D” for *daughter*. She begins with this line: “I think you should have the *dialogue*. But let me premise one thing: that if you *think* me too free, you must not let it run in your head that I am writing of your uncle or my mother: but of a couple of old lovers, no matter whom”

(emphasis Richardson's, p. 626). For five pages of the novel, Anna then transcribes the interaction between her and her mother. An example of this dialogue is included below:

M. I expect to be answered by an answer; not by a question! – You don't *use* to be shy to speak your mind.

D. Not when my mamma commands me to do so.

M. Then speak it now.

D. Without hearing it all?

M. Speak to what you *have* heard (p. 627).

This letter significantly puts several modes and letters in conversation with one another and privileges the dialogue as an authentic form of expression—one that shows Anna's loyalty to Clarissa, despite Clarissa's uncle's transgressions. In other words, it demonstrates the letter's heteroglossic and dialogic potential and the ways primary and secondary speech genres merge to reveal how the author has valued certain modes in his female protagonist's characterization.

Such references to modality and letterwriting processes all overlap with the novel's material and dialogic meaning-making potential and draw attention to the novel's existence as the crossroads of manuscript and print. Furthermore, Richardson's handling of these affordances demonstrates how the eighteenth-century novel straddles oral, manuscript, and print traditions and the implications his appropriation of certain modalities has on gendered writing and opportunities for new forms of authority for his female characters. More specific to this final section on genre awareness and genre consciousness, Richardson's incorporation of so many epistolary references in the letters demonstrates his acute awareness of how the letters must call attention to themselves for so many of the novel's goals to be met: authenticity, privacy, and feminine virtue, to name a few. Cook (1996) comments, for instance, that "Like other eighteenth-century epistolary works, *Clarissa* explains its transformation into print, adding the story of the

letters to the story in the letters” (p. 108). Richardson’s story of the letters in the letters is achieved through his attention not only to the genre or the medium in isolation, but to the range of potential that the genre of the letter offers his emerging epistolary novel *and* how his experience in both media contribute to the gendered nature of letterwriting and the character’s letters themselves.

Conclusion: Looking Back and Looking Forward

Richardson was an active participant across genres and media in the epistolary system, and his contributions to emerging genres and the sustainability of antecedent ones are difficult to match, especially in regard to creating new forms of female authority and subjectivity. His contributions to the emerging epistolary fiction, for instance, relied on the complex interaction among previous genres, media, and modes and sustain the letter’s primary purposes of relationship-building and creating a presence of the writer. These epistolary goals are particularly important for female characters like Clarissa, who undergo increasingly severe trauma and stress and must find ways in the letter’s dialogic and material space and outside of the letter to assume authority and agency in ways that might otherwise go unnoticed. Of course, as I have shown elsewhere in the dissertation, the interplay among genres, media, and modes can and does continue to sediment some forms of gendered power, but when we look at the activity happening below the surface and the resourcefulness of the female letterwriters, we can see just how much potential there is for change to occur and for necessary empowerment to happen. The genres and media analyzed in this chapter also have offered the unique opportunity to look back at the gendered writing that preceded it in the English Renaissance *and* the opportunity to look ahead to the ways in which epistolary practices and gendered authority and

empowerment manifest in the digital age. In the next chapter, for instance, I will show how some of the same values of letterwriting—such as sustained communication, continuity, and an increased presence of the writer—are just as important (if not more important) in the epistolary spaces of today’s social media platforms. Like in the eighteenth century, though, the benefits of letterwriting conventions in the digital age, even with the increased accessibility, do not escape the risks of silencing marginalized writers’ voices and experiences.

CHAPTER FOUR

“TRYING TO FIND MY VOICE IN THIS MESS”: EPISTOLARY (R)EVOLUTION(S) IN PANTSUIT NATION

In her chapter “Technology, Genre, and Gender: The Case of Power Structure Research,” Susan Wells (2010) asks, “What are the theoretical relations among gender, technology, and genre? How do these relations change at moments of political or cultural crisis?” (p. 151). Wells aptly notes that the relationships rely on temporal and cultural contexts. This dissertation thus far has focused on similar questions about the relationships among gendered power, genre, media, and modalities within focused moments of media overlap in manuscript and print. Specifically, I have argued for a deeper analysis of the interrelationship among genres, media, and modality to understand how marginalized communities, including women writers, have embraced rhetorical resources to both participate in traditional structures of power *and* subvert traditional power dynamics to make their voices heard. This chapter contributes to that argument by examining the current print/digital overlap through the genre of Facebook posts in Pantsuit Nation and their translation from the online platform to the printed book. The chapter also begins to explore identities beyond (and intersecting with) gender that have been cultivated in online and print media. Ultimately, the analyses posit that a combination of genre and media affordances have enabled the contributors “to find a voice in this mess” and to shape meaningful relationships with other community members in online and face-to-face formats.

Pantsuit Nation emerged as a secret Facebook group on October 20th, 2016. Begun by Libby Chamberlain after the third presidential debate, the group was formed to support wearing pantsuits to the polls in support of Hillary Clinton. Clinton's pantsuit has become an icon and, as Chamberlain remarked in an interview, represents women's fight for equality in the workplace (Poidevin and Young, 2016). The secret group grew by thousands of members in a matter of hours, and within just three weeks had 3.6 million members. In the election's aftermath, the group shifted its primary focus from support for Hillary and pantsuits to storytelling and activism for broader social change. Pantsuit Nation's Facebook page soon became a digital collage of narratives about group members' successes and failures in relationships and marriages, histories of sexual assault, experience living with disabilities, and hardships in immigrating to the United States. Chamberlain commented that the Facebook platform became "a forum for millions...to rally around many of us [who are] feeling scared or hopeless, or like we are not in the majority" (Poidevin and Young, 2016). As a measure of the group's popularity and success, nearly every post on the group's page continues to receive thousands of responses and reactions—most of which are positive—with some posts going viral even outside of the group's private space (with permission from the authors). Significantly, too, the group's administrators privilege original content, as they explain in their guidelines, which prohibit the members from sharing links, memes, or fundraising requests. These guidelines thus have encouraged contributors to share personal narratives and calls to action based in personal experience and current events.

Pantsuit Nation has now grown beyond Facebook. The administrators established the Pantsuit Nation Foundation as a nonprofit organization and have developed a wider

presence online and in print. Pantsuit Nation now has accounts on Instagram and Twitter, has developed its own podcast called *The Pantsuit Nation Podcast* (formerly called *This Pod Is Your Pod*), and published the book *Pantsuit Nation* in May 2017. In each medium, Pantsuit Nation features stories from its members and calls to action, encouraging everyone in the growing Pantsuit Nation network to call their senators to protect rights for the LGBTQIA community, the immigrant community, and to defend net neutrality, to name just a few recent examples. Even with the calls for activism, though, as with any online community, the group has received backlash from individuals inside and outside of the group. Many of Pantsuit Nation's own members, for instance, saw the group as a white feminist space that was not inclusive of intersectional identities. The group has also received criticism for being a storytelling space that has not been dedicated to real activism and has instead become a platform for white women to celebrate each other's good deeds. The decision to create a nonprofit organization and publish a book was met with a great deal of resistance, as well, as some critics claimed the book was evidence that group's organizers were turning Pantsuit Nation into a "branding machine" (Lewis, 2016). Danielle Kurtzleben (2017) published a book review for NPR that summarized the response: "People accused [Libby Chamberlain] of cashing in on other people's personal experiences and worried that she might use stories without authors' permission - the posts in the Pantsuit Nation Facebook group were not written with a book in mind, they pointed out" (n.pag.). While the lack of permission was initially a concern, it proved to be an unnecessary one, as Chamberlain had sought and received "enthusiastic" permission from each of the book's contributors (Chamberlain, 2017, p. 259).

In fact, many participants in my research study praised Chamberlain for personally connecting with them and have developed friendships with the group's founder. In short, this online platform, like many others, has caused positive and negative reactions in the year and a half following the election; the Facebook group in particular remains a safe haven for many members, and the group's active members have sustained Pantsuit Nation's relevance with calls to action and frequent updates of stories and reactions to political events. Also, the platform now features tags that highlight the most popular topics in posts. As of March 5, 2018, the most popular topics were "Candidates" (161), "Women's March" (136), "Calls to Action" (115), and "Elections" (70). Calls to Action have most recently included encouraging group members to research and track the amount of money elected officials have received from the National Rifle Association (NRA) in response to the mass shooting that took place on February 14, 2018 at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida. A group administrator, Cortney Tunis, pinned a video post the next morning on February 15th asking Pantsuit Nation to trace the NRA's money, call elected representatives, and encourage those representatives to donate that money to organizations working to protect kids from gun violence in schools. Tunis ends the post with the following call to action: "Tell them that gun violence is a public health issue. Vote. Become involved, TRULY involved and personally accountable, in the anti-gun violence movement" (Tunis, 2018). This post and the high volume of other call to action posts demonstrate how the group has been sustainable since October 2016. With each event that could affect policy change and lives of the Pantsuit Nation community, the administrators and group members come together to respond and take action.

In what follows, I analyze Pantsuit Nation Facebook posts, book entries, and participants' reflections to explore how participants in this study have carved out a safe space for their voices that could not be guaranteed on their own personal profiles. In this chapter, I consider parallels among Facebook, blogging, and the epistolary tradition. My goal is to explore how this online community has used digital media and genre affordances to develop new friendships and enact political activism within online and offline spaces. More specifically, I show how Facebook relies on open-ended narrative and necessary flexibility and instability. These attributes, in turn, provide opportunities for wide readership and quick editing/updating of original posts—all affordances of the genres and media that have striking similarities to those that appealed to letterwriting communities of the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries discussed previously. Pantsuit Nation also has responded to similar rhetorical exigencies—for community-building, civic action, and responsibility. Its emergence and success have been made possible by the social media platform (the medium) and the Facebook post (the genre), both of which have worked together by drawing on shared modal affordances—of alphabetic text, photos, and video—and thus have offered a space for members to shape online identities and resist common cultural narratives that do not accurately represent their experiences.

In analyzing the posts and reflections, I have relied on the rhetorical genre and media frameworks introduced in previous chapters and Bakhtin's theoretical lenses of the dialogic and addressivity. The chapter's first section reviews these theoretical warrants, primarily to contextualize how and why I see Pantsuit Nation existing in the epistolary tradition and to delineate characteristics of the Facebook post as a *genre* and the social

media platform as the *medium*. The next section outlines my methods and data collection; in this section, I discuss the questions asked in the interviews and the importance of the Pantsuit Nation book in shaping the research study. The chapter's next three sections analyze the participants' posts and reflections and are grouped according to the use of visual modes and alphabetic text in both media, the dialogic potential of social media, and rhetorical enactments that extend beyond print and online media. Each section supports my overarching argument that the members' ability to assume authoritative positions in this community emerges from the interaction among the digital, print, and oral modalities.

1. Theoretical Warrants

The following subsections review literature that has informed how I understand the emergence of the Facebook post as a genre, the exigence for its emergence, and how it has appropriated (feminine) epistolary conventions to fulfill a community need. First, I review scholarship on genre and media evolution in the digital age. Then, I provide an overview of the Facebook post's generic characteristics, situating my rationale within scholarship on emerging digital genres. Finally, I cover conversations on blogging and epistolary practice and scholarship on gendered web writing that I have found relevant to my analysis of letterwriting and social media spaces. These three sections thus cover foundational literature for my argument: ways genres and media emerge and evolve in digital spaces, specific reasons for marking the Facebook post as a (vernacular or open) genre, and ways social media fulfills community needs similar to those of letterwriting circles discussed in recent chapters.

Emerging (Everyday) Genres and Media in the Digital Age

The current subsection reviews literature that acknowledges the difficulty of distinguishing genres and media in the digital age; it also examines scholarship on “vernacular,” “open,” and “everyday” genres to consider how social media genres can facilitate large-scale community-building. First, using the literature referenced here, I have concluded that some epistolary genres maintain key recognizable features that transfer across media. Other genres, however, change enough to where seeing the genre as the *same* or *similar* is nearly impossible. For instance, the Facebook posts studied here look nothing like manuscript or printed letters, but they share characteristics—ongoing narrative, dialogic tensions, expectations for continued correspondence—that meet similar rhetorical needs. In some cases, too, digital media affordances can make it difficult to discern a digital *genre* from a digital *medium*. On this topic, Carolyn R. Miller and Dawn Shepherd attempt to untangle the complex relationship of genre and medium in two articles on blogging published in 2004 and 2009. The earlier article contends that blogs are *genres* of social action, while in the later article, Miller and Shepherd argue the blog is a *medium* because of the affordances of speed and the discourse community’s use of the platform. In discussing genres’ adaptation in new media and the role of affordances in meeting a social need, Miller and Shepherd (2009) conclude that sometimes the genre adapts to the new medium, and other times, “...as seems to have been the case with the blog, the new suite of affordances potentiates an exigence that had not yet been met, had not yet perhaps even been crystallized” (p. 282). In other words, the genre emerges from the new medium to satisfy a social need (previously “latent”), thus making the genre “instantly recognizable to large numbers of people” (p. 282). Miller and Shepherd’s (2009) revision has informed my understanding of how social media—as a form of

microblogging—satisfies an arguably unfulfilled social need for immediacy and intimacy through a combination of genre and media affordances.

Relying on similar understandings of genres and technology, Lüders et al. (2010) comment on the difficulty of analyzing genres that are disseminated through digital media. Specifically, their analysis has influenced how I understand some genres to maintain more generally recognizable characteristics across media than other genres. They write, “New media arrive at short intervals and adapt previous genres in new versions. Some [genres] change considerably in the adaptation process, while others keep their most recognizable features intact.” (p. 949). The speed of adaptation is arguably a key factor in how these authors explain genres and media change over time and what aspects become less familiar in each rearticulation. As mentioned previously, the manuscript and printed letters examined in previous chapters certainly look much different than the social media posts explored here, while the manuscript and printed letters share more recognizable qualities. Yet in both cases, the rhetorical exigencies, the expectations, and values of this genre function similarly to those of the earlier epistolary genres in “older” media.³⁹

Drawing on the above theories, I also want to address the conventions, structure, and rhetorical possibilities in social media, particularly in Facebook. Here, I consider several definitions of everyday genres to argue that the Facebook post is, in fact, a genre and is one that provides opportunities for regular, informal communication and more accessible entry for a wider community of users. First, I find it useful to recall Carolyn R.

³⁹ Carolyn R. Miller (2016) provides a warning that has relevance here, as well. She writes, “I do want to suggest that we be conscious of the assumptions we make about essences and relationships, of how and why we identify something as a genre; that we be alert to the differences between classification by abstraction and classification by descent. We have much to learn about the processes of genre change and innovation, and we need all the tools we can find.” (p. 16)

Miller's (2017) definition of *vernacular* genres, an umbrella which I argue encompasses personal letters *and* social media posts. Miller explains that vernacular genres "emerge and survive when a community finds a configuration of features that satisfies or pleases those who interact together, addressing some communally recognized exigence" (p. 25). This community, Miller adds, has taken on a more agentive role of producers rather than consumers, contributing to a rise in digital genres (p. 25). Myers and Hamilton's (2015) analysis of "open genres" offers a similar rationale for why genres like these might be proliferating in digital realms. They explain "open genres" as being more accommodating and less rigid: "By 'open,' what we mean are genres that are responsive and accommodating instead of restrictive and exclusionary but, as such, become directly available to greater ranges of people who contribute collectively to their growth and adaptation" (p. 226). This idea that open genres can attract more users and help build a vast community because of their flexibility is particularly insightful for my own analysis of writers in letterwriting and social media communities finding rhetorical resources to insert their voices meaningfully.

