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THE NORMALIZATION PROCESS OF MULTIMODAL COMPOSITION: “UN-  
SEEING” PEOPLE OF COLOR IN MULTIMODAL COMPOSITION SCHOLARSHIP

by  
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B.A. Florida State University, 2011

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
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## ABSTRACT

This study attempts to identify normalization cues within multimodal scholarship to highlight moments of “un-seeing” multimodal composing practices and theoretical contributions from non-Western traditions. Advocates of this approach to teaching composition understand it as an effective way for incorporating other voices into the curricular structures of composition courses. However, the instructional resources do not include or cite research that does not lend itself easily to dominant views of composing within academia. I assert that academia must go further with how value is assessed. There is research that acknowledges the multiliteracies practices found within subcultures of America, and plenty of work that deems the communicative practices observed in these subcultural communities as valuable. However, it is more than just including and citing scholarship from and about people of color’s compositional practices, academia must also employ these ways of knowing and being to fully empower students and utilize the knowledge that the students bring with them to the FYC classroom. The dominant assignment genre in academia is the academic essay. Other dominant methods of communication and transferring scholarship are the journal article, annotated bibliography, proposal, and personal essay. Not to mention the many scholars who have critiqued academia for privileging print literacies, which although may be multimodal, promotes a multimodality of one culture and ideological standpoint.

Although the seminal texts from the study offer exceptional multimodal composition research and classroom resources, if we can agree that “the mission of education...is to ensure that all students benefit from learning in ways that allow them to participate fully in public, community, and economic life” and that literacy pedagogy,

essentially what the FYC course offers, “is expected to play a particularly important role in fulfilling this mission,” then failing to see the value and utilize the scholarship from and about people of color ensures those that are marginalized continue to be “un-seen” and students remain unprepared for the tasks of composing and communicating outside of school (New London Group 60).

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To my mother who taught me courage  
To my father who gave me strength  
To Mimi who showed me love  
To Poppy who demonstrated patience  
To Dr. Rios for leading the way  
To Dr. Lathan that started my journey  
To my cohort that supported and helped me to make it  
To the scholars who fought before me  
To my woes who talked me through  
Pattie Mayonnaise, Shontae the Great, Nae Nae and Tar the Czar  
To my encouragers and haters too  
All of your “words” got me this far

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## INTRODUCTION

In recent composition and literacy studies research, implications for a move from skill-based, grammar-based literacy curriculum that reflects dominant ways of knowing and being within American institutions, to a more multimodal, multi-linguistic, and multiliteracies pedagogical focus, has been posited by scholars for the increase of student engagement with the curricular concepts. As a person of color new composition teacher this was an appealing approach for me to incorporate in my classroom. Advocates of multimodal composition posit that this approach recognizes the new and old technologies and globalizing public spheres that require composing in multiple modes to communicate (Lutkewitte; Losh et. al; Arola et al; Alexander and Rhodes; New London Group). Multimodal composition has become an increasingly popular field in rhetoric and composition. Last year alone four instructional and pedagogical books were published for the First Year Composition (FYC) course, Claire Lutkewitte's anthology *Multimodal Composition: A Critical Sourcebook*; *Writer/Designer: A Guide to Making Multimodal Projects* by Kristin Arola et. al; *Understanding Rhetoric: A Graphic Guide to Writing a multimodal composition book that teaches rhetoric and composition* by Elizabeth Losh et. al; and Jonathan Alexander and Jacqueline Rhodes' *On Multimodality: New Media in Composition Studies*. These texts are reflective of the recent shift in the discipline towards multimodal composition for the FYC course because of how recent these textbooks and/or sourcebooks for multimodal composition. Most of these texts were featured and given away as useful resources for the FYC course at the 2014 and 2015 *Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC)*. Because of their



recent publication and vast influence to the multimodal composition field, I refer to these texts as the four seminal texts that lead in the process of normalizing the scholarly discourse for teachers and students alike for the “what” and “how” of multimodal composition.

The multimodal pedagogical approach has evolved from the New London Group’s 1996 article *A Pedagogy of Multiliteracies: Designing Social Futures*. According to the New London Group, the key concept of their multiliteracies pedagogy is that of Design. The notion of design is defined as the ways of meaning making that are actively constructed through the engagement and interpretation of semiotic patterns and conventions (Jacobs; Mills; Rosenberg; New London Group; Kalantzis et al.; Cope & Kalantzis). Moreover, design includes six elements (modes) of meaning: *linguistic*, *visual*, *audio*, *gestural*, *spatial*, and the combination of one or more elements, *multimodal*, which are contextually situated (Jacobs; New London Group; Kalantzis et al.; Cope & Kalantzis). Furthermore, the multiliteracies pedagogy also addressed the increasing importance of cultural and linguistic diversity (Rosenberg; Mills; New London Group; Kalantzis et al.; Cope & Kalantzis; Jacobs). Thus, under these notions of multimodal composition, it is important to indicate that there are cross-cultural and national boundaries set for effective interaction and communication in society. These distinguishing boundaries are what sociologist Pierre Bourdieu describes as “cultural capital,” or the skills deemed necessary for successful functioning and communication within a culture (Barker). For Bourdieu, cultural capital is a social relation system that includes accumulated knowledge about culture, such as forms of knowledge, skills, and behaviors. It is safe to assume that our students come in to the FYC classroom with the

expectations to learn the composing skills necessary to demonstrate that cultural capital. Thus, in negotiating appropriate, effective approaches to prepare students within composing for their academic and professional careers, the multimodal approach offers instruction on the rhetorical analysis skills needed to indicate the available means of communication (Available Design), analyze and produce recontextualizations of those means (The Redesigned), and a metalanguage and practices to describe of the process of composing (Designing) (New London Group).

