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Mobile Vulgus: Everyday Writing, Portable Technology, and Counterpublics

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MOBILE VULGUS: EVERYDAY WRITING, PORTABLE TECHNOLOGY, AND COUNTERPUBLICS

By

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This dissertation is dedicated to everyday composers.
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ABSTRACT

This dissertation aims to make a case for the ecological relationship between portable writing technologies, everyday writing, and counterpublics, arguing that all three represent means by which we can foster more publically-engaged, self-fostered, and technologically savvy composition practices in the composition classroom. I look at three different historical timeframes, focusing on a different portable composing technology in each period and analyzing the products of this technology. In each period, I focus on a community that forms around each portable technology, analyzing the relationship between portable technology, the compositions sponsored by this technology, and the counterpublics that are created as a result of this relationship.

In chapter two, I focus on the final decades of the nineteenth century, providing two examples of everyday writing fostered by the portable technology of the period: the small printing press. Here, I focus on two everyday writing communities: first, adolescent amateur journalists that called themselves “A-Jayers” and, second, an adult hyper-masculine and hyper-sexualized community known as “Sporting Men.” I describe the textual products of these two communities that were created on small printing presses, pointing to how I see their compositions as “everyday.” Further, as a result of the use of the small press, and the everyday compositions created with this portable technology, I argue that both the “A-Jayers” and “Sporting Men” form counterpublics, and it is the everyday compositions and the composing practices of these counterpublics that stand in contradistinction from the curriculum at the time. Ultimately, I claim that the nineteenth-century writing classroom represents a “bifurcated” space that was not equipped to foster the kinds of public writing that motivated these two communities to write, print, and circulate texts on their own.

In chapter three, I move to the 1960s and 1970s to present examples of everyday composing that are both multimodal and mobile. Here, I focus on two communities—known as “guerrilla television collectives”—that were fostered by the newly available portable video recording technology: Broadside TV and Top Value Television. I describe the two examples of each community’s multimodal compositions, underscoring how each community’s approach to everyday multimodal composition supports the development of counterpublics in different ways. Further, this period also represents a moment of curricular reform in writing classrooms as well,
particularly as the humanities felt increasing pressure to incorporate technology into their pedagogy. However, while several writing teachers did attempt to employ television technology in their classrooms, their approaches tended to replicate what Paolo Freire calls a “banking” model of education, with the television operating as an authoritative source of information and students passively consuming information. On the other hand, the example of the guerrilla television collectives present us with an alternative, enacting a kind of composing that comes closer to achieving the aims of educational reform ongoing at the time. I claim that guerrilla television does so by fashioning an everyday composing that privileges the formation of critically engaged, local counterpublics.

In chapter four, I move to the present day, arguing that such digital technology plays a role in the sponsoring what I call “everyday cyborg composing.” In this chapter, I consider two kinds of contemporary mobile digital technologies that sponsor everyday cyborg composing: first, a hand-held, GPS-based device created by Parks Canada called “Explora” and, second, an iPhone app, named “Drift” that was developed in 2012. As demonstrated through these two portable technologies, everyday cyborg composing necessitates a rethinking of the relationship between composers and portable digital tools. Further, everyday cyborg composing suggests a recalibration of the discursive space of the public sphere; whereas publics and counterpublics have been seen as emerging from the circulation of visual-verbal texts, everyday cyborg writing designates, instead, a performance space secured through the circulation of bodies and their movements.

This study adds to composition scholarship in three ways. First, this project informs our historical understanding of the intersection between everyday writing and technologies, especially the way in which different technologies have functioned as sponsors of everyday literacies. Second, this project continues and extends this disciplinary interest in the development of the “public” and the “public sphere.” If, as research in composition studies suggests, the places in which composing occurs play a crucial role in how it unfolds and develops, exploring the intersections between “publics” and the everyday will aim to inform and, potentially, redirect our current classroom practices. Third, this project contributes to the discipline’s continuing interest in how technologies foster composing practices, and my emphasis on “portable technologies” specifically aims to highlight how portability supports a specific kind of
composition that is considered “amateur,” is frequently oppositional, and is grounded in the everyday experiences of composers.
CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

In her 2004 Conference on College Composition and Communication Chair’s Address, “Made Not Only in Words: Composition in a New Key,” Kathleen Blake Yancey observes:

Never before has the proliferation of writings outside the academy so counterpointed the compositions inside. Never before have the technologies of writing contributed so quickly to the creation of new genres. The consequence of these two factors is the creation of a writing public that, in development and in linkage to technology, parallels the development of a reading public in the 19th century. And these parallels, they raise good questions, suggest ways that literacy is created across spaces, across time (298)

Most exciting of all, Yancey notes that these kinds of “writings” are self-sponsored. She stresses that “no one is making anyone do any of this writing” and asks: “Don't you wish that the energy and motivation that students bring to some of these other genres they would bring to our assignments?”(298). Ultimately, Yancey’s call to action, drawing upon literacy practices of the past, asks us to seriously consider how to develop a writing curriculum that is appropriate for the twenty-first century. Such a curriculum would better acknowledge and take advantage of the wide array of compositions that students already create and circulate on their own. Further, such a curriculum would utilize the digital technologies that students are already using, drawing upon and developing their already-considerable technological skills.

However, surprisingly, despite the fact that Yancey argues that “we are witnessing a parallel creation” to that of the nineteenth century in terms of a contemporary writing public forming outside the domain of education, the linkages that she makes to the nineteenth century focus almost exclusively on the formation of a reading public during the period. She suggests that “in some ways our moment is like that in 19-th-century Britain when a new reading public...came into being” (299). Here, Yancey reminds us of shared reading practices during this period, both “reading circles” and public oral recitations. And so, although Yancey highlights that all this activity encouraged new forms of writing genres, she returns to reading; these new forms of writing, she tells us, “encouraged new reading publics who read for new purposes” (300). In our modern day, however, she observes “that of a writing public made plural, and as in the case of
the development of a [19th century] reading public, it's taking place largely outside of school” (300, emphasis original). While her focus is on the varieties of self-sponsored writing of contemporary students, less attention is given to the fact that, in the nineteenth century as well as in the twentieth century, a wide variety of self-sponsored, everyday writing was also occurring outside of academia. Ultimately, the parallels that Yancey suggests between the past and present writing behaviors are actually much closer than indicated in her address. Instead of seeing our contemporary students’ everyday composing practices as a parallel to a nineteenth-century reading public, perhaps it might be more accurate to see it as a continuum, with everyday writing practices in the nineteenth century representing one part of a longer trend, spanning from then to now. This dissertation seeks to uncover this continuum, focusing on the self-sponsored writers at different points in composition’s history. By looking at the practices of everyday composers, this dissertation aims to build upon the connections Yancey makes between such practices outside the classroom and inside.

In addition, when Yancey does point to writers in the nineteenth century, for the most part, they are both literary and professional writers. In “Quartet One” of her address, for example, she points to the circulation of the work of novelists such as Charles Dickens. But this begs the question about other kinds of writers—what were they composing? What kinds of genres did they write with? She does point to other “new forms of writing” such as serials, newspapers—but, again, they point to writing professionals. So what kinds of texts were everyday people outside the profession of writing composing? Yancey hints at this, noting that readers of serialized novels “provided responses influencing the development of the text” which we might assume were in print (300). Of course, Yancey never denies that everyday people are writing at this period, but her address provokes a question: what did everyday texts look like? What were the writing practices of people outside of the writing classroom? And for those everyday composers who sought to circulate their texts themselves, how did they do so?

This circulation also highlights a connection between writers and readers, and this would hold true for everyday writers as well. For Yancey, circulation also mirrors Charles Bazerman and David Russell’s activity theory and, as they explain, “Writing is alive…when it is part of human activity…The signs on the page serve to mediate between people, activate their thoughts, direct their attention, coordinate their actions, provide the means of relationship” (312). Writing, as Yancey’s example of the nineteenth century reminds us, plays a role in fostering a relationship
between people, between writers and readers. Yancey describes an active reading public in the nineteenth century, one that vociferously read the serial novels and newspapers of the time, and responded to them in a variety of ways; she also describes current students playing a significant role in a writing public. But what kinds of publics do everyday writers create and participate in as a result of the circulation of their texts? What do these publics look like?

Yancey underscores that technology played a role in the formation of the nineteenth-century reading public, since, as she points out, the development of the steam press and cheaper paper allowed reading material to become more accessible for a growing middle-class that had both the funds and the leisure to read a growing body of texts (299). This also begs the question: what might the relationship between technology and everyday composers be? Yancey draws from Donald Leu’s concept of deixis to point to technology’s role in both transforming literacy and sponsoring its new forms. In particular, she notes how technology fosters “envisionments of new literacy potentials;” in other words, the ability to use a technology in a way that might be at odds with its design (319). Might these envisionments be at the root of what distinguishes everyday composers from professional writers?

Yancey’s address highlights that research into everyday writing warrants further exploration. It is clear that everyday people outside of the classroom can be highly motivated to compose everyday, self-sponsored writing, and that looking to how everyday composers create and circulate texts can serve as an invaluable source for innovation in writing curriculum. And so, her address provokes questions about what kinds of texts these everyday composers create and what their composing processes look like. Further, considering that Yancey points to digital technology as a key motivator for contemporary everyday writing, it opens the question of what kinds of writing technologies different everyday composers might have used at different time periods and to what ends. Finally, by pointing to the connections between the classroom and the “real world,” Yancey’s address provokes questions about the role everyday writing and technologies might play in the formation of publics that are critically engaged in the world around them.

And so, inspired by Yancey’s address, the questions I will pursue in this dissertation are linked to three areas of exploration. First, spring boarding from Yancey’s comparison between the kinds of writing done inside the classroom versus outside, I seek to answer: what kinds of everyday composing have been produced and circulated outside the classroom? By investigating
these texts, I wish to better understand what these texts look like, what conditions created them, and what kinds of impact they might have. Further, continuing with the historical connections that Yancey makes in her address, I will provide three examples of everyday composing occurring at three key moments in composition studies’ history. I have chosen these moments as a way to demonstrate the heritage of everyday composing practices ongoing from the nineteenth century to the present, predating digital composing tools, but continuing on to the present day. I have also chosen these specific points in time because they represent moments of upheaval in composition studies, and I believe that the everyday texts I will analyze will provide an interesting counterpoint to the reforms undergoing pedagogical practices in each period.

Second, what are the connections between everyday composing and technology? Considering the deicity of technology, how might new envisionments of technology play a role in sponsoring everyday composing? The historical moments in composition history that form the backdrop to my three investigations are all marked by advances in technology that transformed potential writing technology into more accessible and more portable writing tools. I will describe three different technologies in my case studies: the small printing press in the nineteenth century, the portable video recorder in the nineteen-sixties and nineteen-seventies, and handheld digital technology in the first decades of the twentieth century. Looking at these three technologies during these three moments in composition’s history will provide a thicker description of the relationship between accessible technologies and everyday composing that echo the moment Yancey describes in her address. These portable tools suggest, first, the importance of access to composing tools for everyday writers to compose and, second, that portable composing tools in particular foster the kinds of composing I am calling “everyday.”

Third, Yancey points to the relationship between composing, technology, and the formation of reading and writing publics. This suggests the possibility of discovering similar connections between the everyday composers of my study and the kinds of publics that form around their practices. Considering this, I ask: what role might everyday composing at these different historical play in public formation? Further, based on the connections between composing technologies, the circulation of texts, and the formation of publics made by Jürgen Habermas and other scholars of the public sphere, I want to explore how portable technologies might participate in this public formation. Through my analysis of compositions created by everyday writers with portable technology, I hope to better understand how everyday texts might
participate in the forming of publics. Specifically, I propose that portable technology represents a powerful sponsor for everyday writing which, in turn, plays a key role in the development of what Michael Warner calls “counterpublics,” alternative publics that self-consciously stand outside a mainstream writing or reading public.

As a whole, I envision everyday composing, portable composing technology and counterpublics forming what I call a “triadic ecology.” As in any ecology, the individual components are involved in a “deeply enmeshed, coconstitutive [sic] relationship” (Dobrin 18) that supports the larger whole. Further, changes to these individual elements can have “unforeseen consequences that ripple far beyond their immediate implications” (Brooke 28). In this dissertation, I employ the ecology metaphor as a way to signal the complexity of these three components while allowing me to tease out and describe the three parts individually. Once again, the three questions this project addresses are:

1) What kinds of everyday composing have been produced and circulated outside the classroom at different historical moments?
2) What are the connections between everyday composing and technology and how might new “envisionments” of technology play a role in sponsoring everyday composing?
3) What role does everyday composing play in the formation of counterpublics?

This study adds to composition scholarship in three ways. First, this project informs our historical understanding of the intersection between everyday writing and technologies, especially the way in which technologies function as sponsors of everyday literacies. Much of the research that composition studies has gathered on everyday composing is based on the current moment, investigating the kinds of texts created in digital environments. However, more and more, researchers are delving into historical archives to explore the writing of the past, opening the possibility for explorations of the everyday. This dissertation’s historical focus responds to my first central research question, with the intention that my investigations of everyday composing will encourage a more expansive examination of our disciplinary history. Specifically, this research underscores how the divisions between the classroom and composing activities that occur outside them are not as clear as we might think. By blurring the divisions between the classroom and the “outside world,” this dissertation points to the current “public turn” in rhetoric and composition as a manifestation of a continuing, historical conversation between the academy and the world of the everyday.
Second, this project continues and extends this disciplinary interest in the development of the “public” and the “public sphere.” The “publics” that I currently see emerging from the production and circulation of discourses that could be seen as “everyday” offer glimpses of how the development and circulation of texts initiates very different performances of literacy that might, as Yancey wisely advocates, encourage teachers, administrators, and scholars to consider a wider array of approaches to writing that would include “real” engagement with the public sphere. Further, this study explores the intersections between the public sphere and place, especially through movement in and through places. If, as research in composition studies suggests, the places in which composing occurs play a crucial role in how it unfolds and develops, movement through places might play a role in the forming of publics.

Third, this project contributes to the discipline’s continuing interest in how technologies foster composing practices, and my emphasis on “portable technologies” specifically aims to highlight how portability supports a specific kind of composition that is considered “amateur,” is frequently oppositional, and is grounded in the everyday experiences of composers. Further, this investigation of portable technologies aims to further bridge the linkages between such technologies, composing and the spaces in which they converge.

**Defining the Everyday and Everyday Composing**

Portable technology, I argue, sponsors everyday composing, and everyday composing, in turn, participates in the creation of alternative publics. Key to my arguments here are the concepts of the “everyday” and “everyday composing.” I see the everyday and everyday composition as characterized by four traits: 1) The Everyday Occurs Behind-the-Scenes; 2) The Everyday Draws on Local Resources; 3) The Everyday Underscores the Power of “Unofficial” and Mundane; 4) The Everyday Possesses Potential for Change. Using these characteristics as a basis for my analysis, I hope to demonstrate not only the value of everyday composing to composition pedagogy, but also to suggest its potential in forming communities and promoting political change through its critical stance towards established social and political structures.

**The Everyday Occurs Behind-the-Scenes**

First, this project seeks to uncover some of the hidden practices of everyday composition that our own field’s narratives have missed. Everyday events and composing practices, to be defined as “everyday,” occur “behind the scenes.” In particular, this characteristic of the everyday draws from the French *quotiden*: because everyday actions have become seemingly
ordinary through ubiquitous and repetitive usage, the everyday blends into the background of social activities. Michel de Certeau, in *The Practice of Everyday Life*, articulates the “everyday” as “an ensemble of procedures” (43) or “a multitude of tactics” (xiv) that he considers as “clandestine,” (xiv) since such practices exist “below the thresholds at which visibility begins” (93). For example, in the second volume of *The Practice of Everyday Life*, co-author Luce Giard describes the everyday practice of cooking, pointing to how such culinary work seems so ordinary as to be invisible. Yet, while “alleged to be devoid of mystery and grandeur,” cooking requires a multitude of everyday tactics—“a complex montage of things to be done according to a pre-determined chronological sequence: planning, organizing, and shopping; preparing and serving; clearing, putting away, and tidying up” (158). Similarly, everyday composing represents practices that are equally quotidian and behind the scenes and involve everyday composing events, everyday genres, and employ available everyday tools. The fact that everyday composing may be “hidden” does not diminish the fact that such practices can be both complex and creative.

Further, in their attempts to define the everyday, many theorists articulate it as positioned within and influenced by larger social, cultural, and historical structures. In *Critique of Everyday Life*, Henri Lefebvre writes, “I see the humble events of everyday life as having two sides: a little, individual, chance event—and at the same time an infinitely complex social event…The social phenomenon may be defined as the unity of these two sides” (57). Similarly, in *Ordinary Lives: Studies in the Everyday*, Ben Highmore concurs, seeing the everyday as “the accumulation of ‘small things’ that constitute a more expansive but hard to register ‘big thing’” (1). For example, to return to the everyday practice of cooking, while it represents a behind-the-scenes quotidian practice, Giard points to the larger conditions that have historically placed women in the position of carrying out this household task. On the other hand, Giard argues that “a change of material conditions or of political organization” (151) might be enough to change how we conceive of or practice such a quotidian activity. The everyday tactical activity of cooking, in this way, is connected to larger cultural and social structures that play a role in how the everyday practices are performed and how they are valued. As Giard puts it, everyday practices like cooking are “bricolages subject to the weight of economic constraints” (156). And so, while the practices of the “everyday” are seen as embedded within these overarching structures of power, such practices—including everyday composing—are performed in such a way that they remain concealed, dismissed as “popular” or less relevant to larger historical and cultural concerns. For
these everyday theorists, seeking out the everyday occurring behind the scenes is central to their work, something Certeau illustrates. Certainly, the overarching disciplinary narratives in the field of composition have similarly neglected some of the hidden composing practices of everyday people.

However, Certeau’s larger project—what he calls a “science of singularity”— aims to rescue the everyday from forming “merely the obscure background of social activity” (xi). Seeing the everyday as equally valuable in comprehending social activity, he questions, “how we should consider other, equally infinitesimal, procedures, which have not been ‘privileged’ by history but are nevertheless active in innumerable ways” (49). By uncovering and describing the everyday, Certeau challenges these grand apparatuses of power that compose such privileged narratives of history. Further, he also seeks to bring to light the practitioners of the everyday—“users whose status as the dominated element in society (a status that does not mean that they are either passive or docile) is concealed by the euphemistic term ‘consumers’”(xi-xii). Certeau argues for the importance in uncovering and analyzing “the microbe-like operations proliferating within technocratic structures and deflecting their functioning by means of a multitude of “tactics” articulated in the details of everyday life” (xiv). Thus, for Certeau, society is simultaneously “composed of certain foregrounded practices organizing its normative institutions and of innumerable other practices that remain ‘minor,’ always there but not organizing discourse”(48).

Further, such practices frequently represent minute challenges to such technocratic structures, in part because they are considered “behind the scenes” and, thus, less relevant. For example, Certeau points to the practice of la perruque or “the wig.” Here, the worker performs his or her work disguised as work for the employer. As he describes, la perruque “may be as simple a matter as a secretary’s writing a love letter on ‘company time’ or as complex as a cabinetmaker’s ‘borrowing’ a lathe to make a piece of furniture for his living room” (25). Yet, although simple, la perruque represents a minute challenge to the “order of things,” since the worker that indulges in such behind-the-scenes practices “diverts time from the factory for work that is free, creative, and precisely not directed toward profit” (25).

In fact, this behind the scenes quality might be its greatest asset to promote change. Certeau directs his challenge toward the work of Foucault, particularly his historiography that describes the panoptic microphysics of power in modern institutions. Certeau sees in Foucault’s
project a paradox: that in aiming to describe panoptical procedures, Foucault creates a theoretical narrative that “obeys rules analogous to those panoptic procedures” (191). Yet, below the “‘monotheistic’ privilege that panoptic apparatuses have won for themselves,” in Foucault’s scheme, Certeau insists that “a ‘polytheism’ of scattered practices survives, dominated but not erased” (48). Certeau suggests that “we do not yet know what to make of other, equally infinitesimal procedures that have remained unprivileged by history yet which continue to flourish in the interstices of the institutional technologies” (189). The everyday, then, remains active in the shadows of such institutions, appearing in the hidden spaces that the narratives of institutions miss.

And so, acknowledging that the everyday is concealed by larger social structures offers a parallel to the neglect of everyday composing in composition’s constructed historical narratives of writing instruction. However, by seeking out the hidden everyday composing practices, we can both recover these practices while also, as Yancey suggests in her address, exploring these practices to support new innovations in writing curriculum. Lefebvre hopes that his “true critique” of everyday life “will imply a rehabilitation of everyday life (127). This represents an opportunity to write a more complete history—for Lefebvre, any examination of history that ignores the everyday, is deficient. He writes, “If he [sic] fails to examine history in the light of everyday life, the historian is failing naively and of necessity into a trap. . . . While taking care not to deny the importance of the leading players, more profound historical study takes the whole into account” (Critique, 136). And so, in light of the many recent attempts to revisit canonical histories of composition (Donahue and Moon; Gold; Hawk; Palmeri;), expanding our established histories to include the everyday composition practices of everyday people, we may achieve a more layered and nuanced account.

The Everyday Composing Draws upon Local Resources

Second, since they are out of sight from institutions and dispossessed of institutional resources, the everyday and everyday composing particularly draw upon local or regional resources on hand to generate rhetorical performances. In terms of everyday composing, the everyday ability to draw creatively on the resources on hand point to the power of the local; it points to how everyday composing represents an assemblage of available means in the service of creating texts in response to local conditions. The everyday composers I investigate in this study all draw from local resources in different ways; by exploring how these everyday composers
draw upon local resources, we can better prepare students to compose in ways that are better attuned to the variety of rhetorical situations in which different composing practices take place.

The tactics that comprise the everyday, for Certeau, are “creative” in the sense that such everyday acts are frequently characterized by a kind of improvisational bricolage, what he calls “the artisan-like inventiveness” (xviii), “making do”(xv) or “poaching” (xii). However, in addition, these inventive performances that could be considered “everyday” particularly draw upon resources that are at hand—resources in a composer’s local vicinity. Scholars in literacy studies particularly envision everyday literacy practices as a “resource” as well as a resource that is drawn from what is locally available. Deborah Brandt specifically articulates literacy as a resource as a way to emphasize its productive ability through which “legacies of human experience move from past to future and by which, for many, identities are made and sustained” (6). In addition, she also emphasizes that seeing literacy as a “resource” helps us better understand why “organized economic and political interests works so persistently to conscript and ration” these powers of literacy for their own purposes (5). Further, David Barton and Mary Hamilton, in their exploration of everyday literacies that they call “local literacies,” emphasize that these resources take on many forms—they can be “technical skills and equipment”; “sites and supports for learning”; “institutionally based or informal”; “collective or shared resources for literacy in households, neighbourhoods [sic], and publically available in the community more generally” (17). In much the same way, seeing the everyday as drawing on local resources highlights that these very resources are inevitably connected to larger economic and cultural systems. As we have seen with the first characteristic, the everyday is inevitably connected to such systems, but unseen and alienated from them.

In other words, the everyday draws upon local resources to “interface” critically with these systems. Jenny Rice, in defining what she deems “regional rhetorics,” proposes that a “region” serves as a rhetorical interface between global and local spheres. As a rhetorical interface, the everyday draws upon local, regional resources, “allowing participants to engage with the large flows that cut through their lives in material ways: economic, technologic, migratory, and consumer flows” (205). And so, the everyday employs local resources at hand, and the employment of these resources seemingly connects composers to larger communities, to larger infrastructures, serving as an interface between them. For example, Frank Farmer describes what he calls the “citizen bricoleur,” a figure that he envisions like as a “citizen-
handyman and handywoman” that is particularly dedicated to “understanding how publics are made, unmade, remade, and made better, often from little more than the discarded scraps of earlier attempts” (36). He points to the composers of anarchist zines, noting that an important quality for these composers is their commitment to an ethics of “do it yourself” and that this ethics represents a challenge to larger economic and consumer flows. Farmer writes that in anarchist circles, the point is to “break free of the almost ceremonial dependencies so integral to the ideology of consumer capitalism” (48). By drawing on local resources, these everyday composers interface with larger structures and, much like the la perruque, present a minute challenge to the established order of things.

Further, drawing on local resources plays a role in establishing and fostering community. Anne Ruggles Gere, for example, in her examination of the extracurriculum, points to how local recourses and circumstances tends to foster the “strengthening of ties with the community”—thus suggesting the connection between the employment of local resources to compose everyday texts and the potential of such texts to serve as interfaces to larger publics or institutions (47). Diana George, looking at the literacy practices of marginalized groups, highlights the key role that local resources play in fostering the creation of small newspapers and newsletters of several different groups, all of which succeed in connecting people and ideas and creating impact in local peoples’ lives. In this way, the everyday and everyday composing employ whatever local resources are available, frequently employing these resources in ways that can highlight existing relationships or potentially participate in the formation of new, and often “unofficial,” communities. Finally, the everyday and everyday composing particularly highlight composition’s ability to garner local material resources to produce impact. David Coogan, for example, argues for a “materialist rhetoric”—one that not only takes into account principles of good argument, but also is conscious of and takes advantage of “historical and material conditions that have made some arguments more viable than others” (668). It is these arguments, steeped in the historical and material conditions of the everyday, that have a much greater chance of affecting communities, circulating effectively, and potentially promoting change.

In sum, everyday composing draws upon local resources, and these local resources serve as a means to interface with and potentially challenge what Certeau calls “normative institutions.” Farmer argues that by promoting the concept of the citizen-bricoleur, a figure that composes by constructing “new objects out of worn ones, who imagines new uses for what has
been cast aside,” (31) we can promote stances that “imagine an alternative way of being in the world” (49). The three communities of everyday composers I analyze in this study all aim, to greater or lesser degree, to imagine such alternatives. By promoting engagement with alternatives, everyday composing represents a means to attempt new possibilities at world making, directly as a result of engaging with everyday approaches to meaning making.

The Everyday Composing Highlights the Power of the Mundane

Further, this study demonstrates how mundane, everyday texts are crucial rhetorical means to promote change. The everyday composers I investigate in this study draw from the “mundane” everyday as a way to foster new perspectives and create new communities. Everyday composing proposes that mundane, everyday compositions play an important role in promoting these alternative ways of being in the world. In his short entry “The Everyday and Everydayness,” Henri Lefebvre describes the “everyday” as defined by two senses of time. As Stuart Elden writes in his introduction to Lefebvre’s *Rhythmanalysis*, this double sense of the everyday entails both “le quotidien” referring to the “mundane” or the ordinary but also the “repetitive”: “what happens every day” (ix). However, the mundane can be an important element of powerful rhetorical performances; further, the mundane, through its connection to the everyday, can foster new perspectives on the material realities of everyday life.

Nathaniel Rivers and Ryan Weber suggest that in order to better prepare students for engaging in public rhetoric, we must help students take into account both the “monumental” and “mundane” rhetorical actions, highlighting that the mundane quality of everyday composing influences more visible, public performances. Rivers and Weber point to the Montgomery Bus Boycott as an example of what they see as an ecology of mundane and monumental texts. They write that such an ecology would include familiar, monumental texts such as speeches and letters, but would also include the mundane: “newsletters, internal memos, proposals, strategy documents, images of protest and the spaces, such as buses and diners” (196). As a whole, this approach demonstrates the incredibly complex rhetorical movement that was the Montgomery bus boycott. It also demonstrates that the rhetorical actions that formed the ecology of the boycott did not emerge “ex nihilo,” but, instead, “within a vibrant interpersonal and intertextual network of public-generating rhetoric” (198). And so, pointing to the everyday can both provide a way to provide new perspectives on community activities, but also provide a fuller and more complex comprehension of communities themselves.
Further, there has also been an emphasis on the mundane materials that often comprise everyday composing, particularly emphasizing how these materials are appropriated to assemble meaning. For example, Todd S. Gernes, in his investigation of how ordinary people assembled nineteenth-century commonplace books, scrapbooks, and friendship albums, highlights how Americans used the household materials at hand to “process information about the world and their own historical being,” and such books “transformed the everyday prose of the object world into poetry, infusing domestic artifacts with historicity, familiarity, and selfhood” (109). Jamie White-Farnham, describing what she calls “rhetorical heirlooms,” focuses on the everyday genres of the household kitchen, including grocery lists and recipes; these mundane genres particularly demonstrate their connection to “social and material effects” that directly create the realities of the people who use them (213). Similarly, the communities that I investigate all take advantage of a mundane genre of the period—such as the newspaper—and, through their focus on everyday events and everyday issues, the mundane represents a means by which to articulate and circulate a silenced or unheard point of view. By focusing on the power of the mundane in the everyday, this project seeks to better understand the larger ecology in which everyday writing is a part.