Each of these definitions for vernacular and open genres aligns with Bakhtin's theorization of the "everyday genre," a label I have applied to manuscript letters elsewhere in the dissertation. Bakhtin writes:

This is what ordinary people live, and their means for communicating with each other—the private letter, the laundry note—are not considered artistic. They are, however both conventionalized and canonized; indeed, all communication must take place against a certain minimum background of shared generic expectations. (p. 428)

In previous chapters, I described manuscript letters as everyday genres that have conventions and expectations, yet are not always highly regarded. Furthermore, most of

the letterwriters, particularly in Chapter Two, were “ordinary people” communicating their lives and needs to other family members and trusted correspondents. As I show below, social media posts similarly have conventions and expectations (often established by the users, rather than formal manuals or rules) but are not always respected as authentic, credible forms of communication. Nevertheless, the posts are written by “ordinary people” who gain credibility through sharing recognizable experiences and values. Even in a less formal and regulated genre, then, there is a “minimum background of shared generic expectations” that the community relies on to make meaning (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 428). Pantsuit Nation, for instance, relies on a communal understanding of expectations and shared values (guided by the administrators’ set of guidelines). And, as my analysis demonstrates, these expectations and values have led to the formation of subgenres within this group: introductions, dedications, and disrupted stereotypes, to name a few. Such subgenres have emerged organically from the users’ everyday practice and the repeated affirmation of these types of posts over time.

In analyzing the Facebook post as a genre (“open,” “vernacular,” and/or “everyday”), I have also found scholars’ delineations of genre conventions insightful. Myers and Hamilton (2015) outline social media characteristics that they believe led to its “openness”: “fragmentariness, disunity and multiplicity, multiperspectivalism, and dialogism” (p. 223).⁴⁰ Such aspects contributed to my analytical threads used below, particularly “dialogism.” Furthermore, Lucas Graves (2007) specifies that the blog in

⁴⁰ The authors believe that these qualities (fragmentariness, disunity and multiplicity, multiperspectivalism, and dialogism) are what facilitate more “untapped possibilities” for historians (p. 223). While I disagree with their broad assessment of social *media* as open genres (rather than social media disseminating open genres like posts), I do appreciate the concrete examples and characteristics of social media genres that they see as opening up the space to include more users; yet, as my analysis shows, sometimes these aspects of open genres that give users a voice are not evenly distributed in an active social media space, which I will explore in further detail later in the chapter.

particular affords “reader input,” “fixity,” and “juxtaposition” (pp. 340-342). Graves explains the potential for “many eyeballs” to see the posts and the opportunities for pinning, fixing, and curating thoughts and responses in a single space that remains in view of a large audience (i.e., what he calls “fixity”). Although I do not use all of these terms specifically in my genre analysis of the Facebook post, I do recognize these affordances facilitating community-building and civic action within the Pantsuit Nation’s social media platform and outside of it.

Using these understandings of social media and blogging affordances, I argue that in Facebook, we can similarly easily identify conventions of a successful post, though some uses vary because of the platform’s capabilities. Most posts, for instance, are relatively short in length (or at least shorter than most blog posts), contain an image or use of other modalities, include content that divulges enough personal information to give audience members a window into the user’s everyday life or value systems (but do not offer *too* much information), engage audience members through inviting responses or encouraging uptake and circulation, privilege current or very recent experiences, use reverse chronological order, and more. The uses of these conventions in Pantsuit Nation’s secret group have shown this shared set of values and expectations in regard to content, length, and images being enacted and developing their own set of shared community guidelines. Posts in Pantsuit Nation are, at times, much longer than traditionally accepted Facebook posts because of the importance that storytelling has in this community. In short, as discussed below, participants have made conscious rhetorical decisions about which modes to privilege and which conventions to adopt or reject in their posts.

Facebook and Letters

Studying emerging genres can and often does shed light on genres and media that have come before them. Toward that end, here I explain how and why I traced letterwriting forward into social media and what the shared characteristics across the genres and media reveal about one community's shared values. As briefly mentioned above, letters and social media posts rely on a continuation of the narrative and communication in order to be successful. The expectation of new information and consistent, ongoing correspondence marks most (if not all) epistolary and social media genres and allows for community-building to happen and to be sustained. Both letters and blog/social media posts also rely on genre and media instability and flexibility so that users can highlight the most important aspects of their message through a range of modes. Because the narrative and the community-building are ongoing, the genre and the media must be flexible enough to change to meet the needs of users within that particular moment, while still maintaining recognizable features that readers will expect.

The posts examined below will certainly demonstrate what community-building and flexibility look like in practice, but for now, I want to situate these conclusions in scholarship that theorizes the epistolary conventions of social media practices, much of which has come from eighteenth-century literature scholars and researchers in communication and psychology. Literature scholar Kathleen Fitzpatrick (2007) focuses on blogging and the early (serial) novel to argue that the blog has become a new literary form. She writes:

Like the early novel, the personal blog on the one hand seemingly presents certain dangers to its readers, while on the other, it may be gradually transforming a degraded species of domestic scribbling into as [sic] a new form of literature through the production of a new form of subjectivity, a new understanding of the self as it exists not as individual, but instead as part of a network. (p. 174)

Fitzpatrick's conclusion that the self becomes distributed and networked in the blog are particularly important for my understanding of how social media—as an extension of blogging—has facilitated even faster growth of networks as it has become ubiquitous. Furthermore, Fitzpatrick acknowledges that blogging has the potential to turn rudimentary “domestic scribbling” into a meaningful literary form that resists narrative closure, an appealing and necessary feature for its users. Like blogging, social media has developed a reputation for being a less serious form of communication that often contains entries about mundane activities (like what a user had for breakfast that morning or a picture of an outfit of the day). Yet, social media has also been a platform that has facilitated and sustained important social movements through hashtag activism (#BlackLivesMatter, #LoveWins, #metoo, #yesallwomen, #standwithstandingrock, #ArmMeWith) and activist groups like Pantsuit Nation being founded in social media spaces and leading to in-person meet-ups and marches for social justice causes. In short, like blogging and personal letterwriting, social media has been used to form meaningful, long-lasting networks online and offline and has resisted narrative closure to maintain its relevance amid emerging social issues.

Social media, blog posts, and letters also share qualities that allow users to span across several genres and media—from handwriting, to digital and print forms, and oral delivery. For instance, it was common in the Renaissance and the eighteenth century for letterwriters to share their letters orally in larger public circles or use the letters to arrange a face-to-face meeting. Based on the interviews conducted with Pantsuit Nation participants, I have found that relationships forming across media have also been particularly important for Pantsuit Nation's community. On the topic of offline

relationships emerging from online blogs, educational psychologist Vanessa Paz Dennen (2009) comments, “As bloggers become more familiar with each other, their interactions extend to email, face-to-face meetups, and Facebook friending. These extensions allow them to explore topics and divulge information that they are not comfortable posting in a public forum” (p. 35). Pantsuit Nation participants, for instance, discussed friending members of the group, following their personal profiles, and sending them direct messages. Some participants also mentioned having regular phone calls and/or meeting group members in person. Others have revived previous friendships after finding that individuals from high school or other organizations they have been a part of were also members of Pantsuit Nation.

Gender and Online Writing

Scholarship surrounding women’s online writing is also pertinent to this discussion, as it sheds light on why some online genres and media—blogs and social media posts, for example—have generally been called “feminine” genres, much like the epistle. To contextualize the feminist space of Pantsuit Nation, I briefly review scholarly conversations that contribute to how I understand feminine epistolary practices in social media platforms and what we might gain and/or lose from gendering online writing. Deborah Bowen (2009) calls attention to online autobiography and how it affords women writers the “freedom to try out some or all of [their] voices, to publish ideas and opinions solely for the pleasure of recording and sharing experiences” (p. 311). She then says that “[t]he Internet offers women the space, the tools, and the medium for exploration into individual and collective *écriture féminine*” (p. 311). While I do see the possibility of writing openly and in real time using digital tools, I do take issue with Bowen’s

understanding of the Internet as “shapeless, shifting, and uncontrolled,” since I adopt the understanding—like DeVoss and Selfe (2002) and Spender (1995)—that all media and genres are shaped from specific ideological positions that can (and do) inform how users interact with the technologies and with one another in these spaces (p. 313). This freedom for expression is nevertheless one of the qualities that makes online genres—like the online autobiography that Bowen examines—*feminine*.

Other scholars point to *narrative* as foundational to feminist online spaces. Jordynn Jack (2009), for example, references the values of personal stories and everyday narratives to online feminist communities and compares these spaces to male-authored blogs that focus on politics and economics. She also explains that men’s blogs get taken up more frequently in the media and featured on more “blogs to follow” lists (p. 336). Similarly, Van Doorn et al (2007) in their analysis of weblogs reference the natural feminine nature of lifelogs and online diaries since these genres are invested in emotional and personal realms (p. 156). Much like the genres referenced here, the posts in Facebook’s Pantsuit Nation rely on the power of storytelling as a primary way of building community and navigating many personal identities in a volatile political environment. In my analysis of the posts below, I push against marking all narrative as feminine because it is “emotional” and “personal” and instead focus on the power of storytelling to incite activism in other online and offline spaces where women generally have difficulty inserting their voices and being valued as leaders. I also consider the potential of storytelling in this feminist space to be more inclusive of *intersectional* identities through a combination of genre, media, and modal affordances that authors use to establish a space for themselves in this community.

3. Methods

As discussed in previous chapters, this dissertation's primary purpose is to analyze a rhetorical genre—the letter—as it evolves through various media to address how genres create spaces where gendered power dynamics are reinforced and/or subverted in any given text. This part of the project focuses on *digital* genres and similarly attends to questions of writers' authority; more specifically, the project examines what digital resources are available that allow marginalized users to become or feel empowered, but it also recognizes that these same resources can work to further silence and devalue users in and over time. This case study relies on qualitative research methods, particularly rhetorical analyses of posts and comments and semi-structured interviews with contributors, to reach conclusions about the online platform's potential for inclusivity. All interviews and written reflections were conducted and received after receiving IRB approval for the study. Also, as explained in further detail in what follows, all participants were contributors to the publicly-available Pantsuit Nation book, thus making the sample a small representation of the much larger Pantsuit Nation community.

My IRB application included my initial plan to write a call for participation that would be published on Pantsuit Nation's Facebook page and would be accessible to all of its (almost) four million members. My recruitment post explained that my membership in Pantsuit Nation preceded my decision to research the space and that I was interested in studying gendered writing in online spaces. This post also specified that those who wished to participate could “opt in” to the study by commenting on the post or writing to me via personal Facebook message or email. I also offered participants the option of

pseudonymity and the choice of selecting certain details or images they wished for me to exclude from the written research.⁴¹

Before attempting to post the request to the Pantsuit Nation page, I reached out to Libby Chamberlain (the group's creator and primary administrator) to let her know my research plans and ask her to review my post before I tried to publish it. After two unsuccessful attempts to reach Chamberlain, I ultimately decided to submit my post in hopes that it would be published. Almost immediately after clicking "post," I received a private message from a Pantsuit Nation administrator asking for more details about the research project. Our conversation continued for several weeks, and the administrator presented my post in a Pantsuit Nation executive meeting. Unfortunately, the post was eventually denied because the group is relatively "young" (insofar as the group is only a little over a year old), and many group members are from vulnerable populations. As a member of the Pantsuit Nation community, I understood the administrators' skepticism

⁴¹ This study was designed in large part by using Heidi McKee and James Porter's (2012) model for decision-making in designing online research. Using the authors' model, I made the following conclusions about my study in each of their categories:

1. **Public vs Private** - Pantsuit Nation is largely public; with four million users, the content cannot be deemed "private" or even "mostly private."
2. **Data ID** - data identification in a group of this size is low, particularly for those who opted to have a pseudonym and/or excluded any identifying images or other digital media from the post.
3. **Degree of Interaction** - the degree of interaction is low to medium; the only interactions I had with participants were phone calls, private messages, or emails confirming their participation and our correspondence about follow-up questions
4. **Topic of Sensitivity** - the topic of sensitivity varied based on the consenting participants' posts. Some posts contain stories of success or humorous experiences (e.g., stories of political discussion with families during holiday gatherings), while others describe sensitive material, such as experiencing domestic violence/abuse; oppression resulting from their sexuality, race, or other factors; and difficulties related to immigration status.
5. **Subject Vulnerability** - the subject's vulnerability also varied based on the reasons described for "topic of sensitivity."

Based on the assessment of the project using this ethics paradigm, I concluded that consent was necessary, particularly because of the final two categories — "topic of sensitivity" and "subject vulnerability"; however, the space is a largely public nature, even as a "secret" group, and involved only minimal interaction with me.

and desire to protect the group members and did not pursue posting to the group as a whole.

Fortunately, however, the Pantsuit Nation book, *Pantsuit Nation*, had been recently published in May 2017 and was available to the public for purchase. The book listed (most of) the contributors' names, so I was able to contact each of them to request an interview or a written reflection for my study. Of the 125 individual messages I sent to contributors, I ultimately had between thirty and forty responses and twenty-one who followed through with the request. When I contacted the book contributors, I asked the participants a series of questions that I hoped would generate responses about their rhetorical decisions:

1. Can you tell me more about the image that you chose for this post?
2. Were there any parts of the story that you either left out or emphasized because of the particular venue in which you were writing? Why?
3. What are some of the ways you have interacted with commenters on your post? Have you met or reached out to any of these group members individually?
4. If you edited the post, why did you make those edits? What did you add or take out, and why?
5. In what ways did you feel supported/encouraged/empowered or not after posting in Pantsuit Nation?
6. Is there anything else you would like to add about your participation in the group?

Some of the participants interviewed with me on the phone, and others chose to write out their responses because they felt that it would be easier for them to collect and process their thoughts in writing.

The response of the site's administrators, denying my initial post, clearly limited the types of responses and participation for this study. As contributors to the book, all of the participants were avid supporters of Pantsuit Nation and felt comfortable in sharing online and reflecting on their contributions and feedback. I was not able to include other members' perspectives, such as those who spoke out against Pantsuit Nation. Lastly, as

my study makes clear, the experimentation and freedom that online platforms can afford can be compromised by the many layers of mediation between the user's initial post and when/if it appears on the group's page. As Carolyn R. Miller (2017) remarks about new media communication, activity in new media genres "is voluntary and relatively unregulated...[new media genres] highlight additional factors in genre emergence: free experimentation, play, and social competition" (p. 22). While I do agree that *Pantsuit Nation* still affords some of this flexibility and room for play, the administrators' roles in moderating the activity and in providing fairly rigid guidelines do limit the control that writers have over their stories and interactions in this space.

In the correspondence through Facebook messenger and phone conversations, I structured my communication with the participants based on Selfe and Hawisher's (2012) feminist semi-structured interviews. In "Exceeding the Bounds of the Interview," the authors explain semi-structured, conversational interviews as a more authentic way of researching with participants. Selfe and Hawisher describe their methods as being in contrast to more traditional methods of interviewing, in which an implicit hierarchy exists between the interviewer and participant and thus creates a perceived difference between the two. In order to work toward lessening this difference, they stress the importance of the range of possibilities for participants' involvement in the research (p. 40). Before conducting my first interview, I decided to adopt some of their methods, because I was intrigued by "the feminist understandings of the interview-based work in which [Selfe and Hawisher] were engaged," which "encouraged" them to move away from "more structured, interviewer-directed research goals" and toward "more-interactive exchanges" (p. 41). Such an interactive approach, as Selfe and Hawisher describe, relies on beginning

an interview with an unfocused prompt (e.g., asking the participant to tell some stories about the topic of interest), followed by an exchange in which participants are encouraged “not only to tell ... stories but to help [the interviewers] make sense of them” (p. 41). While I relied on a similar set of questions in my written and interview correspondence, I certainly felt that my interaction with the participants in the phone interviews involved a more reciprocal exchange. In these conversations, I shared my own story of how I became a member of Pantsuit Nation and my identity as a white southern feminist. This organic conversation led the participants to divulge more information about their own involvement in the group than they might have otherwise.