The conversation surrounding the “what” and “how” of multimodal composition is newly debated in the field of rhetoric and composition. Because of the ongoing debate there are several terms used interchangeably for multimodal composition such as multimedia and new media studies. As more research is conducted and written up to be published in various academic and public platforms the multimodal composition is becoming “normalized” as more universities embrace this approach for FYC. For instance, in their second edition of *Writing About Writing* Elizabeth Wardle and Doug Downs a new was added on multimodal composition. Furthermore, there are many university departments that have changed the structures of their FYC courses to incorporate the multimodal perspective. In the conversations about multimodal composition between students, instructors, and researchers are tempered with individual multimodal composition experiences and the scholarship that one has engaged with. Thus, timeliness of the seminal texts are important. Multimodal composition is becoming more embraced and the need for guidance in theory and practice seems to be the exigence for such resources. However, the demand for curricular and theoretical multimodal composition praxis provides a unique opportunity to study this moment in our field. As

an approach that provides opportunity to utilize rhetorical concepts and composing skills from multiple cultures to reflect the vastly globalizing communicative world we live in, as well as the many cultures represented in our universities. Scholars that are valued and accredited by their peers as experts of multimodal composition lead the conversation surrounding what is “right, proper, and appropriate, or normal” about multimodal composing. Furthermore, to continue privileging Western rhetorical strategies misses valuable opportunities to hear those voices unheard within academia. This study is a careful interrogation of the developing multimodal composition discourses circulating within academia and the contributors that are influential to the field.

## **CHAPTER ONE: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Key Principle of Multimodal Composition Pedagogy**

Since the inception of the multiliteracies concept almost 30 years ago, composition and literacy scholars have conducted research to understand and develop a pedagogical focus that allows students to engage in composing with the wide range of digital and non-digital materials available for the composing process (Arola et al; Alexander and Rhodes; Lutkewitte; Shipka; Rosenberg; Mills; Kalantzis et al.; Cope & Kalantzis; Jacobs). A valued theoretical underpinning of multimodal composition is that this approach “gives students the agency they need to reflect on who they are as composers in the world...[and] allows for many voices-- even those new, marginalized, or unpopular voices-- to be heard” (Lutkewitte 4-5). I highlight this sentiment because the history of the field of composition is replete with scholarship that challenges traditional literacy and composition pedagogical approaches that privilege the written word and Eurocentric ways of being and meaning-making (Alexander and Rhodes; Banks; Lutkewitte; Jones-Royster; Shipka). In addition, many of the marginalized voices are often people of color. Moreover, the scholarship that holds this sentiment as a key principle for multimodal composition pedagogy tends to be about the rich rhetorical and compositional practices happening outside of school that are often overlooked in academia as practices for the classroom. Often times, these studies highlight minority communities and the cultures of people of color to challenge the marginalized perspective held of these communities.

Furthermore, many scholars have challenged the notion of the “newness” or the “timeliness” of this conversation within rhetoric and composition to emphasize the existence of valued rhetorical meaning-making and communicative processes and

practices that subcultures within the dominant culture have engaged in far before it was recognized by academia (Alexander and Rhodes; Banks, Mckee and DeVoss; Richardson; Shipka). Therefore, as an increasingly popular pedagogical approach for FYC courses, it is notable that the aims of this approach provides an empowering experience for those students that are marginalized as well as a scholars that demand their voices to be heard within academia. As the New London Group asserts, increasing cultural and linguistic diversity calls for a broader view of literacy than the tradition literacy pedagogy, which has conventionally taught reading and writing as formal, “monolingual”, “monocultural” (61). Rhetoric and composition as a field has advanced a conversation that calls for more inclusive (multilingual, multicultural, multimodal) learning opportunities for students of all life experiences and cultural backgrounds within the very exclusive walls of academia—a pedagogy that recognizes composition as communication through many different modes, “ways of communicating” (Arola et. al 1).

### **Multimodal Composition within the University**

Multimodal composition pedagogical resources should reflect the recent shift in the field of composition to prepare students for the multilingual, multicultural, and multimodal public spheres. Multimodal composition scholarship explains that these lessons can be accomplished by giving students the opportunity to compose with modes not traditionally practiced or required by academia standards. These dominant practices mostly include genres with compositional aims, meaning students must produce essayistic text, such as the personal essay or a thesis, to acquire the accreditation of higher education. Students are required to engage in the practices of academia, methods of acquiring knowledge and understanding genres of written communication, and are

expected to add to the archives of academic journals. Specifically, the FYC course most often asks students to complete academic essays or tasks that privilege print literacy. Even in graduate education, print literacy is privileged through the emphasis of seminar papers, proposals, and annotated bibliographies, rather than multimodal projects. These practices are situated within Eurocentric ways of being and meaning-making. Informing students of composing possibilities in theory while limiting the mode of communication possible for knowledge-making in practice perpetuates the already dominant modes of meaning making.