**The Everyday Composing as Political Potential**

Finally, this project looks to the everyday compositions of different communities at different historical moments to demonstrate how everyday composition has the potential to foster political change. By virtue of the fact that the everyday takes advantage of local resources and mundane texts, the everyday and everyday composing have political potential to evoke change by introducing alternative visions of the world. In his work, Highmore aims to “mobilize aesthetics for the task of attending to ordinary life”—what he calls an “aesthetic of the everyday.” Aesthetics, Highmore hopes, once it has cut its ties with the automatic privileging of ‘beauty’, might be able to find new forms of beauty in what had previous been passed off as downy and dull, ugly and uninteresting, routine and irregular. It might involve learning to appreciate new forms of beauty that could be more sustainable, more precarious and more world-enlarging (xiii)

By uncovering or rehabilitating a new aesthetic paradigm of the “everyday,” Highmore hopes to develop alternative networks of relations that help us rethink new conceptions of what could
potentially be considered “beautiful.” In much the same way, the “everyday” offers the potential to help us rethink our understanding of what constitutes writing both inside the academy and beyond. By way of example, he points to the doctoral thesis of French philosopher and historian Jacques Ranciere, who follows the lives of worker-poets and worker-philosophers of the 1830s and 1840s. Ranciere describes how these poet laborers challenged “orthodox distribution of time” by “stealing back the hours of night for another form of existence.” These workers disrupted the official distribution of time by “behaving improperly, by disrespecting propriety” through a variety of poetic performances (47). Through these tactics, they attempted to “intervene in the distribution of allotted time” organized by the factories that employed them (47). By uncovering how these laborers employed time in an alternative or oppositional way, Ranciere highlights the political potential of these everyday “tactics” to make an argument about new ways of critically engaging in the world.

This political challenge has remained a thread in composition studies, particularly through attempts to incorporate “radical” pedagogical approaches and “liberatory” learning in the classroom. As Christian Weisser explains, for these scholars, the traditional classroom represents a site “inherently implicated with the unequal power arrangements that permeate society at large” (27). As such, the classroom represents a site in which academic discourse has prevailed, and those who are outside that dominant discourse community are often silenced or excluded. As a way to challenge such hegemonic approaches scholars considered critical, collaborative approaches to learning that are more reflective of the ideal of a participatory democracy. Further, such approaches to the classroom particularly sought to draw upon the everyday, “vernacular languages one belongs to” as a way to formulate consensus, be it through conflict or agreement.

More recently, such an approach to liberatory practices in the classroom has been challenged, and this position argued that empowering people requires movement outside of the classroom. Ellen Cushman, for example, seeks to promote civic participation by creating “networks of reciprocity” with people in local communities as a means to “created solidarity with them” (235). As she argues, “when we fail to consider the perspective of people outside of the academy, we overlook valuable contributions to our theory building…that is, we become guilty of applying our theories from the sociological ‘top-down,’ instead of informing our theories from the ‘bottom-up’” (250). The everyday, and the everyday composing practices of
the communities I look at here, represent the very kind of “bottom-up” community composing that Cushman is pointing to here. By virtue of the challenge the everyday presents to dominant social and economic structures, the everyday represents a means by which political change can be implemented. Further, the example of these everyday composers further highlights the connections between such rhetorical performances and the public sphere. Similarly, Frank Farmer sees citizen bricoleurs, the “improbable handymen and handywomen of alternative world making,” as performing democracy at the “street level”, performing democracy “at the unmapped sites of its most quotidian expression” (68). These everyday citizens, by building alternative worlds through everyday composing, participate in the making of new publics or, more specifically, the alternative and oppositional worlds of counterpublics.

In sum, everyday composition is comprised of four important characteristics. First, everyday composition occurs behind the scenes, and one purpose for this project is to uncover some of the hidden practices of everyday composition that our own field’s narratives have missed. Second, everyday composition everyday composing particularly draw upon local or regional resources on hand to generate rhetorical performances, and this project looks to how everyday composers creatively draw upon these resources for their own purposes. Third, everyday composition highlights the power of the mundane, which demonstrates composition takes place in a larger ecology of a variety of texts, places, and events, both monumental and mundane. Fourth, everyday composition, as a result of the preceding three characteristics, has the potential for fostering political change through the participatory and democratic composition practices of everyday composers. In particular, this kind of participatory, democratic, and often oppositional approach to composing that comprises the everyday, I will argue, has the potential to form counterpublics, alternative publics that draw from, engage with, and critique established publics and their established ways of looking at the world.

**Portable Composing Technologies**

Seeing the potential of everyday composition to provoke change, this dissertation asks: what are the connections between everyday composing and technology? Considering the deicity of technology, how might new envisionments of technology play a role in sponsoring this everyday composing? Portable technologies and envisionments of their use might serve as a potentially powerful sponsor of everyday writing, which, in turn, could play a formative role in the development of these everyday counterpublics. As rhetoric and composition scholars have
noted, technology is inextricable from the process of composing. However, although this relationship has been made explicit, clarifying the relationship between portable composing technology and everyday writing warrants further exploration because it is suggestive of how providing such accessible technologies can support kinds of composing that has great potential for engaging composers with communities and, potentially, provoking change.

Composing and technology are certainly inextricable. Walter Ong famously stated that writing is a technology, pointing to how print and computers continue writing’s ability to transform and heighten human consciousness. Christine Haas, in *Writing Technology: Studies on the Materiality of Literacy*, emphasizes what she sees as a “symbiotic relationship between writing and technology”(x). James Porter agrees that technology matters to writing, but underscores that this relationship is based on the social and ideological context in which that technology is embedded. In “The Effect of Technology on the Composing Process,” Elizabeth Larson agrees that, while “equipment” influences writing, “our social needs and uses of writing affected equipment, so that the technology itself responded to human intervention and direction”(44). The connections between technology, composing, and our social needs are suggestive of the potential relationship between portable technology and everyday composing since portable technology might be best suited to respond to the exigencies of the everyday.

Further, it is clear that the history of composing practices runs parallel to a history of writing technologies. Richard Rawnsley perhaps states it most plainly when he claims that “the history of writing machines is the history of technology” (30). Larson reminds us that humans “have not always composed in the same way; over time they have used multiple processes; in fact, the primary change in process—from discretely sequential to recursive—is associated with major nineteenth and twentieth century innovations in physical equipment” (43). Larson makes the key point that

our own very different view of writing as a ‘continuing process of revision’ depends radically on the convenient writing implements and relatively cheap paper first developed during the nineteenth century. With pens that do not require constant sharpening, ink that requires little or no blotting, and cheap yet serviceable paper, it becomes possible to write in the free, exploratory manner advocated by Peter Elbow, for example (170)
Certainly, then, the kinds of technologies employed play a key role in encouraging specific approaches to composing. In this way, technology serves as a “sponsor” for specific forms of literacy, motivating and delimiting different approaches composing. Similarly, portable technologies offer the possibility of sponsoring the kinds of mundane behind the scenes composing of the everyday. Portable technologies might provoke composition practices to echo the improvisational, local, and bricolage-based approach of the everyday.

Deborah Brandt, in “Sponsors of Literacy,” defines “sponsors” as “any agents, local or distant, concrete or abstract, who enable, support, teach, model, as well as recruit, regulated, suppress, or withhold literacy—and gain advantage by it in some way” (16). In her consideration of “who or what underwrites occasions of literacy learning and use,” Brandt emphasizes the economic forces in shaping these sponsors of literacy, turning her focus “to these larger contexts of profit making and competition” rather than “individual literacy development” (16). Not surprisingly, technology plays an important role in sponsorship; Brandt opens her essay considering the role of technology—in this case, the effects of the introduction of the steam press—in this larger institutional and economic view of literacy. In the three historical moments I look at here, smaller, more portable technology, particularly due to a conflux of economic and commercial factors, became available to the public. Certainly, access to technology previously available only to professionals played a key role in sponsoring new forms of literacy to a larger part of the population. In addition, it appears that “portability” is an important factor in this sponsorship relationship, and I suggest that portable writing tools specifically sponsor everyday composing.

Further, by examining how particular groups employed portable technologies in the past, we can better see the extended relationship composers have had with portable technologies. Through my exploration of histories of portable technologies, I aim to highlight the fact that to be “mobile” is not merely a contemporary phenomenon. As portable digital technologies become more prominent and accessible for contemporary college students, rhetoric and composition has begun to consider the possibilities of such technologies as powerful sponsors of literacy that could be harnessed in the writing classroom. In her introduction to the collection Going Wireless: A Critical Exploration of Wireless and Mobile Technologies for Composition Teachers and Researchers, Amy Kimme Hea argues for the necessity of teachers and researchers in rhetoric and composition to become “better informed about the far-reaching discourses and
practices” of wireless and portable technologies (3). In particular, Hea emphasizes that such awareness will assist us in assuming institutional agency in formulating how wireless and mobile technologies might fit within a writing curriculum. Drawing upon Cynthia Selfe’s call to “think carefully and ethically about the integration of technology” (199), Hea argues that simplistic narratives of the benefits of mobile technologies frequently leave “little room to develop critical wireless and mobile technologies” (200). Hea makes clear that mobile technologies are part of a larger ecology in which greater mobility does not necessarily always mean greater social and political agency. Ryan Moeller, in his article for the Fall 2004 issue of Kairos, “Wi-Fi Rhetoric: Driving Mobile Technologies,” offers a similar critique of the technological narratives offered for mobile technologies, arguing that the “wi-fi industry promises mobility, security, and entertainment not by emphasizing the open-spectrum technologies upon which they are based but through strategies that anticipate and recycle generic consumer values.” In Moeller’s view, contemporary mobile technologies, then, would tend to restrict the development of everyday composers that could potentially (and dialogically) challenge such narratives and could attend primarily to their local needs. However, even if we agree with Moeller that the claims about mobile technology by commercial interests are exaggerated, an exploration of how different, non-portable portable technologies were employed in the past might help us see if this has always been the case or if digital technologies have altered the relationship between portable technologies and everyday composing.

In addition, this emphasis on the connections between portable composing technologies and everyday composing highlights the importance of movement and the body in composing. In the digital era, the claims made about a completely untethered digital mobility by commercial interests are certainly not as accurate as they seem. In Wireless: Radical Empiricism in Network Cultures, Adrian MacKenzie complicates the notion of mobility, noting that this mobility, often tied to wireless technologies but applicable to earlier portable technologies, is “indexed to stable locations.” In “Learning Unplugged,” Teddi Fishman and Kathleen Blake Yancey similarly understand that to be wireless is not to be “untethered” from physical locations; rather, it is always “embedded in a physical context and even more so when the physical contexts are multiplied.” Beyond such physical proximities, they argue, other kinds of “proximities” such as “proximities of discourse, proximities of perspective, proximities of knowledge” are required, operating as kinds of “power sources” (39). Mobility in the digital era represents something
closer to a cyborg relationship—one in which the body and a vast system of digital supports work in concert, suggesting a fine balance between a moving body and fixed infrastructure.

Indeed, the connection between movement and fixity has had lingering political implications in the composition classroom. Anne Ruggles Gere signals the importance of examining mobility in exploring the extracurricular—specifically, she evokes an image of a nineteenth-century classroom with students seated in “desks bolted to the floor” and contrasts it to contemporary students often situated in “moveable desks” (44). The fixing of composing bodies, then, is seemingly tied to a rigid pedagogy that is divorced from what Burke calls the “Scramble” and the “flurries and flare-ups of the Human Barnyard” (547). Instead, moveable desks, for Gere, might be iconic of a pedagogy that potentially moves bodies, that encourages participation in the “scramble” of the public sphere through composing. In this way, composing technologies that move are suggestive of a pedagogy that is more mobile: both on the move as well as able to adjust to the exigencies of rhetorical situations of the “real world.” The portable technologies that I explore in this study aims to push us to think further than moveable desks, pushing composition out the door. Emblematic of such an approach, Geoffrey Sirc aims to push out at the walls of what he sees as an architecturally and intellectually stagnant and immobile composition classroom, offering to re-envision composition as a happening and envisioning writing as an on-the-move derive. Such approaches, as Gere highlights, drawing from Heath, Hull, Bizzell and Hubbard, reminds us particularly of “the situatedness of composition practices” (38) and emphasizes the relationship between everyday community writing and the places in which such writing occurs. Portable technologies then, serve as a potentially powerful sponsor of everyday writing, which, in turn, play a formative role in the development of everyday counterpublics. This investigation into the nineteenth-century small printing press, the portable television production equipment, and the portable GSP or iPhone technology, aims to answer the question about the relationship between such technology and the support it might provide towards everyday composing practices.

**Counterpublics, Portable Technology, and Everyday Composing**

Everyday composition, due to its positioning behind-the-scenes, and due to the fact that it draws upon local resources and harnesses the mundane, has the potential to promote political change by recomposing alternative publics that represent new ways of looking at and engaging with the world. Ultimately, through the creation and circulation of everyday composing, the
writing communities I investigate form what Michael Warner calls “counterpublics.” I will argue that there is a close connection between the use of portable technologies that fosters such everyday composition and the creation of critically engaged, active counterpublics that seek to promote change through composing.

In this study, the communities I analyze all employ portable technology as a means to circulate texts and, in doing so, create forums for dialogue and exchange that might be the basis of public formation. Jürgen Habermas’s *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society* represents the a foundational work on the subject of “publics.” In this work, Habermas seeks to foster a structural transformation of the public sphere itself by developing “a concept of public opinion that is historically meaningful... and that is theoretically clear and empirically identifiable” (244). Targeting his critique specifically at what he calls the “bourgeois public sphere,” he aims to illustrate both its “internal tensions” as well as its “emancipatory potential” through an exploration of the conditions that led to the genesis of what we now comprehend as a “public” (Calhoun 2). Habermas sees the shift to an awareness of “publicness” in the eighteenth century occurring because of several causes, primarily the rapid increase in the production and circulation of newspapers and novels via the printing press, which evolved alongside the development of early capitalist commerce, and the availability of spaces for public deliberation such as academies, salons and coffeehouses. Nancy Fraser describes Habermas’s public sphere as an arena of “discursive relations” that is mediated through “talk” (57); for Habermas, printed and circulated texts and venues for deliberation motivated ongoing discussion on public matters among “private” people and readied them “to compel public authority to legitimate itself before public opinion” (25-26). This sphere of private people, according to Habermas, eventually achieves an awareness of itself as an opponent to public authority and ultimately envisions itself as an emergent public sphere of civil society (23).

However, many scholars, including Habermas himself, have contested, revised, and extended the original concept of the “public sphere.” Oskar Negt and Alexander Kluge’s critique points out that while Habermas claims that the bourgeois public sphere was founded on principles of inclusiveness and consensus, the bracketing of social status and special interest as a grounds for rational dialogue ultimately undermine such democratic principles. In addition, they argue that the bourgeois public sphere is exclusive since it was constructed by and serves the purposes of those in control of material goods and production rather than everyday people.
Instead, they propose a counter-term, a “proletarian public sphere” that according to Miriam Hansen, “provided a rallying point for a whole spectrum of groups and movements...because [they] allowed the groups to think of themselves as oppositional and public” (xvi). Further, critics argue, there is not simply one alternative public to the bourgeois public sphere but, rather, a multitude of publics. Fraser, in “Rethinking the Public Sphere,” examines the historiographical research into what she calls “subaltern counterpublics,” demonstrating that Habermas’s “bourgeois public was never the public” and that “there were always a plurality of competing publics” contesting “the exclusionary norms of the bourgeois public, elaborating alternative styles of political behavior and alternate norms of public speech” (61). Michael Warner, in *Publics and Counterpublics*, agrees that “some publics are defined by their tension with a larger public” (56); however, he wishes to better understand what makes a public oppositional in the sense Fraser describes it. Seeing “counterpublics” as not merely limited to a “subaltern,” Warner envisions counterpublics as “[maintaining] at some level, conscious or not, an awareness of its subordinate status” (119). Although, like any public, “counterpublics” represent a space for the circulation of discourse and a scene for developing “oppositional interpretations of its members’ identities, interests, and needs” (119), they are primarily structured “by alternative dispositions or protocols, making different assumptions about what can be said or what goes without saying” (56). He continues that, set against a background of a Habermasian public sphere, these counterpublics enable “a horizon of opinion and exchange” that “remain distinct from authority and can have a critical relation to power” (56).

More importantly, for Warner, publics and counterpublics are specifically “created by the reflexive circulation of discourse” (90). That is, this circulation of discourse is based upon “an interaction” of “talking back” that produces a self-conscious awareness of the “intertextual environment of citation and implication” in which printed texts are embedded (97). As Warner highlights, a counterpublic’s reflexive awareness of how its discourse can circulate is specifically manifested through “temporally structured” genres such as “regular and dated papers, magazines, almanacs, annuals, and essay serials” that participate in the process of developing reflexivity about their circulation, especially “through reviews, reprints, citations, controversies” (95). In the communities I investigate here, this circulation of “exchanges” in a variety of forms, fostered by portable technology, is continuous, suggesting that portable technology might promote the
kind of self-referential, intertextual awareness that helps the communities I will look at conceive of themselves as a counterpublic.

In sum, everyday composing, particularly sponsored through portable composing technology, is an important factor in the creation of publics as well as counterpublics. The communities that I look at here are, at root, mediated, and the available technologies these composers take up play a supportive role in creating these counterpublics. Access to new technologies, particularly ones that were smaller, more portable, and more affordable, presented these composers the opportunity to more consciously shape their own counterpublics by developing alternative or re-appropriated genres to suit the needs of their own hidden and oppositional publics. Such an approach suggests the possibility of everyday writing as a means to achieve something closer to the liberatory goals many composition scholars have promoted; further, an emphasis on the power of everyday writing may assist us in bridging the gap between the “ivory tower” and the community in which it sits.

**Methodology**

In order to answer the questions I pose in this dissertation, I will look at three different historical timeframes, focusing on a different portable composing technology in each period and analyzing the products of this technology. In each period, I will zoom in on a community that forms around each portable technology, analyzing the relationship between portable technology, the compositions sponsored by this technology, and the counterpublics that are created as a result of this relationship.

The first time frame spans the final decades of the nineteenth century. I have selected this period for two reasons. First, drawing from the parallels that Yancey draws between the late nineteenth century and the present, I want to analyze nineteenth century everyday texts as way to expand on Yancey’s premise that this period may be informative of our current understanding of everyday composing. Second, the late nineteenth century represents a boom in innovations of printing technology, and these changes present an opportunity to analyze how new composers took advantage of this new print technology, enacting new composing strategies and creating new texts that earlier, more established print technologies had never attempted.

My second time frame spans from the late nineteen-fifties to the late nineteen-seventies. I have selected this time frame because it represents a period of tremendous reform in education in the United States, reform that particularly was focused on how best to prepare students for
participation in a democratic society as well as what was technology’s role in education. Such upheaval suggests parallels to contemporary composition pedagogy that warrants exploration in two ways. First, considering the current, and increasingly loud, calls from various stakeholders in education to increase the emphasis on multimodal and digital technology in the classroom, this period might be instructive by offering examples of best practices for using technology in the classroom. Second, with the field’s continuing interest in multimodal composition, in part motivated by such digital technologies, this period is important in developing histories of multimodal composition as a way to better understand how multimodal composing practices might change over time and change in concert with available technologies.

My final time frame focuses on the present. I have selected this period because current composition pedagogy and scholarship increasingly focuses on digital composing tools in the classroom and I wish to explore and critique these approaches to digital composing. First, this time frame serves as a counterpoint to the other historical periods, highlighting the ways that it might represent a seismic shift in the way everyday composers compose. Second, I want to challenge current discourses of “mobility” and push back against the potential of such tools to re-inscribe the traditional classroom—fixing students by attaching them again to immobile desks bolted to the floor.

In my analysis, I will focus on three different forms of portable technology. In each time frame I will investigate, I have selected a composing technology that is what is frequently called the “bleeding edge” of technology (Hayes). That is, as opposed to “cutting edge” technology, they represents technologies that are so new that they pose some degree of risk: it may be unfamiliar to users and, perhaps due to lack of testing, may be unreliable. As a result, users must develop their own best practices with such technologies, may have to improvise with them to make them work effectively, and will often rely on other users to develop strategies to compose with them. Further, such bleeding edge technology often provokes resistance from trade professionals and industry leaders; as a result, the technology is frequently marginalized, pushing it further into the domain of everyday composers.

In the nineteenth century, I focus on the small printing press. I have selected this technology because it represents a tremendous shift in print technology that had previously been the domain of professional printers and those who could provide the capital to purchase
extremely large and immobile printing presses. As a result of this innovation, everyday people are able to compose in print and are able to circulate such texts on their own.

In the late twentieth century, I focus on the portable video recorder. I focus on this technology because it is similarly representative of a major shift in media. The advent of portable video recorder represents the first time in history that everyday people were able to compose with devices that could create audio-visual texts. With the field’s current interest in multimodal texts and multimodal composing, this particular technology presents an opportunity to expand on the histories of multimodal composing. Further, by exploring how teachers of composition approached such technologies in the classroom, we may be better positioned to reflect on best practices for incorporating multimodal technologies in the classroom today.

In the twenty-first century, I focus on GPS-enabled portable digital tools. I focus on this technology for two reasons. First, while current scholarship in composition studies has focused extensively on computers and digital tools in the composition classroom, less scholarship on mobile digital tools and implementing them effectively exists. Further, while composition scholarship has focused the relationship between composing practices and the places that they occur, portable digital tools warrant further exploration into this relationship.

In each time frame, I will analyze texts created by everyday composers using these portable tools. I provide two data sets from the late nineteenth century period. The first is a body of printed amateur newspapers composed by adolescents that formed a community of amateur journalists called “A-Jayers.” The second is a guidebook, titled *A Gentleman’s Companion* and published in 1870, which documents the location of houses of prostitution in lower Manhattan.

The Kelsey Company collection, housed in the National Museum of American History at the Smithsonian Institution, represent the basis for my research during the nineteenth century, comprising the majority of A-Jayer texts that I refer to in this study. The Kelsey Company, a printing company founded in the mid-nineteenth century, designed and built some of the most successful small presses of the period, and Glover Snow, president of the company from 1925 to 1960, donated this collection that includes Kelsey business correspondence, testimonials from users of small presses, as well as many examples of A-Jayer newspapers. The second text, *The Gentleman’s Companion*, is housed at the New York Historical Society in New York. However, it is available in a scanned digital form and is available to the public online. I selected texts because they are representative of the everyday compositions of groups rarely explored in
theories of the public sphere—adolescents and white males participating in unsanctioned sexual activities. Because the portable press was more accessible to more people, these texts point to the kinds of oppositional stance that characterizes counterpublics.

My data set for the nineteen-sixties and nineteen-seventies includes two videos from two major guerrilla television collectives, Broadside TV and Top Value Television (TVTV). In my analysis of Broadside TV, look at Gate City Mills and Showdown at the Hoedown. I look at Four More Years and TVTV Goes to the Super Bowl as the basis for my analysis of TVTV’s work. Due to the diligent digital archival work of many groups dedicated to the work of such television collectives, the work of Broadside and TVTV can be found primarily online, but can also be purchased for home viewing as well. In particular, the Media Burn Archive contains over 6,000 videotapes created by video composers around the world, which can be downloaded digitally at their website or, if available, ordered in DVD format. Media Burn provided both TVTV videos that I analyze in this study. The videos of Broadside TV, on the other hand, due to the fact that their work is less available, came from different online resources. A digital version of Gate City Mills is available via the Internet Archive website focused on collecting “cultural and academic films.” A digital version of Showdown at the Hoedown comes from The Southeast Media Preservation Lab website, a group dedicated to the restoration and reformatting of historic video and film. I selected these two groups and these two videos because they both represent approaches to everyday composing that suggests their potential for curricular transformation. Both draw upon the affordances of the portable video technology in different ways; Broadside TV’s work suggests the centrality of drawing upon the local for powerful everyday composition, while TVTV’s work particularly aims to foster engaged, critical counterpublics. Here, I analyze both the content of their videos as well as their process behind creating the videos, pointing to how they are indicative of an approach to everyday composing that represents an alternative to curricular reform ongoing at the time.

My data set for the present moment includes the interfaces of the Explora device and the Drift app. Here, I analyze the interfaces of both digital tools as demonstrations of the ways in which the designers sought to invite the user’s body to move. In addition, I also draw upon Parks Canada’s user surveys gathered during the testing phase of the project in my analysis. While the Explora system was in the testing phase, I was able to use the Explora system to explore the trail I describe in my analysis. The Explora system, however, was eventually not adopted by Parks
Canada and is no longer in use. My analysis of the Drift app is based upon my own experiences using the app, navigating through the streets of Tallahassee. I also draw from my interview with the founding members of Broken City Lab, the group responsible for designing and implementing the app. Broken City Lab’s Drift app can be downloaded for free online at Apple’s App Store. I look at these particular digital tools because they represent demonstration of the fusion between digital tools and a moving human body. Considering the established connections between technology and composing, and scholarship in composition that looks at the connections between place and composing, these two digital tools both prompt a new way of conceiving how we might define a “composition.”

Chapter Summaries

This dissertation, then, aims to make a case for the relationship between portable writing technologies, everyday writing, and counterpublics, insisting that all three represent means by which we can foster more publically-engaged, self-fostered, and technologically savvy composition practices in our students. In chapter two, I focus on the final decades of the nineteenth century, providing two examples of self-sponsored writing fostered by the portable technology of the period: the small printing press. Here, I focus on two self-sponsored writing communities: first, adolescent amateur journalists that called themselves “A-Jayers” and, second, an adult hyper-masculine and hyper-sexualized community known as “Sporting Men.” I describe the textual products of these two communities that were created on small printing presses, pointing to how I see their compositions as “everyday.” Further, as a result of the use of the small press, and the everyday compositions created with this portable technology, I argue that both the “A-Jayers” and “Sporting Men” form counterpublics, and it is the everyday compositions and the composing practices of these counterpublics that stands in contradistinction from the curriculum at the time.

In chapter three, I move to the nineteen-sixties and nineteen-seventies to present examples of self-sponsored, everyday, composing that is both multimodal and mobile. Here, I focus on two communities—known as “guerrilla television collectives”—that were fostered by the newly-available portable video recording technology: Broadside TV and Top Value Television. I describe the two examples of each community’s multimodal compositions, underscoring these collectives’ ability to move into a variety of sites to compose fashions an everyday composing that privileges the formation of critically engaged, local counterpublics. As
a result, I argue that the example of the guerrilla television collectives comes closer to achieving the aims of educational reform ongoing at the time.

In chapter four, I move to years of the new millennium, arguing that such digital technology plays a role in the sponsoring what I call “everyday cyborg composing.” In this chapter, I consider two kinds of contemporary mobile digital technologies that sponsor everyday cyborg composing: first, a hand-held, GPS-based device created by Parks Canada called “Explora” and, second, an iPhone app, named “Drift.” As demonstrated through these two portable technologies, everyday cyborg composing necessitates a rethinking of the relationship between composers and portable digital tools. Further, everyday cyborg composing suggests a recalibration of the discursive space of the public sphere; whereas publics and counterpublics have been seen as emerging from the circulation of visual-verbal texts, everyday cyborg writing designates, instead, a performance space secured through the circulation of bodies and their movements. In chapter five, I conclude by focusing on the implications of this research for composition scholarship and pedagogy.
CHAPTER TWO

“CAREFULLY SCREENED FROM PUBLIC VIEW”: AMATEUR JOURNALISTS, SPORTING MEN, AND EVERYDAY WRITING

In this chapter, I explore the relationship of everyday writing, portable technologies, and counterpublics during the final decades of the nineteenth century. This historical moment is significant for writing curriculum because we see its genesis and expansion in universities in the United States; however, there is little exploration of the kinds of everyday writing that was simultaneously ongoing outside the university walls. Nonetheless, it is clear that a tremendous amount of this writing was occurring at this time. In particular, as is the case with all the historical moments I explore, the final decades of the nineteenth century also involve the sudden availability of more accessible and more portable technology: in this case, the appearance of the small printing press resulted in the sudden explosion of different forms of everyday compositions that fostered the formation of a variety of counterpublic writing communities.

This investigation into the counterpublics that formed around the portable printing presses of the nineteenth century provides a way to respond to my three research questions. First, what forms of everyday writing were being produced and circulated during key moments in composition and rhetoric’s history? The two examples of everyday writing that I explore in this chapter provide us with a fuller picture of the kinds of writing people were doing outside the academy at the time of composition and rhetoric’s beginnings. To answer this question, I will briefly describe the two very different communities who previously had not had access to the printed word: the first, adolescent amateur journalists, or “A-Jayers” for short, and adult males engaged in illicit sexual activity who called themselves “Sporting Men.” At present, very little research on these writing communities within composition studies exists.

Second, how might portable writing technologies act as an important sponsor for this everyday writing? In both cases of the writing communities I investigate here, it is clear that advances in printing press technology represent a significant sponsor for their everyday writing, specifically because these presses had become more portable and financially accessible to them. To make this argument, I describe the texts of these two communities. I look at the work of the “A-Jayers,” demonstrating that the small press was an essential common element that motivated these young men and women write and circulate their printed texts. I then look at The
Gentleman’s Companion, a sporting male guidebook that documents the location of houses of prostitution in lower Manhattan. As the example of The Gentleman’s Companion demonstrates, the printing press motivated members of the sporting male community to appropriate the very popular nineteenth-century genre of the guidebook and direct it to very different purposes.

In both cases, the everyday texts that the small printing press sponsored also played a role in public formation since, through the circulation of these printed texts, both the A-Jayers and Sporting Men became more aware of who were within their ranks. Analyzing these two communities, then, represents a way to respond to my third research question: what do the kinds of publics formed by everyday writers at these different historical periods look like? The everyday compositions of the portable printing press played a key formative role in the creation of the amateur journalism community that spread across the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom; they also played a problematic formative role in the development the hyper-masculinized and hyper-sexualized counterpublic of “sporting male” culture. I argue that such everyday writing, sponsored by this newly accessible technology, plays a significant role in the formation of writing counterpublics. Because this technology was suddenly more accessible to more people, I argue that it represents a powerful source of counterpublics populated by figures not considered in theories of the public sphere—adolescents and white males participating in unsanctioned sexual activities.