On this subject of how I participated and interacted with the participants, I have also considered Filipp Sapienza’s three categories of developing an ethos as a researcher in digital communities: “an ethos as a technologist, an ethos as a culturally competent member of the community, and an ethos as a scholar-expert on virtual communities” (p. 89). In this case study, more than the others, I was faced with determining my own research positionality given my membership in the group prior to selecting it as a case study. In Sapienza’s piece, he explains thinking of the researcher’s positionality in terms of ethos, saying “ethos not only applies to how participants construct rhetorical identities online, but also to researchers as well. A researcher’s ethos consists of multilayered roles that intersect and inform one another: participant, observer, helper, and so forth” (p. 91). Similar to my experience, Sapienza explains that he had a personal connection to the group outside of his research, which made it difficult for him to research the group “from the position of an outsider” (p. 92). In short, I have used Sapienza’s explanation of ethos as being multilayered to help me better identify my research positionality in this complex

online community—as a participant, observer, and helper who shared my own story and helped others reflect on theirs.

I conclude this section by describing the transcribing and coding processes. I initially completed a round of thematic and conceptual coding of the book's printed entries since all of my participants were book contributors. My first round of coding revealed posts themed around contributors introducing themselves—often including their names and where they live in addition to significant aspects of their identities. Many other posts included specific language that circulated during and after the election: “I’m with her,” “Love trumps hate,” “Stronger together,” “Nasty woman,” and “bad hombre,” to name a few. I also recognized a trend in posts which served the primary purpose of dismantling common stereotypes about a particular community in which the contributor belonged (e.g. self-identifying as a white male ranch owner from Texas who supports Hillary). Other trends included dedicatory posts—to lost loved ones or significant others who felt threatened during this political moment—and excited posts announcing that the contributor was a first-time voter. Finally, the last theme that was particularly apparent came from posts referencing the next generation of voters, many of which included photographs of children wearing Hillary apparel or t-shirts including the slogan “The Future is Female.”

Similar themes emerged in participants' written and oral reflections and also introduced significant details about their other roles/identities and rhetorical choices and writing processes, including the selection of images, that could not be discerned from the posts or book entries alone. After transcribing the interviews and compiling the written reflections, I discovered additional themes that contributed to the following analysis. In

particular, I found that many participants were also in nonprofit leadership or were advocates for specific causes and organizations (e.g. CEO for the Habitat for Humanity in New York, social worker and leader in homeless shelter and community outreach programs, fundraiser for the American Foundation of Suicide Prevention, board member for New Leaders Organization, among others). As the first analysis section shows, I was able to gather useful information about the choices for photographs and the alphabetic text-to-image ratio. Importantly, too, the participants explained how many new Facebook friends or in-person contacts they had with Pantsuit Nation members which offered insight into relationship-building happening behind-the-scenes in private online and physical spaces. Additionally, they frequently discussed the group as a reprieve, or as a “safe” place or “haven.” In all, the written responses and interviews revealed insightful information about contributors’ intersectional identities and societal roles, how they formed relationships online and offline, ways they adhered to the community’s understood generic conventions for the Facebook post, and how they used Facebook’s modal affordances to create agentive positions and receive the much-needed safety and emotional support that this community provided.

4. Intersections of Modalities and Identities: Exploring the Materiality of Facebook and *Pantsuit Nation* in Print

In previous chapters, materiality, as I used it, referred primarily to tactile affordances such as the physical makeup of paper, ink, and wax seals. Chapters Two and Three also discussed the visual nature of handwriting and use of spatial modalities on the page to either participate in or subvert traditional gendered power dynamics. Materiality in this case study, however, looks quite different and focuses largely on the material aspects of the Facebook platform *and* the printed book that allow users from

marginalized communities to insert their voices meaningfully in these media and genres. To this point, Ignacio Siles (2012) contributed a useful understanding of online identities in his work on computer-mediated communication in blogs, explaining the “mutual shaping” of technology through “practical reason” and “materiality” (p. 418). He argues that “the emergence of the identities of both online diarists and bloggers rested on the mutual articulation of particular techniques of the self (technology in Foucault’s sense) and websites with certain material features to support them (technology as artifacts)” (p. 418). Siles summarizes the crux of his argument: “...that the emergence of user identities on the internet must be thought of as a process of mutual configuration between particular types of artifacts and certain practices for fashioning the self” (p. 418). In this section’s analysis of materiality, then, I adopt Siles’ understanding of technologies and online identities to examine the multilayered nature of how the tools themselves provide spaces for digital photos and other forms of communication outside of written alphabetic language; I also consider how users rely on the digital materiality to conform to (or reject) the community’s genre and media expectations to make their voices heard. Finally, I examine what happens when the digital materialization transfers into the printed book and the possibilities and restrictions of this different medium.⁴²

The analyses here posit that a combination of media enabled contributors to find a voice—either for themselves or for a community that is important to them. In other words, the genre of the Facebook post as disseminated through the online medium *and* through the printed book work together to meet the contributors’ needs by compensating

⁴² While the scope of this project does not allow me to draw on feminist new materialism, I want to acknowledge that I see these theories as being relevant to my scholarship and hope to adopt Karen Barad’s work and similar theories of material-discursive entanglements in a future project.

for what the other medium *lacks* (or is perceived to lack). After analyzing the reflections and interviews, I saw common modifiers associated with each medium. When discussing the online platform, participants used terms that indicated the dynamic and fast nature of the online Facebook platform (particularly in the speed and volume of responses). By contrast, users described the printed book with terms that highlighted the permanence and nostalgic nature of this particular medium. In her introduction, Libby Chamberlain (2017) made a similar reference to the book being a “time capsule,” implying that print was capable of bounding the posts and this piece of election/post-election history in a tangible product. Most interesting to me is that, overall, the translation of the online posts into print led to deep satisfaction for the contributors, enabling them to see how their story fit into the larger picture in a way that the online medium—with thousands of posts every day—could not provide them. The contributors were also part of a much smaller group that had been selected for the book, creating an even more tight-knit community. In short, both media deliver the post in meaningful ways: in one medium, the contributors get copious amounts of feedback and reactions through the speed and virality that the online medium affords, and in the other, the contributors get what they perceive as a neatly curated version of their story that outlasts the ephemeral nature of online media and genres.

The remainder of this section focuses on posts and book entries that emphasize the importance of visuals and serve as evidence of Facebook posts’ success in print and online media. In each case referenced here, the genre and medium are working together to provide a platform for the contributor to feel that his or her voice is valued and shared by others in the community. One of the most salient examples comes from contributor

Mark Breault, a Cleveland native and staunch supporter of the Black Lives Matter movement, whose identity shows how the broad range of contributors in this feminist online space. In our interview, Mark described the image as the impetus for his post (See Figure 11). He exclaimed, “There’s so much behind that picture!” (M. Breault, personal communication, December 4, 2017). He was enthusiastic and emotional as he shared his story and explained the kairotic opportunity of capturing and sharing the photo on the day there was a Trump rally in Cleveland:

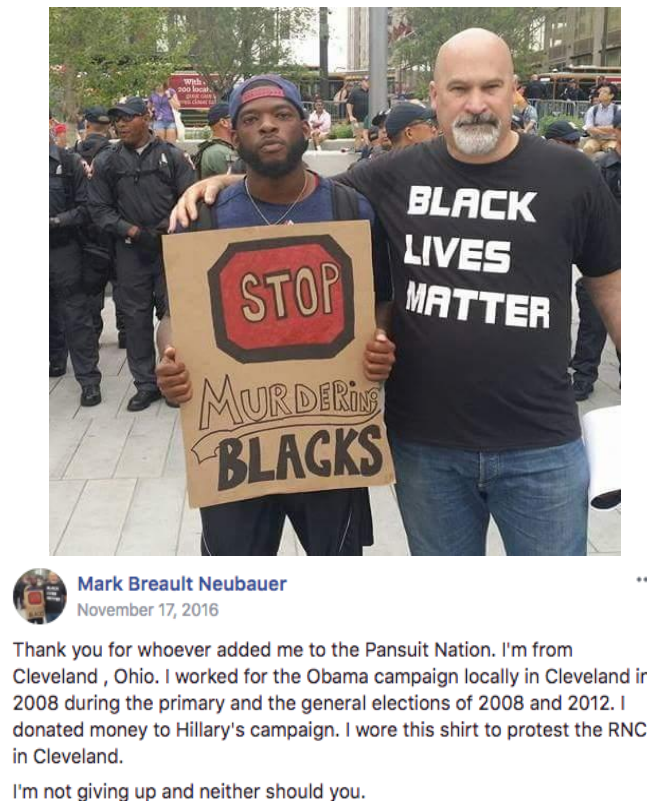


Figure 11: Mark Breault Neubauer, November 17, 2016

During our conversation, Mark reflected on the timeliness of the photo, detailing the story of meeting the young man standing beside him and discovering that someone Mark knew from college was a mutual friend. Mark also spoke to the significance of having the photo’s background completely filled by police officers and said that he, when he is not

wearing his Black Lives Matter shirt, is often mistaken for an officer because of his large stature and other physical traits. When reflecting on the alphabetic text and the photo in his interview, Mark expressed, “My words don’t matter. My picture and what it represents is the most important...The picture is the star...you know, [with] my words I didn’t want to take away from that” (M. Breault, personal communication, December 4, 2017). When Mark discussed the book entry, he was similarly captivated by the photograph and offered some insights into the value of the printed medium: “And then I saw the picture...in the book...and I’m like, man...that’s forever. There’s something about seeing [the photo] in ink and paper” (M. Breault, personal communication, December 4, 2017). For Mark, his image in both media meaningfully captured this moment. In the digital space, he received 12,000 reactions to his post and over 300 comments; the book provided him with an object that commemorated that moment and was something that he could hold and then share with his mother as a Mother’s Day gift.⁴³ Furthermore, the book entry and the Facebook post provide other platforms for Mark to use his voice and his position as a white man to speak out for a community that has strongly influenced and shaped his childhood and adult life. Both platforms afforded Mark a space to feature the image that represented his allyship and new friendship, and both media have disseminated Mark’s message and helped him position himself within the Pantsuit Nation community.

⁴³ Mark posted again on May 14, 2017 for Mother’s Day. This post includes a photo of Mark (in his Black Lives Matter shirt) with his mother who is holding a photo of her with her mother. The post reads, “In celebration of Mother’s Day today I showed my mother my submission in the [#pantsuitnationbook](#). She’s holding a picture of her mother, Gertrude Breault who was married and had five of her twelve children before the ratification of the 19th Ammendment [sic] when women gained the right to vote in America. It was to her that I dedicated my vote in November when I cast my ballot for Hillary Clinton. We didn’t get there, and much like BLM we have a lot of work to do before we fully live up to the promise of what America is supposed to be. Keep moving forward.”

Kairos also influenced Bernadette and her son Majin’s post. This mother-son post additionally reveals the potential for a space like Pantsuit Nation to communicate the interconnectedness of personal and political interests. In our interview, Bernadette reflected on why she selected the photo for her election day post and why/how she has included her son Majin throughout the process. As with Mark, I asked Bernadette about choosing the photo for the post, and she told me that it was an impromptu photo that had a lot of personal significance for her and Majin and was politically relevant for election day:

I stuck with this photo because that picture was taken at Ramses Farm which is a pumpkin patch, and I have taken my children to the same pumpkin patch every year since they were little...and that particular day my son and I had just finished campaigning for Hillary...he was right there with me, knocking, and trying to find people...I just wanted to remember that day and that moment and the significance of that day” (B. Evans, personal communication, September 15, 2017).

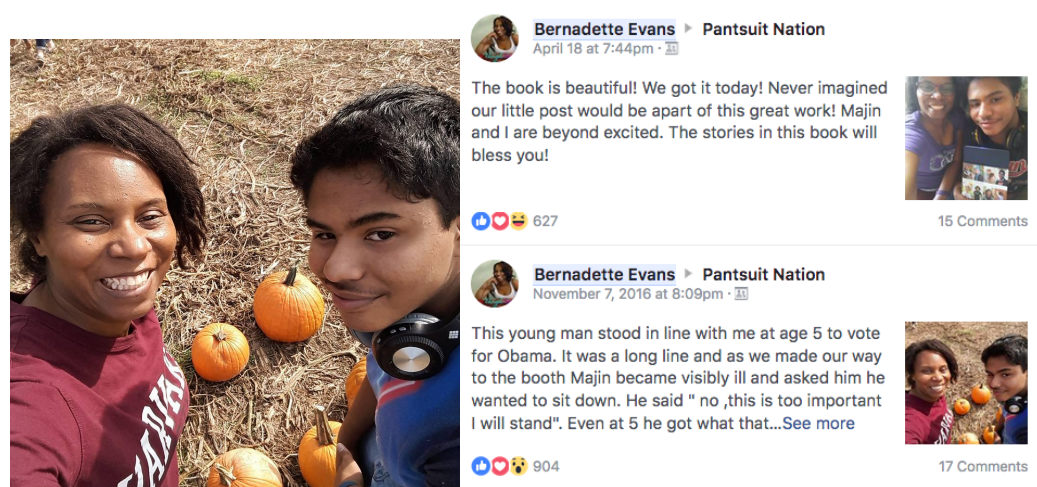


Figure 12: Bernadette Evans, November 7, 2016 and April 18, 2017

For Bernadette, the initial post was driven by her desire to show her support for Hillary and to demonstrate her pride in her teenage son’s civic engagement. The photograph not only commemorates her and Majin’s experience of the 2016 election, but also represents a family tradition that has been important to Bernadette and her family for many years.

The book then provided yet another medium to commemorate this shared experience. She and Majin both explained how proud they were to be included in the book. Majin's excitement led him to share the book with his friends, and Bernadette was subsequently invited to do public speaking for various groups because of her contribution to the book. In short, Bernadette and Majin's posts and reflections offer insight into how contributors used both media to engage in this community and a wider community of activists. The online space afforded them the technological means to share the photo of their campaigning experience on election day, and the book gave them the opportunity to be a part of a smaller group of contributors that eventually led to relationships and opportunities forming outside of the Pantsuit Nation community (a topic I explore further in the chapter's final section).

The book and the social media platform have also allowed Karen Haycox to share a beautiful dedication to a loved one's life and voice her concerns for the LGBTQIA community, particularly in relation to health equity, to a "private" and public audience. Karen is the CEO of Habitat for Humanity in New York City and used the online medium to share her story during a personal, kairotic moment. Karen's post is a dedication to her late wife Trudy, and the post runs fairly long at over 1,000 words (in comparison to Mark's brief post shown in full above). Karen's narrative explains that she and Trudy would have been married three years on the date of the post, November 20, 2016, but that cancer shortened Trudy's life and their marriage. Karen richly layered her post with personal narrative, metaphors, and specific political events that affected her and her wife, including the difficulty to access healthcare during Trudy's illness. Karen thoughtfully

reflected on both the online post and book entry in our interview, explaining her motivation for writing this post and unpacking one of her metaphors:

...motivation for the post was certainly informed by the steps I had taken as a gay woman...I think the analogy I used at the end of that post was feeling as I felt as though I had cast off a weight [during the marriage equality supreme court decision a couple of years ago] that I didn't know I was carrying, and this moment felt like the antithesis of that...I felt as though I was being asked to put it back on...Both were shocking to me” (K. Haycox, personal communication, December 11, 2017).

Karen also explained that she wrote the post on her sofa in one sitting, without returning to it to edit. She explained that her motivation to write was quite simple: “I just couldn't not write it...that's how I felt that day...I just couldn't not write it” (K. Haycox, personal communication, December 11, 2017). Karen's reflection on her written post here points to the importance of immediacy in the platform and the tools that were at her disposal to do so: her iPhone and the Facebook application. The availability of such tools and the immediacy they provide, as in Bernadette and Mark's posts, allowed Karen to take advantage of a kairotic moment and publish this tribute to Trudy on the day of their anniversary. Furthermore, her post in both media show how deeply integrated the political and the personal are in the Pantsuit Nation community.