The texts meant to be used for multimodal composing instruction and pedagogy, such as the seminal texts mentioned earlier, lack available theory and practice on composing in modes other than the dominant practices already in place for the FYC course. Lutkewitte warns against conventionalizing the field in her introductory chapter. She mentions that the notion of multimodal composition allows for “new, marginalized, or unpopular voices—to be heard” (5). However, I question what about these voices are “new” when there is a decade’s worth of scholarship that demands for all categories of marginalized voices to be heard within academia, particularly a long body of work from people of color that provides rich insights into their multimodally literate lives. Lutkewitte’s analysis of the multimodal approach to composition’s allowance of new, unpopular, marginalized voices to be heard gives evidence that there are still groups despite the progression of composition as a field, that are underrepresented in academia. People of color and their meaning-making and knowledge producing practices are often categorized within subfields of rhetoric and composition, rarely privileged and revered as “academic”. Lutkewitte’s quote is indicative of the fact that only a small number of those

few “new”, marginalized, unpopular people will gain the daunting privilege of becoming a valued and hopefully impactful voice within academia. Those few scholars of color will share the stories that Malea Powell describes in her 2002 article “Listening to Ghosts”. Stories “that frequently go unheard and unsaid in much scholarly work...the knowledge that isn’t honored” (12).

Multimodal composition allows for the assessment of culture and the challenging opportunity to privilege non-print literacies to compose knowledge in creative and exciting multimodal ways. Therefore, as the discipline embraces multimodal composition as the approach for FYC, we as instructors must ensure that we provide representations of a globalizing communicative society. In his 1985 article, “Writing ‘Race’ and the Difference It Makes”, Henry Louis Gates Jr. describes race as the “irreducible difference between cultures, linguistic groups, or adherents of specific belief systems...because it is so very arbitrary in its application (5). A common practice within our composition courses is the study of language use for different linguistic groups through concepts such as “discourse communities”. Therefore, it would be difficult to assess these linguistic groups without the analysis of race and culture for composition curricula. In order to decolonize these public spheres “[w]e should get used to the fact that modern history does not go directly from Greece and Rome to France, England, and Germany, but takes a detour, the Atlantic detour. And in that detour, the idea of the West itself—of Western traditions, Western reason, Western civilization—was invented (“Stories Take Place” 392). Within the dominant culture, people of color’s languages, their physical bodies, and their life experiences are relegated to the background of the American tale. Therefore, our discipline must be revised to free ourselves from what Mignolo calls the “colonial matrix

of power” (“Stories Take Place” 392). ‘Decoloniality according to Mignolo, refers to addressing ‘spheres of control in which the colonial matrix of power operates’ (“Stories Take Place” 392).

### **Purpose of Study**

My work follows a long history of people of color within the field of rhetoric and composition that devotes their research to the decolonizing movement. Powell looks to Walter Mignolo in her *2012 CCCC Chair’s Address* to theorize the “decolonial project”, a movement that is a major theme in non-Western rhetorical traditions. Her address essentially makes the argument that rhetoric and composition’s history is deeply embedded within the history of Western civilization. For Mignolo and Powell, this logic includes the idea that Western history is the irrevocable origin and truth of history and the history of Western civilization is the “guiding light of all kinds of knowledge” (Stories Take Place 392). I take up the “decolonial project” with this research because I feel the same as Powell does, that “[a]s a woman of color, when I think of the stories of our discipline, I find it hard to imagine how I fit in” (“Stories Take Place” 390).

The popular 90s Black comedy sitcom *A Different World* touched on the issues of education and the African American community. In the fourteenth episode of the sixth season, “To Whit, with Love” the main character, Whitley Gilbert-Wayne, is a substitute teacher in a poor inner city school. The students are disorderly and refuse to follow any instructions, especially during their history lesson. After a hard day Gilbert-Wayne decides to resign as the substitute for the week. Explaining her reasons for leaving Gilbert-Wayne says,

Well who could make it, this classroom is over-crowded, the children are



totally unruly, we have these old textbooks...got one little paragraph about Black people in it. It says we were slaves and Martin Luther King came and marched, and now racism is a thing of the past. They teach us that we don't even exist (Kovabab).

I bring this 1993 episode into the conversation to highlight the perspective held by African Americans and most people of color that the education we are provided “un-sees” our existence. Gilbert-Wayne articulates the issues people of color find most wrong with the education system in that economic disadvantages do not allow for proper educational resources, but in addition, the history being taught does not include the reality of African American peoples’ existence. Although this episode aired over twenty years ago the critique of American history as it is constructed and circulated throughout our school systems sadly continues to ignore people of color, and thus, continues to be a battleground for scholars of color to fight within. In her 2002 article “Literacy, language, composition, rhetoric and (not) the African American student: sick and tired of being sick and tired” Elaine B. Richardson argues that for Blacks, “America continues to teach us to accept the status of lower achievement for Black students as the *norm* (emphasis added, 8). However, there has been research stemming back four decades that has studied the multiliterate lives of communities of color. The results show that people of color have led rich rhetorical, multiliterate lives and have historically composed and utilized genres that do not have compositional aims, or print literacy in mind. The multimodal composition approach theoretically offers opportunities for this scholarship to be incorporated within the FYC course.