To begin, I will briefly describe the curricular context of writing pedagogy during the final decades of the nineteenth century, putting forth the notion that the nineteenth century classroom was a bifurcated space that, in contrast to deeply-embedded notions of the current-traditional classroom, was simultaneously drawn to the writing ongoing outside its walls while also aiming to shield students from what they saw as the dangers of popular culture. I will then describe the technology of the portable printing press, arguing that it served to sponsor everyday writing as demonstrated through the compositions of the A-Jayers and the Sporting Men. Next, I will argue that these examples of everyday writing that has been enabled by the small printing press played a role in the transformation of these individual everyday composers into a counterpublic. In conclusion, I will claim that paying attention to writing practices outside the classroom is absolutely crucial in designing writing curriculum—both in the nineteenth century and in the present day. Ultimately, the lesson of the nineteenth century writing classroom is that
paying attention to writing practices outside the classroom is critical for designing writing curriculum—both in the nineteenth century into the present day.

The Bifurcated Nineteenth Century Writing Classroom

In its struggle to cope with the explosion of writing sponsored by this increasingly available printing technology, the late nineteenth century writing classroom, I argue, represented a bifurcated space. Although composition scholars commonly aim to distance themselves from the nineteenth century, particularly from current-traditionalist models that were the foundation of composition pedagogy at this time, seeing the composition classroom as “bifurcated” reflects our current pedagogical moment. Specifically, this bifurcation echoes the division that Yancey points to in her address: the division between the energetic composition of texts ongoing outside the classroom, and composition’s inability to fully embrace everyday composing and consider ways to blur the divisions between the “real world” and the writing classroom.

In the nineteenth century, the composition classroom was bifurcated in three specific ways: first, it was divided in terms of what constituted appropriate composition practices and genres; second, it was divided technologically due to its emphasis on oral declamations rather than printed texts; third, it was divided between academic space and public space where everyday writing was being printed and circulated. As a result of these three tensions, the nineteenth century writing classroom remained at least partially divorced from the everyday and everyday composition.

First, the nineteenth century classroom represents a bifurcated space because it was divided about what constituted appropriate composition practices and genres. As a result, the writing classroom did less to prepare students for the kinds of writing performances and genres they would write outside of academia. The writing students frequently performed in nineteenth-century writing classrooms and the genres they produced seemed to have been quite limited and divorced from the writing ongoing outside the school. As a partial result of the “mental discipline” tradition, classroom instruction frequently emphasized memorization and recitation of texts and the regular writing of “themes” and involved little, if any, dialogue or questioning between student and instructor. Further, these genres were entirely divorced from writing in the world, vacant of an audience beyond an instructor.

Charles Copeland and Henry Rideout, in their book Freshman English and Theme-Correcting in Harvard College give us a sense of how such classes operated:
He is to write twelve fortnightly themes from three to six pages in length, and on every week day a theme of not more than one page...He is to attend three lectures or recitations per week...to listen to readings and talks by either the instructor in charge of the whole course, or the Dean of the college...Every month, moreover, he must read one or two prescribed books, of which he is expected to form an intelligent opinion (3-6)

And so, in the writing classrooms, while students were pressed into writing multiple texts, even demonstrating engagement with books through written reflection and critique, the reach of students' texts was isolated from the outside world. Specifically, what is now known as “current-traditional” rhetoric ultimately gains ascendancy during this time which, James Berlin notes, focuses on “the most mechanical features of Campbell, Blair, Whately and makes them the sole concern of the writing teacher” (Writing Instruction 62). Most troublesome, such a mechanistic approach removes all ethical concerns and significantly reduces all emotional consideration in rhetoric, and this further removed students from the outside world—particularly during a period of emotionally engaged texts that were deeply embedded in the political struggles of the period.

This significantly, then, reduces the scope of the composition process; the purpose of writing is to “report, not interpret, what is inductively discovered” and the writer should aim to “find the language that corresponds to the observed phenomena” (62). The conception of audience becomes a simplification of George Campbell’s view; the audience becomes unimportant and plays no role in the shaping of meaning, since all that is required of writers is to reproduce their original experience in the minds of their audiences. Style, heavily influenced by Hugh Blair, then becomes the prime concern of composition classrooms and textbooks. As a whole, then, for current-traditional rhetoric, “superficial correctness had become the most significant measure of accomplished prose” (73). Further, whereas current-traditionalism’s emphasis on the “practical” encouraged students to write more, they were ultimately “told less and less about composing” (74). Ultimately, this method “severely restricts the student’s response to experience” since it “dictates that certain matters cannot be discussed because they are either illusory—not empirically verifiable—or they cannot be contained within acceptable structures” (75). As a result of this pedagogy, the nineteenth-century class represented a bifurcated space that found itself in tension with the public sphere beyond academia. While the
classroom aimed to give students practice writing texts that encouraged critical thinking, it also kept their work contained within the classroom.

Second, the nineteenth century classroom represents a bifurcated space between two technologies—the human voice and the printing press. The writing classroom differed greatly from the kinds of writing ongoing outside of the classroom because much of the prevailing educational thought retained its emphasis on oral declamations rather than printed texts. As a result of their struggle to cope with the explosion of writing sponsored by this increasingly available printing technology, a conservative counter-push towards the oral resulted. In fact, when Edward T. Channing, Harvard’s third Boylston Professor of Rhetoric and Oratory, publically advocated for teaching written forms over oral declamation, detractors that challenged his appointment as chair assailed him. One challenger argued that Harvard should select “an able, practical orator” and that the emphasis should be on speaking and composition where “composition” meant primarily “written translations of elegant passages of Latin and Greek” while students would receive some instruction in “their own compositions as their progress in letters may permit” (Paine 56). In fact, Channing himself was of two minds about the printed word. On one hand, he was certainly concerned about how the circulation of printed texts had the potential to create uncritical and docile citizens and, in particular, he wished that the upper echelons of the citizenry were able to maintain a critical distance from the potentially harmful effects of popular culture. On the other hand, Channing saw that America required a different system of communication from the Ancient Greeks, and that print culture was, in fact, “culturally and epistemologically superior.” He believed that whatever rhetorical system emerged in a society would be appropriate for that context, so long as it was grounded in the highest moral character. Channing, then, seems to be illustrative of the bifurcated thinking of the time. Once again, the nineteenth-century classroom represents a space ambivalent about the explosion of printed texts in America; whereas many acknowledged the power of printed texts, some were uncertain about its power, while others were clearly opposed to them, seeing them as the pernicious result of a dangerous popular culture.

Third, the composition classroom at this time is bifurcated because it was divided between the academic space of the classroom and the everyday public space where everyday compositions were increasingly being created and circulated. Fully aware and, in some ways, supportive of the writing ongoing outside its walls, they were, at the same time, deeply
concerned what they saw as the potent dangers of popular culture. Edward T. Channing represents an illustrative example of a figure that straddles this paradox of nineteenth-century education. For Channing, education, which included writing, could operate as a “fortified immunity” against the contagion of what he saw as a society that was increasingly turning engaged citizens into passive subjects. In particular, Channing was concerned about the detrimental effect new technologies were having on the public; according to Charles Paine, “While new technologies and new forms of communication had made it possible to unite the country, these new technologies and the forms of discourse they spawned also threatened America’s citizen, Channing believed, with what might be called uncritical habits of belief” (52). However, his solution still involved engagement in the public sphere despite his skepticism of the emerging print-culture of the time. Channing championed written forms of public debate because “he believed they fostered superior forms of thinking and reflection” (53). And so, the nineteenth-century class engaged in a simultaneous withdrawal from the public sphere while also being pushed, in lesser or greater degree, back to engage with it.

Further, the educational doctrine of “mental discipline,” common in higher education at that time, also played a role in dividing the space of the composition classroom. The psychological and educational concept of “mental discipline” translated into a pedagogy that aimed
to discipline and strengthen these separate faculties through drill and exercises;
and secondarily to supply the student with a store of general principles in the light of which his trained faculties would, in later professional life, make needed particular applications (2)
And so, while composition practices tended to be divorced from composing practices ongoing outside of the classroom, mental discipline encouraged and expected men’s engagement with the public sphere, even while many colleges were simultaneously withdrawing from it in practice. In addition, as Sharon Crowley emphasizes, this theory of mental discipline that served as the foundation for rhetorical pedagogy was also highly gendered, and this masculine ideal was also seen as tightly linked to the public sphere. Crowley notes that rhetorical education was viewed as “one of the really masculine studies in eighteenth- and really nineteenth-century American colleges” (Composition 51). Paine reminds us of the “manly ideal” at Harvard University “that meant above all grappling with real social problems, most often resisting the commonplace
beliefs and attitudes of American culture”— and to achieve this independence of mind and “mental toughness” were crucial qualities\(^1\) (127). Ultimately, Paine observes, “real men grappled with the public in the public sphere” and rhetorical education aimed to prepare men for this (127). And so, there was clearly an educational culture that tied masculine endeavor with public engagement, despite the fact that writing pedagogy did not always reflect that culture.

To recap, the nineteenth-century composition classroom reflects a bifurcated space in three ways. First, it was divided in terms of what constituted appropriate composition practices and genres; second, it was divided technologically due to its emphasis on oral declamations rather than printed texts; third, it was divided between academic space and public space where everyday writing was being printed and circulated. Seeing the nineteenth century classroom as bifurcated has two implications for everyday composing. First, as a bifurcated space, the composition classroom was divorced from the everyday practices of composing and was unable to investigate multiple ways to compose that would best prepare students for engagement in the public sphere. Second, as a bifurcated space, it failed to incorporate technology as an important component of composing; as a result, the teaching of composition during this time articulated writing, paradoxically enough, abstracted from how writing worked in the world at that time. Finally, seeing the composition classroom as bifurcated draws parallels to the current moment, suggesting that the divisions of the nineteenth century carry into our own. As a result, everyday writing, the technologies that sponsor them, and the publics that might form around everyday composing might be more productively embraced to blur the divisions that might hinder the teaching of writing. To provide a counterpoint to the nineteenth century classroom, I will now explore examples of composition practices that were less equivocal: everyday composition practices ongoing at the same time that were sponsored by the portable technology at the time, and composition that not only engaged with audiences in very real ways, but also participated in creating new, and frequently oppositional, publics.

\(^1\) It may be telling that one of the marginal comments on one of several graded themes presented in Copeland and Rideout’s book states that one student’s phrase, “How peaceful and contented they looked” is marked as “rather a feminine formula” and, thus, subject to revision.
The Small Printing Press as a Sponsor for Everyday Writing

Advances in printing press technology represent a significant sponsor for everyday writing in the nineteenth century, specifically because these presses had become more portable and financially accessible to a greater number of people. I will briefly describe the portable printing press and its capabilities, focusing on how this late nineteenth century writing technology was taken up by a large segment of the population that previously had not had access to the printed word. I will argue that this writing technology served as a powerful sponsor of everyday writing during this period.

In “Portals to Metropolis: 19th-century Guidebooks and the Assemblage of Urban Experience,” David Michalski writes that “[i]n the 19th century, both intellectuals and laypersons engaged in the pursuit of a kind of knowledge management, attempting to use their known technologies and conceptual apparatuses to describe and control the burgeoning information society” that was growing around them (201). In particular, the desire to print their findings was specifically spurred on by a flurry of innovations in printing presses that transformed unwieldy stationary presses into smaller, more portable, and more accessible technologies. One result of this new technology was an explosion in the printing and circulation of amateur newspapers, guidebooks, magazines, novels, flyers, and many other genres that involved the written text.

First motivated by the need to print multiple documents rapidly in the battlefield during the Civil War (Harris 34), and then driven by a vogue for cards of all sorts such as visiting cards, trade cards, and postcards, as well as ticket printing, (12), these small presses proved to be the true “workhorses of nineteenth century daily printing” (9). Even further, people from all walks of life were gaining access to the power of print. Lowe Printing Press Company from Boston, Massachusetts ran the headline “Every man his own printer” in ads for their presses, presenting their press as the do-it-yourself tool for an array of professions. This slogan epitomized the powerful draw portable printing presses had for men interested in printing and circulating their own materials, in learning a lucrative trade, and, potentially, in gaining wealth and success. An advertisement in Harper’s Week, dated 1862, by the Adams Press Company of New York, claims that the Adams Press is ideal for the use of “the Army and Navy, Merchants, Druggists, and all Business Men”, boasting that “We have supplied quite a number of regiments with portable printing offices, and they have given universal satisfaction” (NMAH). Ultimately, the
wide availability of these small printing presses encouraged “amateurs” of all ages to take up forms of writing, printing, and circulating texts that required an awareness of a potential reading public, but also offered everyday people the opportunity of potentially attaining a public voice.

The variety of different small printing presses also played an important role in its utility and its accessibility. Elizabeth Harris in *Personal Impressions: The Small Printing Press in Nineteenth-Century America*, notes that nineteenth-century small presses ranged from the extremely popular table-top “lever presses” that used a lever to press type into the paper to the miniature “rail presses” that also utilized a lever but were thin enough to be mounted on a rail (27-29). Cylinder presses involved the pressing of ink via a small cylinder that rolled across a flat bed or, in the case of the Adams Cottage Press, the flat bed was cranked under the cylinder (64-65), while rotary presses used a foot pedal to motor a rotating cylinder. Small presses also included “one-dollar” hand presses that folded like a waffle iron to make a print and were ideally suited for the printing of cards or small flyers (142). As a result of these innovations, people from all walks of life gained access to the power of print. The headline “Every man his own printer” became a commonplace in ads for these smaller presses, frequently presenting the new technology as the do-it-yourself tool for a wide array of professions and users (146). In addition, many printers saw small printing presses as an educational tool—specifically, a means to a moral education for boys and young men. An advertisement for the Daisy Printing Press reads:

> Educate your boys. Give them a printing press. The moral, mental and physical development of the boys should be the study of all who love their country and desire to perpetuate its institutions. In no way can this be more effectually aided than by the use of one of these presses (qtd in Harris 27)

An 1882 flier for the Golding company shows an image man at work at his hand press in his workshop; it also shows a young boy printing in his parlor with the same small press, while his mother knits in her chair by the fire. The text reads: “Every man his own printer. Every boy a Ben Franklin” connecting the moral and public ethos of this founding father—himself a printer—to that of the young printers who buy the Golding press (Harris 9). The possibilities that this versatile tool offered made it very appealing for a large part of the population. I will now look at two communities of writers that did take up this bleeding edge printing technology. First, I look at the community of adolescent amateur journalists or “A-Jayers.” Next, I look at the community of adult hyper-sexualized males known as “Sporting Men.”
A-Jayers

Perhaps as a result of these advertisements, young boys took up this new exciting technology enthusiastically, and the small press served as a powerful sponsor for their everyday writing. Glover Snow, the president of Kelsey Press Company in 1923, and historian of the small printing press, notes that the small press movement in the late nineteenth century was powered by these young amateur journalists who came to call themselves ‘A-Jayers;’ young people “burning with the desire to write and publish, who scrapped and squabbled in the best style of nineteenth century adult journalism” (23-24). A-Jayer Harlan H. Ballard, writing in the July 1882 issue of *St. Nicholas* reflects that “the widely scattered advertisement, 'EVERY BOY HIS OWN PRINTER,' proved irresistible” to himself and other amateur printers (*The Aonian*, n.p.). Indeed, as Glover Snow recalls, “[b]y 1873 several hundred youngsters were at it and from 1876 to 1878 the boys engaged in this fascinating hobby reached the maximum” (*Amateur Journalism* n.p.). One such magazine, *The Youth’s Companion*, was said to have a circulation of one hundred thousand in 1872 (*Nineteenth-Century American Children*). Smart and irreverent, with titles such as “The Bull-Dog,” “The Bumble Bee,” “The Young Barbarian,” “Spark Plug,” “Spasm” and “Jabberwok,” these texts varied in style and tone but, generally, included a mix of poems, fictional stories and essays, reviews of A-Jayer publications, editorial commentary, notices of activities and events concerning amateur printing associations, and, frequently, a smattering of advertisements, sketches, jokes, and insults. Ultimately, it was the wide availability of small printing presses and their appeal that fostered this community of “amateurs”; sponsored by this technology, A-Jayers put their nascent writing skills into practice in a way that required an acute awareness of a potential readership and offered the real possibility of attaining a public voice.

Although the tone of these magazines was frequently crass, there was also an articulated awareness of serving the public in some fashion, and it is this awareness of writing to an actual responsive audience that played a key role in this community formation. The masthead for one such magazine, *The Little Corporal*, states that the magazine is “FIGHTING AGAINST WRONG, and for The Good, The True and The Beautiful.” A January 1870 issue of *The Little Corporal* presents an image of a young boy in a soldier’s uniform carrying an American flag and leading a young girl through a mountain range (*Nineteenth-Century American Children*). Other magazines for the young, such as *The Youth’s Temperance Banner* overtly sought to influence public opinion on a very specific issue, such as prohibition. *The Youth’s Companion*, for
example, upon the assassination of President Lincoln, began a weekly commentary in its pages about the events that followed Lincoln’s death, following closely the search for the culprits as well as their trial and eventual execution.

**The Sporting Men**

At the same time the A-Jayers were writing and printing their texts to an adolescent audience, the adult fathers, brothers, and uncles of these adolescents were the potential readers for an amateur publication of a very different nature. Sporting male culture, according to Timothy J. Gilfoyle, was organized around various forms of gaming, such as racing, gambling, cockfighting, pugilism, and other ‘blood’ sports that both “defended and promoted male sexual aggressiveness and promiscuity.” In contrast to “respectable” notions of domestic male sexuality which the sporting male saw as “a female preserve organized to control and restrain his sexual freedom” (116), “self-indulgence, not self-sacrifice, meant freedom” for this hyper-sexualized male. Ultimately, “unregulated sex was the categorical imperative for the sporting male,” and, as a result, the brothel was his primary haunt (99).

As with the A-Jayers, the figure of the sporting man and sporting male culture was supported via the circulation of amateur newspapers. Sporting male newspapers, with titles such as *The Weekly Rake*, *Sporting Whip*, and *Libertine*, included reports on sporting events and happenings, erotic fiction and poetry, as well as satirical commentary and cartoons (99). While much of the coverage of such papers “aped the penny press in its tendency to exaggerate and sensationalize, their appeal rested upon a positive view of male heterosexual indulgence” (Gilfoyle 99). The front page of the July 9, 1842 edition of *The Weekly Rake*, for example, consists of a poem praising a woman’s ideal virtues, the first part of a serial story focusing on the romantic adventures of the lovely and innocent Judith whose “expressive, clear, and open countenance” held “something radiant and coquettish in its very innocence” and a short article “Kissing by Rule” that catalogues and describes different kinds of kisses (*Rake*).

However, a more crucial printed everyday genre amongst sporting male culture was the tour guidebook. David Michalski emphasizes that the many growing American cities like San Francisco, Chicago and New York represented “complex information environment[s]” that required the guidebook as a means to organize the information and to assist in navigating this often-tumultuous space (199). Since sporting culture was highly mobile and its usual haunts concealed from view, members of this community appropriated this popular genre to suit the
needs of their own community. One such type of publication was *The Gentleman's Guide*—published in 1870, the guide was an appropriation of the popular tourist’s handbook, instead providing information, including addresses and rankings, of the numerous prostitutes and brothels in New York City. Concurrent with the rapid expansion of urban centers in the second half of the nineteenth century, prostitution became more prominent, and the publication of guidebooks providing information on how to locate prostitutes and brothels became a lucrative business for the amateur printer. These prostitution guides became so commonplace in the second half of the nineteenth century that they were available for purchase in local bookstores and on corner newsstands (Gilfoyle 146). However, although these guidebooks were publicly available and could be read by anyone who purchased them, the texts themselves were only fully directed to—and constitutive of—the sporting male.

The small printing press, then, represented the most effective available means for such a public to create and circulate these texts. The illicit content necessitates concealment, and the palm-sized *Companion* is designed to be kept hidden or to be discretely discarded; this, again, would seem to be a print job catered to the small press. In this way, although the text’s stated aim is to provide “insight into the character and doings of people whose deeds are carefully screen from public view,” the size of the text itself demonstrates the need to keep this information concealed from the larger public’s moral critique (*Companion* 6). On the other hand, this hidden information becomes fully available to those who self-identify as members of the sporting male public.

**A-Jayers and Sporting Men as Everyday Writers**

The everyday writing of the A-Jayers and the Sporting Men was specifically fostered with the aid of the new technology of the small press. Returning to my four-part definition of everyday writing, I want to demonstrate how the writing of these two writing communities reflects such a definition. By demonstrating the ways in which these two groups composed everyday texts, I argue, we can better understand how everyday texts are created and circulated and how this everyday writing might participate in the formation of counterpublics. These four parts, once again, are:

1) The Everyday Occurs Behind-the-Scenes;
2) The Everyday Draws on Local Resources;
3) The Everyday Underscores the Power of “Unofficial” and Mundane;
4) The Everyday Possesses Potential for Change.

First, the writing of both the A-Jayers and the Sporting Men can be considered “everyday” because, first, they are “invisible” or “behind the scenes.” Specifically, their everyday writing is considered invisible because such writing is not valued or even outright challenged and undermined by mainstream culture. The views of writing teachers in the nineteenth century classroom about the threat of popular writing and the “official” standard they proposed through the writing pedagogy they propagated, in particular, suggest how devalued the work of writers engaging in publically engaged everyday writer was at that time. Simply put, A-Jayers were not considered worthy models for study and emulation; even further, sporting male texts were, for obvious reasons, never welcomed into the classroom and such illicit texts only stood as evidence of the poisoning the public sphere through the circulation of base sentiments through print. Further, because the everyday writing of A-Jayers and Sporting man were, for the most part, “invisible”—a direct reflection of how mainstream nineteenth century culture valued such writing—it was, for the most part, neither archived or conserved. In fact, the design and size of the Gentleman’s Companion particularly demonstrates how such texts were considered disposable, and the relative reproducibility of A-Jayers papers underscored that they could be disposed of because another one would undoubtedly arrive in the mail in a week or so. However, the ephemeral nature of these everyday writings, paradoxically enough, lent them a particular potency to challenge established norms of writing or acceptable behavior because they were easily produced and circulated by everyday people who could now take on the medium themselves. Further, because such texts could be easily concealed or discarded, such everyday writers may have felt more willing to take risks and push at the established limits of genres—such as the guidebook—to challenge such norms in print.

Second, the writing of the A-Jayers and the Sporting Men represents the everyday because they work draws on local resources to compose their texts. In the case of A-Jayers, the local resources were often very much whatever was at hand, and this, in particular, highlights the bricoleur element of everyday composing. For example, in The Bull-Dog, the writer frequently fills pages with a variety of often-random material that he composed—grabbing whatever local material is at hand. On one page, there is a short opinion piece entitled “A Sermon on Murderers” above another segment with the short statement, “I am getting more and more
interested in amateur work.” On the same page, the author includes short poems, promotes his newspaper, and pithy statements such as “Some people have too much thunder in their religion and not half enough lightning.” Further, as is typical of A-Jayer texts, these newspapers include a variety of drawings and homemade images. Earle Bean, editor of Boys’ Journal, for example, created his own woodcut images for every issue, incorporating these images across each issue. As we can see in these examples, and as is prevalent in many A-Jayer texts, the young composers drawing upon their own skills and create frequently created materials for their issues with their own hand. In this way, A-Jayers relied solely on local everyday resources that were simply available in order to fill their issues. The writing of Sporting Men, as demonstrated through The Gentleman’s Companion, is particularly connected to the local environment, which serves as a resource for this everyday writing. Appropriating the genre of the guidebook, the authors of the Companion are specifically focused on the local area of Lower Manhattan and this local information is the basis for the text. In this way, the place itself in which the text is situated serves as a resource for everyday composing.

Third, their work underscores the power of the mundane. As we have seen, in the case of the A-Jayers, many of their newspapers focused on mundane, everyday genres and topics including jokes, quotations, personal narratives and comics. While these genres and topics are ordinary and mundane, they are representative of the power of the mundane in that it involves adolescents actively participating in forms of composing. The Gentleman’s Companion, on the other hand, presents its less-than-mundane information in mundane packaging, and, by doing so, helps conceal it from view. First, by appropriating the everyday, mundane genre of the tour guidebook, the authors of the text seemingly sought to hide unsavory content in a common and well-established printed genre that might avoid detection. For example, the Companion opens with an introduction that echoes that of a typical guidebook. The authors suggest that this guidebook is intended, in part, as a kind of sociological and cultural study: “if we do not succeed in giving the public a more full and correct idea of the various classes of society in New York, their occupations, habits, and predilictions [sic] than to be obtained elsewhere, we shall at least have failed in accomplishing the task which we have undertaken” (8-9). Second, through its mundane entries, the authors are able to present information that seems mundane, but for members of that community, such mundane writing was powerful, serving as a “code” that provided more information than meets the eye. For example, the house of Fanny Austin, of 15
Watts Street is said to keep “a quiet, tidy, and pleasant house of assignation for gents of leisure who admire the gentler half of creation” (24). The house No. 159 on Wooster Street is said to let furnished rooms to “enterprising girls” (18). By writing in a way that suggests the mundane, the authors of the guide attempt to deflect notice by the larger public. And so, by harnessing the everyday and mundane in these two ways, Sporting Men employ everyday composing to serve their own illicit ends.

Fourth, the everyday writing created by the A-Jayers and the Sporting Men possess political potential for change, although clearly not all such change proposed was positive. Specifically, the everyday writing of the A-Jayers represented a challenge to the formalized practices of professional printers and journalists; the everyday writing of sporting male culture directly challenged the many churches and moral societies that sought to contain their behavior. In both cases, these two counterpublics became self-aware and came to define their community as fundamentally based on this critical relationship with mainstream power. Their everyday writing served as a means to both articulate and demonstrate how they stood in contradistinction from the establishment. By virtue of its ephemeral nature and its critical positioning alongside dominant structures of power, everyday writing always represents latent political challenge.

In sum, the writing of the A-Jayers and the Sporting Men is reflective of the everyday in four ways. Both occur behind the scenes, although A-Jayers’ texts are “hidden” by the discourse of professional journalism while Sporting Men texts are behind the scenes due to their illicit content. However, both groups employ the hidden quality of everyday writing, drawing upon local resources and composing mundane texts as a way both participate in the composition and circulation of texts, but also to initiate community formation—specifically a counterpublic of everyday writers.

The A-Jayers and Sporting Men as Counterpublics

As demonstrated by A-Jayers and Sporting Men, greater access to the technology of the small press played a key role in the development of these two groups as counterpublics. Habermas argues that, in the eighteenth century, both the public forums of the salons and coffee houses as well as printed texts offered a chance to establish a bourgeois public as “a stable group of discussants” (37). Similarly, in the nineteenth century, by both self-producing and circulating written texts, two very different counterpublics—A-Jayers and Sporting Men—were formed, and those within those counterpublics were able to encounter one another in a venue for exchange,
sharing what Habermas calls a “domain of common concern,” and sustaining themselves as a stable group of discussants (36). However, without access to the small press specifically, it would be less likely that members of these two groups would be able to self-consciously join together, dialogue with one another, and sustain such a continuing discussion within a community.

Further, the self-reflexive awareness of the A-Jayers and the Sporting Men is couched in an articulated and circulated knowledge of their status as a subordinate counterpublic and, once again, the small press played a key role in this awareness. As Michael Warner argues, a counterpublic is distinguished by its different assumptions, its “alternative dispositions or protocols” and both the A-Jayers and Sporting male’s alternative production via the small press, its circulation to a select readership, as well as its content, fostered a consciousness of their status as both marginal and subordinate (56). Ultimately, it is the small press that is central to this formation. By virtue of access to this technology, adolescents, normally excluded from circulating their own printed texts, were able to appropriate an “official” and “professional” platform for their own purposes. This printed platform fostered an awareness of their subordinate status, directly tied to the awareness of a readership and community of amateur journalists as well as an awareness of their tension with established professional journalists and printers.

To make this argument, I will then describe the texts of these two communities in the nineteenth century. I look at the work of adolescent amateur journalists, or “A-Jayers,” demonstrating that the small press was an essential common element that helps these young men and women see themselves as a counterpublic of everyday writers. I then look at The Gentleman’s Companion, demonstrating that this everyday composition of the portable printing press plays a crucial formative role in the development of a hyper-masculinized and hyper-sexualized counterpublic known as “sporting male” culture.

A Counterpublic of Amateurs

In the case of A-Jayers, the availability of the portable printing press spurred the development of a counterpublic comprised predominantly of adolescent boys. First, it is the reflexive production, exchange, and circulation of their printed texts that organizes these adolescents into a group that identifies itself as a subordinate, amateur “A-Jayer community.” A-Jayers are able to articulate, as a consequence of the availability of this new tool of textual production and circulation, an awareness of the “A-Jayer” public as a subordinate adolescent
“amateur” counterpublic. This self-awareness is intimately tied to the appropriation of the printed newspaper as a platform to develop community-specific practices and circulate alternative content deemed valuable to this subordinate community.

For the “A-Jayers,” this awareness of a developing public sphere was particularly fostered through “exchanges” of their newspapers in which editors reviewed and commented on other A-Jayer’s work. Gerard Hauser, in Vernacular Voices: The Rhetoric of Publics and Public Spheres, contends that a public is possible only to the degree that a communally sustained consciousness is available to its members. In addition to sharing language and descriptions that constitute their institutions and social practices, a public’s members must share a web of significant meanings that define a reference world of common actions, celebrations, and feelings (69).