In addition to her beautifully written post, Karen included a picture of her with Trudy on their wedding day:

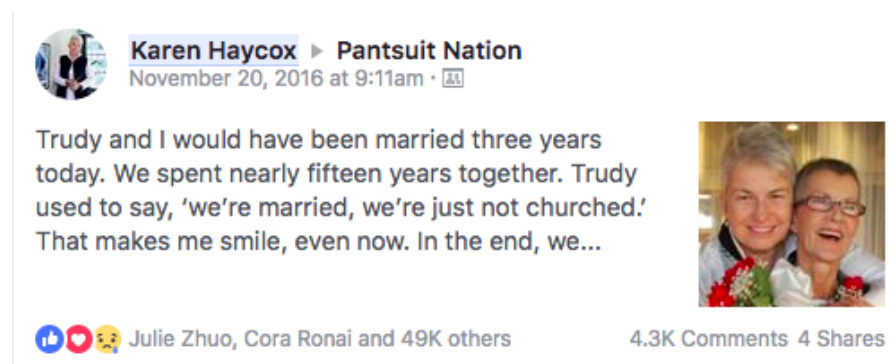


Figure 13: Karen Haycox, November 20, 2016

In the photo, Karen is embracing Trudy, and both women are wearing large smiles that represent how happy they were on this occasion. When discussing the picture, in contrast to her written narrative, Karen expressed that choosing the picture for the post was a challenge: “I had some difficulty around choosing the picture; so I chose a photo that was taken on my wedding day. For me, it was an emotional day... ‘we’re married, we’re just not church’d’...I use that photo because it reflected what was happening that day” (K. Haycox, personal communication, December 11, 2017). Significant to Karen’s narrative, too, was that the photo reflected Trudy’s health challenges, as she had already been diagnosed with cancer before their wedding day; in fact, Karen shared that Trudy’s cancer was a large factor in their decision to marry. While the photo reflects two primary threads of the narrative—health equity and marriage equality for the LGBT community—Karen expressed during our conversation that Trudy would have despised the photo that Karen chose for the post. Karen explained, “...if Trudy saw [the photo] she would kick my butt for using that photo...she would have said there were thousands of other pictures you could have chosen” (K. Haycox, personal communication, December 11, 2017). Yet, even knowing Trudy would have chosen another photo, Karen selected this one as a way of not only reflecting the important message of her written post, but also to show the genuine joy that she and Trudy felt on that day.

Much like other contributors who wrote dedication posts to loved ones, Karen expressed how happy she was that her story and dedication to Trudy’s life was included in the book. She said, “I’m so honored to be able to share Trudy’s legacy in the book...in such a tangible and long-lasting way” (K. Haycox, personal communication, December

11, 2017). Like Mark and others, Karen perceived the book as a means of making her post *permanent*; similarly, the book was something that could be held and touched, a response that many of the book's contributors shared with me. In her interview, Karen also expressed how angry she was about the negative reactions to the book; she said, "I was incensed about the pushback about the book; this is an effort to get this platform out there...the power of stories is so strong" (K. Haycox, personal communication, December 11, 2017). Yet even with her enthusiasm for the book and its seeming stability, we cannot overlook the virality of Karen's digital post, which had 49,000 reactions, nearly 5,000 comments, and four shares.⁴⁴ As Karen expressed in the interview, she was able to connect with other members of the Pantsuit Nation community by participating online and in the book. Both media also made Karen's tribute to Trudy successful: the tribute certainly would have existed and been successful in the Facebook group alone, but the book featured the story with a much smaller number of contributors, thus giving Karen's entry more focused attention in print. More specifically, the book promises that readers would continue to see the tribute to Trudy's life, whereas the online platform privileges new entries each day, making it more difficult to access stories from 2016. In sum, both platforms provide Karen a space to develop and share her intersecting identities as a gay woman who had previously faced challenges with marriage equality and equal access to healthcare for her spouse. The online and digital platforms also provided her a space to weave together her personal and political values, using different modal affordances to do so.

⁴⁴ The disproportionately low number of shares is likely due to the group's secret space and the expectations that group members will not share this post on their own pages without permission from the post's author. To clarify, reactions and comments remain "secret" and only able to be viewed by the group members; however, sharing would allow a wider audience to see the post and react to it on the user's personal profile.

My last example for this section on the intersections of media and identities comes from Aixa, who offered insights into the book's editing that caused her some disappointment. Aixa shared fondly about participating in Pantsuit Nation, though she did express some displeasure with how her post got translated and modified in the book. The Facebook post that was included in the book focused on the opportunity she had last Thanksgiving to join her Nigerian Muslim friends and share a special holiday with her own daughter and several other mothers and daughters. She also expressed her appreciation for the photo she shared because of the vibrant colors of the women's attire and the colorful spread of food:



Figure 14: Aixa Perez-Prado, Thanksgiving Photograph, November 26, 2016

She noted that the photo was a representation of this untraditional Thanksgiving meal that she shared with women with whom she felt connected in their support of Hillary and in their appreciation for their friendship despite their differences.

In response to the post's translation to the book, Aixa said that she received positive feedback from everyone except from one of her daughters (not pictured) who had wished that Aixa had not highlighted her atheism. When reflecting on her post, Aixa herself expressed some displeasure with the way the text's font size and color emphasize

the term “atheist,” when that aspect of her identity was not meant to be emphasized; rather, she used the term to highlight the diversity of belief systems represented in the photograph and how the women, regardless of their religious beliefs, came together to give thanks together.



Figure 15: Aixa Perez-Prado, Book entry and Facebook post

Aixa stressed that she is a “word person” and tried to “choose her words very carefully,” but the formatting change visually made the emphasis different than she would have liked. In this case, the modality shift from digital to print—which the contributor did not have the opportunity to proof—made a significant rhetorical difference, causing Aixa to not purchase multiple copies or read any of the other entries. She did stress, however, that she wanted it to be clear she is still an avid supporter of the Pantsuit Nation group and the community as a whole and that she does plan to read the other entries. She has also met other contributors and developed friendships with them based on their touching stories.

By highlighting the posts and reflections from Mark, Bernadette, Majin, and Aixa in this section, I have demonstrated several layers of authorial choices that have gone into the Pantsuit Nation entries and what modes in each medium have afforded the writers.

Each of the aforementioned contributors used the online space to take advantage of a timely moment to share their photo and story and to participate in a larger political and cultural narrative-in-the-making. Although the length of the narrative and the type of photo chosen for each one varied, all of the entries demonstrate how the different modes work together in online and print media to shape the contributors' identities within this community. Each platform also provides a space for the community members to bring together personal and political values and make themselves vulnerable in ways that they might otherwise choose not to do without such a large support system.

5. Social Media and the Dialogic

In Chapter One, I explain my rationale for using Bakhtin to examine how power dynamics have the potential to be reinstated or subverted as genres and media evolve together. In particular, I focus on Bakhtin's theories of the dialogic and addressivity, which I see as integral to how social media genres and platforms—like the post on Facebook—afford opportunities for users to insert their voices meaningfully into larger cultural conversations and disrupt certain narratives that stifle them. As a reminder, in previous chapters, I used Bakhtin's notion of addressivity to show how letterwriting calls writers into two distinct positions; in this section, I contend that the same is true of social media. Furthermore, I have used Bakhtin's dialogic to theorize meaning-making through language that shapes users' positions of power (p. 426). The two theories provide the foundation for the analysis of Facebook's potential to give contributors an opportunity to assume authoritative positions and resist stereotypes that do not accurately represent their experiences and values.

On the dialogic potential of social media in particular, communications scholar Michele Zappavigna (2012) provides several insights in her book *Discourse of Twitter and Social Media: How We Use Language to Create Affiliation on the Web*. She explains social media, particularly Twitter, as being inherently dialogic and heteroglossic. Discussing the reciprocity of relationship-building that occurs in Twitter, Zappavigna claims:

Tweets are highly dialogic and part of a heteroglossic (Bakhtin 2008) Twitter stream in which an important social process is showing reciprocity by public thanking of other users. These users are clearly doing more than broadcasting the personal, self-indulgent or mundane details of their daily routine. They are producing more than a kind of monoglossic, self-indulgent stream of consciousness that is oblivious to other texts. (p. 49)

Zappavigna highlights a common assumption about social media posts here: that they are “monoglossic” and self-serving, or a space to merely display one’s self to voyeurs behind the screen. Yet, as her analysis of Twitter demonstrates, social media posts are heteroglossic and allow the users to create a space for themselves within a social network through a number of different practices: adopting hashtags, tagging topics and other users in posts and photos, circulating each other’s posts, among others.

In analyzing Pantsuit Nation, I have reached similar conclusions. Pantsuit Nation members have used several of the aforementioned practices to connect with others and have used personal experience to speak back to and subvert the rhetoric of powerful politicians who do not share their identity positions or experiences. The current section examines two outcomes of the dialogic in this space: 1) contributors taking ownership of their stories and finding a place in the community through editing, revising, and responding to readers’ feedback and 2) resisting power and cultural narratives that perpetuate stereotypes of marginalized communities. For the first outcome, Pantsuit

Nation Facebook contributors have crafted their posts and often revised and edited the posts based on the perceived and actual audiences. In the interviews and written responses, a number of the contributors explained editing and revising their posts in reaction to the high volume of responses or to clarify a point of contention. One user explained editing her response *before* posting, explaining that she had initially focused on the “local bigots” rather than on her father who had dedicated his life to climate change and was devastated by the election results. In her reflection, she also mentioned both anticipated and real audiences of her post and the book and how considering the audiences helped shape her rhetorical decision-making. Another contributor, Leanna Gable, experienced some pushback to her post that features a photograph of her, a white woman with the sun shining on her and wearing a look of determination, and opens with these lines: “I am a mixed-race (Scottish, English, Irish, Native American, and what was listed on my great-grandmother’s census record as ‘black’) woman. I am a college-educated, 30-year-old, single mom. I work in the computer technology field” (Gable, 2016). Leanna reflected on receiving some negative reactions to the way she introduced herself as a “mixed-race” woman and said that she edited the post afterward to clarify her introduction: specifically “that [she] never felt as if a census report from the 1800s left [her] disenfranchised in any way because of [her] heritage. [She] only shared it to highlight how a person’s skin doesn’t really say anything about where they came from” (L. Gable, personal communication, November 27, 2017). In each of these instances, addressivity played a part in how the contributors edited and revised their content, as they were pulled into various positions based on either the intended or the actual audience’s feedback. Because of the Facebook platform’s option to edit the post (a widely accepted

and practiced genre convention), the contributors have been able to shape and control their content even in a platform where content gets taken up, modified, and recirculated often, and large volumes of feedback are possible within just a few seconds.

In this same vein, Jia Howard, whose post generated 139,000 reactions and 21,000 comments, used the affordance of editing the genre and medium to respond to the large number of responses on two different occasions:



Figure 16: Jia Howard, December 6, 2016

Jia's post featured the above selfie and detailed a story that happened to her on the day the picture was taken and her post was published. Jia began her post with this introduction: "Hello, my name is faggy dyke" (Howard, 2016). She then explains that she received this name while out in public that day at a donut and coffee shop, and she reflects on her reaction in that moment. She writes, "While plotting [the woman's] demise, a small voice reminded me, 'when they go low, we go high.' So I cut her off (intentionally in line) and said to the cashier 'please ring me up for my usual and pay for

her order as well” (Howard, 2016). As her edits to the post suggest, Jia was shocked by the amount of support she received from the Pantsuit Nation community. In her interview with me, she reflected on the motivation to post and her shock about the number of reactions and comments she received, as well. Immediately after the encounter she describes, Jia said that she thought “wow, this is Pantsuit Nation stuff” and decided to share (J. Howard, personal communication, December 1, 2017). This response interestingly demonstrates how Pantsuit Nation members have internalized the narratives shared in the group and see their own experiences through the stories shared online; this kind of reaction again demonstrates the dialogic potential of a social media space like this one. Jia also commented, “I used this as an outlet to just kind of express my opinion and my experience and just kind of leave it and be done with it and then...holy moly” (J. Howard, personal communication, December 1, 2017). In describing the photograph and the post, she said, “I think for me it was just...this is me every day, guys” (J. Howard, personal communication, December 1, 2017). Her reflections indicate, like several other contributors’ explanations have, the importance of immediacy and kairos in this storytelling space that affords an always-available platform for connecting with others or simply sharing a story that, as Jia said, the writer can just post and leave if she wishes. In a space like Pantsuit Nation, though, the chance of receiving little to no interaction on those stories is small, and even she acknowledged that before posting she was having an internal dialogue about how her experience was like other Pantsuit Nation members’ experiences.

Jia’s case is a particularly salient example of the dialogic and addressivity at work: first, her own internal thought processes in response to the incident were partially

shaped by the stories she had read on Pantsuit Nation, and second, she crafted her story in a way that adhered to the group's expectations and values. She also adopted a response strategy—editing her post two separate times—to communicate her gratitude for the large volume of positive responses she received. In the first edit, she also encourages the uptake and circulation of the post, indicating that she had already shared the same post outside of this particular group. The recursive nature of Jia's contribution, then, demonstrates the dialogic at work from her own initial internal reaction to the gratitude shown to her readers. In this way, Jia's story was shaped in many ways by the stories that preceded hers, but she also took ownership of her post through her revisions and interactions with her readers.

Another result of the dialogic and addressivity in the Facebook platform is the ability for the contributors to speak back to recurrent cultural narratives and stereotypes that they feel do not accurately represent their identities. Contributors use a combination of modalities, namely photographs and written alphabetic posts, to offer alternatives for generally accepted representations of the LGBTQIA community and even representations of women and minorities in business. In other words, the contributors use the online space to insert their own lived experiences in ways that might not be accepted or heard outside of this safe community space. In Jia's reflection, for instance, she noted herself that she used this particular photo to show that there was no particularly obvious "gayness" about her on that day (J. Howard, personal communication, December 1, 2017). Another example of resisting such assumptions and cultural narratives comes from "Kritter" who lives in Georgia and who shared a photo of him with his husband. In our written correspondence, Kritter explained:

I thought it would be easier for people to relate to our situation if they could put an actual face to the people involved. It was important to me that people see that my husband and I are just ordinary people. The kind of people they cross paths with on a daily basis in public which makes us more real and relatable; i.e., it still sticks out in my memory the one thing that people seemed to remark about the most is that we didn't look 'gay.' So that I upset the apple cart and dashed a few preconceived notions about gay people [was] extremely encouraging. (K. Huk, personal communication, October 14, 2017).



Figure 17: Kritter N Huk, November 23, 2016

Kritter's reflection shows the genre and media potential to disrupt common images of the LGBTQIA community that circulate in other spaces. His reflection, in this way, resembles Mark Breault's in that the image provides a central focus point for the post and offers alternatives for ways to see this community and another possibility for what a family—especially one living in the South—can look like.

Like Kritter's post, Jackie Strano's post provides a visual that disrupts traditional understandings of family, even within the progressive space of Pantsuit Nation. Their post features an image of them with their wife and children and visually shows the diverse makeup of their family. The post also explains their gratitude to Hillary Clinton

for the Adoption and Family Safe Act of 1997 that allowed them and their wife to create this family:



Figure 18: Jackie Jack Strano, November 6, 2016

In this post and others that Jackie contributed to the group, they direct their message to Hillary specifically by discussing her political action that led to the Adoption and Safe Family Act. Yet Jackie also uses this post to challenge criticisms of the Pantsuit Nation community being a white feminist space that does not encompass intersecting identities like theirs. During our interview, Jackie reflected on the photo and the post further; they explained:

I wanted to show...not that Pantsuit Nation was particularly heteronormative or all Caucasian...but I didn't see a lot of gender non-conforming people...I wanted to represent a little bit to show that our kids have two moms...and here we are with

three sons through adoption...I wanted to show that there are other ways of creating a family. (J. Strano, personal communication, December 13, 2017)
Even within the safe space of Pantsuit Nation, then, contributors have used a combination of alphabetic and visual modalities to diversify the group and offer other possibilities of what a specific marginalized community could look like or what their lived experience is.