We must be careful, as we interrogate the relationship of culture and composition,

to include empowering representations of a “globalizing” world within our literacy curriculums as well as honor our responsibility to provide an education that allows students to reflect on their identity as a composer. Over the years, the perspective of literacy has been broadened for the field to account for the multiple literacies we use during the composing processes. However, if we continue to privilege print literacy we ultimately relegate the theoretical contributions stemming from non-Western rhetorical traditions as invaluable to the multimodal composition conversation. The multicultural identities reflected within the multimodal composition instructional resources continue to cast people of color to last place, as I will explain more thoroughly in the results section. However, Powell’s claims about the discipline is an example of what Blackwell calls the “mechanics of erasure” where colonization allows for the physical erasure, or silencing, of people of color and their histories within the American history story. Within my own research I take up Powell’s assertion that “erasing real bodies in real conflict in the real world by separating mind from body, theory from practice” is key in the colonization of academia (“Stories Take Place” 392). The “un-seeing” of people of color ultimately has a colonizing affect on the multimodal composition discourse.

My research attempts to answer Powell’s call to tell different stories for a multivocal and decolonized knowledge world to construct a more inclusive history for our discipline. I attempt to understand multimodal composition as a subfield, and the voices of those that are valued by the field to express and theorize the subjectivity of multimodal composition to challenge the colonial logics that can often ignore the contributions of people of color (Stories Take Place 403). Powell’s focus on the agency and historical relevance of stories, specifically, Navarre Scott Momaday’s claim that “we

are the stories we tell”, led her to question who the field of rhetoric and composition has illustrated themselves to be. This notion demonstrates the power of the story in that the stories told reflect an identity. In this case the stories of a particular place can also reflect the very identity of that place and its inhabitants. However, Powell also emphasizes the “untold” stories, “those stories that are removed from our lives because of conflicting ideologies”. However, those stories must be remembered and honored and including these stories within academia will give people of color options other than the Western fixation with print literacy to achieve a critical orientation to knowledge making, meaning an education that recognizes *all* available knowledge-making practices as viable and valid within the classroom.

### **The Un-Seeing Theory**

Malea Powell argues in “Blood and Scholarship: One Mixed-Blood’s Story,” that dominant historical narratives taught in school, such as Christopher Columbus’ ‘discovery’ of a new world, and Manifest Destiny, contribute to the “un-seeing” of Indian people, nations, and civilizations (3). In other words, that larger narrative deliberately excludes and denies the physical presence or the perspective of American Indians in the founding of the U.S. Powell claims this deliberate “un-seeing of Indian peoples, nations, and civilizations,” is a way to *un-see* the “mutilations, rapes, and murders that characterized this first wave of genocide” (3). These narratives that construct life in America also shape the narratives of academia, which often has a colonizing effect on what is valued as knowledge and theory. These narratives that shape the “Academy” and what it means to be Indian are part of that larger narrative, the ‘American Tale’ (3). Powell shows how the effects of that logic extend to the narratives that shape our field

and continue to “un-see” impactful contributions from people of color.

The “un-seeing” of people of color has been a major theme within the scholarship from people of color when theorizing the history of the field. Texts such as Cook’s “Writing in the Spaces Left,” Dolmage’s “Metis, *Métis*, *Mestiza*, Medusa: Rhetorical Bodies across Rhetorical Traditions,” Greene’s “Misperspectives on Literacy,” both Powell’s “Blood and Scholarship” and “Listening to Ghosts,” Richardson’s “Literacy, Language, Composition, and (not) the African American Student,” and Royster and Williams’ “History in the Spaces Left” to theorize how marginalized groups within composition pedagogies and curricula of American universities “un-see” particular meaning-making practices, ways of knowing, and that often ignore the stories of victimization, exclusion, and omission experienced by people of color in particular. In addition, they claim that current pedagogical standards and practices devalue the language and knowledge practices as well as the literacy acts performed specifically by people of color. Although these stories can be found in university archives, they are seldom valued (cited, acknowledged, used to build theory or influence practice) in the widely accepted documents, practices, and journals that shape the field of rhetoric and composition. In addition, Chicana scholar Maylei Blackwell’s *Chicana Power* further supports the argument that people of color continue to be “un-seen” and must write and historicize in the “spaces left.” Though she is not a rhetoric and composition scholar, her work intersects with what we do in the field and represents the potential for multimodal composition that values modes other than the linguistic. Blackwell used the historical narrative found within the archives of Hijas de Cuauhtémoc, a feminist organization, as well as the oral histories of Chicana women that helped to brainstorm and draft these

documents, as evidence for the rise of Chicana feminism in relation social and political factors such as gender, race, and sexuality. For Blackwell “retrofitted memory” helps to theorize how political identities are produced through historical narratives by enacting a “countermemory that uses fragments of older histories that have been disjunctured by colonial practices of organizing historical knowledge or by masculinist renderings of history that disappear women’s political involvement in order to create space for women in historical traditions that erase them” (2). Similarly, Powell’s theory of “un-seeing” American Indian peoples in the academy is a framework to understand how the available multimodal instructional resources “un-see” scholarship by people of color and other marginalized folks *and* their curricular impact.