According to Hauser, “for our discourse to be mutually intelligible and sensible as a conversation, we must enter a partnership in which topic, language, and meanings are shared in some significant way” (66). In particular, in order to “belong to a community” we must acquire its language in order to participate in the “rhetorically salient meanings” that characterize that community (67). This is, he continues, “not dependent on consensus” but rather on the sharing of this “common world,” a dynamic that the A-Jayers demonstrate (69). Truman J. Spencer, in his “The History of Amateur Journalism,” writes that

The youthful journalists of America felt this urge [to exchange materials] as soon as they became aware of one another. Then there arose a natural desire to see the product of one another’s pen and press. This led to the practice of exchanging papers. The earliest example of this on record took place in the year 1857. There were then seven or eight amateur journals published in and about Boston … [and] [t]he editors of these papers exchanged copies of their respective publications and commented upon one another’s work.

For example, in the June 1899 issue of The American Gem, the editors review another magazine called Klinkner: “The gentleman—er, beg pardon—cad with the cumbersome cognomen, who edits the vile sheet supposed to represent ‘Young America,’ is a menace to the cause of amateur journalism” (Wendemuth 7). Earle H. Bean, the twelve-year-old editor of Boys’ Journal, writes in his “With The Amateurs” column in 1909 that “Hollahan’s ‘Young Folks’ Companion’ is a
fine addition to the ranks” (n.p.) In other cases, editors note the status of other amateur newspapers, keeping readers and other amateur journalists abreast of their community participants. In the December 1886 issue of The Young Barbarian, the authors note that “The Boy’s Own of Minneapolis, Minnesota, has suspended publication on account of school” (Stempel n.p). In fact, the “exchanges” section was such a common feature in many amateur newspapers and a defining feature of the A-Jayer community, that journalists who neglected to exchange their work with others were frequently chastised in print. One editor of The American Gem complains “It’s a pleasure for me to receive exchanges, but I am being treated pretty mean by over 60 of my 150 exchanges. Wake up, boys, this is not way to do, sent your paper and often too” (Wendemuth 24). John F. Gamble, editor of The Boys’ Monthly, writes “We would be greatly pleased if Editor Goff would send us a copy of the October ‘Review’ so as to complete our file” (9). Michael Warner argues that by reading printed texts within a context of an established communal language, we “incorporate an awareness of the indefinite others to whom they are addressed as part of the meaning of their printedness” (94). Thus, through these exchanges, A-Jayers regulated the expected behavior of community members in print; more crucially, they articulated an awareness of the metalanguage of the A-Jayer public itself, ultimately delineating the reference world for an amateur journalist counterpublic.

Ultimately, this metalinguistic reference world is grounded in the amateur ethos tied to the small printing press and maintained via a circulated body of acceptable writing practices. Warner amends his view of metalanguage to also consider the “temporality of circulation” as a factor in this phenomenon of reflexivity that characterizes both publics and counterpublics. Warner writes that “temporally structured” genres such as “regular and dated papers, magazines, almanacs, annuals, and essay serials” particularly develop reflexivity about their circulation, especially “through reviews, reprintings, citations, controversies” (95). He highlights that the “punctual” nature of such temporality is “crucial to the sense that discussion is currently unfolding in a sphere of activity.” In other words, “the more punctual and abbreviated the circulation, the more discourse indexes the punctuality of its own circulation” and for a text to have a public, it must continue to circulate through time, self-referencing itself and its circulation (96). For the A-Jayers, a regular printing schedule was continually articulated as best practice for successful amateur journalists, and it was the small press that allowed for control over such regularity.
As a consequence of this reflexivity, the “A-Jayer” public also fundamentally understands itself as a subordinate “amateur” counterpublic directly in tension with a public of professional printers and journalists that presumed a monopoly on the production and circulation of printed materials. As a telling example, in the February 1889 issue of *Inland Printer*, a technical journal for professional printers, W. E. Seaport wrote a short commentary, entitled “The Amateur” that vociferously argued that the amateur is nothing but an “ignorant, arrant knave,” but, that such a “parasite” is “transitory at best” and will “soon vanisheth away” (399-400). On the other hand, the most damning critique leveled at another A-Jayer in their exchanges is the charge of not being a true amateur and of not producing original amateur journalistic text. George Houtain, editor of *The Zenith*, writes in his May-June 1900 issue that “the article on ‘China’” in *The Literary Gem* “would be more appropriate [sic] if it were original but as the same has been taken from the *Boston Globe*, I fail to see when 'The Gem' comes in for any credit” (n.p.). The editor of *The Boys’ Journal* asks: “‘The Key West’ can hardly be called an amateur magazine; yet can it be called a professional one?”(n.p.) It is this self-awareness by A-Jayers, manifested in print, which helps these adolescent journalists self-identify as “amateur” and it this self-awareness that helps unify community members in a way that is indicative of a counterpublic.

As a way to maintain this subordinate status, the A-Jayers circulated and self-monitored a collective standard of what constituted “proper” writing practices amongst them, with particular emphasis on distinguishing themselves from professional journalism. A-Jayers were not only hyper-conscious of their subordinate status, but they worked actively to articulate, police, and maintain it. George R.S. Connell, co-editor of the paper *The Antecedent*, describes amateur journalism in the April 1900 issue, defining what he sees to be proper practices for aspiring journalists and editors. He encourages writers to “write on one side side [sic] of paper only, use ink and good paper. Do not send in unclean papers and be very neat”(n.p.). As for editors, he explains that “an editor must have patience, hustle and control of his temper in order to refrain from swearing at some poor individual who is unlucky enough to have poor penmanship” (n.p.). The magazine *The Amateur Journalist*, in particular, is devoted to coaching new writers and advising them on how to write appropriately as an amateur journalist, ultimately attempting to define the “reference world” that constitutes the amateur journalism counterpublic. The editor, James H. Chase, in the first issue, writes in his article “Editorials: Good and Bad” that a good
editorial should be “a clear, straightforward presentation of the editor’s view on some topic suited to the circle of readers for whom the paper is published . . . the editor will find his topic in the common interests that unite him and his readers, and will talk as one friend to another” (5). Further, Chase also suggests that writers should “choose words that have a limited meaning and so convey a definite picture” (6) and argues for using “simple” fonts so the page “appeals to the eye and invites perusal” (15). The editor of *The American Gem* Charles Wendemuth, describes the “defects of Amateur Serials,” arguing that “most amateur serials have many faults. Ignoring lack of grammar and punctuation, as they are are merely mechanical defects—so to speak—the one great fault common to amateur serials is disjointedness” (5). Beyond this lack of “unity,” according to Wendemuth, “the majority of amateur serials lack novelty of incident, and plot” (5), “characters are dismissed in a few words” instead of being “developed gradually through the story” (6), and “local color is also neglected” (6). Making a clear distinction of what defined an “amateur” or “professional” was continually an issue as well. For example, in the December 1913 issue of *Boy’s World*, the editor notes that “The question has come up time and time again: ‘Should amateur newspapers accept paid advertisements and paid subscriptions?’” He finds that “it is perfectly legitimate for an amateur to accept any aid which will tend to improve his or her paper materially” since, ultimately, “if they could accept advertisements and also subscriptions they could issue their paper more oftener and more regular.” (4) Such a paper, he notes, could be “made to interest subscribers and also the amateur fraternity” (5). Navigating the difference between amateur and professional was crucial for the A-Jayer community to maintain its status as an amateur, and to consolidate its existence as a counterpublic.

**A Sporting Man’s Counterpublic**

Greater access to portable printing technology participated in the formation of a self-awareness that characterizes counterpublics. This awareness includes the realization that the counterpublic stands as an opponent to official public discourse: whereas the A-Jayers represented an opponent to professional journalists and printers and challenged what kinds of writing was acceptable for journalism, sporting male culture went much further, openly challenging the dominant moral authority of the late nineteenth century. More curiously, however, although membership of sporting male culture was predominantly comprised of white middle and upper class white males—the most privileged group—it still can only be considered a “hidden” illicit counterpublic. Once
again, the technology of the small press played a central role in the development of this sporting man counterpublic. First, the small press was central in articulating and circulating in print an awareness of sporting male culture, itself standing as a challenge to established norms of sexuality and gender behavior. Second, by virtue of the fact that members of the counterpublic themselves were able to access printing presses and print materials unassisted by professional printers, this counterpublic was able to remain hidden from public view, a fundamental characteristic of sporting culture. A crucial printed genre for the development of a self-reflexive awareness of a sporting male counterpublic was the tour guidebook. Since sporting culture was highly mobile and its usual haunts concealed from view, members of this community appropriated this popular genre to suit the needs of their own counterpublic. Although these guidebooks were publicly available and could be read by anyone who purchased them, the texts themselves were only fully directed to—and constitutive of—the sporting male counterpublic and, in this way, was hidden from view from those outside of the community.

*The Gentleman’s Companion: New York in 1870* illustrates the intersection of print technology and a sporting male counterpublic. The majority of *The Gentleman’s Companion* is composed of lists, including addresses, of “boarding houses”, “houses of assignation” and “brothels” with quick evaluations of each location. For example, Miss Ida Thompson at 126 East Twelfth Street is said to have “an elegant parlor house . . . furnished in the most elaborate and magnificent style”(30). As a result, the anonymous author(s) claim, “This is a truly splendid establishment of the very first class”(30-31). The house kept by Hattie Taylor at 111 Spring Street, however, is “patronized by roughs and rowdies” and by “gentlemen who turn their shirts wrong side out when the other side is dirty” (19). The reader is frequently encouraged to stay away from such questionable establishments, suggesting that the text of *The Companion* presumes a very specific reading public comprised of middle to upper class men. These men, first, asserted their right to illicit sexual release and “manly” activities; second, based on class and race, they presumed an unrestricted mobility offering full license to explore the urban spaces described in the text; finally, due to these activities, they saw the necessity for anonymity and concealment from the dominant moral standards of the time.
The small press, then, represents the most opportune technology for the printed
guides for the sporting male because the print technology could, itself, be hidden from
view and used for its illicit purposes. Further, since the usefulness of any tourist’s
guidebook is tied to how accurately it depicts a particular location, and since any
effective guidebook must alter its text if elements in the location change, the guidebook
represents temporally based genre that can most effectively capture the rapidly changing
urban prostitution environment for Sporting Men, since their focus is on hidden, and
often shifting, “sights.” And so the small press, by being able to be concealed, and due to
its rapid and inexpensive production that could keep up with a changing environment, is
ideally suited to quickly respond to this illicit environment to keep Sporting Men’s
knowledge of the landscape—a landscape fundamental to sporting culture—current. The
use of the small press tells us much about the counterpublic of Sporting Men and the
temporality of the environment in which their activities occurred. First, this directory was
printed quickly, out of the necessity to stay current; these brothels seemed to be highly
mobile places. “Miss Jennie Creagh,” for example, is said to be moving from 155
Wooster Street to “17 Amity Street in February” (18). In fact, Miss Creagh seems to have
moved while the guide was still in production; later in the text we see that she has already
established herself on Amity Street, and has “splendidly furnished her palace . . . from
top to bottom, sparing neither expense nor labor” to create “the finest in the city” (28).
As a result of this continuously changing landscape, the need to produce accurate
documents rapidly warrants the necessity of the small press. The text, by making this
presumption, both caters to the needs of its readership, while also participating in the
development of a distinct, self-aware counterpublic of Sporting Men.

Second, this public supported by The Gentleman’s Companion is based upon a keen
awareness of its status as an unsanctioned, oppositional, and illicit public; this awareness is
reflected in the text itself and is supported by other circulating texts. As we have already seen,
by satirically appropriating official discourses, the authors of the Companion highlight their
awareness of an oppositional position. Further, the guide signals sporting culture’s oppositional
stance through assuming a satirical voice, challenging traditional moral doctrine and gender
roles, and arguing for the recuperation of the fallen woman. For example, the author(s)
mockingly recommend that The Companion be used for moral guidance: “Our book will,
therefore, be like a warning voice to the unwary—like a buoy attached to a sunken rock, which warns the inexperienced mariner to sheer off, lest he should be wrecked on a dangerous and unknown coast “ (7). In addition, satirizing the academic public, the author(s) of the Companion assumes the conventional writing style of an academic performing sociological research:

Within the past ten years, New York has undergone greater changes than any other city has ever done in the same space of time. It has changed not only in it’s [sic] material growth and it’s [sic] topographical aspect, but also in moral tone and the character of it’s [sic] inhabitants, and especially in it’s [sic] position relative to the other great cities of the world (7-8)

By assuming these voices—which become satirical in this context— the guidebook challenges the deliberative, public arguments deployed by the authoritative and oppositional publics that seek to resolve the social evils of prostitution. Ultimately, the guidebook mocks the inability of these “official” publics to make a convincing argument to seriously comprehend and challenge sporting male culture. This satirical text, then, presents itself as a snapshot of private individuals organized sufficiently around their shared concerns and interests to be cognizant of their own status as a counterpublic as well as their adversaries. The portable press represents a means by which Sporting Men could articulate in print their challenges to other communities that sought to reform them. By doing so, print circulates a self-awareness of who is “with us” and who is not. Yet, despite its tendency to aggression and violence, sportsman culture also represented a distinct challenge to traditional gender values. Gilfoyle observes that “[s]porting-male culture, in effect, displaced older rules and traditions governing sexual behavior for young, married, and ‘respectable’ men” (102). In addition, although for its own ends, sportsman culture typically utilized the small amateur press to defend prostitution and challenge the dominant nineteenth-century trope of the “fallen women” by consistently arguing, such as the Weekly Rake did, that women who engage in illicit sex do not “sink into an abyss of shame”(99). The counterpublic of Sporting Men, then, also align themselves with Habermas’ contention that all publics embody contradictory impulses, both undermining power while simultaneously bolstering it.

Finally, the Gentleman’s Companion demonstrates the increasing self-awareness by Sporting Men of a developing counterpublic; the production of such a text assists in defining and articulating the characteristics of such a public. Primary is the status of this counterpublic as “hidden.” In terms of the Companion, the illicit content inhibits publication by any respectable
publishing house with more funding and more experienced equipment and labor. By this fact alone, sporting male publics are already placed in an oppositional position and, thus, form the basis of a “counterpublic.”

The small printing press, then, represents the most effective available means for such a public to create and circulate texts. The illicit content necessitates concealment, and the palm-sized Companion is designed to be kept hidden or to be discretely discarded; this, again, would seem to be a print job catered to the small press. In this way, although the text’s stated aim is to provide “insight into the character and doings of people whose deeds are carefully screen from public view,” the size of the text itself demonstrates the need to keep this information concealed from the larger public’s moral critique (Companion 6). On the other hand, this hidden information becomes fully available to those who self-identify as members of the sporting male public.

**Conclusion**

As demonstrated by A-Jayers and Sporting Men, greater access to the technology of the small press served to sponsor their everyday writing that, in turn, played a key role in the development of the kind of reflexive self-awareness that characterizes a counterpublic. By both self-producing and circulating written texts, two very different counterpublics—A-Jayers and Sporting Men—were formed, and those within those counterpublics were able to encounter one another in a venue for exchange. However, without access to the small press to sponsor their everyday writing, it would be less likely that members of these two groups would be able to self-consciously join together, dialogue with one another, and sustain such a continuing discussion within a community. Further, this self-reflexive awareness of the A-Jayers and the Sporting Men is couched in an articulated and circulated knowledge of their status as a subordinate counterpublic and, once again, their everyday composing played a key role in this awareness. This suggests that the printing technology itself, in the hands of these “amateurs”, was a formative factor for these two distinct counterpublics. Ultimately, it suggests that, in order to fully understand a public sphere and its counterpublics, we also have to understand the concurrent changes in technologies. In other words, no understanding of a public sphere or its counterpublics is complete without an understanding of the kinds of technologies that make them possible. Further, it suggests that everyday writing is also a central component of these counterpublics.
CHAPTER THREE

IMAGES ON THE MOVE: MULTIMODAL COMPOSING, CURRICULAR REVISION, AND THE GUERRILLA TELEVISION MOVEMENT

In this chapter, I continue to explore the relationship among portable writing technologies, everyday writing, and self-sponsored counterpublics by examining changes during the late 1960s into the late 1970s. I argue that portable video technology serves as a significant sponsor of everyday multimodal composing. Such technology not only expands the modes available to everyday composers to include moving video and audio, but the portable video recorder also demonstrates the connections with a moving composer’s body, underscoring the crucial role space and movement play in self-sponsorship and the development of counterpublics.

The years between the end of the 60s and 70s constitute a moment of growth and change in composition studies, a moment that involved curriculum and media. Sharon Crowley, in *Composition in the University*, stresses that the post World War Two era represented a moment of transformation for the field. She notes that the universal requirements in composition and the communications skills programs that had formed alongside the wartime environment had, for the most part, been phased out by the 1960s, because, as she writes, “the serious wartime exigencies that gave birth to the communication skills movement must have seemed remote indeed” (184). And so, scholars and teachers invested in the teaching of composition were surveying the terrain and seeking to clarify the direction the growing discipline would take. In the next decade, composition would return to and expand on a more student-centered pedagogy and initiate, through some initial research on writing and recovering texts in classical rhetoric, the beginnings of the process movement. Furthermore, motivated by perceived technological demands, in part as a response to the launching of Sputnik, this exploration in composition included the incorporation of media, particularly television. Conversations about the use of television and video in the writing classroom were, in fact, ongoing in *College Composition and Communication, College English, Composition Studies* and *The English Journal* (among others) during the 1950s and 1960s and into the 1970s that questioned, challenged, or supported the value of utilizing such new audio-visual technologies in the classroom. However, it is clear in these experiments that the use of television in the classroom was limited by three issues: first,
television in the classroom was employed in ways that merely replicated a banking model of education; second, in the rare instances students were given image-making tools such as cameras, these approaches were apparently considered as remedial tools in service of developing linguistic literacy; third, television equipment in the classroom was often non-portable and required expensive infrastructure, and this tended to tether students within the traditional classroom even more tightly instead of giving them opportunities to document their communities beyond classroom walls.

In addition, while current research began to explore this relationship between writing pedagogy and the adoption of different technologies—including multimodal technologies—in the classroom during this period in the field’s history (Alexander and Rhodes; Gee; Hawisher and Selfe; Palmeri; Selber; Shipka), there was little exploration in the kinds of self-sponsored multimodal composing simultaneously ongoing outside the university walls. In fact, just outside of the classroom, everyday composers, working in collaborative communities, were utilizing the latest in video technology to create video texts; in addition, these composers, part of what was called the “guerrilla television movement,” were also theorizing their composition practices with video as grounded in a “process, not product” model and envisioning their technology as a means to express an array of personal perspectives. Yet, despite these apparent similarities with classroom writing pedagogy gaining ground at that time, portable video technology allowed guerrilla television composers to literally go further—to move into a variety of locations and document events, people, and communities in places beyond the reach of the writing classroom. As a result, this chapter presents the example of guerrilla television to highlight the connection between multimodal composition that, in this case, involves image and sound, mobility, and the formation of self-sponsored counterpublics.

This investigation into the communities that formed around the portable video recorder provides a way to respond to my three research questions. First, what forms of everyday writing were being produced and circulated during key moments in composition and rhetoric’s history? The examples of self-sponsored everyday multimodal composing that I explore in this chapter provide us with a fuller picture of the kinds of writing people were doing outside the academy at a transformative time in modern composition and rhetoric’s history. To answer this question, I will briefly describe two major guerrilla television collectives who used the portable video recorder to different ends: Top Value Television (commonly known as TVTV) and Broadside
TV. At present, despite a growing interest in looking at multimodal composing practices through a historical lens, no research on these writing communities within composition studies exists.

Second, how might portable writing technologies act as an important sponsor for this everyday composing? For TVTV and Broadside TV, and all the other guerrilla television collective composing with video technology at the time, it is clear that the new availability of this portable technology that allowed amateurs to both record and edit video with sound represents a significant sponsor for their everyday composing, particularly because it was now possible to carry the technology to a variety of sites. To make this argument, I describe the multimodal texts of these two guerrilla collectives. I first analyze two videos produced by TVTV: *Four More Years*, covering the 1972 Republican Convention, and *TVTV Goes to the Super Bowl*, a documentary on the 1976 Super Bowl. I then focus on the work of Broadside TV, emphasizing their approach to engaging with their local Appalachian community. I look at two of their films: first, *Showdown at the Hoedown*, a film documenting a local music festival and *Gate City Mills*, a video about a grain mill in Gate City, Tennessee. In both cases, the portable video recorder also played a central role in the formation of both individual collectives and a larger network of collectives in the United States. Through the broadcasting and circulation of their multimodal texts, as well as the sharing of information and resources about how to use portable video equipment effectively, guerrilla television collectives were able to see the kinds of work other groups were making and share feedback, ideas, and resources.

Looking at these guerrilla television collectives, then, represents a way to respond to my third research question: what role does everyday writing play in community formation? The everyday compositions made by those using portable video technology played a key formative role in the creation of a guerrilla television movement that spread across the United States. Here, I argue that such everyday writing, sponsored by this newly accessible technology, plays a significant role in the formation of writing counterpublics. In Chapter 2, the counterpublics of the A-Jayers and Sporting Men were limited to participating members—either adolescent journalists composing their amateur journalists and exchanging with other amateur journalists or adult males participating in illicit sexual behaviors. However, in the case of the guerrilla television collectives, the participatory nature of their multimodal compositions tended to make the edges of the counterpublic less stable, since, by drawing upon everyday, local resources at the sites and communities that they were covering, their compositions incorporated the
communities and subjects that they documented into their counterpublic. In this way, the counterpublics of the guerrilla television collectives are more amorphous, increasing or decreasing in number based on who might be participating at one time.

I open with a description of the field of composition poised in a transformational moment. Within the context of this period of transformation, I zoom in on how teachers in English and writing classes grappled with new video technology, highlighting both what I see as their weaknesses and their strengths. As I whole, I will argue along the lines of Jonathan Alexander and Jacqueline Rhodes who insist that we must prepare our students for “literate participation in complex, multicultural public spheres” by equipping them with an enlarged vocabulary that should also include “the nonrational, the alternative, the knowledges of the body, and the avant-garde as part of its critical lexicon” (71). My intention in this work, however, is not to belittle scholars of the past for their engagements with technology that do not mesh with current pedagogical approaches—rather, it is to highlight that paying attention to the kinds of composing practices going on outside the classroom is invaluable to how we should consider technology use in the writing classroom in the present.

Television in the Classroom

The appearance of television in the classroom occurs in a moment of curricular transformation that represented a push towards improving performance in math and sciences, a drive to engage students with technology as a way to foster technological innovation, and a desire to re-focus academic attention on designated key concepts in each of the academic disciplines. However, despite this push to engage students with technology, many of the attempts to incorporate television in the composition classrooms tended to re-establish a traditionalist orientation that re-established what Paolo Freire deems a “banking” model of education, an approach that seemingly undermined students’ everyday experiences. In those instances where teachers innovated in the classroom by encouraging students to compose with video tools, such technology was considered a remedial tool for basic students. Students’ visual literacy, when it is acknowledged at all, was always utilized in service of building skill in text-based literacy. Further, composition students were not given the opportunity to utilize television technology themselves for their own compositions. Rather, for the most part, television served merely as a delivery device for the instructor alone, be it in the classroom or via pre-recorded video provided for students’ viewing. And so, for the most part, the kind of “literate participation” Alexander
and Rhodes envision with multimodal composition was rarely, if at all, present in the writing classroom when television was incorporated.

At the end of the 1950s, the reform movement in higher education had challenged the long-established “progressive” model of education, exerting considerable pressure across American higher education for disciplines to demonstrate “unambiguous expertise” that could contribute to the national welfare (North 10). Arthur Applebee writes that the push for curricular reform was of such degree in the 1950s and 1960s that it was “unparalleled since the late nineteenth century” (192). It was this resurgence of reform that “forced both progressives and their opponents to formulate their goals and methodologies with a rigor and precision” that they had never performed before (185). This reform was broad and far-reaching, but it particularly affected education’s relationship with technology as well as how it viewed students within the education system. Further, the reform was characterized by a clinging to traditionalist positions in academia as well as a simultaneous drive to innovate. Calls for this reform came from a variety of quarters that sought to challenge academia, which more-antagonistic reformers envisioned as an ineffective “self-serving directorate” that maintained a stranglehold on public education. According to Applebee, their motivations varied as well; they included “conservatives seeking ways to reduce school budgets, superpatriots outraged by the social reconstructionists and fanned by McCarthy, parents disturbed by the implications of ‘life adjustment,’ old-line teachers who had never embraced progressive doctrines in the first place and young teachers to whom progressivism meant resistance to new modes of scholarship” (188). This large-scale reform involved a variety of stakeholders and resulted in a stated desire to emphasize technology in the classroom; however, this desire was implemented in the composition classroom with uneven results.

The successful launch of the Soviet satellite Sputnik became a particularly potent “symbol of the failure of the schools,” resulting in 1958’s National Defense Education Act (NDEA). The NDEA provided unprecedented funding for math and science as a way to motivate greater innovation in engineering and technology, fields that the Sputnik launch suggested were lagging behind the Soviets. Applebee points to Vice-Admiral H.G. Richover’s 1958 Education and Freedom as manifesting the nationalistic tone such technological reform struck: “only massive upgrading of the scholastic standards of our schools will guarantee the future prosperity and freedom of the Republic” (189). For Richover, “engineers and ‘talented youth’” and high
academic standards were the means to rescuing a nation at risk and re-establishing the United States’ global dominance (189). Perhaps not surprisingly, the humanities were not considered as part of this technological reform in education—at least not at first.

To the credit of those in the humanities, even prior to the NDEA, academics in English and Composition were considering the new technology of television in the classroom. Unfortunately, many early experiments with television technology in the writing classroom either seemed to replicate what Freire calls the “banking model” of education instead of using television as a way to encourage students to actively participate in composing. For the most part, educators tended to employ television as a tool for helping the teacher manage the laborious tasks of the writing classroom. According to Freire, the primary purpose of the teacher in the “banking” model is to "fill" students with narrative content—content that tends to be devoid of meaning-making context. By presenting course material in this way, “[w]ords are emptied of their concreteness and become a hollow, alienated, and alienating verbosity” (71). As a result, such a scheme undermines the potential for students to actively engage in their own learning, making them less a “practitioner” and more of a blank slate on which content is passively inscribed. Similarly, using television to serve a managerial role in the classroom made the technology a curriculum delivery system for students rather than an component of the writing curriculum in which students used the technology to compose their own multimodal texts.

An early experiment with television demonstrates its use in a way that re-inscribes the traditionalist-banking model. In the May 1956 issue of *College Composition and Communication*, John H. Hoagland writes of a demonstration of a lesson utilizing closed-circuit television at the second gathering of the Conference on College Composition and Communication. Dr. Ruth Middlebrook, leading a “lesson” on “The Apology of Socrates” (really a dramatic reading), presented the lesson on several 24-inch televisions in multiple rooms “connected by coaxial cable” via a television studio two blocks away (67-68). However, employing television in the writing classroom in this way seems only to reinforce the notion of *student-as-vessel*, a container to receive the audio-visual signal coming into the classroom and “tethered” to the classroom space through the coaxial cable. By fixing students in the classroom to watch course content passively rather than producing content actively, students play a less participatory role in their own learning.
However, it is clear that this more passive approach to using television was the norm in the classroom despite the fact that scholars saw the transformative potential of television. Henry W. Knepler’s survey on television in the teaching of English in the October 1956 issue of *College English* suggests that the use of television as a curriculum delivery device was becoming more common. Knepler gathers data about different approaches to utilizing television from a variety of colleges and records the often-mixed conclusions of professors these institutions. He examines three main areas of the use of television for teaching: through television stations, closed-circuit television systems, and kinescope recordings. He concludes that TV is generally utilized on college campuses for four reasons: to cut costs, to conserve faculty labor, to spread superior instruction, and to enhance courses and teaching methods (8). However, faculty members surveyed on the use of television were skeptical that it could even achieve these four outcomes. Ultimately, Knepler is both critical of the tendency to use television to reinscribe banking models and cautious about television’s potential as an effective pedagogical option, concluding that television, like the printed page, is not an intellectual discipline; it is only a medium of education. It is definitely more than the sum of its parts, radio and motion pictures. It can lead to a mechanical mass college. It can become a considerable educational force. It is up to us to take a hand in shaping it (9-10).

The most effective uses of television in the classroom occurred when students were encouraged to compose with the technology. However, the reformist push at the time tended to undermine those forms of innovation.

As Knepler observes, in addition to replicating a banking model of education that disengaged students from their own learning, such mechanical approaches to television in the classroom also tended to depersonalize the composition classroom, further alienating students from teachers and undermining the social basis of composing. The academic reformers of the 1950s and 1960s were highly and vocally critical about the long-established progressive “life adjustment” model that focused on developing the personal and social needs of students, a model that they saw as lacking vigor and creating intellectually unprepared students. Their push to re-organize academia focused particularly on defining the limits of the disciplines, moving the emphasis away from the personal needs of all students and turning towards inculcating key concepts in the disciplines. As Applebee describes, while the progressives “had come to stress
the immediate needs and the characteristics of the student,” for the new programs initiated by the NDEA, ultimately, “it was subject area rather than educational principles which determined the scope and sequence of the new curriculum” (192). As a whole, there was tremendous pressure for the liberal arts to also stress core concepts that would define their disciplines and turn away from what was seen as an excessive emphasis on students’ and their needs. Other examples point to television in the classroom being employed as a way to expedite teaching tasks to help manage the students in the class, a strategy that does not reflect banking per se, but certainly plays a role in separating the writing teachers from composing students. This depersonalization represents a key element of education that Freire critiques in the traditionalist-banking model and runs counter to approaches to composing that involve engaging with other writers, other communities, and other cultures.