Representing another minority community, Antoinette uses her participation in Pantsuit Nation to create a platform for business owning women of color, specifically in the male-dominated field of the trucking industry. Antoinette's reflection and story were inspiring and spoke to the true potential of this medium and genre to facilitate intersectional identity and community-building. Like Kritter and Jackie, Antoinette uses a combination of modes—alphabetic text and a photograph—to represent her identity and her place within the trucking industry. In her initial post on November 6, 2016, which is the post included in the book, Antoinette explains her inability to wear a pantsuit to the polls on Tuesday because of her career but that she had already completed her absentee ballot for Hillary. In reflecting on the image she included in this post, Antoinette explained:

I chose the image because it showed my pride in my career and thought that it showed the power of a woman doing a job in a field that is traditionally male-dominated...I emphasized the fact that I'm not only a female in trucking, and a business owner in the field, but an Afro Latina. Women make up only 6% of truckers. Minority women make up less than 0.5% of all drivers. The percentage who own their own trucks and business is even smaller! (A. McIntosh, personal communication, September 4, 2017)

This comment demonstrates Antoinette's thoughtful rhetorical decision-making in the visual and alphabetic modes of her post. Antoinette also shared a follow-up post on May 12, 2017, that celebrates her 10th anniversary of receiving her commercial driver's license.

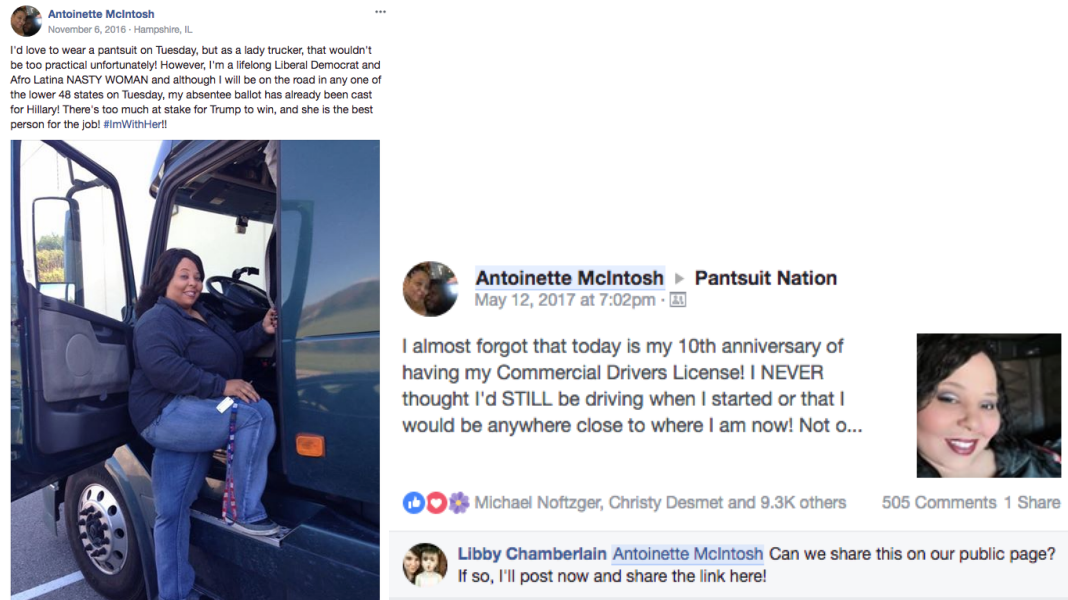


Figure 19: Antoinette McIntosh, November 6, 2016 and May 12, 2017

Both of Antoinette’s posts reveal the dialogic potential to represent alternative narratives—in this case, an Afro-Latina female business owner—and different ways of creating a space for herself in a community like Pantsuit Nation. In the first post, for instance, Antoinette focuses primarily on the election and why she could not participate in the pantsuit-wearing, and her second post focuses more on celebrating her work anniversary. Each of the posts focuses on Antoinette’s intersectional identities and works with the other to create a consistent online presence in the group and to provide a space to represent the small percentage of business-owning women of which Antoinette is a part. The genre and the medium, then, provide a way for Antoinette to identify with the group—as another Hillary-supporting “Nasty Woman”—and carve a space for her other nuanced identities that she might not have a safe space to voice otherwise.

This subsection has thus far focused on the users’ contributions to the *online* platform and ways they engaged in this dialogic space and took ownership of their writing in this space. Here, I have also detailed how some contributors used this semi-

private space to offer alternative narratives for minority groups to which they belong. I do, however, also want to address some of what happens to the stories and the writers' ownership of their content when their posts are translated to print. The print book, of course, still offers a platform through which to share the stories that originated online. Yet, the translation to the print medium required edits to some of the posts and stripped the original posts of the contextualizing content—the number of reactions, comments, and most of the authors' follow-up responses to readers in their edited notes. Hilary Christensen, for instance, noted that part of her writing was deleted in the book, but that she thought the edits made her post better and more focused on her sister who was the subject of Hilary's post. In reflecting on this change, Hilary commented, "I love being a part of the Pantsuit Nation group. The book and the group are chock full of amazing stories, and even more amazing people. I love that Rachel is included in this. As far as the editing out my excitement in the book [excitement about voting for another Hillary], it was the right thing to do. I wanted my piece to be about my sister" (H. Christensen, personal communication, September 7, 2017). The original and edited posts are included below:



**The person
I thought
about
more than
anyone else**

when I voted this year
was my sister, Rachel.
Born with a rare genetic
disorder, she spent
most of her life in a
wheelchair. She was
and is my hero. Tough
as nails, a feminist,
advocate, and writer.
When Donald Trump
mocked Sergio Kovalski,
I pictured Rachel
witnessing that. I was
so upset I couldn't think
of much else for days.
My vote is dedicated to
my sister, Rachel, who is
way too Nasty to ever
Rest in Peace.



Figure 20: Hilary Christensen, Book Entry and Facebook post, November 5, 2016

As the images show, the post's translation from the screen to the page emphasized the dedicatory purpose of Hilary's post in a number of ways: 1) deleting the first line of the original post, 2) emphasizing the next sentence that focuses on the post's main subject through enlarging and bolding the text, and 3) enlarging the photograph of Rachel and giving the post a two-page spread in the book. With the edits, then, Hilary's post becomes less focused on the election and more focused on her personal relationship with her sister. As Hilary noted herself, the changes emphasize the post's real purpose, and they do so through means that are not available on the Facebook platform. For instance, all posts' texts and images are equally sized and appear in the exact same format when they are published on Pantsuit Nation's page. Here, however, the editor was able to give this dedication more space and emphasize the words in the post that were most important. Thus, while Hilary lost some authorial control over her post in the translation, she was ultimately grateful for the editorial decisions because of how they honored her sister's life.

6. Rhetorical Enactments Beyond Online and Print

In this final section, I focus on the rhetorical embodied enactments and personal connection-building that have occurred outside of the digital and print spaces of Pantsuit Nation. In analyzing the personal and face-to-face relationships that have formed in this group and the public activism that has emerged from it, I have drawn on Jennifer Nish's (2016) argument in her chapter "Spreadable Genres, Multiple Publics: The Pixel Project's Digital Campaigns to Stop Violence against Women." Here, Nish analyzes tweets and explains that "...[t]he affordances of digital media offer greater potential for public activity" (p. 239). She also theorizes what she calls "uptake enactments," which are actions taken in response to digital genres and their affordances (p. 240). Nish's focus in the chapter is on "spreadable genres," in which she explains, "[t]he concept of spreadability offers rhetorical genre theorists a useful lens for examining cultural and technological factors that influence the development, circulation, and use of genres" (p. 240). The concept of spreadable genres and digital media's potential to facilitate public activity have directly influenced my understanding of how Pantsuit Nation members have formed long-lasting relationships with one another in online and face-to-face settings and have become directly involved in taking political action by running for office, campaigning for other democratic candidates, and taking on leadership opportunities in other organizations.

The previous sections have demonstrated the potential for the online and print media to work together to help readers respond to events immediately, receive meaningful feedback, and to commemorate their stories. This section focuses more on what happens behind the posts shared with the entire Pantsuit Nation. Bernadette, for instance, reconnected with Mark after being included in the book and invited to

participate in a book signing. Antoinette connected on Facebook with fifty to seventy-five group members, met in person with three individuals, and maintains regular contact over the phone with at least one individual. Another contributor, Nick Gomez, shared this reflection:

Pantsuit Nation was a breather on the bench for me. A huddle with my team to regroup and refocus...using the group as a means of touching base was and is fantastic. I have had the opportunity to meet with a couple members in person at one of the book release events, and I've connected with a handful of others across other social media networks. *That makes the group feel more alive. These people aren't just a few words on a monitor, they're real people living their truths as they know it like the rest of us.* (emphasis mine, N. Gomez, personal communication, September 18, 2017)

Nick's analysis of contributors' embodied, lived experiences is particularly important for thinking back to how the digital community emerged, has been sustained, and has led to personal relationships outside of this four million-member group. The book, of course, only exists because of the stories shared in the online format, but it has nevertheless brought many of the individuals who were only connected through Facebook into personal, face-to-face contact. While these group members may have eventually still formed relationships and met one another, the printed book and its editors brought the individuals together in the same physical location which made this in-person relationship-building easier and more likely.

Participants in the study also mentioned forming meaningful relationships with group members who did not contribute to the book or attend the book events. One story in particular resonated strongly with me because the outcome was life-changing for the two correspondents. Melissa Griebel dedicated a post on November 27, 2016 to her son Mitchell, who died by suicide when he was just sixteen years old. Melissa shared a beautiful photo of her son that had been given to her after Mitchell's death by one of his

classmates. She directed the message to those suffering from anxiety and depression to raise awareness about suicide prevention. Shortly after her post was published, she received a message from another group member who said Melissa had saved her life with her post. In summarizing the many responses she received, Melissa shared:

I had an individual reach out to me privately and tell me that my post saved her life. That she was actually contemplating ending her life and that my post made her understand that there was hope and that we were all here for her. I had many other people respond privately with sympathy and understanding as well. Others who had lost loved ones. In addition, in my original post I suggested that money be sent to the American Foundation for Suicide prevention, and I believe over \$3,000 was raised. (M. Griebel, personal communication, November 27, 2017)⁴⁵

Melissa's post and reflection demonstrate how a post shared in an online platform can result in powerful personal connections. Her post also led to public activity in the fundraising for the suicide prevention organization. Because of her story, 172 donations were made to the cause and other donations were raised for similar groups.

In addition to building relationships with other members of Pantsuit Nation, other contributors have shared their desire for activism outside of this community. In her reflection on the book, for instance, Christina Liew shared her hope that the book would do more than just curate individual stories. Specifically, Christina said, "My wish is that [the book] would become more than a commemorative archive of what this group was

⁴⁵ Aside from our personal correspondence, Melissa also shared this information in the edit made to her post: "UPDATE: Your responses have been so wonderful and heartwarming. Thank you. I received an email from AFSP today and at 8 am this morning they'd received over 172 donations and over \$3,000. That is so fantastic. Thank you. I think the moderators already have causes in the works for donations, I believe right now it is the DAPL. Please check out what they have going on and support it! I received many private messages from people who said my message helped them to decide to stay for today. I hope that decision continues each day. Your loving responses are a huge part of that too. Thank you. Thank you also for the offers of support groups and shoulders to lean on. Those are all much appreciated. I've attended Compassionate Friends, as well as in person Suicide Survivors Support groups as well as online ones. I'm a social worker and actually work in an inpatient hospital. I have lots of resources. Thank you for your concerns. Thank you for all your kind words. For reminding me that I'm a good mom. That we did all we could. It helps me continue to be a good mom to my surviving son. Hugs your kids and keep spreading kindness" (Griebel, 2016).

about...Groups like Pantsuit Nation cannot remain merely an oasis for us to escape to. We have to activate, to speak even louder, to spur each other on” (C. Liew, personal communication, September 6, 2017). For Lejla Huskic, the group has encouraged her to run for office. Lejla first contributed to Pantsuit Nation when she shared a beautiful tribute to her hero: her grandmother who fled the Bosnian war with her family and created a safer life for them in the United States. In many ways, Lejla’s post functioned similarly to the posts in the previous section; her story, for example, seeks to change the dangerous rhetoric around immigration issues that has been circulating more frequently since the election. This post was published on November 27, 2016 and was the featured post in the Pantsuit Nation book, but I want to highlight the political activism that Lejla has taken since this initial post. In her interview with me and in a follow-up post to Pantsuit Nation, Lejla expressed her excitement about taking steps toward running for public office. In her post, Lejla writes:

On [the previous] post, I was humbled that a lot of you asked me if I’d ever considered running for public office. Well the answer is: YES! I am writing this because I want to share with all of you that I’ve just been accepted into a program called Emerge...The purpose of the organization is to train Democratic women who are interested in running for public office (Huskic, 2016).

In our interview, Lejla enthusiastically described her experience in Emerge (then completed), explaining that the program was an excellent way for her to understand the concrete steps that it takes to become a candidate. Lejla’s decision to put into action what Pantsuit Nation encouraged her to do shows just a glimpse of the potential for a digital genre to spill over or spread into public life. Each of the examples analyzed in this section shows how stories shared in a Facebook group can ultimately lead to action and change for individuals and for the larger public.

Conclusion

In analyzing these excerpts from interviews and personal correspondence with Pantsuit Nation members, I reached several conclusions that show how the rhetorical genre and media affordances work together to give marginalized writers a space to resist power and cultural narratives that do not align with their experiences or values. I have also seen how the online and print media have worked together to provide the writers with meaningful experiences in online and face-to-face relationship-building and in enacting their activism beyond these spaces. Furthermore, every participant in this study has intersecting identities and has pointed to those intersections in their responses (Antoinette as an “Afro Latina,” for example). Nearly all of the contributors have also created (or recreated) and sustained relationships with other contributors of the book or the Facebook community. For these participants—although this certainly could not be said for all of the group’s members, as I detail in the chapter’s methods section—the group has functioned as a safe haven to build community, to share their stories without fear, and to reflect meaningfully on concepts of allyship, privilege, and community.

In sum, the theories of genres, media, and modes that have served as the primary lens for the project have led to some important insights in this case study. In my analysis, it has become apparent that, like the letter genre, the Pantsuit Nation posts are predominantly based in narrative and resist narrative closure. Members of this community expect ongoing communication with other members and expect administrators to continually update the space with new calls to action. This continuation is an affordance of *both* the genre and the medium that enables the creation and sustainability of community to persist. Another shared modal affordance is that the genre

and medium rely on a combined image that evokes emotion from readers to gain initial interest, and that there is a clear give-and-take between the image and written post. For example, Mark's reflection on his post showcased that the alphabetic text was included just to provide a brief context for the real content of his post: the powerful image of him wearing a Black Lives Matter shirt with another activist and backdrop of policemen. Other findings on the transition from the digital space of Facebook to the printed "time capsule" have clearly shown how both media have modal affordances that have mostly positively influenced the contributors' interactions within and outside of the group. A common result, for instance, has consistently been empowerment and connectedness, which have led this group to remain relevant and sustainable over the past year.

Given the scope of the chapter, I cannot possibly share all of the wonderful stories that this group of contributors generously shared with me, yet I hope that the excerpts shared here show the potential for individuals to use rhetorical resources in genres and media to change the narratives around their communities and hopefully affect policy change and deeper systemic oppression that affects so many members in this group.

CONCLUSION

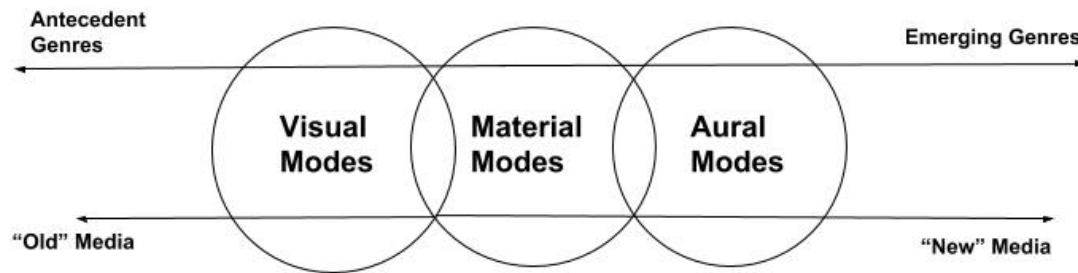
PENS, PRINT, PIXELS, AND FUTURE PROSPECTS IN WRITING STUDIES

It is no secret that genres and media will continue to evolve—likely much faster than ever before. Accepting speed and technological innovation as a given, we must be more attuned to ways power gets implicated in genre and media affordances in each coterminous reiteration. As teachers and researchers of writing, it is within our disciplinary purview to do so. We simply cannot afford to neglect the deeply complex ways writing directs and shapes our lives and the lives of community members and students with whom we work. This project has worked toward meeting those needs through challenging the perceptions of dichotomous media change and adding historical and theoretical dimensions to existing scholarly conversations about how shifts (and overlaps) in media can open up genres to new forms of participation for marginalized writers. In this conclusion, I reflect on the theoretical model introduced in Chapter 1 and explain its value in informing the analyses and arguments in the case studies. I then discuss the limitations of the study, explaining what the cases prevented and pertinent aspects of my own positionality as a researcher. Finally, I conclude with specific calls for further action and implications of the research in rhetoric and composition.