I argue that a pedagogy that focuses on lessons of multimodal composition helps students recognize the potential of composing and meaning-making in modes that more accessible and recognizable to the communicative mechanisms they engage with everyday. It will also give students agency to value their own perspectives and ways of knowing that they bring with them to the classroom. Ideally, a multimodal composition curriculum offers students the language necessary to identify the particular message intended to be communicated, helps students recognize the available means of communication, values the multicultural meaning-making practices and perspectives that students bring with them, *and* allows for multiple modes of communication to be valued as acceptable forms of communication and scholarship.

Nevertheless, the four seminal texts I cite have begun a discourse-normalizing process for the field of rhetoric and composition. Alexander and Rhodes describes this process through “Foucault’s understanding of the production of normalized

subjects...[where] ‘normalizing narratives circulate around and through us, conditioning our subjectivity, sculpting our sense of right, proper, and appropriate, or ‘normal’” (182). An example of these circulating narratives can be seen in *Multimodal Composition* where Claire Lutketwite situates the sourcebook as “introducing readers to multimodal composition, advancing the discussions taking place in the field, and encouraging those who are apprehensive about using modes other than the written word in the composition classroom” (1). The introduction of this sourcebook explicates the values of multimodal composition within the field as well as guides teachers and students in research and composing multimodally, which indicates to readers who valued scholars are and what research is valued within this field. Foucault’s definition is significant for this project, because under this notion of what normalizing means, a discourse can indicate what is considered right, proper, and appropriate within the narratives of the seminal texts.

The narratives found within the prefaces and introductions of the seminal texts of the multimodal composition scholarship display the language, images, and other textual elements that contribute to the normalizing process of the discourse. An extended example of this normalizing process could possibly be seen in Alexander and Rhodes’ explanation of the definitional constraints placed on the term media, Alexander and Rhodes recognize that the field often “colonize[s] the production of multimedia texts with more print –driven composition aims” (19). In the 2010 Octologs, Malea Powell makes a similar argument in that colonial traditions fixate on print literacy, and that as a discipline we must move away from this fixation, including “relying on alphabetic text [or] by textualizing non-alphabetic objects” in our theorizing (122). For me, it is important to critique the discourse and monitor the theoretical trajectory of what is considered

multimodal scholarship and what scholarship is and is not normalized as practical and theoretically sound multimodal composition contributions to resist conventionalizing a discourse that lacks in perspective and knowledge-making practices from people of color. Doing this attempts to provide opportunities to compose in modes that appropriately reflect the communicative expectations of our ever-technologically advancing and globalizing public spheres. The seminal texts are curricular resources that are significant staples in the development of multimodal composition as they claim to offer the latest and most influential theoretical frameworks, research and course activities to orient the FYC course in multimodal composing instruction. Therefore, as more research and pedagogy continues to develop and influence the conversation surrounding effective pedagogical practices for the FYC course, a particular multimodal composition discourse is becoming “normalized” for instructors and for our students. A multimodal composition discourse that includes the research of those referenced and cited within these seminal texts.

### **Overview of the Study**

My work analyzes how the narratives of multimodal composition is in the process of normalizing a discourse that “unsees” scholarship from people of color and continues to privilege Western ways of knowledge-making. There is a long trajectory of scholarship from people of color that identifies an “un-seeing” of the traditions, practices, ways of knowing and being of people of color in American historical, but more importantly, educational narratives.

The inception of the multimodal composition curriculum and thus the theoretical

underpinnings that will develop into the narrative used by rhetoric and composition scholars about multimodal composition runs the risk of continuing to “ignore” and “un-see” contributions from people of color with little to no citations and no multimodal composing practices to utilized in the seminal texts. Furthermore, Banks states that there is “both the lack of scholars of color in the discussion [of race, ethnicity, and culture in multimedia writing] and the paucity of attention to the actual practices and conceptual frameworks that African American, Latino/a, Indigenous, and Chicana/a traditions could bring to the discussion” (6). Both examples demonstrate how scholars of color are aware that “un-seeing” happens a part of a normal process of scholarly production for the field of rhetoric and composition.

There are scholars who provide opportunities to compose in modes that are traditionally not accepted as scholarship such as Shipka, who provides a broad range of media and technologies for students in the composition classroom. She acknowledges that “knowledge can be embodied in different kinds of representations and [that] some kinds of knowledge lend themselves better to certain representations than to others” (Shipka 7). However, even as the number of multimodal composition advocates grows that acknowledge the necessity for the composition course to provide opportunities for students to compose in ways that prepare them for the multimediated, multimodal communicative public spheres, *in reality*, the dominant assignment genre in FYC courses, and the dominant modes of communication for scholarship and theoretical perspectives for making meaning in academia is the academic essay. With some minor exception, dominant modes of communication and transferring scholarship in FYC courses are the journal article, the annotated bibliography, the proposal, and the personal essay. Thus,



multimodal composition as a field continues to privilege print-based, essayistic practices.

What's more, we often do not offer students opportunities to engage in the multimodal practices found in marginalized histories, such as Banks' DJ compositional practices, which are ultimately concerned with the production of the mixtape.