In a published version of his presentation at the 1959 CCCC, John Bellamy, in the February 1960 issue of *College Composition and Communication* makes the modest argument that “television can do some of the work of the composition course without seeming to cause any significant lowering of achievement” (36). Bellamy suggests that teaching writing via television has its limitations, particularly, since the instructor is separated from students and is, thus, deprived of “feedback” from students in the classroom; yet, restricting the use of this technology solely to that of an “instructional aid,” television, for Bellamy, ultimately delivers the writing instructor from what he describes as “the time-wasting interruptions of irrelevant, inane, and exhibitionistic comment” in a populated classroom (38). Although Bellamy sees the pane of glass of the television as one of its primary limitations since it separates the teacher from students, it seems as if Bellamy is not particularly concerned about creating distance from writing students in his class. Instead, his focus is on improving and making more effective the teacher’s managerial abilities.

Striking a more slightly more optimistic tone a decade later, and reflecting the innovation associated with any curricular transformation, Paul Briand, from the State University of New York, in a 1970 contribution to the feature “Staffroom Interchange” describes his approaches to incorporating multi-media in his classrooms, including a multi-level approach of commenting on the papers themselves, providing responses to more “abstract matters” in students’ writing via audio tape, and by generating a twenty-minute video for more “esoteric rhetorical problems” (267). The value of such an approach, he claims, is that it provides a student with “a record of
his [sic] progress” that the student can then “replay at will” with the hope that “his writing will begin to ‘sound’ like him now that he can hear it” (267). Writing instructors like Briand and Bellamy are seemingly united in their frustration in their failure to pique the interests of writing students, particularly first-year students. Briand, apparently exasperated, declares:

Because nothing I have tried has worked I am willing to try something else. If my students have no verbal literacy to speak of, do they (because they are children brought up on viewing instead of reading) have visual literacy? From pictoral-oral, can they translate into verbal-aural linear literacy? In other words, can they change lines of photographic and electronic dots of lights into line of moveable type? It is worth a try (268-269)

Briand’s thinking here seems to represent a transitional moment. Although his views of his students as totally lacking in “verbal literacy” is certainly problematic, it is clear that he is seriously considering how his students’ own language operates and how he might assist them in “translating” that language into traditional “aural linear literacy.” While it is pretty clear that Briand’s end goal here is to teach exclusively traditional academic English, his attempt to help students actively participate in their own learning moves him away from a more traditionalist banking model that is more disengaged and depersonalized.

Yet, while any moment of transformation includes teachers' efforts to cling to stabilizing tradition, it also includes teachers' efforts to innovate, to develop new approaches to pedagogy. While there are instances of attempts to use this new technology to re-inscribe a traditionalist model, there are documented instances of writing teachings giving students opportunities to utilize television technology to create their own compositions. Jason Palmeri points to Richard Williamson’s 1971 essay in CCC, “The Case for Filmmaking as English Composition” in which Williamson challenges the traditional banking model, arguing that “[i]n an educational system for the common good, the school can no longer be a dispensary of knowledge but must become a place in which a youth can experiment with applying the knowledge he gets from other sources” (132). For Williamson, the “home” visual literacies that exasperated Briand a year earlier represent sources of knowledge that students can apply in the process of creating their own visual compositions. Williamson’s approach represents a clever strategy in two ways: first, he modifies the nationalistic language surrounding the NDEA into an emphasis on “the common good,” and he seems to draws upon cognitive psychology as a way to challenge the emphasis on
disciplines over students. In 1960, the Harvard psychologist, Jerome Bruner’s *The Process of Education* introduced cognitive psychology to the educational dialogue provoked by the NDEA. Drawing from progressive education, Bruner’s emphasis was on learning as a “process”; however, where he differed was that he saw this learning process in terms of Piaget’s scheme of levels of cognitive development and its relationship to the structure of the particular academic discipline. However, as James Berlin writes, this approach of learning was grounded in doing, learning “the structure of a discipline through engaging in research as a practitioner of the discipline” (123). In this way, Williamson develops a strategy that points to structuring the discipline in a way that echoes the traditionalist reformers while also turning the emphasis back to students and the kinds of knowledge they bring to the classrooms.

But Williamson wasn’t the first to innovate with television by encouraging students to compose with the new technology. Two years earlier, a 1969 issue of *CCC* included a short review essay of Brooklyn College’s federally funded “Audiovisual Literacy Project.” This project, led by Dr. Melvin E. Levison, assistant professor of education at the college, aimed to “increase the learning capacity of students in disadvantaged areas” by developing a “new kind of literacy—audiovisual literacy.” “Audiovisual literacy,” according to Levison, represents “the ability to ‘read’ pictures, both still and moving, objects and sounds in a way that will give the ‘reader’ much new information about a culture or environment (158). Eventually, the review reports, “the students develop an interest in making their own films and tape recordings—something they will be able to do during the federally funded project” (158). For Levison, allowing students to compose audiovisual texts is the next step in his approach to assist students in “reading” information in the world around them and to help them develop their “learning capacity.” Such compositions would represent responses to that information based on the composer’s perspective.

However, despite this innovation with television, it is clear that there are some problematic traditionalist assumptions guiding Levison’s project. First, there are Levinson’s assumptions about the intelligence and learning ability of disadvantaged people. Second, despite his willingness to let students utilize the technology themselves, this strategy is ultimately a means to an end: this brief review is careful to note that this form of literacy stands in as only a temporary measure to help students develop “mentally” in order to ultimately prepare them for “linear literacy” of reading and writing text. Although we can assume that Levison was not
referring to one of the principles of guerrilla television, he notes that his approach will create a “feedback effect” that will, he argues, “result in the development of a desire to read among the previously unmotivated” (158). Thus, we see that, although this project actually aimed to put technology in the hands of students, its purpose was primarily as a form of rudimentary preparation for “serious” literacy work with alphabetic text.

As a whole, then, writing pedagogy, within an age of curricular change, was beginning to welcome the idea of employing television as a composition tool, but actual use of television for students to compose their own texts was quite rare. Further, when such tools were used, they were only seen as a method to expand a student’s perceived-remedial writing abilities with alphabetic text. Ultimately, the evidence points to the visual being seen as a method for remedial learning, a basic stepping stone for building written literacy. In sum, television in the writing classroom was rarely employed to foster the kind of active and engaged “literate participation” that Alexander and Rhodes see as possible with multimodal composition—a kind of participation that could support transformation in the classroom. Further, the banking model, due to the fact that it seemingly veers away from active engagement and critical thinking, also undermines the creative and critical power of counterpublics. To find evidence of change and inspiration for curricular transformation, one needs only to look outside of the classroom to the rise of Guerrilla Television movement.

**The Guerrilla Television Movement**

The Guerrilla Television (GTV) movement demonstrates the potentially powerful learning that television *could* have in the composition classroom. Occurring alongside the educational reforms of the period, guerrilla television was part of a larger alternative media tide that swept the country in the 1960s that also included radio, newspapers, magazines, and publishing. Groups such as Top Value Television (TVTV), Videofreex, Ant Farm, University Community Video, and Broadside TV, among others, formed the video collectives that came to be known as the “guerrilla television” movement. Although compositionists in the classroom struggled to embrace the possibilities of the transformative moment through their attempts to employ television and video, the young men and women that participated in the guerrilla television movement took such attempts much further, innovating in ways that came closer to achieving the goals of curricular transformation. Many guerrilla video groups dedicated their video composing practices to community service, often basing themselves in specific geographic
areas and aiming to use the medium for social change. Minneapolis-based University Community Video, for example, represented a highly successful collaboration between local community activists and university of Minnesota students that focused on stimulating local civic engagement. Guerrilla TV’s topics ranged widely: from local high school basketball games to the Super Bowl to local performances of mountain music or storytelling, from documenting local church services to political critique and reform. Certainly, the range of topics taken up by GTV further underscores the agency of the composer. While the banking model approaches to television in the classroom envisions students as passive consumers of information, GTV composers positions themselves on the other side of the screen: rather than watching, they worked behind it, documenting whatever they found interesting or valuable.

The key tool that fostered these new forms of multimodal composing and began the guerrilla television movement was the Sony Porta-Pak. Introduced in 1967, the Porta-Pak was a battery-powered, portable video tape recorder (VTR) system that was lighter and more affordable than any previous video recording technology. The first model, DV-2400, the “Rover Porta-Pak,” in the attempt to make the machine as light and compact as possible, eliminated every function not directly related to recording itself, including a rewind function. Charles Bensinger, also an active member of the guerrilla television community, notes in his 1979 *The Video Guide* that the Porta-Pak video systems represented a “compromise between the picture quality and stability of a big studio VTR, and the portability required for field recording” (156). This portable video system weighed about twenty pounds and could be carried over the shoulder in a carrying case and utilized half-inch wide videotape to record moving images and sound. Attached to this VTR, was a small, hand-held portable video camera with a monitor eyepiece, complete with a built-in microphone or a jack for an auxiliary microphone, which synched sound with the video signal. The camera operator began recording tape by pulling a trigger at the grip of the camera. Relatively accessible for the time, these new devices cost about a thousand to fifteen hundred dollars and videotape cost twelve to eighteen dollars per reel. In contrast to the approaches seen in the classroom, the portability of the Porta-Pak ultimately encouraged users to play an active, participatory role in composing multimodal texts. Parry Teasdale, a founding member of another television guerrilla collective, Videofreex, notes that "[u]ntil half-inch VTRs came along, the means to produce television programs had resided almost exclusively with the networks because only they had the
money, equipment and technical support needed to make TV shows. Now suddenly, the tools of television production had fallen into the hands of people not beholden to the networks in any way” (17).

And so, this new technology represented a powerful tool that invited the kinds of self-sponsored composing that teachers like Briand, Bellamy and Levison sought to motivate in their own students.

In addition, versus traditionalist banking model of education that seem undermine interpersonal engagement as a means for composing, the hands-on approach to composing that portable video technology invited also supported the development of communal composing practices, and it is these communal practices that we see manifested in the counterpublics of guerrilla television. The Porta-Pak seemingly encouraged collaboration: as a result of this shared desire to compose with VTR equipment, exchange technical knowledge and support each others’ work, many individual composers ultimately gathered into collectives. This partially had to do with access. Teasdale observes that Sony originally introduced video tape recorders as “educational tools and consumer toys in the mid-1960’s” but soon instead began marketing the Porta-Pak, the “relatively small, battery-operated VTR with a lightweight, black and white camera” to the larger public, which was taken up with great enthusiasm (16). Indeed, this portable system encouraged access for a large segment of the population traditionally excluded from film production. For the first time, according to video historian Deidre Boyle, the Porta-Pak “allowed women and children as well as burly men to wield the new communication technology”(223 n. 5). As a whole, beyond fostering the formation of many video communities centered on this portable technology, the Porta-Pak technology surrendered quality to exploit portability and ease of use by non-technical experts; the result was the creation of a tremendous library of audio-visual texts composed collaboratively by everyday people. Michael Shamberg, in his 1971 how-to manual Guerrilla Television, argues that “the economics of portable video are subversive to anyone whose authority and security are based on controlling information flow” and that the use of such “self-contained” technology “punctures the estranging mythology of technology as something to be operated and therefore controlled by an elite” (21). Portability via the Porta-Pak, for Shamberg and the movement as a whole, represented a means to intervene in official information flows, and to redirect and circulate alternative television to challenge that produced by the major media outlets.
Offering an alternative to such official information, the collaborative compositions by these collectives represent everyday compositions focused on local issues or behind-the-scenes events that the major media neglected, and the circulation of these everyday compositions created with a Porta-Pak potentially played a role in fostering the characteristics that define a counterpublic. Further, in terms of curricular transformation, the positioning offered by counterpublicness stands in opposition to banking models of education, particularly because to participate in a counterpublic is to assume a critical standpoint that requires engagement with others and active participation in composing as a means to participate in creating new ways of composing the world.

First, as Michael Warner argues, counterpublics retain an awareness of their subordinate status. Warner writes that the “cultural horizon” against which counterpublics marks themselves off “is not just a general or wider public but a dominant one.” Further, this separation from a dominant public represents a conflict, particularly circling around issues such as “speech genres and modes of address that constitute the public or to the hierarchy among media” (119). Members of the guerrilla television movement, seeing themselves as distinct from the dominant public and clearly were aware of their status. Further, as can be seen in both their approach to composing multimodal texts and their statements in print, members of the movement saw themselves as directly in conflict with mainstream media, situating themselves as a challenging alternative to that dominant media paradigm. This subordinate status was also connected to the technology of the Porta-Pak itself. Because such technology was labeled as “amateur,” this key tool served as a way to distinguish members of the guerrilla television movement from television “professionals.” Ultimately, however, such a position is a critical one: to articulate clearly how a group sees itself as subordinate, it must be able to offer clear critique of the mainstream. Once again, such a position stands in contrast to the banking model of education, which does not require of students to collectively reflect on and critique course content.

Second, counterpublics are structured by what Warner calls alternative dispositions or protocols. Both publics and counterpublics represent “poetic world making”—that is, they are a “scene for developing oppositional interpretations of its members’ identities, interests, and needs” (119). A counterpublic, through its awareness of its subordinate status, supplies different possibilities for composing the world, something akin to what John Poulakos deems “the possible.” For Teasdale and for many others who participated in what became known as the
“Guerrilla Television” movement, this new video technology “fit neatly with the revolutionary ethic of the time in that it didn’t matter so much what you produced so long as you didn’t do what they—the broadcasters—did”(17). Boyle writes that between 1965 and 1968 video technology was the ideal tool for both documenting the spontaneous “happenings” of the period, but also as a means of exploring the media consciousness that new technology and popular communications theories, particularly that of Marshall McLuhan and Buckminster Fuller, promised. Michael Shamberg, in his *Guerrilla Television*, consciously sought to challenge what he called “Media America”: an omnipresent information environment of electronic media that had become “looped-in to our neural networks” and threatened, in his view, to numb citizens’ ability to adapt and evoke change. “If we can understand how to orchestrate these technologies,” Shamberg insists, “we can work directly on the level where Media-America is shaped” (2). In the case of one collective, Broadside TV, for example, we see that intervening in a dominating symbol system circulated by broadcast television—or Media America—clearly a central guiding principle of the group. By documenting the everyday lives of people, members of the collectives play a collaborative community role in helping people access indigenous symbols they can employ in their own way to actively develop, reflect on, and manipulate their local community identity. In this way, the community can create its own protocols that are reflective of their own local identities, interests, and needs. Further, these alternative dispositions or protocols are particularly tied to the portable video equipment itself, since the ability to now move and document events via videotape represented a foundation on which these alternative protocols were based. As a whole, such an approach to composing represents a very potent strategy to motivate students to compose, but to also help them see the potential impact such compositions could have on communities. Counterpublics, as Warner sees them, aims to develop a “poesis of scene making” that, in contradiction to publics, will be “transformative” rather than “replicative” (122)

Third, counterpublics enable a “horizon of opinion and exchange” that remain distinct from power and often are positioned in a critical relation to it. Warner argues that counterpublics are, due to the centrality of circulation of texts, grounded in intertextuality. Further, Warner sees continuous “feedback loops” programmed into counterpublics, in which members dialogue with each other through the circulation of texts. The guerrilla television community, as a whole, fostered exchange in two ways. To begin, of course, is the composition and broadcasting of
video content. Prior to the advent of the Porta-Pak, according to the Shamberg, “videotape equipment was cumbersome, stationary, complex, and expensive, even though it had been used commercially since 1956” (5). Yet, with the introduction of such portable technology, he notes, whereas ten of thousands of dollars were once needed to tool up for videotape, now only $1495 are required. In place of a machine weighing hundreds of pounds and requiring special power lines, all you need now is standard house current to recharge batteries which will let you use the twenty-one-pound system anywhere, independent of external power. And instead of a mystique of technological expertise clouding the operation of the system, all you have to do is look at a tiny TV screen inside the camera which shows exactly what will be recorded, and then press a button (5)

Bensinger, underscoring the connection between the Porta-Pak and counterpublicness, claims that such a portable system represents the basis of “decentralized media,” “One person,” he observes, “now becomes an entire TV studio, capable of producing a powerful statement about himself/herself or communicating a sense of people, places, and events to a planet full of potential listeners” (155). As a result of this technology, GTV supports potential sites of opinion and exchange. In addition, the journal _Radical Software_ represented a print-based forum for the exchange of information about technologies, recording techniques, and interviews with important figures in media. What differentiates the guerrilla television counterpublic from that of the A-Jayers or Sporting Men is that, while their primary compositions exist in a multimodal video format, guerrilla television also employs traditional print to foster community exchange. In this way, the guerrilla television community represents a multi-media counterpublic, one that employs a different technology to achieve different goals in terms of community dialogue.

The example of Guerrilla TV, then, can theoretically model the goals of curricular transformation. First, GTV emphasized on hands-on experience with technology to compose texts, and students could gain practical experience composing with the latest technology through this hands-on work. Second, technology would encourage students to play an active role in self-sponsored writing by grounding these compositions on the everyday experiences of the composers and topics that are of interest to composers. The Sony Porta-Pak represented a powerful tool that could encourage students to engage with the world around them and to articulate their personal, individual experiences through multimodal composing. Further, such
an approach with portable video technology would require collaboration in the classroom, underscoring that the process of composition is a collaborative and communal endeavor and that composition’s extends beyond the classroom and the genres considered the domain of a particular “discipline.” As a whole, the Guerrilla Television movement moved closer to the kinds of practices with multimodal composing tools we seek today: teaching students to compose effectively with a variety of technologies, valuing the everyday experiences and interests of students, giving them practice composing collaboratively to create texts, and helping them develop strategies to circulate information to audiences beyond the classroom. Two guerrilla television groups, Broadside TV and Top Value Television, are representative of the potential portable video could have had in the composition classrooms of the 60s and 70s, not only because of the ability to help students compose in multiple modes, but also because guerrilla video is grounded in valuing the knowledge composers bring to the process—particularly, their knowledge of their everyday experiences. In the next section, I will describe two GTV collectives, Broadside TV and Top Value Television, demonstrating how their everyday multimodal composing with portable tools present us with a vision of curricular transformation in action.

**Broadside TV**

Broadside TV demonstrates the potential of curricular transformation in action. The multimodal compositions created by this collective reflect my four-part definition of everyday composing. The four parts are: 1) The Everyday Occurs Behind-the-Scenes; 2) The Everyday Draws on Local Resources; 3) The Everyday Underscores the Power of “Unofficial” and Mundane; 4) The Everyday Possesses Potential for Change. Since Broadside TV focus on events behind the scenes of a small rural community, drawing directly from the local resources of local people, events and knowledge. By drawing on these everyday, local resources, Broadside provides new perspectives on a local rural community and, by doing so, aim to bring about political change within that community and beyond. In addition, by documenting such experiences and circulating them within a particular community, Broadside TV participates directly in the formation of a counterpublic since their approach consciously aims to set up an alternative forum for local opinion and exchange, fostering the alternative protocols for exchange that characterize a counterpublic. By moving the act of composing outside of the traditional classrooms, Broadside TV demonstrates one potential approach that would foster curricular
transformation—specifically, by engaging with local communities in ethical and responsible ways to assist and support them. Broadside TV, located in Johnson City, Tennessee was founded in 1972 by 26-year-old Ted Carpenter. Inspired by the successful homegrown Appalachian newspaper, The Mountain Eagle, Carpenter took this local community newspaper as his model for his television collective. As one of Broadside’s promotional flyers describes, Carpenter intended to use television “more like a telephone providing citizens of Central Appalachia the opportunity to hear and respond to their own neighbors and their own institutions” (99). Further, Carpenter envisioned this as a collaborative endeavor. Resisting something much like a banking model, he insisted that “under no circumstances are we trying to be ‘teachers,’ ‘missionaries’ or ‘film-makers’ taking a curriculum, message or other form of ‘enlightenment’ to people in the mountains…We create a disciplined exchange that allows people to generate the material for their own learning” (99). Carpenter’s approach here represents an alternative to the banking models of education offered by television in the classroom during this time because it does not import or impose particular perspective on them, nor does it propose to teach or “correct” community members and their practices. Instead, his approach privileges collaborative composing as a means of learning.

Similarly, Lynn Bennett, the director of Broadside following Carpenter, observed that we are losing a lot of our traditions…and I think television has done more to take away those traditions than any other one thing and make people believe that…this old mountain life was poor and illiterate and wasn’t worth nothing. We established ourselves to counteract that whole outside foreign information system (Video Television Review)

Bennett again reiterated Carpenter’s view that by documenting the everyday lives of people not from “New York” or “California”, and by involving them in the development of a localized symbol system, Broadcast TV sought to circumvent the “foreign” symbol system of mainstream media. And so, conscious of itself as “subordinate” to mainstream media, and aiming to generate what Warner calls an “alternative idiom,” Broadside TV is a representative example of a counterpublic. Further, their emphasis on documenting the everyday in their multimodal compositions plays a key role in fostering Broadside as a counterpublic. Two video compositions by this group are representative of their approach to the everyday and reflect the development of a counterpublic: Showdown at the Hoedown and Gate City Mills. In addition, these everyday
multimodal compositions underscore that Broadside TV’s approach have potential for curricular transformation as configured in the 1960s and 1970s.

In terms of a counterpublic, the multimodal compositions of Broadside TV sponsored by the technology of portable video, reflects both the awareness of a subordinate status, the conscious construction of alternative protocols, and formulates a unique horizon of opinion and exchange. Particularly as articulated by Bennett, Broadside TV was hyper-aware of “Media-America’s” influence on the way people thought about rural communities in the United States and, in particular, how they were simply seen as poor, illiterate and “not worth nothing.” Further, although people living in rural communities undoubtedly were aware of the regular negative stereotypes circulating in contemporary media, the multimodal compositions of Broadside TV represent a bolster against such media. In addition, by circulating video about local people and local issues, Broadside TV participated in generating the reflective self-awareness that, according to Warner, characterizes a counterpublic. Similarly, by constructing an alternative media system that local people can participate in, Broadside TV fosters a counterpublic by generating alternative protocols to composing and circulating information via television. Much as we see with the A-Jayers, Broadside TV formulated news ways of documenting events and focused on topics ignored by the mainstream, valorizing more local, community subjects. And finally, by letting community members play an active role in composing these videos, Broadside TV sets up a venue for opinion and exchange—local people are more easily able to share information and circulate it among the community, and community members are more likely to learn more about their community through this engagement. As a whole, the qualities that characterize the Broadside TV counterpublic all represent challenges to a banking model of education and are suggestive of approaches that might foster curricular transformation.

Showdown at the Hoedown and Gate City Mills

Both Showdown at the Hoedown and Gate City Mills demonstrate the potential of curricular transformation through everyday composing of the local. Broadside TV’s 1976 Showdown at the Hoedown focuses on a community fiddle jamboree in Smithville, Tennessee. Rather than merely documenting the event itself, Broadside also focuses much of its attention on both the planning by community members as well as forms of media promotion for the event. For example, much of Showdown is dedicated to interviewing the festival director, and filming the local DJ promoting the event on the radio. Broadside’s coverage also includes material not
necessarily related to the event itself, but focusing on local personalities, culture, and history. In one segment, Broadside interviews a local musician who shows off his rabbits; in another, Broadside speaks with a local man who grinds and sells his own corn meal at the festival. As a whole, this video focuses on the community that surrounds the event, employing the fiddle jamboree as a way to present both the local knowledge of community members as well as document the ways in which the community shares that knowledge. *Gate City Mills*, a collaboration between Broadside TV and the Mountain Community Television collective based in Virginia, focuses on William Riner, owner of the Gate City Roller Mill in Gate City, Virginia. In this video, Riner, microphone in hand, presents his extensive knowledge of the history of his mill, stretching back to the final years of the nineteenth century. In describing the original 1899 dam turbine from the mill that he restored and still used, Riner offers the viewers a picture of the local history of the community of Gate City. Further, the film archives Riner’s extensive technical knowledge: as the camera moves through the mill, Riner proceeds to describe the milling process as it is ongoing while showing how the machinery operates. *Gate City Mills* aligns with Broadside’s mission to document, archive, and circulate local community knowledge, and particularly highlights the long and rich everyday history of the area. As a whole, these two compositions, sponsored by portable video technology, are representative of my definition of everyday composing, and Broadside TV’s work suggests the potential for curricular transformation through everyday composing of the local.

First, both *Showdown* and *Gate City* demonstrate everyday compositions that highlight the “behind-the-scenes” quality of the everyday. Since everyday actions have become seemingly ordinary through ubiquitous and repetitive usage, the everyday blends into the background of social activities; however, although these behind-the-scenes might seem secondary or irrelevant, such practices frequently represent minute challenges to larger social structures. As Bennett explains, mainstream media presents a distorted view of rural people; instead, he says, “we want to concentrate more on local people, more on local issues…” (video). Broadside TV’s work, then, focuses on the everyday behind-the-scenes events that mainstream media neglects. For example, in the opening of Showdown, much of the video focuses on an interview with Berry Williams, the festival director. Interviewing him informally during a haircut at the barber’s, Williams describes the behind-the-scenes history of the jamboree, his approach to planning the event and the various challenges he has encountered.
during the process. Williams, in his first appearance in the beginning of *Showdown*, talks about a meeting with a local congressman that led to the event, and his description suggests negotiation behind the scenes for mutual benefit. He recalls that “[i]t started in 1972 when we had a new courthouse built and the congressman wanted to know if there was some way to get people up to see the new courthouse and them improvements in the area. I told him I knew a way to get a crowd here…let’s put on a fiddler’s jamboree.” Williams’ story emphasizes the behind-the-scenes interactions of the everyday, captured by Broadside TV, and underscores the centrality of rhetoric in such everyday interactions. Further, as Williams’ stories suggest, such everyday negotiations occurring behind the scenes have potentially a great effect on the local community. Williams also describes his thought process in naming the fiddling event, and his thinking highlights that he is clearly considering the connotations of his word selection and is paying particular attention to the implications for his word choice for local history. He says, “Back in those days they called it a convention, but I shied away from ‘convention’ because it sounds too much like a political gathering or something like Westinghouse or Pittsburgh Plate Glass or General Motors…so I didn’t like the word ‘convention.’” His rationale points to how he was considering a word choice that was more appropriate for a local context, a word that was more closely linked to an everyday, local history, rather than a word that suggested groups outside of their community. Bennett’s aim to focus on local people and local issues demonstrate how the everyday is central to the local community, and that behind-the-scene events play a crucial role in the community itself.

Further, Broadside TV also focuses on the behind-the-scenes of the larger musical event in progress, documenting everyday knowledge that the public might not see. Broadside dedicates much of the video to learning more about the musicians participating in the event, focusing less on their performance on the stage and more on uncovering the musician’s personal history and interests and their views of themselves as part of everyday, rural culture. In one segment, a revered fiddle player Fraser Moss is introduced multiple times; however, instead of immediately presenting his performance, Broadside follows him as he presents and feeds his caged rabbits with visible enjoyment. After a brief clip of his virtuosic performance at the Hoedown, we return to his rabbits, where he describes his history learning the fiddle. In another segment, Williams himself points to the behind-the-scenes happenings during the Hoedown that he sees as equally important as the official event. He declares that “it’s not what goes on on that platform…where
the real show, the competitive show…it’s what goes on under shade trees, around the corners of the building, in the rooms of the courthouse…they are tuning up and fiddling and playing their heart out.” Williams himself confirms Broadside TV’s mission—to focus on the community events that might be hidden, but hold great cultural value and relevance. And so, as a whole, Broadside not only presents segments of the event itself, but also highlights the richness of the local talent, skill, and knowledge in the community. By documenting the behind-the-scenes negotiations, thought-processes, and knowledge of the everyday, Broadside implicitly highlights the power of the everyday.

*Gate City Mill* particularly documents the behind-the-scenes history of a local mill, looking at the everyday transactions and material artifacts that make up the everyday. In the film, William Reiner discusses purchasing the Gate City Roller Mill on the bank of Moccasin Creek in Gate City, Virginia. He talks about the mill’s history, demonstrates the mill mechanism and the turbine and walks the viewer through the entire milling process. In addition, Reiner provides an exhaustive history of the mill, and the entirety of Reiner’s narrative highlights both the behind-the-scenes history of the mill, including his own personal history with the mill, but also points to the larger local history around Moccasin Creek, as well as the kinds of relationships that occur between communities. At the beginning of the video, Reiner holds up an old grain bag from the previous owner, noting that the mill was in “business commercially back before the Second World War some time. It was operated by a Mr. H.H. Williams and sons…and they did a thriving business on the banks of Moccasin Creek on Route 2.” In particular, in describing the technology of the mill, Reiner highlights the historical interconnections between different communities that are often hidden from view. He points out that “We’re still using the same old turbine that they used back before the Second World War. And, upon examining the turbine, I felt that it could be repaired and put back into use, although the turbine was build in 1899 by Leffel and Company of Springfield, Ohio.” In describing the history of the mill, Reiner underscores the deep and ongoing history of the local area, histories that remain behind the scenes. In this way, Broadside TV demonstrates the behind-the-scenes histories of the everyday as a material and transactional, and this suggests that curriculum might better incorporate a variety of materials in the composition class; it also suggests that interacting with others as an essential element of the composition process. Both these alternative approaches stand in contrast
to a traditional banking model which tends to be abstracted and fixed within the limits of the classroom.