Revisiting the Model

Given this responsibility, we need diverse ways of seeing and understanding how power relations and hierarchies manifest in genres and media as they evolve together. In

Chapter One, I offer one such possibility that informed my thinking about each of the case studies analyzed in the dissertation. The model proposed in Chapter One was designed to respond to this question: “how does the relationship between genres, media, and modalities set conditions for the reproduction and/or transformation of gendered power relations in texts?” (p. 35). As represented in the model, I ultimately argue that genre and media exist on parallel continua, evolving together over time with no clear “end” or “beginning.” Genres and media certainly have affordances of their own, but I argue that they also share *modal affordances*, such as visual, tactile, and aural modes. These shared affordances are what, I argue, determine the relationship between genres and media and facilitate their evolution over time. Consequently, the shared modal affordances are what allow genres and media to be flexible enough to adapt to changing cultural circumstances and social exigencies. In other words, the model reinforces the argument that genres and media dynamically and reciprocally shape one another through their shared modal affordances in any given historical moment. This model also specifically depicts how genres and media are nearly always evolving from antecedent forms—a phenomenon that often gets overlooked in other visualizations. Furthermore, as explained in further detail in Chapter 1, this model resists isolating the genre of the letter *or* the medium of delivery, depicts the continued progression of genres and media, and it illustrates how integral *modes* are to the relationship between genres and media and their concurrent evolution over time.



1. **“Material modes”** include the tactile elements of writing *objects*, mainly printed and manuscript alphabetic texts; they also include the digital material modes that enable digital uploads and archiving.
2. **“Visual modes”** include all written alphabetic text, drawings, digital photographs, and spacing.
3. **“Aural modes”** include the sound elements of any digital text *and* include the aural messages that often accompanied written documents in the first two time periods of the study.
4. The model does not explicitly show **rhetorical situation** and/or **language**, but the model shows forms of communication that instantiate language and forms of interaction with language in specific rhetorical situations.

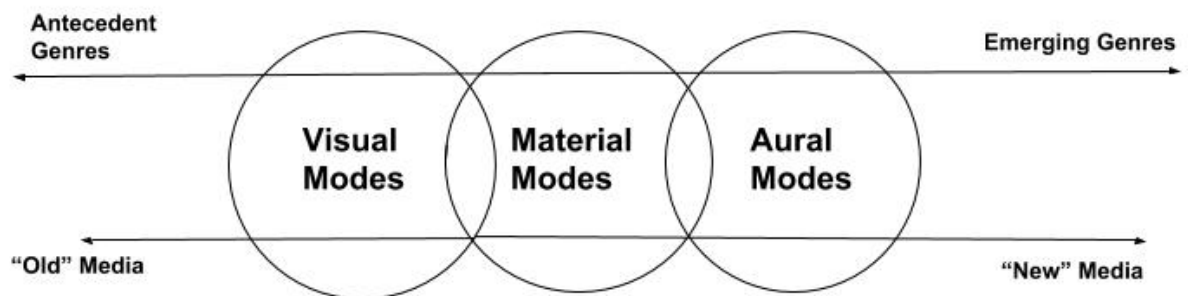
Figure 21: Review – Epistolary Genres, Media, and Modes Theoretical Model

Specifically, the model expands on current theorizations of genres, media, and modes that do not fully attend to how genres and media evolve together over time (Graham and Whalen, 2008; Lüders, Prøitz, and Rasmussen, 2010; Bhatia, 1993). The model also seeks to represent what Carolyn R. Miller and Dawn Shepherd (2009) and Askehave and Nielsen (2005) posit: that genres and media are deeply implicated in one another, so much so that it can be difficult at times to distinguish genres from media (particularly in the digital age). The visualization I have proposed offers one possible answer to Miller and Shepherd’s (2009) question about the nature of the relationship between genres and media; in particular, the reconceptualized model has aided my thinking and my argument that the relationship relies on the rhetorical uses of modal affordances that genres and media share as they evolve over time. Such affordances allow genres and media to be flexible enough to allow marginalized writers, who often rely on creative combinations of affordances, to participate in conversations that affect their lived realities.

As explained previously, given the dissertation's focus on the letter, I designed the model specifically for epistolary genres. Because the framework was instrumental in how I approached the three case studies, I return to it in this section to reflect on the specific insights it provided me in each of the case studies. In each chapter, I explained how the combination of rhetorical resources—genre and media affordances—allowed writers to direct their own positions of power and authority depending on the rhetorical context, particularly the audience. In some instances, the uses of modal affordances across genres and media provided entry points for new forms of participation; at other times, the uses of modal affordances further entrenched existing hierarchies and ideologies that often exclude and prohibit new participants. Ultimately, in all cases, the model has helped clarify how genres remain recognizable even as they evolve and get disseminated through new and different media.

In the first case study (Chapter 2), I use the above theoretical framework to draw conclusions about these dual outcomes in the Bagot women's writing. Specifically, I analyze the modal affordances used by the Bagot women writing in the manuscript tradition and drawing on instructive materials not written or intended for them as female writers. In fact, this case study was what led to the questions that drove the design of the model and the project as a whole. A few years ago, when studying the Bagot letters for a different project, I was interested in how the handwriting and other material and visual modes made the manuscript letters "multimodal" in ways we have not discussed in rhetoric and composition. Furthermore, I was interested in the question of whether or not the woman's handwriting and use of marginal space should be considered an affordance of the letter genre *or* the manuscript medium. As shown in Chapter 2 and the dissertation

more broadly, I ultimately decided that the visual and material modes could be attributed to *both* the genre *and* the medium, and I used this visualization to represent and reinforce this argument. To represent the nuances of Renaissance manuscript letters that served as the catalyst for the project, I describe the context-bound use of genre, media, and modal affordances in the Bagot women’s letters in the legend:



Modes of the 17th-century Letter:

1. **"Material modes"** specifically include the tactile elements of writing *objects*, including paper, ink, seals, embroidery thread.
2. **"Visual modes"** include handwriting, cancellations, additions, ink blotting, space on the page.
3. **"Aural modes"** include the aural components of letter delivery, including the messenger's additions to the text in face-to-face conversation with the recipient.

Figure 22: Review – Epistolary Genres, Media, and Modes in the English Renaissance

As stated in the legend above, I examined the letters’ material production through tactile elements—namely, the paper, ink, and seals. Furthermore, I was able to examine visual modes, including the woman’s handwriting in contrast to her male secretary’s and the atypical uses of margins. By looking carefully at the visual and material modes in conjunction with the push-and-pull of the dialogic, I was able to give snapshots of the specific ways these Renaissance women drew on a range of modal affordances to persuade readers to assist them in times of need or to acknowledge their authority in financial and business matters that normally would not concern them.

As discussed earlier in the dissertation, Chapter 2 served as the foundational case study with arguably the “simplest” combination of modal affordances represented in all the case studies. Although Chapter 2 did offer some examples of what conventional letters looked like in Day’s printed manual, the ways authority and gender manifest across epistolary genres and media became much more pronounced in the Richardson case study. The model enabled me to see more clearly how Richardson drew rhetorical resources from across manuscript and print *and* vernacular letters, manuals, and epistolary fiction to represent women’s lives and positions of authority in the eighteenth century. Using the model to understand visual and spatial modes as I did in Chapter 2, I was similarly able to see what modes across genres and media Richardson valued most in his representations of women’s writing. One of the most salient examples comes from the “Papers” in *Clarissa*:

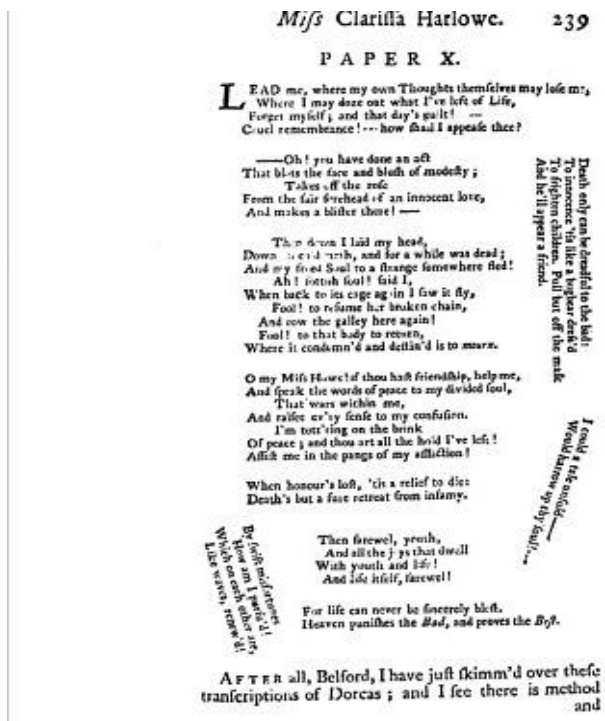
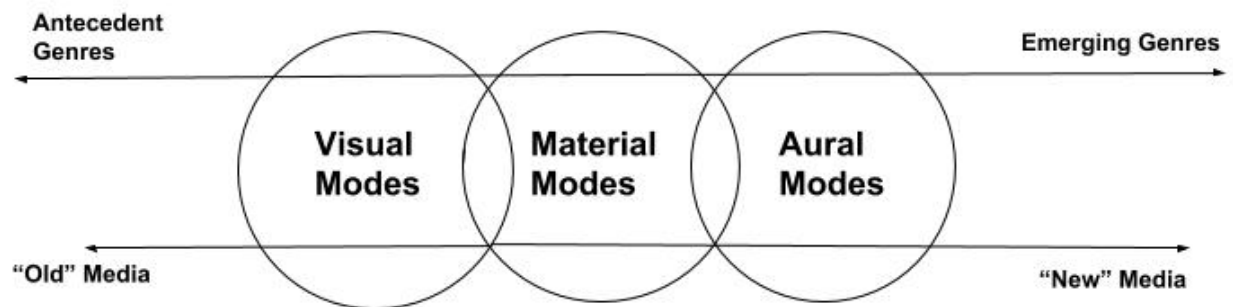


Figure 23: Review – *Clarissa*’s Paper X

As proposed in the chapter’s analysis, Richardson draws on manuscript’s authority in printing pages like this one in the novel. Much like the Bagot women, Richardson not only uses the writing in unconventional spaces on the page to represent Clarissa’s fragmented mental state, but also to allow her further control over her writing. The content, visual, and spatial modes are all utilized to give Clarissa authority even while she is in an extremely vulnerable position.

The legend in the model below describes how Richardson used modal affordances across genres and media to create positions of gendered authority:



Modes of the 18th-Century Letter:

1. **“Material modes,”** like in the 17th-century letter, include the tactile elements of writing *objects*, including paper, ink, seals, embroidery thread; yet it also considers ways the production of writing in manuscript form gets represented in print.
2. **“Visual modes”** include actual handwriting and its representations in print, along with cancellations, additions, ink blotting, space on the page.
3. **“Aural modes”** include the aural components of letter delivery, including the messenger’s additions to the text in face-to-face conversation with the recipient; this particular case would also include the oral sharing of Richardson’s drafts and suggestions for revision.

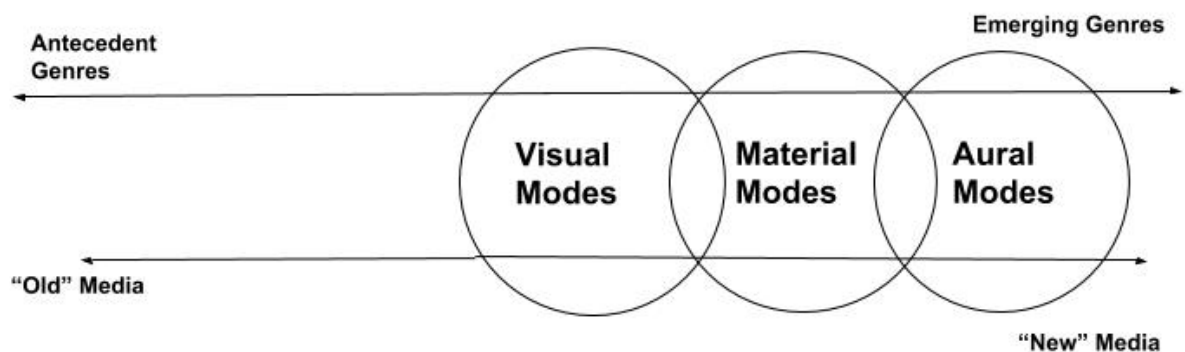
Figure 24: Epistolary Genres, Media, and Modes in Eighteenth-Century England

The diagram cannot possibly include all of the intricate ways in which modal affordances were pushed and pulled across the media and genres represented in Chapter 3, but the description does indicate a slight progression in the modal affordances of the medium—from manuscript to print. In sum, the model helped me conceptualize what modes remain

relatively stable and which ones evolve to potentially open up genres and media to new forms of representation and participation. Although Richardson's position as a male author adds another layer of complication to this analysis, his use of modes in print demonstrates *possibilities* for gendered writing across media and emerging epistolary genres.

The final chapter on Pantsuit Nation presented different challenges for analysis, especially given that the epistolary conventions in the digital form and even in the printed book appear much different than in the manuscript and printed letters. What makes this case comparable to the others, though, is how the writers use modal affordances shared by the genre and medium to respond to cultural exigencies. The model in this particular case helped me see how drastically speed and technological innovation influence ways modal affordances are appropriated to open up new genres and media to forms of participation that otherwise would not be possible. Additionally, the model enabled me to recognize epistolary genre conventions in Facebook that I otherwise might not would have seen. In Chapter 4, I discuss the affordances of digital photographs and the capability of immediate uploading and connection as modal affordances that contribute to how the medium of the platform and the genre of the post evolve. The ways users rely on such affordances also reveal the necessary flexibility for new forms of participation and relationship-building. Furthermore, the printed book is arguably a new genre on its own, as it relies on digital photography and editing to create visually-appealing curated posts that first appeared in an online format. As I was reflecting on the model and how it applied to this case, I realized that the concepts and overall argument represented in the model certainly still applied and helped me reach conclusions about how individual

writers were creating a space for themselves in this online activist community; yet, the limitations of the model’s visualization were more apparent in this case. For instance, the examples from Pantsuit Nation did not map onto the diagram as neatly and clearly as the previous two case studies. One example is that the visual and aural modes overlap in the digital realm, and this overlap is not represented in the model. While the alterations made below cannot encompass all of the messy ways speed and technological innovation have influenced the genre and media emergence and evolution, I attempted to show how the progression of modal affordances in the digital age are “closer” to new media and emerging genres in this illustration:



Modes of the Social Media Post/Digital Letter:

1. **“Material modes”** include *digital* material modes, including the technical capabilities of the platform to enable immediate uploads of digital content and the archiving of digital content.
2. **“Visual modes”** include both digital photographs and alphabetic text, including the presentation of each post in the same size, font, and structure.
3. **“Aural modes”** include the aural affordances of video and sound bites that some users can choose to include in their posts.