Multimodal composition scholars posit that all writing is multimodal. However, a multimodal approach to composition should offer students the opportunity to compose using multiple modes, not just producing dominantly linguistic texts, to prepare them for composing outside of school, and to resist the compositional aims of the university that still privilege Western values of print-based, essayistic, screen-mediated texts that require the student to produce/consume the message in predominantly linguistic modes.

Alexander & Rhodes also acknowledge the long histories of media that offer examples of particular rhetorical affordances by drawing from Banks' work to highlight the complex histories of "multimodal 'practices of sociality'" (21). Despite their existence, such as Adam Banks' *Digital Griot*, my analysis showed that the seminal multimodal composition texts scarcely include bodies of knowledge from people of color or recognize the harvest of multimodal research and theoretical frameworks that define multimodal composing and ways of being in the world from non-Eurocentric perspectives. Non-Eurocentric multimodal research offers "alternate discourses" as well as multimodal production and analysis methods that value the transfer of knowledge and expression through modes other than predominantly linguistic modalities. We must design pedagogy and revamp the educational structures of the American institutions, not just "model a historical sensitivity" for our students (Alexander and Rhodes 21). It is more than finding metaphors from African American practices that fit Eurocentric

compositional practices already privileged by academia, more than merely drawing on the histories of African American culture, but also using the knowledge and practices that come from African American (and other non-European) culture as the compositional aims of textual production for FYC.

My research is needed to resist normalizing a discourse that essentially continues to undervalue unpopular voices within the multimodal composing scholarship. It is needed not only to provide education that is accessible to underrepresented and marginalized students, which should be reason enough, but to provide *all* students with a model of what it looks like to have the ability to communicate and participate fully in a multicultural, multilingual, multimediated, multimodal public sphere. Advocates of the multimodal composition believe that “[p]edagogy...creates the potential for building learning conditions leading to full and equitable social participation” and that “the numerous and varied communicative practices in which students routinely engage outside of school versus the comparatively narrow repertoire of practices typically associated with the writing classroom” calls for radical curricular change (New London Group 60; Shipka 5). An exploration of the African American culture illustrates for teacher and students the rhetorical affordances of digital and non-digital mediums to compose messages found outside of school.

The broadened understanding of literacy pedagogy described by the New London Group resists the “formalized, monolingual, monocultural, and rule-governed forms of language” traditionally taught. However, to effectively prepare students to achieve their aspirations ‘mere literacy’ cannot center on language alone, but multiple modes of representation for a less authoritarian pedagogy (New London Group 64). This is an

important facet in providing instruction that will guide students in participating in “increasingly technologized public spheres” because, according to the New London Group, “effective citizenship and productive work now require that we interact effectively using multiple languages, multiple Englishes, and communicative patterns that more frequently cross cultural, community, and national boundaries (Alexander and Rhodes 19). Ultimately, public spheres may require students to compose a message in modes that do not always privilege the linguistic mode. Depending on the rhetorical situation, the communication required could be to engage in a sit-in as an act of communicating resistance of the oppressive societal restrictions placed upon Blacks or producing a presentation that is predominantly aural to accommodate blind audience members.

Looking to African American culture for theorizing multimodal practices of consumption/analysis of a text and the production of multimodal texts resists the universalizing of the multimodal composing perspective for FYC. Banks asserts that the exigency for the composition course to utilize valuable multimedia practices of the DJ is for “black students to see themselves more genuinely in writing classrooms and theory and can benefit all students for a greater appreciation of the multiple connected and diverging cultural influences on writing” (14). Historically, to survive the oppressive systems that made dominant modes of communication inaccessible to Black slaves utilized other modes to compose and transfer messages such as the songs of the African slaves to navigate the Underground Railroad. Furthermore, a multimodal lens demonstrates the multimodality within African American culture historically from the “sit-ins” as acts, or gestures of peaceful protest during the Civil Rights movement, the

masked-messages radio DJs also during the Civil Rights era that broadcasted the secret meeting locations using coded language, and many other examples.

For the scope of this thesis, the analysis of African American culture for multimodal composing is too large. What is significant of those communicative acts of the slaves and other African Americans mentioned previously is the awareness and utilization of other modes of communication available by this group that could offer interesting theory and praxis for scholarship and instruction that frees students from the limits of the page and from texts that can be composed, received, and reviewed onscreen” (Shipka 11). African American culture also provides models of multimodal composing that does not risk “missing or undervaluing the meaning-making and learning potentials associated with the uptake and transformation of other representational systems of technology” than Western valued meaning-making practices (Shipka 11).

The multimodal composition approach allows for marginalized voices to be heard, but acknowledges the ‘distinct logics’ and ‘different affordances’ of new and old media students used outside of the classroom (Alexander and Rhoades, 11). African Americans have composed and theorized multimodally out of necessity to survive an oppressive American society. Looking to African American culture and other non-Eurocentric cultures for multimodal theory and practice not only answers the call for cross-cultural, multilingual insight for composition pedagogy (New London Group, Alexander & Rhodes, Lutkewitte). In order to provide education such as this, we as a field must first account for the significant gaps in the accessibility for *all* students and limitations on the valued ways of knowing and meaning-making reflected in the educational structures of American institutions and within the emerging normalized

scholarly discourse found within the narratives of the four seminal texts.