Second, since Broadside TV focuses on community events “behind the scenes” of mainstream media, their composing practices draw on local resources—in this case, local people, places, events, and knowledge—to document the everyday. Throughout both Showdown and Gate City, we are introduced to a variety of local people from all parts of the community—community leaders, musicians, local craftspeople, and everyday people on the street—and Broadside TV draws upon their activities and knowledge for their everyday compositions. Broadside TV never provides commentary on top of this local activity and knowledge, but lets the members of the community articulate themselves in their own local way. Further, Broadside TV draws upon these local community members to help document local histories, demonstrating the complexity of these local everyday histories. For example, Reiner’s narrative of the local history of the mill presents two layers of the everyday—one focusing on the everyday events of the mill itself alongside a very localized, personal history of an everyday occurrence. As we see in Gate City, his narrative describes the local history of the mill, focusing on the behind the scenes events, such as corresponding with manufacturers to schedule repairs. However, Reiner also describes elements of his own personal history and points to how those earlier formative experiences tie into the history of the mill. In the middle of describing the process of cleaning the corn for consumption, he suddenly digresses, recalling that, as a boy,

I used to walk up by Fall Creek between Nickelsville and Dungannon to my grandmother’s house and there were several mills on this creek…and they always fascinated me and I often wondered why I couldn’t have a mill of my own. I will never forget how good my grandmother’s corn bread and homemade butter…tasted. It was a real treat, always in the summer…and it was good to get out on the farm and ride the horses and eat the good food from the farm (Gate City)

Broadside TV draws upon this local history for their everyday composition, and Reiner’s history demonstrates the complexity of the local everyday. In Showdown, Broadside TV also focuses on interviewing the variety of crafts persons selling their work at the event, including woodworkers, artists, and a local miller. In one segment, Broadside focuses on a musician, Kyle Creed, who also makes banjos and claims that “I got so involving in making banjos I don’t never get to play
them no more, you know.” While he begins to play, he describes the process of building the instrument, including the kinds of wood to use, and we also see elements of his trade in his jamboree booth: the handwritten cardboard sign that reads “Banjos Hand Made by Kyle Creed,” various banjo parts on display, and close-ups that show off his banjo craftsmanship. Broadside TV engages with all these people, asking them questions and encouraging them to share their knowledge—this resource of local knowledge is the basis of Broadside’s everyday compositions. In terms of curricular reform, this points to, again, the centrality of social interaction in composing, but also specifically that composing is collaborative. Broadside collaborates with the local community, working alongside them to compose multimodal texts.

Third, as a result of the fact that Broadside TV both captures and circulates behind-the-scenes local figures, knowledge and events, their videos demonstrate the centrality of the mundane texts and events in comprising the everyday. Their work highlights that the mundane of everyday composing influences more visible, public community practices and events. In terms of curricular reform, this points to expanding the variety of texts students compose in the composition classroom, since mundane texts have far-reaching consequences. In Gate City, Reiner’s historical narrative is comprised primarily of the mundane everyday events that participated in the buying, restoring, and continued operation of the mill. In narrating his history of the mill Reiner, presents a mundane text—a old grain bag from the original mill—that serves as both a physical artifact to support his history. This is a text that serves an everyday, utilitarian role yet demonstrates its connection to a larger, community history—it holds consequences and provides support for larger events.

In Showdown, Broadside TV focuses on the mundane social interactions both in their interviews with local people as well as in the images they selected for inclusion in the film. Williams, in his description of how the hoedown was eventually put together, presents a meeting between two political figures seeking to promote local renovation. It was this ordinary conversation that leads to the creation of a monumental event, the Smithville Hoedown. In terms of seeing the mundane, Broadside devotes much of its visuals to documenting the mundane things occurring around the main event. One of the first visuals of the actual jamboree event shows two musicians finishing their set and departing the stage; we watch, instead of a show, the MC coming onto the stage to announce the next act, and we also see a member of Broadside TV on the stage, recording video of the event. Further, throughout the film, we continuously see
segments of the local radio DJ announcing the event on the radio. All of which point to the mundane as both ordinary enough to be considered behind the scenes and everyday but also utilitarian and formative. The mundane occurrences that we see in *Showdown* all demonstrate how the everyday mundane is formative in creating larger, monumental events.

Finally, as a result of Broadside TV’s attempts to challenge uncritical perspectives on local rural culture circulated through video, their work represents a political challenge by aiming to provoke change, the fourth characteristic of everyday composing. Broadside’s work harnesses the everyday to provoke political change in two ways. First, by circulating video for the community and involving community members back to the community itself through local cable television, Broadside aims to help the community learn more about its history, people, and places and to reflect on its value. Second, by helping the community learn more about itself, Broadside TV aims to foster a counterpublic that represents an actively engaged community that strives to challenge problematic stereotypes about rural people that are circulated across mainstream media. The work of Broadside aims to use television technology to transform it into something new that draws from the local, everyday community in order to both provoke reflection on the community and foster community awareness and local pride in their substantial cultural and historical heritage. Specifically, members of Broadside TV want to challenge the negative stereotypes about rural communities that are widely circulated by mainstream media. In both *Showdown at the Hoedown* and *Gate City Mill*, we encounter a wide cast of characters that are intelligent, articulate, talented and generous in sharing their experiences with others. In addition, by circulating these videos by broadcasting them for community members to watch, locals come to better know their community members and community history and events. *Gate City Mill*, for example, was broadcast on cable television as part of the Mountain Community Television initiative to provide locally produced public access television in Norton, Virginia. Broadside’s Bennett, in his interview, states that “I think we need to know more about ourselves” and, ultimately, circulating information and knowledge about the community back to those very same community members represents a way to achieve that goal. In addition, by circulating these multimodal everyday compositions, according to Bennett the community can better see both that “we are different from that whole outside world” but also that “we are good ourselves.” In this way, the work of Broadside TV has the potential to provoke change because it actively participates in world building. In terms of curricular reform, this stands polar opposite to the
banking model of education employed with television which seeks to inculcate students with the world as it is; instead, Broadside TV attempts, through their everyday multimodal compositions, to revise the world in ways that it could be.

In sum, I argued here that Broadside TV’s everyday multimodal compositions are demonstrative of an approach that is suggestive of curricular transformation. Specifically, I argued that their compositions focused on the everyday in four ways: first, that they documented behind-the-scenes everyday events; second, they drew upon local resources, including local people, history, and knowledge; third, that their coverage also emphasized the mundane events and texts that support larger community events; and, fourth, that this approach to everyday composing has political potential precisely due to its emphasis on the everyday local. In terms of curricular reform, Broadside TV’s work suggests the both importance of human interaction as well as a consciousness of materials in the teaching composing; since composition is frequently the result of interactions between people, a banking model of education does not suit the teaching of writing. Further, Broadside TV’s view of itself as a counterpublic also particularly is suggestive for curricular transformation. First, it suggests the value of engaging with local communities and supporting them in creating alternative media systems that best emphasize local people, knowledge, and histories. Second, it highlights the necessity of participating in systems of opinion and exchange that are public; rather than remaining within a static classroom, receiving media, Broadside TV’s approach is an endorsement for participating in local media. Finally, it suggests that engaging with local communities might foster more critical engagement with an increasingly corporate and centralized media system. As a result, Broadside TV employs television against centralized media, using it as a critical tool to challenge the status quo.

**TVTV**

Whereas Broadside TV demonstrates curricular transformation through everyday composition that draws upon the local, Top Value Television demonstrates the potential of curricular transformation through everyday critical engagement with the world around them. Created and lead by Michael Shamberg, members of TVTV were particularly interested in the formation of a counterpublic: developing alternative protocols for opinion and exchange as a way to promote political action to challenge the grip of mainstream media. In this way, the counterpublic of TVTV serves as a fulcrum for critical thinking. Prior to founding TVTV, Shamberg had already begun to put his thinking about alternative video into practice—in 1970,
he brought a Porta-Pak to the Conservative Party Convention where he experimented with interviews and event coverage that would ultimately form the style of TVTV. His thinking about alternative media also manifested itself in another group he founded, Raindance, a kind of video think-tank that aimed to put into practice the theory of thinkers such as Marshall McLuhan, Buckminster Fuller, and Gregory Bateson. And so, in contrast to Broadside TV, TVTV was less focused on supporting local communities through their work; instead, TVTV worked to deploy portable television to foster critical engagement with media to challenge, resist, and, ultimately, depose mainstream media as a whole. In terms of curricular transformation, TVTV employs everyday composition to articulate itself as a counterpublic dedicated to critical thinking on a particular issue.

As a counterpublic, TVTV reflects the awareness of a subordinate status, the conscious construction of alternative protocols, and formulates a unique horizon of opinion and exchange and these qualities are all in service of critiquing mainstream media. As a counterpublic, TVTV is very aware of its subordinate status. As young, amateur journalists, members of TVTV did not carry the clout of a firmly-established news organization such as CBS and, while many members of the mainstream media spoke candidly with TVTV, not all members of the media looked on the members of the collective favorable. Indeed, in one scene in *Four More Years*, we see one member of the press refusing to speak a word to TVTV, smiling silently to their questions until they walked away. Further, while TVTV were well aware of the potential of portable video, they were also conscious of how their smaller, cheaper equipment labeled them as amateurs by members of the established television media. In this way, TVTV itself is emblematic of the contrast between “professional” media, which could be seen as impersonal and aloof, and the more personal approach TVTV takes by approaching people candidly. Second, as a counterpublic, TVTV generates reflective self-awareness and this self-awareness is particularly directed to thinking critically about all forms of television media. In particular, TVTV was fully conscious of its position in relation to the larger media systems, and this relationship particularly played a role in shaping how these collective both formed and articulated themselves. Similarly, by aiming to counter mainstream television by constructing an alternative media system that serves to enlighten the population by fostering critical debate, TVTV aimed to construct a media system grounded on alternative protocols to composing and circulating information via television. And finally, as a counterpublic TVTV fosters a collaborative venue for opinion and
exchange that blurs the lines between the composer and the composed. By letting the “subjects” of the videos play an active role in composing them, TVTV offers a critique of mainstream television that tends to divide people rather than bring them together in collaborative and critical endeavor.

In terms of curricular reform, then, TVTV’s approach to media not only proposes more serious engagement with the technology in order to learn how to create texts with the tools of media, but also as a means for critical engagement with the media infrastructure in American society. One way that TVTV worked to achieve these ends was to develop a different approach to coverage as a way to implicitly encourage critical reflection on traditional television coverage. By focusing on the everyday and mundane events behind such events, TVTV sought to bring a new perspective on the event to viewers in order to critically challenge the approaches mainstream media took that often simplified such often-complex events. Second, employing the affordances of portable television, TVTV was able to capture more behind-the-scenes moments that mainstream media might miss, but that would also present a more sophisticated and more complete version of a complex event. In terms of curricular transformation, TVTV’s critical approach to media coverage could represent the basis for supporting active, critical readings of mainstream media texts rather than the simple consumption of information via such texts. Further, TVTV’s hands-on multimodal composing that focused on everyday people and events, suggests a curriculum that is grounded in employing technology for supporting local communities. Further, building upon the reformers’ emphasis on academic disciplines teaching core concepts in the classroom, such a critical approach to multimodal composing might support the expansion of terms to describe multimodal texts, and such a critical and active approach to curriculum would serve as the basis for transformation. Two major works by TVTV that are indicative of this transformative potential are *Four More Years* and *TVTV Goes to the Superbowl*. In the next section, I will describe these two videos, and point to how these compositions are reflective of everyday composing.

*Four More Years and TVTV Goes to The Super Bowl*

*Four More Years* represents the result of TVTV’s work with the 1972 Republican Convention, held in Miami of that year. Filmed using ten Porta-Paks, *Four More Years* provides a video expose of the events not traditionally covered by the major networks, including the unscripted events occurring on the convention floor, documenting the odd behavior of delegates,
and improvisational interviews with a variety of figures at the convention. Shamberg, reflecting on the experience in the winter 1972 issue of *Radical Software*, recalls the instructions he gave the team prior to the convention. “At best,” he writes, “we want to cover the media covering those actions and cover the people planning for or reflecting on them. The actions themselves are of negligible importance to us” (13). The results, including journalist Mike Wallace’s admission that “I think I might rather watch this at home, honestly” to scenes of a private party for Governor Ronald Reagan and his fervent supporters shouting “Yeehaw!” to Henry Kissinger’s smirking comment that “the girls” at the convention were “very enjoyable” seemed to provide “a complex portrait of America poised at a moment when a contentious war was about to end and a political debacle about to unfold” (Boyle 55-56).

Another video by TVTV, *TVTV Goes to the Super Bowl* offers a behind the scenes look at Super Bowl X in Miami that year, offering commentary on the frenetic media circus of the major sporting event. As a whole, this video focuses on the behind-the-scenes events that occur around the Super Bowl itself, documenting the wide variety of people that participate in the antecedent activities that surround the game more so than the game itself. As Boyle observes, “TVTV wandered from locker rooms to hotel suites, from barrooms to yachts, from practice fields to the playing field. They captured a man in a gorilla suit dancing on the beach, a charter plane full of well-oiled Dallas fans” (163). Further, the films highlights many players, many of whom proved to be natural performers, and several of whom were given their own cameras to film material. In addition, challenging even further the conventions of mainstream news coverage, TVTV also began to experiment with mixing real and fictional characters, employing Bill Murray and Christopher Guest to perform in segments of the film.

These two videos are both representative of multimodal everyday composing and, as I will argue, this everyday composing is all directed to fostering critical thinking about the role of mainstream television. First, both *Four More Years* and *TVTV Goes to the Super Bowl* demonstrate everyday composition that highlights the “behind-the-scenes” quality of the everyday. This behind-the-scenes coverage is representative of TVTV’s critical engagement with the event itself, as well as its critical engagement with mainstream media’s coverage of events. Their motive is not to share the significant culture and history of a local community demonstrated through everyday events, but rather to convey their central argument that mainstream television’s coverage of complex events is both narrow and simplistic because it
neglects such everyday, behind-the-scenes moments. TVTV’s innovations with portable video technology offered a new way to present information about events in startling ways by seeking out the behind-the-scenes moments. In doing so, TVTV points out to viewers what mainstream media omits. By pointing out these omissions, TVTV seeks to foster critical dialogue about what mainstream media selects to cover and why. In *TVTV Goes To The Superbowl*, TVTV devotes much time to the players themselves, talking candidly with them off the field and behind-the-scenes. Whereas mainstream media focuses on the spectacle of the event, of which the players are a part, TVTV attempted to get to know the experiences of these players. Through these interviews with players, we get a variety of perspectives on what the game means for them. In one sequence, a player in the locker room describes his view of playing football, insisting that “it’s alright, it’s a job…Yeah, that’s all it is is [sic] a job—you’ve got to look at it like that because you get paid for it. You know, in college and high school it was fun—it’s still fun—but now you’re getting paid for it—it’s a job.” By encountering the players in this everyday and more humanized way, we are presented with an alternative view of them than what mainstream media presents. By doing so, TVTV aims to foster critical thinking about why the major networks might wish to distance and dehumanize these athletes through their coverage. In another sequence, after a player presents his many scars on his body, he insists that “it’s hard work, you know, it’s physical labor…and it you don’t like it, there’s just no use doing it.” Similarly, this conversation offers an alternative perspective on the game, and aims to provoke critical dialogue about the physical costs of this sport. Later, several players are shown sitting around a cake commemorating the Super Bowl. One asks the camera: “Have you ever seen…little kids get some cake?” and proceeds to grab a handful of cake and stuff it on his face to the laughs of other players. He continues: “That’s the same psychology football players have they’re just a bunch of kids playing a kid’s game.” And so, throughout this video, TVTV collects a variety of everyday views on the game from the players themselves, and this collection of perspectives complicates a view of the sport and its presentation on television. However, going even further than Broadside TV, TVTV also encourages the football players to operate the Porta-Paks themselves; by giving these football players the Porta-Paks to record their own material. By providing the players themselves the television technology, they are empowered to participate in their own presentation on television. We are given an opportunity to see the players present a variety of personas and guises, opening up new ways to think about football in a more nuanced
and complex ways. The bodies on the field become something much more human, more intimate, more real by seeing a small segment of their everyday life. In one sequence, Pittsburgh Steelers player, Lynn Swann, performs his rendition of Moon River; he later conducts an interview with a fan anxious to meet him. Despite the fan’s clear excitement, Swann continues to question her, asking her name, where she was from, and her reasons for wanting to meet him. By getting a glimpse of players in everyday situations, we also get a better sense of the intelligence and complexity of these men that mainstream media misses. This unique approach to collaborative composing suggests connections between critical engagement and collaboration in ways that would support curricular transformation and challenge the banking model of education. By collaborating with others, particularly those in local communities, to compose texts that are reflective of the people, issues, and needs of those local community members, both students and community members could participate in collaborative meaning making. Whereas the banking model aims to posit already established knowledge for students’ consumption, such an alternative approach would empower both student composers and local community members to engage critically with local issues.

In *Four More Years*, TVTV avoids the actual event in much the same way, focusing instead on the behind-the-scenes happenings during the convention from the absurd to the serious. In one segment, TVTV interviews Vietnam veteran Ron Kovic, who led a contingent of Vietnam veterans protesting the Republican’s role in continuing the war. Describing his experience, he explains,

> When I went to ‘Nam, I began to see napalmed babies, began to see United States’ genocidal policy in Vietnam murdering civilians, babies, then I spent seventeen months in the Veteran’s Administration hospital and I saw men that were twisted by the war, men who lost their legs and arms…and I saw Nixon cut back one hundred million dollars in expenditures to the VA hospital system and completely forget about the veterans that returned from the war

Kovic’s perspective was one that was excluded from the coverage of the convention, yet it stands as an example of the collage of everyday experiences and perspectives that ultimately form the greater event. The coverage of these everyday, behind the scenes events has the potential for critical engagement. Dedicating coverage to Kovic, a figure behind-the-scenes of the convention, is suggestive of critical engagement, since it encourages us to ask why mainstream media is not
questioning the issues that Kovic brings up. In the case of both media events—the Super Bowl and a Republican Convention—these everyday, behind-the-scenes happenings and perspectives are ever-present, yet mainstream television neglects to cover them. However, TVTV aims to recover the everyday through its alternative coverage. As Shamberg writes, “Whatever Porta-Paks do that TV doesn’t is what we want to do. This means injecting ourselves into material, intimate access to situations…the print analogue to what we’re trying to do is collage” (13). By taking this collage approach, TVTV encourages a wider spectrum of perspectives to share the stage.

Further, since TVTV focuses on the “behind the scenes” events not traditionally covered by mainstream media, their composing practices draw on local resources to document the everyday and these local resources serve as a means for critical engagement characteristic of curricular reform. In keeping with TVTV’s critical stance to media, these local resources frequently include established, “professional” media personnel as well as the assortment of different participants involved in the event in a variety of ways. For example, *Four More Years* does not follow the schedule of the convention itself. Instead, *Four More Years* draws on local resources to highlight how different people—particularly other media figures covering the event or demonstrators on all sides of the political spectrum—experience and think about the event in ways that are not presented through official media channels. Much of *Four More Years* involves interviews with other members of the mainstream television news media, and many of their responses are surprisingly candid and offer another perspective on the event that challenges “official” approaches to covering the event. In one sequence, TVTV interviews a floor correspondent with NBC news. When asked how things have been going on the convention floor, she answers, “it’s been very dull.” Asked why this was the case, she responds, “it looks to me like a very package, plastic kind of thing, with very little spontaneity…I don’t see why we have to stay with so much of what’s going on on the platform…I’m sort of put off by the way we are staying with the platform tonight.” Mike Wallace, also covering the floor, is more unequivocal about his experience covering the event, claiming that he’d rather be at home. These figures represent “local” resources for TVTV because they are the available means for the collective to achieve their aim to critically question mainstream media.

In addition to interviewing media figures, TVTV also converses with a wide variety of people participating in convention happenings as a local resource. In one segment, TVTV
interviews several people watching the Vietnam veterans protesting the convention. One man asked angrily “How many guys got killed because these guys were hopped up in the war? What did these guys do? These guys were nothing in the army…they were hopped up, they weren’t protecting the guy next to them.” In another clip, the correspondent interviews a group of women who also disagree with their protests. When asked if they have talked with the veterans to find out what the protester’s issues are, they respond by questioning their legitimacy. One claims, “We understand that many are not from Vietnam though.” Another insists that “They falsify their credentials and are just here with the group but are not really Vietnam veterans.” In another segment, the camera takes us outside of the convention to a gathering of young protestors forming an ad hoc parade dressed up as dead people and marching to a fiddler playing “Glory, Glory.” As a whole, TVTV draws upon the local resources—a variety of participants from all walks of life with different, oppositional, and challenging viewpoints and perspectives. These local resources, combined with TVTV’s coverage of behind the scenes events, present a much more complex picture of this political event. This more complex picture reflects critical engagement by highlighting how mainstream media tends to condense and simplify complex people, events, and issues. As a result, this expanded picture serves to critique such unproblematic and simplistic depictions.

TVTV draws upon local resources in Superbowl as well, again highlighting the wide spectrum of participants in order to critique how mainstream media presents sporting events. A large portion of the video focuses on the antics of the fans. In one segment, TVTV interviews one Steelers fan dressed as a gorilla as he walks out to the beach followed by a large curious crowd who line up to take photos with him. In another scene, TVTV boards an airplane full of noisy Dallas Cowboys fans on their way to Miami, eating cake and smoking cigars. Later, TVTV takes their camera on board of a fan’s yacht and document a variety of conversations—one man’s recommendations for a trip to Hawaii, another man’s detailed description of why he prefers Coca-Cola over Pepsi. By drawing on the local resources of behind-the-scenes, unofficial happenings that circulate around the Super Bowl, TVTV’s Superbowl presents a richer view of the event, one that highlights that the everyday activities surrounding the “official” sporting event are just as interesting—and perhaps even more creative and interesting—than the Super Bowl itself. Ultimately, this is in service of fostering critical thinking about how media depicts events.
Third, TVTV’s work highlights that the mundane of the everyday composing influences more visible, public community practices and events while, at the same time, offering a critique of mainstream media’s coverage of these monumental events. As a result of the fact that TVTV both engages with media figures and participants behind-the-scenes, their videos demonstrate the centrality of the mundane in comprising monumental events such as these. By bringing to light the often-unseen mundane events, TVTV offers a critical engagement with two major events in American culture. For example, in *Superbowl*, TVTV’s emphasis on the mundane implicitly critiques mainstream media’s coverage of sporting events as exclusively entertainment when, in fact, it is primarily a lucrative business that takes its toll on athletes. In one scene in *Superbowl*, TVTV interviews a group of wives of Steelers’ players. When asked what they think the public thinks their husbands are, one responds, “That they are entertainers; our husbands are strictly there to entertain them.” In addition, they describe their concerns about the physical demands of their husbands’ schedules. One woman insists, “I’m so tired of hearing people saying, ‘oh, these guys only play six months of the year and then they have the other whole six months off’” Instead, she describes the eight month season and the fact that her husband spends the remaining four months of the year working out in preparation for the next season. Equally concerning to her, she knows that even if her husband doesn’t seriously injure himself during play, “he’ll be affected for the rest of his life…arthritis and all kinds of things.” In mainstream coverage, the focus avoids this mundane aspect of the sport—that of the athlete’s personal lives, which includes the impact the sport has on their family life and their health. Interviews with several of the players also highlight this negative side of the sport, pointing out many of their injuries. In another interview, John Fitzgerald, a player for the Cowboys, describes at length a variety of injuries in his elbows, his right knee, his knuckles, presenting the scars that remain all over his body. Lynn Swann also displays several scars on his body, and describes a harrowing experience with a concussion on the field. “When I got this concussion against Oakland, that got to me quite a bit…all of a sudden I was just hit in the side and it came around my neck and hit me in the back of the head…I don’t know which way I fell…Joe Green carried me off the field…and they said I kind of looked like a rag doll in his arms. And I never even knew that. And I didn’t even remember it—somebody told it to me, and, to this day, I still can’t remember it.” As a whole, then, TVTV’s composition aims to promote critical thinking by presenting us with the opportunity to reimagine the televised and, perhaps, dehumanizing, spectacle of the SuperBowl,
and consider the effects of the sport on these athletes.

Similarly, *Four More Years* presents several images that point to the everyday, mundane happenings supporting the larger media event but also keying into much larger political and social issues. In one segment, we see a group of Nixonettes preparing to host a convention fundraising party. The rather stern leader of the group provides directions to the group, grimly insisting that “it’s going to be fun and that’s what I want all of us to project—it’s going to be a fun, light thing...I think that just the decorations alone will give us the fun we need!” Such mundane preparations that included Nixon buttons and finger foods ultimately tie into the larger event, particularly since this party aimed to raise political funding for the Republican party. In an insightful interview, TVTV speaks with Walter Cronkite, who argues for the value of the mundane work of journalism and offers a candid and critical perspective on television coverage that advocates citizens doing the mundane work of being an informed and critical citizen. He argues that citizens should get their information from a variety of media and resources, and certainly not from one official channel. He insists that

I don’t think people ought to believe only one news medium...I don’t think they ought to believe me, I don’t think they ought to believe in Brinkley or anybody else who is on the air and I don’t think they ought to get all their news from one television broadcast or even all the news from television—they ought to read and they ought to go to opinion journals and all the rest of it. And I think that it’s terribly important that this be taught in the public schools

Cronkite, himself a media figure, presents a picture of both journalists and the public engaging in what could be seen as mundane everyday work. However, these two examples point to how the mundane has implications on a much larger scale as well. By emphasizing the potential of mundane, everyday acts to create impact on monumental events, we can support students to begin to intervene in larger political and social currents.

Fourth, as a result of this fact that guerrilla television both captures and circulates these temporal and ephemeral events, their videos offer new perspectives on events, people, and cultures that challenge dominant, mainstream, and often uncritical, conceptions. As a result of these attempts to challenge uncritical perspectives on media coverage of both people and events, TVTV’s work represents a political challenge by aiming to provoke change. In particular, TVTV sought to infiltrate and challenge mainstream television media by demonstrating its limitations
and its inability to enlighten citizens. By focusing on the everyday occurrences that collectively play an important role in media events, TVTV aims to both highlight mainstream television’s inability to present a full spectrum of perspectives, but also to make an argument about television’s potential as a way to illicit public dialogue about events, both in the world of sports and politics.

**Conclusion**

I have focused on the everyday, multimodal compositions of Broadside TV and TVTV to emphasize that their different approaches suggest different possibilities for curricular reform in the composition for the 60s and 70s. The work of guerrilla television operates at the vanguard of curricular transformation in two ways. First, the multimodal work of guerrilla television presents the possibility of a connection between everyday writing and compositions that are multimodal. In particular, there is a shared linkage between the political potential of everyday writing and multimodality. Kress, in *Multimodality*, insists on the necessity of a rhetorical approach to communication, an approach that “draws on the resources both of competence and of critique and utilizes them in the process of design” (26). On one hand, competence anchors communication in “social regulation,” leaving semiotic and social arrangements “unchallenged” (6). On the other hand, to critique is to “refuse to acquiesce in and adapt to existing distributions of roles, rights, responsibilities and power in specific occasions of communication” (22). As a whole, “design offers a paradigm which keeps the insights offered by critique and turns them into a means for action in the designer’s interest, an interest focused on the future” (22). With its emphasis on critiquing and pushing beyond convention, Kress writes, “design is transformative, hence inevitably innovative” (132). The multimodal work of guerrilla television particularly demonstrates the shared foundation in innovative and potentially critical composing practices.

Second, in contrast to the nineteenth-century small printing presses, Porta-Paks allowed composers to compose on the move; the work of guerrilla television collectives, then, suggests a connection between the movement of the body and everyday multimodal composing, and such a connection has the potential to move composition beyond the limits of the traditional classroom. As we can see with TVTV and Broadside TV, access to sites that were previously inaccessible is central both to their invention and their composition style. For TVTV and Broadside, portable video was a way to make social issues more visible and, by bringing “the Porta-Pak to the
problem” (Boyle 99), video producers would compose their multimodal text based upon the exigencies of the moment. Further, this mobility also tied into the particular style in which both the camera operator and the editor would compose the video. In particular, the mobility of the technology tended to result in close-ups, shaky video and rising and falling audio. Such realities of filming with hand-held technology further cemented their status as alternative media.
CHAPTER FOUR
EVERYDAY CYBORGS, EVERYDAY CYBORG COMPOSING: MOBILE DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY, EVERYDAY COMPOSING, AND DIGITAL COUNTERPUBLICS

Beginning as early as the late 1970s, and reaching a tipping point by the turn of the century, composition studies underwent a curricular sea change as digital media gained traction in the writing classroom. Russel Durst, reflecting on the field in 2003, observed that, over a span of twenty years, computers had become increasingly central in the teaching, learning, and uses of literacy. As further evidence for Durst’s observation, the CCCC Executive Committee appointed the Position Statement on Teaching, Learning, and Assessing Writing in Digital Environments the following year. Echoing Durst, the statement points to the fact that “increasingly, classes and programs in writing require that students compose digitally.” Further, the statement observes that, as users of digital technology continue to develop new genres, the variety of digital compositions will continue to proliferate, potentially inflecting the kinds of compositions our students will be creating in writing classrooms. Certainly, the authors of that statement couldn’t have entirely predicted the kinds of devices—especially portable digital devices—that would be available in their very near future. Apple had yet to release the world’s first advanced touchscreen smartphone—and the first phone to have its own operating system—for another three years. In other words, the authors were yet to encounter devices that moved digitality out-of-doors on the scale we see today, allowing users to move with their technology and both compose and circulate texts while on the move.