Figure 25: Epistolary Genres, Media, and Modes in Social Media

In other words, the available modal affordances in new technology make the emergence and evolution of new media and genres more likely and much faster. Recognizing such possibilities is important for understanding how the constant emerging and remaking of digital genres and media can offer more points of entry for marginalized writers to

participate in discourse communities that matter to them. For my study, recognizing these possibilities resulting from the interrelationship among genres, media, and modes helped me analyze the conversations and relationship-building in Pantsuit Nation and think beyond the issue of *access* to technology (or access to the tools/devices); instead, it has offered me a way to think more deeply about the structures underlying platforms like Facebook that can provide opportunities for participation for communities that have felt threatened in more publicly accessible venues.

Limitations of the Research

As I have noted throughout the project, this theoretical model cannot illustrate all of the intricate ways that genres, media, and modes push and pull at one another and the writers who must choose what rhetorical resources to convey their messages—in vernacular letters, printed manuals, epistolary fiction, and social media posts. Specifically, the model does not explicitly illustrate language or power constructs, which are focal points in this dissertation. I acknowledge this limitation in the model’s description in Chapter 1, explaining that while language and power cannot be visually represented, it is to be understood that they are implicated in the genres, media, and modes that are represented. Furthermore, the model represents a limited range of modes (“material” as primarily “tactile,” for example) and still oversimplifies the messy relationships among genre and media systems and modal affordances, particularly as they overlap with one another and with the genres and media in ways that do not fit in the neat, overlapping circles or parallel lines. Even recognizing these limitations, though, we can still see how this representation recognizes genre and media evolution/emergence and how the modal affordances help define the relationship between genre and media. It is

my hope that rhetorical genre and media scholars will be able to appropriate and alter this visualization as they theorize other writing platforms in their work.

The case studies, while robust, also presented limitations. The Bagot family archive, for instance, includes a wide range of letters from women and men in the family, which makes it suitable for a genre analysis; however, because of the family's high societal status, the collection prevents a deeper study of power dynamics in Renaissance letterwriting. There is also no explicit evidence that the women studied the letter models included in Day's manual. Furthermore, we cannot draw conclusive results about how successful the women's letters were without knowing the readers' interpretations and actions. Similarly, the eighteenth-century study only includes texts from Samuel Richardson and Lady Echlin, both of whom had privileges because of their social class. The archive of vernacular letters studied in Chapter 3 was limited in that it lacks letters from everyday 18th-century women whose lived experiences might have made meaningful additions to Richardson's epistolary works and instruction manuals. For these reasons, the case study focuses on a man's performance and interpretation of women's values and experiences. The case study would have been enriched had it included vernacular letters from women outside of Richardson's elite circle, but such letters are unavailable.

The final case study presented different limitations, but ones that similarly prevented me from deeply examining inclusion and exclusion of voices. While I was able to speak with the project's participants, my selection of contributors was greatly limited by Facebook group administrators' denial of my request to post to the entire online Pantsuit Nation group. As mentioned briefly in the chapter, only being able to contact

book contributors almost ensured that all of the responses about Pantsuit Nation would be positive, as the group's founder and book editor had developed relationships with each of the contributors in getting their consent for the book. Yet, in the actual group, several members have pushed back on the administrators and other group members whose views did not represent their own, including many women and men who experienced exclusion or harassment (feedback I have seen in comments on posts and received in private messages from friends and other Pantsuit Nation contacts). In a future project, I hope to be able to expand my group of participants to examine a wider range of modes used (such as video/audio) and perspectives from group members who have had different experiences in this online space.

Before addressing implications and future directions for the research, I also want to discuss my own "research blind spots." As a white feminist researcher from the South, I have to acknowledge my own histories, privileges, and limited experiences. As a woman who has experienced sexism in my professional and personal life, I was naturally interested in studying what rhetorical resources are available to *women* who may have similarly felt excluded and even threatened. Yet I also must recognize the privileges I have because of my race, the opportunities I've been afforded as a doctoral student immersed in an academic context, and my family background which includes members who have also pursued doctoral study. I also selected the first case study from work I had done in a prestigious Renaissance program and have continued to work with documents curated in highly respected libraries. Given all of these details, I cannot ignore that there are questions that I may not have known to ask—questions that a first-generation student or scholar of color might consider in a project like this one. I am hopeful that scholars

from a wide range of class and racial backgrounds will expand on this research so that we can have a fuller picture of ways power gets recirculated and subverted by writers in other communities. In the research design and the write-up of this study, I have acknowledged my own position, experiences, and biases and have tried to refrain from suggesting that the experiences and voices of the women in the letters or the participants in *Pantsuit Nation* represent every woman or person in the communities in which they identify.

Implications and Why This Work Matters in Rhetoric and Composition

In closing, I offer a summary of some of the contributions this project has made and ways that I hope other scholars build on this work: namely, through applying the theories to other historical and contemporary genres and media, other marginalized communities of writers, and to the writing classroom—a space where we encounter a wide range of writers with different histories and perspectives who can teach us a great deal about ways they navigate genres and media that have the power to shape their activities, experiences, and lives.

Here, I have tried to show the utility of the model in my study of letterwriting across genres and media, and I end by making a few pointed calls to action that I hope researchers and teachers of rhetoric and composition will respond to in their future work:

1. We need to pay closer attention to the ways that modalities overlap and coexist in multiple media and how they potentially work across different genres and media. Doing so will allow us the opportunity to see more fully the processes behind composing in new media and emerging genres and the needs these modes/media/genres are fulfilling for marginalized writers who are working in and against structures of power inherent to certain genres and media. Providing ways of re-seeing also gives us the opportunity to see more clearly the recreation of power in broader historical moments and in specific textual examples.
2. We need more deep research on particular cases—both in historical and contemporary genres. Doing so allows us to apply the broader theoretical lenses

to situationally-specific instances to see what kinds of rhetorical work is possible in each case. Studying genre emergence by cases and individual examples reveals how values and power dynamics can be reproduced over time.

3. We also need to challenge assumptions about the introduction of new media and the understanding of media as “technical tools” by looking at the contextual factors that “focus on the whole of practice—on artifacts, activity, and people alike” (Prior, 2005, p. 29). By focusing on the “whole” and the specific ways that media shape and are shaped by cultural exigencies, we can gain more insight into how structures of power get instantiated in and over time through media.
4. We must continue to expand our understanding of how genres emerge, how they draw on antecedent forms, how they evolve alongside media, and how they share modes with the media that disseminate them. Doing so will enable us to further see how genres and media respond to changing cultural exigencies and possibly changing the activities and writers themselves—through new and different platforms for political activity and citizenship, relationship-building, and personal meaning-making.

These calls are, of course, major undertakings; however, re-seeing the relationships among genres, media, and modes and the ways they evolve over time in particular historical moments is one way to start. I hope my analysis of the letter has provided one such start.

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Huk, Kritter N. (2016, November 23). This is me, Vince, and my hubb'n Chuck. We've been together for 12 years and married for 8. Yay! From Georgia, we flew to San Diego and married just before Prop 8 shut down gay marriage in California. It was [Facebook status update]. Retrieved from

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/pantsuitnation/search/?query=kritter>

Huskic, Lejla. (2016, November 27). I really want to share a little bit about my grandmother. My nana is a female Muslim refugee who does not speak English, and who now lives in a nursing home on the government's dime - in other words, she [Facebook status update]. Retrieved from

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/pantsuitnation/search/?query=lejla%20huskic>

Huskic, Lejla. (2016, December 9). Hi everyone! A lot of you may remember me from a story I shared a couple weeks ago about my nana who is a Muslim refugee and now in a nursing home. On that post, I was humbled that a [Facebook status update]. Retrieved from

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Papers of the Bagot family of Blithfield, Staffordshire, 1428-1671 (bulk 1557-1671), Folger MS 223, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington, D.C.
- Letter from Anne (Bagot) broughton to Mary Bagot (her mother), 1592? June 14. Papers of the Bagot family of Blithfield, Staffordshire, 1428-1671 (bulk 1557-1671), Folger MS 224, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington, D.C.
- Letter from Anne (Bagot) Broughton, Warwick Inn, to Richard Bagot, 1593? April 2.
Papers of the Bagot family of Blithfield, Staffordshire, 1428-1671 (bulk 1557-1671), Folger MS 225, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington, D.C.
- Letter from Anne (Bagot) Broughton, Warwick Inn, to Richard Bagot, 1593? June 17.
Papers of the Bagot family of Blithfield, Staffordshire, 1428-1671 (bulk 1557-1671), Folger MS 227, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington, D.C.
- Letter from Elizabeth (Cave) Bagot, Bromley Pagets, to Walter Bagot, 1614 July 7.
Papers of the Bagot family of Blithfield, Staffordshire, 1428-1671 (bulk 1557-1671), Folger MS 48, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington, D.C.

Letter from Isabel Kynnersley (nee Walker), Loxley, to Walter Bagot, 1609 July 27.

Papers of the Bagot family of Blithfield, Staffordshire, 1428-1671 (bulk 1557-1671), Folger MS 593, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington, D.C.

Letter from Jane Lycett, Shugborough (Shutbore), to [Dorothy] Okeover, 1617 April 28.

Papers of the Bagot family of Blithfield, Staffordshire, 1428-1671 (bulk 1557-1671), Folger MS 629, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington, D.C.

Letter from Jane (Roberts) Markham, Lady Skipwith, to Walter Bagot Cotes (Cootes),

Leicestershire, 1610 September 20. Papers of the Bagot family of Blithfield, Staffordshire, 1428-1671 (bulk 1557-1671), Folger MS 850, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington, D.C.

Letter from Jane (Skipwith), Lady Throckmorton, to Lewis Bagot, [1609/10?] March 24.

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Letter from Jane (Skipwith), Lady Throckmorton, to Lewis Bagot, [1610?] April 17.

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Letter from Judith (Austen) Boothby Basset, Lady Corbet, Langley, to Walter Bagot,

1608 October 15. Papers of the Bagot family of Blithfield, Staffordshire, 1428-1671 (bulk 1557-1671), Folger MS 394, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington, D.C.

Letter from Lettice Kynnersley, Badger, to Walter Bagot, [1605/06] March 21. Papers of

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Letter from Lettice Kynnersley, to Richard [sic] Bagot, [1608?] September 14. Papers of the Bagot family of Blithfield, Staffordshire, 1428-1671 (bulk 1557-1671), Folger MS 598, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington, D.C.

Letter from Lettice Kynnersley, Badger, to Richard [sic] Bagot, [1610?] May 9. Papers of the Bagot family of Blithfield, Staffordshire, 1428-1671 (bulk 1557-1671), Folger MS 599, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington, D.C.

Letter from Lettice Kynnersley, Badger, to Elizabeth (Cave) Bagot, [1610?] May 20. Papers of the Bagot family of Blithfield, Staffordshire, 1428-1671 (bulk 1557-1671), Folger MS 600, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington, D.C.

Letter from Lettice Kynnersley, Badger, to Walter Bagot, [1618?] May 23. Papers of the Bagot family of Blithfield, Staffordshire, 1428-1671 (bulk 1557-1671), Folger MS 605, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington, D.C.

Letter from Lettice Kynnersley, Badger, to Walter Bagot, [1619/20] March 23. Papers of the Bagot family of Blithfield, Staffordshire, 1428-1671 (bulk 1557-1671), Folger MS 606, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington, D.C.

Letter from Margaret (Bagot) Trew, Wilne, [Derbyshire?], to Walter Bagot to Walter Bagot [sic], [1614] December 1. Papers of the Bagot family of Blithfield, Staffordshire, 1428-1671 (bulk 1557-1671), Folger MS 901, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington, D.C.

Letter from Ursula (Stafford) Erdeswicke, Stafford Castle, to Walter Bagot, [1618?]. Papers of the Bagot family of Blithfield, Staffordshire, 1428-1671 (bulk 1557-1671), Folger MS 453, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington, D.C.

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- Letter from Walter Bagot to Lady Barbara Crompton, 1616 July 6. Papers of the Bagot family of Blithfield, Staffordshire, 1428-1671 (bulk 1557-1671), Folger MS 145, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington, D.C.
- Letter from Walter Bagot to Margaret (Bagot) Trew (his sister), 1619 August 22. Papers of the Bagot family of Blithfield, Staffordshire, 1428-1671 (bulk 1557-1671), Folger MS 150, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington, D.C.
- Letter from William Bagot (Walter's son), Oxford, to Walter Bagot, [1622/23] March 21. Papers of the Bagot family of Blithfield, Staffordshire, 1428-1671 (bulk 1557-1671), Folger MS 181, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington, D.C.
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Zappavigna, M. (2012). *Discourse of Twitter and social media: How we use language to*

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International Publishing Group.

CURRICULUM VITA

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EDUCATION

- Ph.D.** English – Rhetoric and Composition May 2018
University of Louisville – Louisville, KY
- Dissertation: *Pens, Print, and Pixels: Gendered Writing and The Epistolary Genre in Transitional Eras*
Committee: Debra Journet and Beth A. Boehm (chairs);
Mary P. Sheridan, Hristomir Stanev, Anis Bawarshi
- M.A.** English – Renaissance Studies May 2012
Hudson Strode Renaissance Program
University of Alabama – Tuscaloosa, AL
- B.A.** English (Honors), *Summa Cum Laude* May 2010
University of Georgia – Athens, GA

PUBLICATIONS

Peer-Reviewed

Mathis, Keri E., et al. “**Building Infrastructures for Community Engagement at the University of Louisville: Graduate Models for Cultivating Scholarly Identities.**” *Community Literacy Journal* 11.1 (Autumn 2016). Print.

Mathis, Keri E. “**Genre Uptake and Mobility: Making Meaning in Mobilized Contexts.**” (*Response*) *Working Paper Series on Mobility Work in Composition: Translation, Migration, Transformation*. Louisville: Thomas R. Watson Conference on Rhetoric and Composition. October 2016. Web.

Journet, Debra, et al. “**ClarissaBlogs.**” *Kairos* 19.2 (2015). Web.

Forthcoming

Mathis, Keri E. “**Material Meaning-Making: Objects of Letterwriting in Renaissance England.**” *The Material Culture of Writing*. Eds. Cydney Alexis and Hannah Rule.

Mathis, Keri E. “**Material-Discursive Entanglements: Matters in Digital Texts and Archives.**” *Making Future Matters*. Eds. Rick Wysocki and Mary P. Sheridan.

Mathis, Keri E., and Beth A. Boehm. “**Building Engaged Interventions in Graduate Education.**” *Composing Feminist Interventions: Activism, Engagement, Praxis*. Eds. Kristine Blair and Lee Nickoson.

Works in Progress

Immekus, Jason, et al. “**Community Engagement Academy: An Institutional Model to Promote Service-Learning and Community Engagement in Graduate Education.**” *Journal of Higher Education, Outreach, and Engagement*.

Mathis, Keri E., and Laura Sceniak Matravers. “**The Role of Friendship and Co-Mentorship in Graduate Student Professionalization Efforts.**” *Peitho*.