From preliminary analysis of the seminal texts show a lack of scholarship that privileges non-linguistically dominant projects. As a whole they demonstrate the general lack of non-Western theory and practice. However, in addition, the low ratio of representation from people of color is a common theme within the normalized discourses course-work materials for student practice, and modes of meaning-making and expression held as valuable scholarship for the field of rhetoric and composition as a whole. Texts that require the linguistic mode as the dominant mode, such as essayistic, print-based, screen-mediated genres of communication, are predominantly the texts that the FYC course asks students to produce. Moreover, the scholarship, research, theoretical frameworks, assignments, explanations, etc. offered in the four instructional and pedagogical books, such as, but not limited to, the seminal texts, privilege mediums that are linguistically dominant. The multimodal approach to composition allows for what Alexander and Rhodes calls, resisting the “universalizing desire to reduce all communication to simply ‘writing’ but instead understand that new media, as a powerful possibility of communication, is ‘content—and context—contingent and irreducibly complex’” (23).

Although, the seminal texts acknowledge multimodal composition as the practical instruction and theory of designing texts that account for the globalizing and multimediated modes of expression and communication afforded by new media and technology, there is still scholarship at the forefront of the multimodal composition conversation that is lacking in these texts. Alexander and Rhodes maintain that composition’s “embrace of new and multimedia often makes those media serve the

rhetorical ends of writing and more print-based forms of composing” (19). The consequences of these risks for normalizing a discourse can be seen in my preliminary analysis to unpack the term “new media” as a key concept held in the discourse of multimodal composition.

Shipka is concerned that the “emphasis placed on ‘new’ (meaning digital) technologies has led to a tendency to equate terms like multimodal, intertextual, multimedia, or more broadly speaking, composition with the production and consumption of computer-based, digitized, screen-mediated texts” (8). Her worries about the term new highlights the conflation within academic discourse for these very similar but nuanced terms and what it means for the production of texts in the FYC course. However, this conception of “new media,” also erases a history of technology and mediums that have been used by people of color to compose, express, and survive oppressive systems of inequality and injustice in America. A historical analysis of the multimodal rhetorical strategies implemented by people of color for survival requires an expanded definition of *text*. It is important to understand the meaning of *text* to signal the types of scholarship that is included in the coursework of the FYC course—what projects are considered scholarship by university standards to receive a degree.

My work takes up the progressive notion of *text* for my own study to highlight the production of purposeful communicative texts that, in the standards set by the four seminal texts, are deemed not “right, proper, or appropriate” multimodal production and consumption, due to the paucity of scholarship that stems from African American and other people of color’s ways of knowing and multimodal meaning-making practices within these seminal texts. There is a myriad of multimodal productive, analytical, and

rhetorical strategies to explore for the enhancement of the multimodal composition tradition. And once this research is acknowledged as valuable sources of scholarship for multimodal composition by their inclusion in the texts positioned at the “forefront” of multimodal composition scholarship, these works will demonstrate the increasingly globalized societies represented by our students in our classrooms, and foster a classroom that resists the monolingual, monocultural, formalized, rule-governed FYC course that is popular within our institutions.

Ultimately the field risks normalizing a discourse that will continue to limit students to the academic requirements of screen-mediated, digital, print-based essayistic modes of meaning-making instead of exploring and gaining experience with the vastly multimediated, multimodal communicative systems provided by the multicultural discourses found in our public spheres and the new technology that has transformed the realm of communication representation. I conduct this research in the hopes that my project can open doors to more research opportunities to demonstrate how people of color, specifically African Americans, multimodally communicate and compose through what Banks describes as “survival technologies,” and to provide a rich source of multimodal composing practices to theorize from in the available body of scholarship.

## CHAPTER TWO: METHOD

In order to understand how this pedagogical approach theoretically offers opportunity for multiple voices and perspectives within the circulating narratives but misses vital opportunities for the integration of non-Eurocentric meaning-making and compositional practices that ultimately continue to ignore the scholarship from people of color, I designed a study to answer the following questions:

1. How is the field of multimodal composition normalizing a discourse?
2. How is that normalized discourse “un-seeing” scholarship from and about people of color?
3. What can be done to resist normalizing a discourse that “un-sees” people of color’s multimodal composition scholarly contributions?

To answer these questions this project takes up the Foucaultian definition of the normalizing process whereby narratives that circulate around and through us inform and are informed by what is considered right, proper, and appropriate, or normal (Alexander and Rhodes 182). I used a combined method of Theo van Leeuwen’s multimodal systemic-functional analysis explicated in “Multimodality, Genre, and Design” and rhetorical analysis to assess the introductions, prefaces, and references of the four seminal texts that are normalizing the discourse of multimodal composition. Using this method assumes that texts are made up of *communicative moves*, or stages, and that the boundaries of these “stages” are marked by “linguistic realizations” (van Leeuwen 75).