In this chapter, I continue my exploration of the triad of everyday writing, portable technologies, and counterpublics in the present. Here, I will argue that portable digital composing tools sponsor a new way of composing everyday texts, and suggest an expansion of what comprises counterpublics. Specifically, I contend that contemporary digital tools sponsor what I will call “everyday cyborg composing,”—or ECC for short. In Chapter two, we saw that the small printing press sponsored everyday writing that fostered counterpublics in two vastly different groups. As demonstrated by A-Jayers and Sporting Men, greater access to the technology of the small press played an important role in the development of the kind of reflexive self-awareness that characterizes a “counterpublic.” This was transacted primarily
through their printed texts and circulated amongst other members of the counterpublic. In chapter three, the compositions of guerrilla television demonstrated the possibility of a connection between everyday writing and compositions that are multimodal. Further, we moved to a composing technology that was not only accessible to more composers due to its size, but could be carried to different sites where the composition could take place. Guerrilla Television also enacted a moving image of curricular revision, offering a kind of composing that, I argued, better achieved the aims of curricular revision in the 1950s and 1960s.

By looking at the texts of these everyday composers at very different points of history, we uncovered two different examples of what the compositions of composers outside the writing classroom looked like. In both these examples, we see composers that were engaged in their composing processes, who took advantage of available composing tools of the period, and, through the circulation of their everyday compositions, formed counterpublics. In the case of these digital tools, the “compositions” are transacted through bodily movements, and these tools invite these bodily movements.

To demonstrate everyday cyborg composing at work, I will first describe two digital sponsors for ECC, focusing specifically on the interfaces that the designers created. The two digital apps I will look at here include a portable GPS device, named “Explora,” which was designed to help provide information to visitors on park trails in a National Park in Nova Scotia, Canada; and a smartphone app named “Drift” that was designed by members of a non-profit organization based in Windsor, Ontario, a group that employs a variety of multimodal and digital tools to bring attention to local, urban, civic issues. Both the Explora device and the Drift app, I argue, sponsor bodily compositions that are the basis for everyday cyborg composing. Further, these two specific apps demonstrate two different forms of rhetoric at work, both traditional persuasive rhetoric and invitational rhetoric, and these two rhetorical approaches result in two different kinds of bodily performances. Finally, both Explora and Drift provide us with a potential new view of counterpublics as sponsored by digital technology, a perspective that both highlights the contingent nature of counterpublics’ construction as well as their cyborgian network of users and tools.

Next, I will describe what I see as three main characteristics of everyday cyborg composing, pointing to how these apps and the associated bodily performances demonstrate these characteristics. The first characteristic of ECC, in keeping with the concept of the cyborg,
points to the blurring of boundaries. I point to how it blurs divisions in three ways: between the
digital interface and the composer’s body; between composition and composer; and between
composer and audience. The second characteristic of ECC points to tools. As opposed to the
everyday composing of the small printing press or the portable video recorder, ECC involves
tools that are distributed and diverse, and requires their continuing presence throughout the
sponsorship relationship. The third characteristic of ECC reflects the temporary, shifting, cyborg
nature of counterpublics and the texts, bodies, and relationships that form them. As a whole, as I
will argue, ECC necessitates a rethinking of the relationship between composers and portable
digital tools. Further, everyday cyborg composing suggests a recalibration of the discursive space
of the public sphere; whereas publics are seen as emerging from the circulation of visual-verbal
texts, everyday cyborg writing designates, instead, a performance space secured through the
circulation of bodies and their movements.

I conclude by reflecting on the implications of everyday cyborg writing for composers in
the digital era as well as the implications for thinking about approaches to bodily movement and
digital composing tools in the composition classroom.

Cyborg Sponsorship

While I argue that these digital devices serve to sponsor everyday cyborg writing, in
keeping with the nature of the cyborg, this sponsorship relationship is not necessarily a simple or
unidirectional one. Deborah Brandt herself highlights the dynamic of “literacy diversion” in
which those sponsored “divert” sponsors’ resources for their own purposes, and such
“misappropriations” have the potential to be innovative (179). Dale Jacobs presents a more
problematized version of Brandt’s concept of sponsors of literacy, reminding us that the
sponsorship relationship is “often ambiguous, neither wholly positive or negative” (188). Both
Explora and Drift represent a conflux of interests that involve the digital devices themselves, the
organizations that designed the software, as well as the massive infrastructure needed to support
these tools.

At the same time, there is the continuing possibility for Donald Leu’s concept of
“envisionments” for new technologies—finding uses for technologies that may be at odds with
its design—presented by mobility that further complicates the sponsorship relationship. While
these digital tools encourage particular kinds of movement, the rhetorical strategies employed to
move users is not necessarily a coercive one, and there is a consistent possibility for “literacy
diversion” via the choices a moving user makes with the device. As a result, how these digital devices sponsor movement further underscore an already ambiguous sponsorship relationship

The first digital sponsor is the Explora device. In 2007, Parks Canada tasked its New Media Strategies and Investment unit to investigate ways to improve and enhance visitor experience and learning at National Parks, National Historic Sites and National Marine Conservation Areas through the use of new media. One technology this unit identified as having potential to further these goals was location-based media. In partnership with French GPS company Camineo, Parks Canada developed a pilot program called “Explora” that incorporated Camineo’s innovative handheld multimedia location-based guides. The aim of this project was to enhance “the overall experience and education” of park visitors by providing them with information about points of interest in the park. Camineo’s technology allowed users to obtain location-specific information and experiences through the use of handheld computers or smartphones combined with Global Positioning Systems (GPS).

The Explora device itself is GPS-enabled, slightly larger than an average smartphone, and employs a touch-enabled screen that can be used with a stylus stored in the device. The GPS technology connects a visitor’s location on a park trail to a pre-programmed digital text; while the user travels on a path, the GPS device is programmed to activate when the user moves into a designated “Point of Interest” (POI). When the device is activated, a variety of information appears—it can range from questions and answers, to narrated video, quizzes, and photos with informational captions. Further, at particular POIs, users are asked to interact with their environment, sometimes invited to identify a specific landscape feature or nearby flora. The home-screen interface of the application has six colored squares, each titled with a different feature: “River,” “Landscape,” “Flora,” “Fauna,” “People,” and “Science.” Each of these six different squares represent a different topical focus for the trail to come; in this way, a visitor could conceivably walk through the trail six times and receive a different experience while on the hike.

As a whole, Explora gives trail visitors information on the trail that might not be apparent without a brochure or knowledgeable guide; further, the device allows users to design their own experience on the trail based on their personal interests. Visitors interested in fauna specifically can have an experience that might be different from someone interested in the history of human impact on the site. Further, the device manages users’ movements in a variety of ways: first, by
virtue of a map accessible in the device, users are encouraged to stay within the limits of the official park trail designated on the map; second, through a warning sound, users are alerted when they might have strayed from this official path; finally, if a user were to depart from the official trail where no pre-programmed events exist, she would not be provided with any information about her specific location.

The second digital sponsor, the smartphone app *Drift*, is the brainchild of Broken City Lab, an interdisciplinary, artist-led non-profit organization based primarily in Windsor, Ontario, that aims to “explore and unfold curiosities around locality, infrastructures, education, and creative practice leading towards civic change” (website, about). Justin Langlois, in describing what motivated the creation of BCL, points to a discussion with his fiancée about the nature of contemporary protest. He recalls: “I was saying that I think that protest is not a working model anymore for any level of social change. I think because it sets itself up as an antagonism—how can you really change anything if all you are saying is “no” to it? And she comes out of a more traditional activism outlook and so I said, “Well, there has to be something else” (Langlois). As a result of this discussion, Langlois would go on to form the collective group as a way to rethink urban space, particularly post-industrial space in the midst of economic decline. Most notably, BCL’s activity is consciously inflected by media—as they explain, their work extends “from temporary installations to large-scale community events and from gallery exhibitions to various workshops and publications” (website, about). Further, Broken City Lab, conceived as a collective, values the diversity of perspectives that form a community by both creatively responding to issues directly experienced in the community while also negotiating the ways in which other community members might experience the same issues in different ways. In the spring of 2012, evolving out of walks around the city reminiscent of the Situationalist dérive, BCL, with a grant from the Ontario Arts Council Media Arts Grant for Emerging Artists, created the iPhone app. In line with the group’s core mission, this application encourages users to engage

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2 The Situationist International, a Marxist-inspired organization of artists and philosophers founded in 1957, argued that capitalism played a role in developing consumption-oriented social spaces. The dérive, a strategy of walking through urban space that emphasized randomness and playfulness, served to raise awareness of such pervasive capitalist strategies while simultaneously countering them.
with familiar urban surroundings in new ways by providing them with a randomized itinerary of
directions and by encouraging users to photograph different points of their travels to share and
circulate online.

The Drift interface design is very simple: the home screen is comprised of a list of
randomized walks, or “drifts” that the user has taken. At the bottom of the screen are three tools:
a “refresh” button, a “compass” icon that allows users to toggle directional information at the top
of the screen, and a “New” icon that allows users to begin a new “drift.” When a user creates a
new “drift,” they are taken to a new screen that provides a list of different steps.

Each drift provides a variable list of instructions that require the user to move in a
specified direction for a specified distance; in addition, the app also takes advantage of the
camera capabilities of smart phones, asking the user to photograph something after following the
direction. For example, in one drift, the application provides the direction “Walk south for a
block and look for something in need of repair and document it.” Another direction asks the user
to “Walk north and look for a particularly worn out sign and document it.” In this way, the
images taken by the users collectively create visual narratives of the different experiences
moving through urban space. Further, the images compiled by the users’ different drifts can then
be both tweeted and/or emailed; further, the images taken by users, can be publicly shared with
other drifters via a BCL hosted website. The archiving and circulation of these images serve as a
site to generate dialogue about the individual experiences of urban spaces and, in line with
BCL’s mission, provoke change about the way we live in such spaces. In contrast to the Explora
system, Drift is designed to allow much greater leeway in terms of user agency—no specific
“trail” is required, and the user’s experience will inevitably be idiosyncratic and unique.

These two devices, I argue, sponsor everyday cyborg writing. In the section that follows, I will
describe what I see as three main characteristics of everyday cyborg composing, pointing to how
these two apps and the associated bodily performances reflect these characteristics.

**Everyday Cyborg Composing**

Signaling a change from the kinds of everyday compositions that I explored in chapter
two and chapter three, I argue that these two portable digital composing tools sponsor a new way
of composing everyday texts—everyday cyborg composing. Everyday cyborg composing
highlights the cyborgian nature of digital everyday composing that is grounded in the
“confusions of boundaries” between rhetor and audience, between a moving composer, the
composing site and composing tools, and humans and things (8). This concept of everyday cyborg composing provides us with a way to talk about everyday composing in an era of networked digital devices. Further, everyday cyborg composing provides us with a way to think about counterpublics as not only comprising human beings, but as involving a network of composers and distributed tools.

Drawing upon Donna Haraway's concept of the posthuman cyborg, everyday cyborg literacy represents a blurring of everyday writing and digital tools. In “A Manifesto for Cyborgs: Science, Technology, and Socialist Feminism in the 1980’s,” Haraway argues that “quintessentially microelectronic devices” that are both miniaturized and portable generate the ontological breakdown that is the cyborg. Further, Haraway, in defining what she calls “significant otherness,” highlights that “there are no pre-constituted subjects and objects, and no single sources, unitary actors, or final ends”; rather the world is constituted via “partial connections”—patterns in which players are neither wholes nor parts, but where “bodies, human and non-human, are taken apart and put together” (7-8). As a whole, both the shifting connections and blurring of boundaries that Explora and Drift suggest underscore the composer as a cyborg.

Further, these two devices demonstrate what I see as the three characteristics of everyday cyborg composing, and I will look at each of these in turn. First, ECC emphasizes the blurring of boundaries; second, it employs tools that are distributed, diverse, and continually present; and, third, rather than discursive public space, ECC designates a performance space secured through the circulation of bodies and their movements.

**Blurring Boundaries**

First, pointing to “boundary breakdowns” as crucial for what Donna Haraway calls “cyborg ontology”, ECC underscores how these digital tools foster the blurring of boundaries in three ways: between composer and audience, composition and composer, tools and body. These breakdowns lay the groundwork for everyday composing that, I argue, is cyborgian. I will look at each of these three in turn, pointing to Explora and Drift to demonstrate this cyborgian blurring is fundamental to everyday cyborg composing.

**Blurring Composer and Audience**

Portable digital devices sponsor an everyday cyborg composing that blurs the clear divisions between composer and audience. Whereas traditional print tends to reify the separation
between writer and audience—as Ong writes, it removes the text from the living human lifeworld—everyday cyborg composing brings them together, making unclear which is the composer and which is the audience (80). N. Katherine Hayles reminds us that the posthuman presents a tension between disruption and replication, and, as a result of these digital devices, the relationship between rhetor and audience is not always clear, and always at risk of dissolution.

In practice, these two portable digital devices engender a blurring of composer and audience that aligns with Sonja Foss and Cindy Griffin’s concept of “invitational rhetoric.” For Foss and Griffin, invitational rhetoric represents an alternative approach to agonistic rhetoric that, traditionally, involved an orator at a podium employing a variety of rhetorical strategies to change the perspectives of an audience through verbal conflict and domination. With invitational rhetoric, on the other hand, changing and controlling others forcefully through discourse is not the rhetor’s goal; instead, Foss and Griffin’s rhetorical approach extends an “invitation” to an audience to see the world through the rhetor’s perspective. Neither the Explora device nor the Drift app demand the changed perspectives of the user; they simply invite the user to move through space as a way to encourage the possibility of forming new knowledge and perspectives. The Explora interface, for example, invites users to approach the trail in a variety of ways—it presents a series of options a user to move through the trail, presenting a variety of ways to learn about the trail. The Drift app asks users to similarly move through space, but, instead, invites users to engage with different sites in ways that they see fit and compose a visual text to demonstrate this new perspective.

Ultimately, the goal of invitational rhetoric is the possible development a mutual sharing of perspectives that have the potential to form new understanding and insights through a process of discovery and questioning. In this way, both the Explora device and the Drift app blur the line between rhetor and audience. First, the devices operate as a rhetor, since they invite bodily movement; second, if we view the bodily movements invited by these devices as performative and rhetorical, it is clear that the user serves as a rhetor as well; finally, these devices then, in turn, respond to the bodily movements of the user (for example, by calculating the new position of the user and providing new information as a result) and so serves as a kind of audience to the user as well.

Further, thinking about how invitational rhetoric blurs the divide between rhetor and audience suggests an ethics of movement. In keeping with the embodied nature of the cyborg,
both Explora and Drift, unable to forcefully persuade a user to move in a prescribed way, must invite users to move their bodies to produce embodied performances that aim to foster such a mutual sharing of perspectives. Through this mutual movement of device and body, a mutual movement that blurs the division between the composer and the audience, the user obtains an enriched understanding of her particular surroundings, an awareness achieved through the melding of information sharing by the device and the bodily experience and perspective provided by the user. These movements of different users are grounded—to a greater or lesser degree—in principles of self-determination: while the device can invite users to move in particular ways, users ultimately have the choice to move as they wish. The blurring of the division between composer and audience augmented by these digital devices suggest also the blurring of ethical lines that have consistently been the concern of rhetoric. The Drift app, as a whole, aims to support self-determined movements of the users, giving basic instructions that are open-ended enough to invite creative approaches to movement. The Explora device, on the other hand, while certainly not maliciously, aims to create a more structured experience of an established park trail, although providing multiple “lenses” for experiencing that trail offsets such structure.

**Blurring Composition and Composer**

Just as the centrality of movement in ECC dissolves the border between composer and audience, so does it dissolve the boundaries between composition and composer, necessitating a more capacious definition of what constitutes a “composition.” In the case of Explora and Drift, bodily movement becomes the composed "text," the "composition" of the cyborgian human-technology intersection. Thus, the everyday “texts” that users create do not involve the production of a printed text or a recorded video that can be (re)accessed and (re)circulated; instead, these everyday cyborg texts are grounded in transient embodied performances ripe with meaning. With Explora, moving into the appropriate location activates the device, which shares information relevant to that particular site. As a result, the site becomes layered with new meaning for the user, directly as a result of such movement. On the other hand, Drift invites movement as a way to develop new knowledge based on the perspective of the user and framed by the randomized instructions. One direction, for instance, states: “Walk west until you find something undervalued and take a picture of it.” By virtue of such invited movement, the user encounters urban space in a new way, and is encouraged to interpret what may be a familiar place in a new way contributing to a thickening of site-specific meaning.
The more capacious definition of composing required by the dissolution of composer and text resonates with recent work in composition studies that aims to bridge connections between bodies and writing. Christina Haas observes that since “different technologies are materially configured in profoundly different ways” these technologies potentially “set up radically different spatial, tactile, visual, and even temporal relations between the writer’s material body and his or her material text” (226). Explora and Drift both demonstrate the tight connection between a composing material body and a composition, setting up relations that blend the spatial, tactile, visual and temporal to invite embodied performances to create meaning.

Further, scholarship makes connections between movement and composing. Jody Shipka, in *Toward a Composition Made Whole*, argues for re-asserting a more complete view of the communicative process as a “dynamic, embodied, multimodal whole— one that both shapes and is shaped by environment”(26). Rejecting the inclination to associate “multimodal” with the digital in particular, she highlights how the body is an integral part of multimodality and the multimodal composition process. Agreeing with Vygotsky’s claim that “it is only in movement that a body shows what it is” (65), Shipka emphasizes, through a series of examples of her students’ often-performative compositions, how the tools we use have an impact on the body, noting that “differently mediated action places different demands on the body, compelling it to behave or work in ways it may not be accustomed to” (50). She notes that “also impacted by the introduction of new meditational means is the user’s body, the way it participates in, and responds to, the (re) mediated action” (50). Thus, Shipka argues, the tools employed “brings about ‘amplifications and reductions’ not only in the moment of use but in the physical and psychological structure of the user” (51). Her work demonstrates an increasing attention to how a moving composing body is tightly linked to the process of composing. However, the Explora and Drift devices themselves, through their invitation to move a user’s body, play the role of composer, with the user’s movements representing “compositions” that hold particular meaning. In the case of Explora, the movements that the device sets up are physical manifestations of how the device demonstrates meaning with the trail. On the other hand, the moving bodies that comprise the compositions of Drift create meaning through its randomized instructions. And so, instead of serving as a kind of techne for multimodal invention and style, movement that results from the interaction with these digital apps represents the final “product.”
The dissolution between composer and composition underscores that movement is the composition, transient though it may be. The more capacious definition of composition that ECC encourages suggests that bodily movement now represents the composed "text," the "composition" that is created out of the cyborgian human-technology intersection. In the case of the Explora device, the composition is the movement of park visitors across the trail. Similarly, the Drift app also composes movement, but such movements are not dependent on a specific location on the map. In both cases, the bodily movement that comprises the composed text is the result of a composing process that involves the device.

**Blurring of Tools and Body**

Third, in addition to the blurring of boundaries between composer and audience and composition and composer, ECC also blurs the boundaries between digital composing tools and a moving body. The blurring between machines and organism is the characteristic that particularly distinguishes the cyborg, and this blurred boundary particularly underscores the centrality of writing machines to composing as well as emphasizing composing, including everyday composing, as a material process.

The movement intrinsic to ECC is informed by the discipline of disability studies, which has much to tell us about the relationship between writing, body and movement. Kristin Lindgren, in “Body Language: Disability Narratives and the Act of Writing,” argues that teaching “disability narratives” in the writing classroom can particularly call attention to “technologies of writing, or ‘what I’m writing with,’ and to the politics of location, or ‘where I’m writing from’”(97). Looking at these narratives, she finds that these authors “rhetorically reconnect” the written text to the body, challenging the long-established notion that written text represents a “removal from the living human lifeworld”—a lifeworld full of movements (Ong 80). Lindgren’s approach aims to contest the notion of writing as abstract and conceptual and establish writing as “a physical and mechanical activity that cannot be separated from the body that produces it” (97). Lindren highlights the inextricability of composition and body, encouraging us to “think about writing as an embodied practice and about the written text as shaped by the particular circumstances of the bodies that produce and interpret it” (107). Ultimately, this blurring between bodily movement and text, and rhetor and audience, paired with digital tools, represent a central characteristic of everyday cyborg composing.
On the other hand, the blurring between tools and bodies suggests the possibility of what Certeau calls the “totalizing eye” (92). Through the devices that fuse with the body, human movement can be managed and made subject to surveillance, yet through unexpected movements, users can create moving “literacy diversions;” these diversions echo the kinds of everyday activities that Certeau sees occurring “below the threshold” of the city.

Josh Mehler and Kristie Fleckenstein, drawing from Martin Jay’s concept of “scopic regimes,” propose the term “mobility regimes,” arguing that technology represents a kind of interface with the human body that plays a role, through rhetoric, in the invention and advocation for certain configurations of physical movement. However, while for Mehler and Fleckenstein, mobility regimes are inflected across technology, language, and culture, ECC takes this further by emphasizing the role technological infrastructures play in organizing and articulating mobility regimes as well. ECC incorporates their work, as well as that of Haas, Shipka and many others, but expands the focus to look at this relationship on a much larger scale as well. And so, as we saw with guerrilla television in the previous chapter, movement is, once again, an important element to these forms of digital embodied composition.

The Explora device and the Drift app sponsor this blurring, formulating mobility regimes that are grounded in a globalized infrastructure and expressed through the movement of bodies to composes a “text.” Both digital apps exist as invitations to bodily movement, underscoring their sponsorship of ECC. In the case of Explora, the mobility regime is suggested by the map of the trail provided by the device that invites users to both stay on the trail and follow it, as well as the features of the device itself that only operate if the user stays on the trail. Overall, the Parks Canada survey of the pilot program found that users tended to use the device and experience the trail in a fairly consistent way, underscoring the success of this device to employ invitational rhetoric to maintain this regime. Specifically, the Explora device tended to manage and slow visitors’ walking pace on the trail. Users reported that the device added time to their walk, since the various POIs and additional information slowed their pace and encouraged them to investigate at specified points on the trail. However, users unanimously responded positively to this slowed experience, noting that it was a useful educational tool for children, and those who had been on the trail before were surprised at the new knowledge they gained via the device. Although, at root, the movement is based on the relationship between a user and an individual device, on a larger scale, this experience of what I consider everyday cyborg composing is
grounded on the blurring of park visitors using the device, the infrastructure of the park itself, as well as the supportive role the GPS infrastructure—comprised of a system of GPS orbital satellites and network of ground control systems—not “visible” to the composing user. However, without the presence of this massive infrastructure, this specific composition process would not occur.

On the other hand, the Drift app doesn’t require the users to be located in any one specific location on the globe, and, in fact, formulates a mobility regime that invites self-motivated movement. By removing users from the GPS navigational network that is so central to Explora and by randomizing a series of movements, the Drift app not only undermines any particular route, but it also challenges the specific organization of space the GPS network presents. Instead, the only navigation tools available are the text directions themselves, supported by the compass that helps users move in the specified direction. Beyond that, users themselves must make choices on a variety of things: how far to travel, where to stop, and what to focus on when arriving. To use the Explora terminology, users of the Drift application ultimately choose what the “points of interest” actually are, based on the choices of the user. That they “count” as points of interest is demonstrated through another act of multimodal composition: users take a photograph of something at the site and then circulate it to others and share it with the Drift photography database.

Both of these applications demonstrate the interrelationship between digital composing tools and movement and, thereby, illustrate the relationship between interface and body that involves rhetorical strategies to invite and enrich bodily movement. However, comparing the way the digital tools advocate for specific regimes of movement, Explora and Drift offer two different approaches to such regimes, and thus function as two different sponsors. Explora utilizes layers of infrastructure to formulate that mobility regime: first, the official, established GPS infrastructure, and, second, the physical infrastructure of a purposefully-constructed trail, itself built via the resources of Canada’s National Park department. On the other hand, the designers of Drift, in their mission to defamiliarize users with local, urban environment in essence, unplug themselves from the official GPS infrastructure, constructing a mobility regime in which more agency for movement is provided for the user.
Distributed and Diverse Sponsorship

The second characteristic of ECC builds upon the first, and sees that the sponsors available to everyday cyborg composers are both distributed and diverse; in addition, the continual presence of these sponsors is required for the composition process to proceed. This characteristic is significant in three ways. First, distributed and diverse sponsorship envisions composition as a cyborg ecology, pointing to the necessity of the continual presence of infrastructure to sponsor the act of composition; in this way, the infrastructure acts both literally and figuratively as a “server” in that it supplies requested data and orchestrates an ensemble for rhetorical action. Second, distributed and diverse sponsors across a posthuman ecology acknowledge the multiple. It further undermines notions of composition as involving an individual composer, individual texts, and solo autonomous action; instead, the compositional act is performed through the blurry interrelationships between a multiplicity of actors, tools, and objects. Further, this multiplicity also extends to texts, acknowledging the crucial role that a variety of supportive texts—from the “mundane” to the monumental—play in sponsoring ECC. Third, distributed and diverse sponsorship, paradoxically, emphasizes that they are “tethered.” ECC encourages us to scrutinize the discourse surrounding portability, since, although this infrastructure sponsors movements that I deem compositions, much of this infrastructure itself is fixed and certainly not “portable.”

Cyborg Ecology

First, envisioning the sponsors of ECC as distributed and diverse is significant because it underscores that sponsors of literacy are embedded in an ecology comprised of cyborgs. A cyborg ecology, for one, I formed around digital infrastructure, which represents another, perhaps less visible sponsor for everyday cyborg compositions, but one that must be continually present for ECC to occur. In “Infrastructure and Composing: The When of New-Media Writing,” Danielle DeVoss, Elle Cushman, and Jeffrey Grabill argue that, in order to better understand new media composing in contemporary contexts, we need to be better able to account for “the complex interrelationships of material, technical, discursive, institutional, and cultural systems” that all play a role in digital composing (37). Ultimately, “these often invisible structures make possible and limit, shape and constrain, influence and penetrate all acts of composing new media” (16). Grabill, later in Writing Community Change, deems this “infrastructural awareness,” and ECC similarly aims highlight such complex interrelationships.
while expanding this awareness to also include the cyborgian blurring of infrastructure and composer in a larger cyborgian ecology (117).

For instance, both Explora and Drift foster cyborg compositions as a direct result of their connections to vast infrastructures. The GPS infrastructure is indeed massive, comprised of three segments: the space segment, involving twenty-four operating satellites circling the globe; the control segment, which consists of worldwide monitor and control stations and ground antennae; and the user segment, which involves users’ digital devices incorporating a GPS receiver. In addition, minus the user segment, this infrastructure is mostly invisible; however, it certainly plays a role in shaping and influencing the cyborg composing. The Explora device specifically requires this infrastructure to locate the user; it is this ability that allows the device to activate at POIs and plays a central role in the invitational rhetoric used to move the user through space.

Further, Haraway sees the cyborg as potentially empowering us in our relationship with technology. Seeing ECC sponsorship as distributed and diverse acknowledges the power of infrastructure to sponsor writing, and also highlights the potential to encourage agency with technology. Others have considered approaches to engaging with infrastructure in ways that take a more active and collaborative approach to composing. In “Hacking Spaces: Place as Interface,” Douglas M. Walls, Scott Schopieray, and Dânielle Nicole DeVoss propose recuperating the term “hacking” stating that “…we want to situate hacking as a community-oriented act engaged to better our relationships to and work with computers and networks and, specifically here, instructional spaces” (274). In much the same way A-Jayers employed the sponsorship of the portable press to “hack” the relationship between writers and printing technology, Drift specifically represents a conscious attempt to employ mobile technology to “hack” the relationship between the digital and the physical world. Whereas the purpose of Explora is to invite users to walk along the trail as a way to present site-specific information, Drift invites users to simply move in a randomized way. Further, Drift is designed to foster such improvisation as a way to invent new knowledge--knowledge that may be both undiscovered and very individualized. In other words, returning to Hayles, the Explora system aims for replication of both information and movement while Drift aims to foster both randomness and disruption as a way to create new perspectives on urban space.
Multiple Composers, Texts, Actions

Envisioning sponsors as distributed and diverse draws upon expanded notions of the metaphor of an ecology of writing that emphasizes the multiple. Nathaniel Rivers and Ryan Weber, in “Ecological, Pedagogical, Public Rhetoric” aim to develop models for helping students enact more effective, generative public rhetoric, propose a more expansive notion of a writing “ecology.” Although they agree that such a metaphor has been productive, in practice, it has tended to suggest that such public rhetoric is the result of an individual writer, individual texts, and solo, autonomous action. Rivers and Weber’s expanded ecology, instead, takes into account both the “monumental” (such as Rosa Parks’ refusal to surrender her bus seat) and “mundane” rhetorical actions (the innumerable pamphlets, meeting minutes, spreading the word door to door prior to that event) that comprise public rhetoric. Further, such public writing, they write, is multiple—it is both “emergent and enacted through a complex ecology of texts, writers, readers, institutions, objects, and history” (188-189). In much the same way, ECC represents rhetorical action embedded in just such an ecology; however, it extends Rivers and Weber’s work by highlighting the sponsorship role digital technology plays within such an ecology. As a result, ECC reminds us that such an ecology is also a cyborg ecology in which composers and technologies are fused.