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

“ Rescripting and Reimagining Gendered Authority in Early Modern Women’s Letterwriting ” <i>Rhetoric Society of America</i>	Minneapolis, MN May 2018 (Accepted)
“ Epistolary (R)evolutions(?): A Case Study of Pantsuit Nation ” <i>Feminisms and Rhetorics</i>	Dayton, OH October 2017
“ Developing Capacity for Diverse Research Practices in the Archives ” <i>Conference on College Composition and Communication</i>	Portland, OR March 2017
“ Material Meaning-Making: Medium, Genre, and Gender in Early Modern Letterwriting ” <i>Newberry Center for Renaissance Studies Multidisciplinary Graduate Student Conference</i>	Chicago, IL January 2017
“ Transporting Genres and Media Through Modality: Epistolary Conventions in the Digital Age ” <i>Thomas R. Watson Conference</i>	Louisville, KY October 2016
“ Re-Envisioning Graduate Student Professionalization through the Community Engagement Academy ” <i>Engagement Scholarship Consortium Conference</i>	Omaha, NE October 2016
“ From Pens to the Press: Textual Production and Generic Change in 18th-Century Epistolary Culture ” <i>Rhetoric Society of America</i>	Atlanta, GA May 2016

“Building Interdisciplinary Paths to Community Engagement” <i>Conference on Community Writing</i>	Boulder, CO October 2015
“Rescripting Manuscripts: Making Meaning in Early Modern Women’s Letterwriting” <i>Feminisms and Rhetorics</i>	Tempe, AZ October 2015
“Gendered Genres: Rhetorical Rewards in 17th-Century Women’s Letters” <i>Conference on College Composition and Communication</i>	Tampa, FL March 2015
“The Letter as Genre in Early Modern England: A Case Study of the Bagot Family Letters” <i>Newberry Center for Renaissance Studies Multidisciplinary Graduate Student Conference</i>	Chicago, IL January 2015
“Getting Wired In: Responding to Upward Bound’s Digital Needs” <i>Thomas R. Watson Conference</i>	Louisville, KY October 2014
“Liminal Spaces: The Marriage of Non-Traditional Students’ Academic/Career/Personal Selves in the Open Access Institution” <i>Conference on College Composition and Communication</i>	Indianapolis, IN March 2014
“(Re)Constructing the Self through Blogging: ‘Lifting the Weight’ as Recovery Narrative” <i>Popular Culture Association/American Culture Association</i>	Chicago, IL April 2014
“Composing Works for Public(s): Employing Multimodal Technologies to Connect Students, Ideas, and Audiences in the First-Year Composition Classroom” <i>Conference on College Composition and Communication</i>	Las Vegas, NV March 2013
“Textual Sexuality: Self and the Female Speaker” <i>Georgia Gwinnett College Chat ‘N Chew Colloquium</i>	Lawrenceville, GA October 2012
“Race and Romance: Liberating the Female Speaker through Racial Discourse in the Poetry of George Herbert and Lady Mary Wroth” <i>Medieval-Renaissance Conference at University of Virginia-Wise</i>	Wise, VA September 2012

TEACHING

Graduate Teaching Assistant <i>University of Louisville – Louisville, KY</i>	2013-2017
Introduction to College Writing	
Introduction to College Writing (online)	
Intermediate College Writing	
Scientific and Technical Writing	
Business Writing	

*includes themed course “Professional Writing for Nonprofits”
Digital Media Academy (summer camp)

Part-Time Faculty	2012-2013
<i>Georgia Gwinnett College – Lawrenceville, GA</i>	
Composition II	
Pre-College Writing	
Adjunct Instructor	2012-2013
<i>Athens Technical College – Athens, GA</i>	
Workplace Communications (hybrid)	
Composition and Rhetoric II (hybrid)	
Composition and Rhetoric I (hybrid)	
Composition and Rhetoric I (online)	
Graduate Teaching Assistant	2011-2012
<i>University of Alabama – Tuscaloosa, AL</i>	
English Composition I	
English Composition II	
*themed “Southern Culture and Diversity”	
British Literature Survey (assistant to Dr. David Ainsworth)	
Upward Bound Instructor	Summers 2011 - 2013
<i>University of Georgia – Athens, GA</i>	
English Literature	
Composition	
Writing Tutor	
<i>Backside Learning Center, Family Literacy Program – Louisville, KY</i>	2017 – Present
<i>Wyzant – Online</i>	2012 – Present
<i>University of Alabama Writing Center – Tuscaloosa, AL</i>	2010 – 2011
<i>University of Alabama Athletic Tutoring Center – Tuscaloosa, AL</i>	2011 – 2012

ADMINISTRATIVE AND RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Graduate Fellow	Summer 2017 – Present
<i>Cooperative Consortium for Transdisciplinary Social Justice Research</i>	
<i>University of Louisville – Louisville, KY</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Support capacity-building and develop organizational structure for this new grant-funded organization- Organize and assess professional development opportunities for faculty, staff, students, and community partners- Coordinate and oversee matching undergraduate and graduate students with transdisciplinary research teams	

- Plan and assist in facilitating University Advisory Council, Community Council, and Faculty Council meetings and collaborations
- Organize, plan, and co-facilitate inaugural Social Justice Research Symposium

Graduate Research Assistant to Dean Beth Boehm Summer 2014 – Spring 2017

School of Interdisciplinary and Graduate Studies

University of Louisville – Louisville, KY

- Co-designed and implemented the Community Engagement Academy for graduate students interested in engaged scholarship
- Completed research projects on community engagement in graduate education
- Planned and facilitated workshops for the PLAN (Professional Development, Life Skills, Academic Development, & Networking) program
- Organized annual Women’s Panel
- Co-wrote research grants, including outcomes, sustainability, and budget

Nothing About Me Without Me, Co-Researcher Summer 2016 – Summer 2017

UofL and Council on Developmental Disabilities – Louisville, KY

- Produced artist profile videos for the Council
- Led free digital media workshop for Kentuckians with Developmental Disabilities on “Video Editing”
- Recorded workshops, conducted interviews, and edited material for project promotion for Louisville Council on Developmental Disabilities
- Recorded and participated in free art workshops for Kentuckians with Developmental Disabilities

Digital Media Academy, Teacher and Co-Researcher Summer 2015

University of Louisville – Louisville, KY

- Co-designed free digital media production camp for 20 middle school girls
- Led the technology team and investigated products and programs to use and teach during camp
- Taught girls video editing and led discussions of images in the media

AWARDS, FELLOWSHIPS, AND GRANTS

K. Patricia Cross Future Leaders Award - Nominee 2017, 2018

Association of American Colleges and Universities

Faculty Favorite 2017

Delphi Center for Teaching and Learning

University of Louisville – Louisville, KY

Social Justice Consortium Graduate Fellowship 2017 – 2018

Cooperative Consortium for Transdisciplinary Social Justice Research

University of Louisville – Louisville, KY

Newberry Renaissance Consortium Grant (\$550) 2017

The Newberry Library – Chicago, IL

Graduate Student Council travel grant (\$350) <i>School of Interdisciplinary and Graduate Studies</i> <i>University of Louisville – Louisville, KY</i>	2013, 2014, 2015, 2017
Graduate Network in Arts and Sciences Research travel grant (\$100) <i>College of Arts and Sciences</i> <i>University of Louisville – Louisville, KY</i>	2014, 2015, 2017
Faculty Favorite <i>Delphi Center for Teaching and Learning</i> <i>University of Louisville – Louisville, KY</i>	2015
Graduate Student Council Research Grant (\$300) <i>School of Interdisciplinary and Graduate Studies</i> <i>University of Louisville – Louisville, KY</i>	2015
July Graduate Student Spotlight Recipient <i>School of Interdisciplinary and Graduate Studies</i> <i>University of Louisville – Louisville, KY</i>	2015
Pathways Women’s Leadership Conference Scholarship <i>University of Louisville – Louisville, KY</i>	2015
Gesa E. Kirsch Travel Award (\$260) <i>University of Louisville – Louisville, KY</i>	2015
Newberry Renaissance Consortium Grant (\$600) <i>The Newberry Library – Chicago, IL</i>	2015
School of Interdisciplinary and Graduate Studies Assistantship <i>University of Louisville – Louisville, KY</i>	2014 – 2017
Newberry Renaissance Consortium Grant (\$850) <i>The Newberry Library – Chicago, IL</i>	2013
Graduate Teaching Assistantship <i>University of Louisville – Louisville, KY</i>	2013 – 2017
MA Comprehensive Exam – Pass with Distinction <i>University of Alabama – Tuscaloosa, AL</i>	2012
Graduate Teaching Assistantship	2010 – 2012

University of Alabama – Tuscaloosa, AL

Hudson Strode Fellowship 2010 – 2012
University of Alabama – Tuscaloosa, AL

Emerson R. Loomis English Scholarship 2010 – 2012
University of Alabama – Tuscaloosa, AL

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Invited Presentations

Women’s Panel: Mentoring Women Graduate Students Spring 2018
Invited Panelist – School of Interdisciplinary and Graduate Studies
University of Louisville – Louisville, KY

Communicating Social Justice Research on a Resume or CV Spring 2018
Workshop Presenter – Cooperative Consortium for Transdisciplinary Social
Justice Research
University of Louisville – Louisville, KY

Transdisciplinary Social Justice Research at UofL Spring 2018
Roundtable Moderator – Graduate Student Council, Graduate Research Conference
University of Louisville – Louisville, KY

Presenting Social Justice Research to Diverse Audiences Fall 2017
Symposium Presenter – Cooperative Consortium for Transdisciplinary Social
Justice Research
University of Louisville – Louisville, KY

What Does It Mean to Be a Social Change Leader? Fall 2017
Workshop Presenter - Cooperative Consortium for Transdisciplinary Social
Justice Research
University of Louisville – Louisville, KY

Be Searchable: Developing an Online Portfolio for the Job Search Spring 2017
PLAN Workshop Co-Presenter Spring 2016
University of Louisville – Louisville, KY Spring 2015

Gendered Identity Performance in *Twelfth Night* Spring 2017
Presenter - Dr. Joe Turner’s “British Literature from the Beginning Through
Shakespeare”
University of Louisville – Louisville, KY

Creating a Professional Online Presence	Summer 2016
Presenter - Career Opportunities for Biomedical Sciences (graduate course) <i>University of Louisville – Louisville, KY</i>	
Graduate Student Council Research Symposium	Spring 2016
Presenter <i>University of Louisville – Louisville, KY</i>	Spring 2014
Making a Genre Their Own: Women’s Letterwriting Practices in the Bagot Family Collection	Spring 2016
Presenter - Medieval and Renaissance Research Group <i>University of Louisville – Louisville, KY</i>	
Technology for Effective Teaching	Spring 2016
PLAN Workshop Co-Presenter <i>University of Louisville – Louisville, KY</i>	Spring 2015
Managing Citations in Mendeley	Fall 2015
Presenter - Minority Association of Graduate Students Workshop <i>University of Louisville – Louisville, KY</i>	
Managing Grad School: Life as a Grad Student	Fall 2014
Panelist - PLAN Workshop <i>University of Louisville – Louisville, KY</i>	
<i>Participation</i>	
Emerging Engaged Scholars Workshop	Fall 2016
Engagement Scholarship Consortium Conference – <i>Omaha, Nebraska</i>	
Printing in the Age of Shakespeare	Fall 2016
Shakespeare’s First Folio Series; <i>University of Louisville – Louisville, KY</i>	
Delphi U – Online Teaching Professional Development Program	Summer 2016
Delphi Center for Teaching and Learning; <i>University of Louisville – Louisville, KY</i>	
Research Network Forum	Summer 2016
Rhetoric Society of America Conference – <i>Atlanta, GA</i>	
Pathways Women’s Leadership Conference	Spring 2015
<i>University of Louisville – Louisville, KY</i>	
Grant Writing Academy	Fall 2015

School of Interdisciplinary and Graduate Studies; *University of Louisville – Louisville, KY*

Digital Media and Composition Institute Summer 2014
The Ohio State University – Columbus, OH

Graduate Teaching Assistant Academy Fall 2013 – Spring 2014
School of Interdisciplinary and Graduate Studies; *University of Louisville – Louisville, KY*

Early Modernity in Global Perspective Fall 2013
Newberry Library – Chicago, IL

Beyond Engaged Learning Summer 2013
Innovative Course-Building Group (IC-bG); *Macon, GA*

Manuscript Workshop Spring 2011
Participant; *Folger Shakespeare Library – Washington DC*

LEADERSHIP AND SERVICE

Commission on the Status of Women (COSW) Fall 2015 – Present
Graduate Student Commissioner; *University of Louisville – Louisville, KY*

Campus Climate Committee (COSW) Summer 2017 – Present
Committee Co-Chair; *University of Louisville – Louisville, KY*

Campus Climate Committee (COSW) Fall 2015 – Summer 2017
Graduate Student Representative; *University of Louisville – Louisville, KY*

Academic Technology Committee Fall 2014 – Summer 2017
Graduate Student Representative; *University of Louisville – Louisville, KY*

English Peer Mentoring Program Spring 2014 – Present
Mentor; *University of Louisville – Louisville, KY*

Written Communication General Education Assessment Spring 2017
Assessor; *University of Louisville – Louisville, KY*

Women Faculty of Color Panel Spring 2017

Panel Organizer; <i>University of Louisville – Louisville, KY</i>	
<i>Hidden America Book-in-Common Essay Contest</i>	Fall 2017
Essay Contest Reviewer; <i>University of Louisville – Louisville, KY</i>	Fall 2016
Women in Community Engagement Panel	Spring 2016
Panel Organizer; <i>University of Louisville – Louisville, KY</i>	
<i>This I Believe Book-in-Common Essay Contest</i>	Fall 2015
Essay Contest Reviewer; <i>University of Louisville – Louisville, KY</i>	Fall 2014
Graduate Student Council	Fall 2014 – Spring 2016
English Department Representative; <i>University of Louisville – Louisville, KY</i>	
Oral Communication General Education Assessment	Summer 2015
Assessor; <i>University of Louisville – Louisville, KY</i>	
Women in Alternative-Academic Careers Panel	Spring 2015
Panel Organizer; <i>University of Louisville – Louisville, KY</i>	
General Education Student Focus Group	Spring 2015
Member; <i>University of Louisville – Louisville, KY</i>	
Graduate Student Council Executive Board	Fall 2014 – Spring 2015
Vice-President (Internal); <i>University of Louisville – Louisville, KY</i>	
Graduate Student Council Elections and Constitution Committee	Fall 2014 – Spring 2015
Chair; <i>University of Louisville – Louisville, KY</i>	
Student Government Association	Fall 2014 – Spring 2015
Graduate Student Senator; <i>University of Louisville – Louisville, KY</i>	
Student Government Association Academic Policy Committee	Fall 2014 – Spring 2015
Member; <i>University of Louisville – Louisville, KY</i>	
<i>Cardinal Compositions, Undergraduate Student Journal</i>	Summer 2014 – Fall 2015
Editor; <i>University of Louisville – Louisville, KY</i>	

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS AND AFFILIATIONS

Rhetoric Society of America	November 2015 – Present
Member	

Coalition of Women Scholars in the History of Rhetoric and Composition Member	May 2014 – Present
National Council of Teachers of English Member	March 2013 – Present
English Graduate Organization (University of Louisville) Member	August 2013 – Present
English Graduate Organization (University of Alabama) Member	Fall 2011 – Spring 2012

GRADUATE COURSEWORK

Pedagogy

Teaching College Composition (UofL, Dr. Brenda Brueggemann)
 Digital/New Media and Composition Pedagogy (UofL, Dr. Bronwyn Williams)
 Approaches to Teaching Composition (UA, Dr. Michelle Robinson)
 Teaching College English – Practicum (UA, Dr. Jessica Kidd)

Rhetoric and Writing Studies

Research in Composition (UofL, Dr. Mary P. Sheridan)
 Composition Theory and Practice (UofL, Dr. Karen Kopelson)
 Composing Identities: Exploring Literacy, Culture, & Agency (UofL, Dr. Bronwyn Williams)
 Clarissa and Blogs (UofL, Dr. Debra Journet)
 Emerging Genres (UofL, Dr. Carolyn R. Miller)
 Renaissance Reception of Classical Rhetoric (UofL, Dr. Andrew Rabin)
 Computers and Writing (UA, Dr. Carolyn Handa)

Literature

Shakespeare and Love (UofL, Dr. Matthew Biberman)
 Renaissance Drama: City, Cash, and Monsters (UofL, Dr. Hristomir Stanev)
 Contemporary Theory Interpretation (UofL, Dr. Aaron Jaffe)
 Medieval Allegory and Representation (UA, Dr. Alexandra Cook)
 Research and Bibliography (UA, Dr. Sharon O’Dair)
 Shakespeare’s “Comedies” (UA, Dr. Jennifer Drouin)
 Paleography (UA, Dr. Tricia McElroy)
King Lear: Sources and Adaptations (UA, Dr. Jennifer Drouin)
 Chaucer and Boccaccio on Love and Poetry (UA, Dr. Alexandra Cook)
 Spenser and Sidney (UA, Dr. Tricia McElroy)
 Writing Race, Acting Race in the Anglo Atlantic World (UA, Dr. Cassander Smith)