The Explora device and the Drift app demonstrate the distributed and diverse nature of ECC in the sense that they provide multiple sponsors to foster cyborg composing. In both cases, an important sponsor is the interface itself, which involves a variety of multimodal texts to invite everyday cyborg composing. Gunther Kress’s concept of multimodality, by definition is multiple. In making a distinction between what he calls “multimodal orchestration” and “multimodal ensembles,” sees “orchestration” as the process of assembling and designing multiple signs in different modes to form a coherent arrangement. Ensembles, then, represent the results of these processes of design and orchestration that combines and layers the multiple modes (162). For the Explora device, the interface represents multiple modes--text, images, iconography, color, sound, video--that all work as an “ensemble” to sponsor everyday cyborg composition. For example, one point of interest, entitled “Water Colour Challenge,” offers a quiz for the user, providing an image of feet in the nearby Mersea River, and further information if the user correctly answers the quiz question. Another POI, titled, “Red-breasted Nuthatch” presents an image of the bird for the user, as well as textual information about the bird; in
addition, the user can tap the “Sound” icon to hear the call of the bird, and tap “Locate” to find the usual habitat for this bird along the trail. With the Drift app, since it employs text to provide directions and some icons to assist users, is less about reading ensembles of modes; instead, the Drift app invites users to compose their own multimodal content by taking photographs of sites along the walk. In addition, the app encourages users to circulate these visuals through the app interface; users can deliver their images to the Drift blog, which serves as an archive of user photographs. As a whole, this digital archive of users’ drift images represents a site where the images of multiple composers work in concert to create collective meaning, in this case, about engaging with urban spaces. Both these devices demonstrate the blurry interrelationships between a multiplicity of actors, tools, and objects.

In addition, emphasizing seeing sponsorship as distributed and diverse emphasizes the multiplicity of texts. The continuous presence of code supports Rivers and Weber’s claims about the necessity of looking at the “mundane” texts within a broader ecology that support rhetorical acts. Considering code as “mundane” extends their point to remind composers of the crucial role digital code plays as a sponsor for monumental rhetorical actions. Further, since rhetorical actions include bodily movement, Explora and Drift highlight the cyborgian nature of an ecology that includes the mundane by virtue of this linkage between digital code and the human body. In addition, the code also acts as a kind of interface between the user and global infrastructures, sponsoring users’ engagement with a coherent multimodal interface while creating a bridge to the larger infrastructures of the Internet or the global GSP system, which also play a crucial sponsorship role.

Tethered

Incorporating the idea of the cyborgian ecology, the scope of my second central question—how might portable writing technologies act as an important sponsor for this self-sponsored everyday composing?—zeros on the term “portable.” Whereas the small printing press and the portable video recorder represents a tool the user actually engages with, the digital era seems to problematize the concept of “portable technology” since such technology requires the enormous infrastructure of geo-positional satellites, the internet, the portable devices, and the apps themselves to support these portable actions. As Devoss, Cushman and Grabill highlight, “writing within digital spaces occurs within a matrix of local and more global policies, standards, and practices” (16). Taking this into account, everyday cyborg composing is based on the
sustained relationship between the composer, the composer's body, and digital infrastructure. Of course, enormous infrastructure was required to build the portable small presses of the nineteenth century and the portable electronic video recorders; however, the role of that infrastructural support for writing more or less ends after the device is produced and sold. In the case of Explora and Drift, the infrastructural support must be continuous—in order to locate the user proximity to POIs, both the space and control segments of the GPS system must be operational; in order to use Drift’s compass and share photographs, the wireless networks that support the smartphone must be in place, and the phone itself must be continuously receiving a signal. As a result, mobile digital devices might, in fact, be less mobile than the current discourse about mobile devices might suggest. In Wirelessness: Radical Empiricism in Network Cultures, Adrian MacKenzie notes that the mobility often tied to wireless technologies is, more often than not, “indexed to stable locations.”

To foster “portable” technology, then, a vast amount of both moving and fixed infrastructural elements must be continuously sponsoring composition. Similarly, in “Learning Unplugged,” Teddi Fishman and Kathleen Blake Yancey understand that to be wireless is not to be “untethered” from physical locations; rather, wirelessness is always “embedded in a physical context and even more so when the physical contexts are multiplied.” Beyond such physical proximities, they argue, other kinds of “proximities”—such as “proximities of discourse, proximities of perspective, proximities of knowledge”—are required, operating as kinds of “power sources.” With Explora, the connection to the physical location of the trail is absolutely crucial; although the device is portable in the sense that a moving user can carry it easily, the device is tethered to the trail; without it, the device will not work, nor will its sponsorship. Drift, however, is not designed to be indexed to any specific location, so, in this sense, is more “portable.” However, a crucial “power source” for Drift is the user’s familiarity with a particular urban space, so although the app can be used in different cities, the user, in this case, is more tethered to a location. Fishman and Yancey remind us that “human actions are mediated by artifacts that are instrumental in the pursuit of performative objectives” and that tools and users affect each other “mutually and continually.” And so, such blurred boundaries between a distributed and diverse repertoire of tools and users particularly suggest a cyborgian relationship that characterizes ECC.
Cyborg Counterpublics

The third characteristic of ECC builds on the first two and reflects the temporary, shifting, cyborg nature of counterpublics and the texts, bodies, and relationships that form them. To recap, the first characteristic of ECC pointed to how seemingly demarcated divisions between composer and audience, composition and composer, and digital interface and the composer’s body become blurred through everyday cyborg composing. The second characteristic builds upon the first, emphasizing the distributed, diverse, and continually present sponsors that comprise ECC, forming what I called a cyborg ecology. In light of these first two characteristics, the third characteristic advocates a recalibration of the discursive space of the public sphere; whereas publics are seen as emerging from the circulation of visual-verbal texts, such as we have seen in previous chapters, everyday cyborg writing designates, instead, a performance space secured through the circulation of bodies and their movements.

First, in keeping with counterpublics, ECC recalibrates the public sphere as something other than a discursive space emerging from the circulation of visual-verbal texts--instead this counterpublic involves a performance space secured through the circulation of body compositions. However, an everyday cyborg composition particularly highlights the cyborgian alliances between bodies and digital technologies that offer the possibility of counterpublic performativity. Second, these alliances also highlight that such collaboration is not exclusively amongst human beings, but things as well. Third, considering ECC counterpublics as a network of entities, both humans and things, particularly highlights the collaborative, contingent nature of alliances to form such counterpublics. In this way, counterpublics are much more temporary and transient than the scholarship suggests.

First, ECC reconfigures the public sphere as a space in which body compositions are key in the formation of counterpublics. This emphasis on body compositions aligns with the frequent critique, as we see with Nancy Fraser and Michael Warner, against Habermas’ view of the bourgeois public sphere as characterized by “rational-critical debate” that brackets the body as a marker of difference. Warner argues that the public sphere should be defined as an instance in which forms of embodiment and problematic social relations are at issue; bodily performance, then, represents a particularly crucial element of counterpublics. Further, different forms of bodily performance represent an important characteristic that distinguishes publics from counterpublics. As Warner writes, dominant publics take their particular lifeworld--which
includes how bodies are expected to move--for granted, while counterpublics are “spaces of circulation in which it is hoped that the poesis of scene making will be transformative, not replicative merely” (122). As a result, counterpublics aim to develop new strategies of bodily performance. Key to this is the tight relationship between digital technologies that sponsor such movement and the bodies themselves.

In the case of Explora, the movement invited by the device is primarily replicative in the sense that it is intended for one particular trail, and, although the user can select from a menu of themes—such as flora or fauna—to frame their trail experience, ultimately the device aims to provide the same information to visitors to the trail. And so, while Explora certainly does provide new knowledge to trail visitors, ultimately, Parks Canada aims to produce generally the same experience between visitors at the beginning and the end of each season. The Drift app, on the other hand, moves us closer to the transformative scene making that characterizes counterpublics. Specifically, through providing a randomized list of directions that change with each “drift,” the app aims to foster movements in urban space that encourage transformative thinking about the user’s relationship with that space.

Second, this tight-knit relationship between bodies and digital technologies also highlight that such collaboration is a primarily a relationship between human beings and things. Habermas, in particular, emphasizes the role of print technology, as well as coffeehouses and salons, in the formation of a public sphere in the eighteenth century; in this way, things played a crucial role in the formation of his bourgeois public sphere. On the other hand, changing the arrangement and location of things can play a role in counterpublic dissipation. Warner, for example, describes New York’s new zoning laws the city passed in 1995 that created a devastating effect on businesses catering to homosexuals. By removing the material sites and the things that helped them to learn to “find each other, to map a commonly accessible world, to construct the architecture of queer space in a homophobic environment,” maintaining this counterpublic was much more challenging (190-191). Things, then, are an element of public and counterpublics that must also be acknowledged, particularly how such things play a role in how strangers come to know each other. Bill Brown, in his 2001 article, “Thing Theory” argues for the value of thinking about things, which we tend to want to “come before ideas, before theory, before the word,”(16) and returning them within our “grid of intelligibility”(5). Ultimately, Brown aims to highlight our important relationship with things, arguing that a theory of things
can help us better see their fundamental role in social relations. Bruno Latour continues this emphasis on our unavoidable relationship with things, arguing that objects serve as “agents” in social relations. Latour’s Actor-Network Theory (ANT) provides a way to “extend the list and modify the shapes and figures of those assembled as participants” (72). Further, Actor-Network Theory highlights the contingent nature of social relations; as Latour writes, “social, for ANT, is the name of a type of momentary association which is characterized by the way it gathers together in new shapes” (65). Ian Bogost comments that, in ANT, “entities are deemphasized in favor of their couplings and decouplings” and, instead, “alliances take center stage” (7). Both Explora and Drift demonstrate the couplings between things and users, and how those couplings affect the user’s body, bodily movement, and perspectives on and relationship with spaces. Ultimately, without these couplings, the bodily composition does not begin; further, without the connective possibility offered by things, counterpublics do not form.

Third, seeing an ECC counterpublic as a network of things and humans highlights the necessity of collaborative and contingent alliances to compose. Michael Warner suggests that, since publics act according to what he calls the “temporality of circulation,” the Internet and new media might represent a new kind of temporality, one that is not necessarily “punctual” (like an A-Jayer’s monthly newspaper) but, rather, one that is continuous (97). This lack of punctuality might render it, Warner worries, much more challenging to “connect localized acts of reading” to what he calls “modes of agency” (98). However, such modes of agency are, as Karlyn Kohrs Campbell suggests, protean and ambiguous—in this case, dispersed across an infrastructure that circulates between the local and the global. While any tool that circulates discourses that form the basis of relations between strangers has the potential to create a public, these digital tools also offer the possibility of forming temporary counterpublics comprised of contingent, short-term alliances between infrastructure and composers to compose these everyday texts.

Composition Studies has devoted much energy to the concept of collaboration (Bruffee, Flower and Heath, Harris, Pratt); however, this counterpublic, inflected by the digital, seems to reflect a model of community based upon assemblage, that, drawing from the work of Johndan Johnson-Eilola and Stuart Selber, is potentially “open to association and remixing into other assemblages in other contexts by other writers and readers” (388).

Looking at Explora, there are a variety of collaborative and contingent alliances formed via the device: the relationship between users, the relationship between the user(s) and the
device, between the user(s) and the physical trail, between the user(s) and Parks Canada infrastructure, one between the device and the trail, between the device and the Parks Canada infrastructure that supports it, and between the device and the larger GPS infrastructure makes the Explora program functional. Undoubtedly, there are many others in this larger ecology. First, the introduction of the device seems to motivate collaboration. Most visitors arrived in groups of two to three people, and each group was given one device. The pilot survey noted that users shared the device in different ways; in many cases, “one person kept control of the device and either read out the information to the other person or that person looked over their shoulder when they were at a “point of interest” (iv). However, when groups of families visited the trail, the report notes, “the device was often shared between the children and the adults with the children spending most of the time in control” (iv).³ However, second, most fundamental to everyday cyborg composing is the relationship between the park visitor(s) and the Explora device, since this particular relationship seems to be nexus where choices about movement originate and where the everyday composition is created. In any case, for the everyday cyborg composition to take place, users must engage with and negotiate these many relationships; although many of them might seem invisible, they still play a significant role in the composing process that involves human movement.

The example of Drift similarly presents us with a list of short-term alliances; however, these alliances seem to better connect to the established definition of counterpublics due to its aim to develop transformative movement. In this case, a main relationship we see with Explora—that between the device and GPS infrastructure—is purposefully rejected in lieu of an alternative version of navigating space that is both randomized and provides allowance for individual and idiosyncratic perspectives and usages. As Warner reminds us, a public requires pre-existing forms—such as textual genres—and channels of circulation to form itself; however, the public discourse that a public circulates does “struggle with its own conditions” (106). By virtue of the fact that the creators of the Drift app itself do not tap into the official ethos of the GPS infrastructure represents a rhetorical move that frames the users’ compositions. For

³ It is also interesting to note, that the report explains that “For groups of adults, the men tended to take control of the device”—which may suggest that a variety cultural-social-sexual infrastructures may still overlie (and override) these technological ones.
instance, in one “drift” sequence, users are instructed to “Walk north for a little while and look for something celebratory and take a picture of it,” and then “Walk west until you see something warm and take a picture of it.” Later, the direction “Walk west until you find something you wish you could fix and take a picture of it” appears. In the example of drift, the relationship between the user and the physical environment in which she moves is primary. Due to this different relationship, the user is placed in a digitally designed rhetorical situation that motivates a very different type of rhetorical response. In terms of a counterpublic, which maintains an awareness of its “subordinate status”, the choice to reject the established infrastructure of “official” navigation highlights Broken City Lab’s awareness of itself as a counterpublic and their smartphone application reflect this in its design. As a result, everyday cyborg writing is also collaborative, provisional, and frequently grounded in improvisation. Further, seeing ECC as implicated in a network in which things are equivalent to humans, this provisional nature of cyborg counterpublics plays a role in decentering the human subject as the loci of composition.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I looked to contemporary digital tools that enlist bodily movement to demonstrate what I call “everyday cyborg composing.” Expanding on posthumanist scholarship on the cyborg, I presented a version of everyday writing that is particularly cyborgian. Like other portable composing tools I have examined that sponsor everyday writing, these digital tools are both smaller and, in general, more accessible to a larger segment of the population. However, in addition, these digital tools suggest a blurring of tools, bodies, and infrastructure in ways we have not seen in earlier periods. In particular, ECC demonstrates a blurring between tools and bodies; it presents composers tools that are distributed and diverse; and it suggests that counterpublics involve both humans and things.

This definition of everyday cyborg composing has implications for three threads in composition studies. First, ECC emphasizes the necessity of paying attention to the kinds of digital tools that are available and can potentially have an impact on composition; in particular, ECC represents a continuation of scholarship that looks at hidden infrastructure, institutions, and texts, both mundane and monumental, that support and constrain composition. As composition continues to be inflected by digital tools that sponsor composition, it behooves us to help our students better understand the infrastructural supports that invite these digital composition. Further, developing this “infrastructural awareness” might help us better understand how such
infrastructure plays a role in rhetorical situations, presenting us with a more expansive view of such situations.

Second, ECC aims to expand on composition’s emphasis on public writing and writing in the public sphere, problematizing what constitutes a public sphere in a digital age. Grabill sees the public forums in which citizens communicate as “nodes in a complex network of public spaces” and envisioning the public sphere as cyborgian and as a network of entities—both humans and things—highlights the complexity of all publics as well as communication within those publics (120).

Third, the example of the Explora system and the Drift app both suggest the need for further expanding scholarship on multimodality, linking it more closely to embodied performance. It suggests that multimodality thought about in this way might help us think of multimodal composition in both a more material and embodied way. Jay Dolmage, working from his background in disability studies, argues that “as we compose media, we must also—always—compose embodiment” (110). In order to recalibrate composition to be better attuned to bodies, Dolmage advocates foregrounding the fact “that dominant pedagogies disemboby” (110) and highlighting that both the body and the text are “meaningfully messy and incomplete” (125). In this way, multimodal performance might be more aptly described as an embodied performance that involves the often-messy manipulation of objects and spaces. Ideally, such an approach would push us to rethink the relationship between the spaces our bodies inhabit and the multimedia tools that play a role in mediating our environment. In addition, such a messy approach that takes into considering bodies and spaces must inevitably take into consideration participation in public spheres in which spaces and bodies are frequently in contestation. Alexander and Rhodes remind us that:

If we want to make good on our efforts to teach students to participate productively in different public spheres, then we need to engage a more rhetorically sophisticated techne of such participation. Anything less, we contend, requires that composition do something else—that it eschew multimedia if it cannot teach it in ways that are fully cognizant of the rhetorical capabilities of those media. (20)

Pushing students to push at the rhetorical capabilities of digital media, in addition, offers a challenge to the boundaries of the traditional writing classroom itself. Gunther Kress, in
Mutimodality, expresses his concern about what he calls the problem of the “physicality of the classroom” seeing it potentially at odds with an unstable communicative environment that particularly advocates for mobility and portability. Geoffrey Sirc’s English Composition as a Happening represents an attempt to redesign the space of the composition classroom, arguing that traditional writing classrooms have calcified into “soberly monumental” museums. Sirc sees that by “re-styling” pedagogical spaces, he can “re-open […] Composition as a site where radical explorations are appreciated” (32). At root, Sirc’s exploration highlights the connections between writing and the sites in which it occurs; however, digital media can push us push at the boundaries, dissolving the classroom boundaries even further.
CHAPTER FIVE

HARNESSING THE POWER OF THE EVERYDAY: IMPLICATIONS

This dissertation began from the premise that portable technologies might play a role in sponsoring everyday composition. Access to such tools and the ability to circulate such everyday compositions might, in turn, foster the kind of engaged, critical, and rhetorically savvy communities that comprise counterpublics. I opened this dissertation pointing to Kathleen Blake Yancey’s Chair’s address, drawing on her provocative presentation to motivate the three research questions that framed this study. First, what kinds of everyday composing have been produced and circulated outside the classroom at different historical moments? Second, what are the connections between everyday composing and technology and how might new “envisionments” of technology play a role in sponsoring everyday composing? Third, what role might everyday composing play in the formation of counterpublics? My analysis has demonstrated that portable composing technology often fosters everyday writing that reflects the kinds of enthusiastic and engaged composing that Yancey points to in her address. This everyday composition is highly self-motivated, serving to answer the needs of both the composers and communities; it is highly self-directed, often confronting social and political issues that are important to these composers but often ignored by mainstream media sources; it is collaborative, since it tends to engage actively with other everyday composers to create texts, to provide feedback, and technological support; finally, it is potentially transformative, since this everyday composing aims to encourage critical thinking about the impact of everyday people composing and circulating texts, the role of technology and media, and how everyday writing can work in service of creating communities that are misunderstood or divided.

Specifically, in my second chapter, “Carefully Screened from Public View”: Amateur Journalists, Sporting Men, and Everyday Writing” I analyzed the everyday compositions of two groups of everyday composers—A-Jayers and Sporting Men—as a method to demonstrate how the small printing press sponsored everyday composition that participated in the formation of counterpublics. By harnessing the power of everyday writing, both communities were able to articulate themselves as counterpublics. Further, the counterpublics fostered by the small press illustrated that others segments of the population generally not considered in theories of the public sphere can play an active role in creating a wide variety of counterpublics.
In my third chapter, “Images On the Move: Multimodal Composing, Curricular Revision, and the Guerrilla Television Movement,” I analyzed the video compositions of two guerrilla television collectives, Broadside TV and Top Value Television that represented everyday multimodal composing “on the move.” Looking at their everyday multimodal compositions, I uncovered two approaches to everyday composing that were suggestive of potential curricular reform. First, Broadside TV demonstrated how, by drawing upon and collaborating with local communities, their everyday multimodal composing could foster a counterpublic that was potentially transformative, particularly because their everyday composing practices blurred the divisions between these composers and the community. TVTV presented us with an example of using multimodal everyday composing to form a counterpublic dedicated to promoting critical thinking, particularly about the role of television media. In both cases, the composing activities of these two collectives offer a counterpoint to the kinds of pedagogical approaches gaining ascendancy at the time.

In my fourth chapter, “Everyday Cyborgs, Everyday Cyborg Composing: Mobile Digital Technology, Everyday Composing, and Digital Counterpublics”, I analyzed two GPS-enabled digital devices—first, Parks Canada’s Explora device and Broken City Lab’s Drift app. In this chapter, the examples of Explora and Drift point to the unique cyborgian fusion that portable digital technologies create with contemporary everyday writing. Describing this uniquely digital fusion, which I called “everyday cyborg composing,” this chapter pointed to how everyday composing with portable digital tools underscores the role of the body in composing, but also how the everyday cyborg composing process requires a tremendous infrastructural network of people and things to proceed.

**Limitations of Project**

There are three limitations with this current study that also represent opportunities for further research. First, I have selected three historical periods, using major plot points in composition studies’ history to demonstrate the contrasts between composition pedagogy in the academy and composing activities elsewhere. However, my ability to generalize beyond these three periods is limited. As such, further research into a variety of different everyday composition practices is warranted, particularly in other moments in composition’s history that have received less attention in our field. Such research, I believe, will contribute to the growing body of knowledge of how people compose. For example, James Berlin describes the era of
progressive education from 1920 to 1940 in his history, but little current research on that era exists. Berlin points to the resurgence of what he calls “social rhetoric” during these decades, resulting in a view of writing as a response to social and political contexts, so exploration of everyday writing at the same time might help us better understand composition strategies occurring outside of the academy at the same time.

Second, within the time frames I have presented, the scope of my study is limited by the number of examples of compositions from these portable technologies, and the kinds of portable technologies I investigate. As a result, within the time frames presented here and within additional periods in future research, this project can by expanded in two ways. One, by increasing the examples of compositions from these portable technologies, I can develop a broader and deeper data set to draw my conclusions about everyday composing practices. For example, the Guerrilla Television movement represents the work of many collectives across the United States, and there remains a tremendous body of work yet to be explored. Next, investigating an increasing number of examples of portable technologies can help develop a larger body of information about how everyday composers create texts with different tools. For example, the release of the Kodak “Brownie” portable camera in 1900 represented a portable technology that allowed people who were not professional photographers to create their own photographs of whatever they wished to capture. The portable Brownie camera, then, represents another possible technology that might offer more insight into everyday multimodal composing.

Third, whereas I have focused on the products of the users of different portable technologies in this study, looking at the narratives and testimonials of individuals using these technologies represents a way to increase my data set and provide more insights into their composing processes. Since my data in this study focuses primarily on the results of everyday composing, further investigation into the composing practices of these communities would help us build our understanding of everyday composing practices and their role in community formation. For example, there were many venues in which members of the guerrilla television community exchanged information about best practices as well as technological strategies and tips, such as the journal *Radical Software*; further exploration of such texts might provide more insight into these composers’ strategies with Porta-Paks. In addition, many members of guerrilla television collectives went on to write memoirs about their experiences within different collectives, and such histories would also potentially offer more insights about these composers.
Implications

Thus, drawing from this research here, I want to point to three important characteristics that we can observe in everyday composing practices that have implications for the composition pedagogy as well as future research: 1) composition as technology; 2) composition as body; 3) composition as (counter) public-making. These three characteristics can, in turn, form the basis for potential strategies in the composition classroom, strategies that might represent an answer to Yancey’s calls in her CCCC Chair’s address.

Composition as Technology

As portable composing tools represent a central thread in this study, my analysis informs our understanding of the linkages between composition and technology in three ways: first, the portable technology I have explored point to a tight bond between the composing process and composing tools that blurs the division between the two; second, observing in this dissertation the ability of the everyday composers to use portable composing technology in ways that actively respond to the contingencies of the moment suggests that employing such portable devices in the composing classroom might better equip students to compose effectively while responding to shifting rhetorical situations.

First, portable technology points to the tight bond between composing and composing tools. For example, in Chapter 4, I drew upon posthumanist theory and thing theory to point to a new way of looking at this bond between the composing process and composing tools. I argued that a digital composing process is a cyborgian relationship and this suggests that a post-process theory of composition should include an understanding of how “things” participate in and influence that process. Future scholarship in digital tools, particularly GPS-enabled tools, might seek to continue to consolidate thing theory with post-process composing theories.

Second, this study points to the value of employing portable composing tools in composition classrooms. In contrast, we saw how attempts to employ television in classrooms to merely deliver course content served to fix students in a static classroom. The early attempts to employ portable television technology in the classroom represented an important innovation, since it encouraged students to compose multimodal texts about subjects that mattered to them, potentially allowing them to move and compose in ways that were more reflective of their home literacies. In this way, the use of portable composing tools, as reflected by the everyday compositions of counterpublics in this study, aligns well with the CCC’s 1972 resolution
“Students’ Right to Their Own Language and offers an approach to composing that draws upon students’ already-present enthusiasm for composing texts that matter to them, their communities, and their own lives.

Composition as Body

As demonstrated in the examples I have used in this dissertation, the body is recruited to operate the various portable tools that sponsor composition, and the body plays an important role in the process of composing. My analysis points to the body’s role in composition in three ways. First, my analyses of composing practices that are on the move demonstrate the ways that composing is an embodied, performative practice that requires the body to create meaning. Second, seeing composition as involving a body in performance highlights that, specifically, the movement of the human body is a crucial element of composition, one that serves both as a resource for creating texts and, particularly when used in concert with portable composing tools, as part of the text itself.

My analyses of composing practices that are on the move demonstrate the ways that composing is an embodied, performative practice that requires the body to create meaning. In the case of the Guerrilla Television collectives, the body was fundamental to the composing process because, in concert with the portable video device, the way the body moved and the places it moved within determined both the content of the video but also its design. In this way, seeing composition as body underscores the connections between the body and available means for composition while also pointing out how the body participates in meaning making. The compositions created through portable technologies demonstrate that the body is one important means by which a composer invents, gathers, and uses both material and semiotic resources. Further, the body itself represents an important available resource itself in the composition process, since the bodies that create the compositions, as media resources, generate meaning as well. The body is the means by which these resources are employed to create meaning—the hands work the printing press, the shoulders hold the portable video recorder, the legs move the digital device.

In addition, this study points to bodily movement as a crucial and under-examined element of composition. As Gunther Kress writes it, “all communication is movement” (169). For Kress, movement and meaning are intertwined and the movement of composing bodies in my studies both confirms Kress’ statement, but also takes it very literally. Considering the ways
bodies move as a means to compose also opens up the conversation to ways in which limits and constraints on bodily movements are created through rhetorical texts. Much in the way that dominant cultural discourses devise what are considered normative bodies, these discourses also designate appropriate ways of movement as well as designate which bodies can move in what ways. As we saw with the movement of bodies in concert with GPS-enabled digital devices, particularly with the Explora device—the device played a role in inviting movement in very particular ways. While not malicious, other devices, such as, for instance, the remote-control drone, might define the limits that would raise ethical questions about how such devices compose movement.

**Composition as (Counter)Public-Making**

The composers I have investigated here inform the connections between composing and circulating texts via portable technology and the formation of counterpublics. First, my study suggests connections between portable technology and counterpublic formation. Second, my historical study demonstrates that composition teachers and scholars have always been concerned with the divisions between the composition classroom and the greater public. This suggests that the relatively recent “social turn” in composition might best be seen as one manifestation of a larger trend. Third, once again drawing on Yancey’s conception of composition as about relationships, the work of the composers I have looked at demonstrate that everyday composition plays a role in building social relationships that are fundamental to counterpublics.

First, as the example of the Porta-Pak in Chapter 3 suggests, there exists a connection between everyday composition and counterpublic formation. In particular, the television collectives demonstrate that the modes that everyday composers utilize, and the cultural information those modes carry with them, play an important role in distinguishing communities as “outsiders” or “amateurs” or “professionals.” In terms of research in composition studies, this suggests the necessity of further research looking at how everyday composers create multimodal texts in a variety of forms and how multimodality is an important element in how everyday communities envision themselves.

Second, my historical studies suggests that a re-reading of the history of composition might require us to see the relationship between the classroom and the public as a fundamental element of the field rather than merely a recent “turn” towards the social that includes publics. The
nineteenth century classroom that, in Chapter 2, I argue is bifurcated, may not be merely a symptomatic of that particular era, a period in composition history generally denigrated for a pedagogy that is seen as abstracted, superficial, and divorced from the real world. By looking at the historical relationship between composition studies and the public, we may be better informed about our relationship with the public, and composers within that public, today.

Third, the work of the composers I have looked at demonstrate that everyday composition plays a role in building social relationships that are fundamental to counterpublics. Their approaches might suggest a model to construct counterpublic pedagogy that focuses on building new relationships with community members and blurring the lines between inside the classroom and out. As demonstrated particularly by the Drift app in chapter 4, valorizing everyday experiences can foster new social relationships. The app, in particular, points to the connections between everyday writing, movement and building these social ties by encouraging new forms of movement through local community space.
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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Josh Mehler is a Ph.D. student in Rhetoric and Composition, and a teaching assistant in the Editing, Writing and Media program. Josh has also worked as a tutor in the Digital Studio and the Graduate Writing Center. Much of Josh's research revolves around technology, historiography, and everyday writing and his dissertation explores the relationship between portable technologies, everyday writing, and the creation of alternative writing communities, spanning from the late nineteenth century to the present. Josh has presented at major conferences such as CCCC, Rhetoric Society of America, and Computers & Writing. Josh graduated from the University of Windsor, Ontario, with an M.A. in English with a focus on Rhetoric and Composition, and an Honors B.A. in English Literature.