The multimodal systemic-functional approach offers a method of analysis for how the words written by the authors and the contributing reviews from other scholars is normalizing the multimodal composition discourse for what is “right, proper, and



appropriate” scholarship and course activities/assignments. The systemic-functional method will allow me to evaluate each sentence as a separate element and rhetorically analyze them for the “linguistic realization,” or the communicative strategy present in the element’s message. Communicative realization occurs in the awareness of the purpose of each communicative stage (a sentence or image) and the recognition of the move from one stage to the next. Zdenek and Johnstone assert, “sentences take form for reasons connected with the functions utterances serve,” indicating that the communicative realization establishes the perceived purpose of communication for the particular component being analyzed (27). Each component of a text is realized by the “reader,” or someone who engages with the text, in what van Leeuwen considers “reading paths” that are created by the attention paid to the differential salience of a particular textual element: “[R]eading paths begin with the most salient element, from there move on to the next most salient element, and so on” (van Leeuwen 81-82). This process allows readers to see the elements that are included within, for example, a text’s introduction or preface.

Van Leeuwen defines genres as templates for communicative actions characterized by their functions (74; 81). Under this notion, the introductions and prefaces of these seminal texts are genres that provide significant data for the normalizing processes, as their communicative purpose is to give an overview of the texts content and structure, as well as to ground the concepts in a particular theoretical trajectory. However, genres are also socially situated and culturally embedded, and therefore carry beliefs, values, and ideologies of particular communities and cultures (Bawarshi 197). The multimodal analysis of the textual elements included images and words. Van Leeuwen helps to make the argument that focusing on the “communicative act” with a multimodal

lens can elucidate the normalizing process of these texts.

The seminal texts are composed in a traditional school genre for disseminating information (the textbook) and are composed as a traditional print-based text (a book). Therefore, the predominantly required mode of interpretation to analyze for normalization was linguistic, however, each seminal text offered links to additional materials available via the Internet, such as past student multimodal projects, visual aids for instructions, and additional readings. The seminal texts are instructional course materials: textbooks, anthologies, and/or pedagogical resources for multimodal composition praxis. I must point out that the only seminal text that provided an image as a textual component was *Understanding Rhetoric*. These images were of scholars in rhetoric and composition who had reviewed the textbook. The images were drawn in their likeness and included word bubbles, true to the comic book genre, of quotes that the scholar has reviewed about the book. In those instances the images and words together depicted normalizing by evoking the credibility of the text, *Understanding Rhetoric*, as a reliable and useful source for composition instruction. Additionally, they situate the text as one that holds true to multimodal composition principles.

Thus, I chose the prefaces and introductions of the seminal texts because they establish the identity of the text through implicit and explicit value statements that normalize for the reader a particular way of thinking about multimodality. The traditional function of a preface or introduction is to introduce the subject, scope, and aim of the book, providing the story of how the book came into being. They offer insight on the rationale for works cited or referenced and what the reader/user should expect to learn. As a genre, the prefaces and introductions provide circulating narratives of multimodal

composition necessary to analyze discourses that demonstrate evaluative terms that deem the particular scholarship included in the text as right, proper, and appropriate.

I paired the prefaces and introductions with the reference list, table of contents, and works cited or referenced to indicate which scholarly traditions were represented and to indicate which scholars were included and excluded. This was done to clearly demonstrate who is arguing for the particular kind of multimodal composing strategies offered in the text and ultimately indicate who is not a part of the trajectory offered in the text. These lists of content and scholarly citations represent the information that can be found within these texts. The scope of the study did not permit engaging all of the instructional content of the text past the introductions and prefaces. However, it was important to know what could be found in each text. The introductions and prefaces thoroughly went through each section of the text for what scholarly contributions were included and why.

I modeled the systemic-functional genre analysis methods as described in van Leeuwen's article, wherein each textual element (sentences and images) was separately analyzed as a communicative stage. I created a chart for the prefaces and introductions for each text in order to separate each communicative stage. In the first column, I listed the original text. The communicative realization was written in the second column. Thus, by rhetorically assessing each communicative stage to understand the purpose of the message, the notions of what is "right, proper, and appropriate" multimodal composition could be assessed. These notions ultimately contribute to the normalizing process of this field of work. Therefore a third column was added to the systemic-functional genre chart to record specific instances of normalizing happening within the textual element. I

extracted value terms that suggested evaluative stances on to the reader right, proper, and appropriate multimodal composition scholarship and practices found within the text.

### **Data Collection**

I selected four recently published multimodal composition textbooks as the seminal texts for my textual analysis. Claire Lutkewitte's *Multimodal Composition: A Critical Sourcebook*; *Writer/Designer: A Guide to Making Multimodal Projects* by Kristin Arola et. al; *Understanding Rhetoric: A Graphic Guide to Writing* by Elizabeth Losh et. al; and Jonathan Alexander and Jacqueline Rhodes' *On Multimodality: New Media in Composition Studies*. These texts are fast becoming the circulating multimodal composition narratives for our field and were given out as free course materials at the 2014 and 2015 CCCC.

### **Data Analysis**

I began the preliminary breakdown of each textual element into the multimodal systemic-functional genre chart with the added column for the extraction of normalizing cues. The communicative realization was determined for each textual element to determine the purpose in relation to the genre's function. From there, terms that indicated value or described what was right, proper, appropriate, or normal about the text and the scholarship found within the text were categorized as a normalizing cue and placed in the last column. I use Joe Saldaña's definition of value as, "the *importance* we attribute to oneself, another person, thing, or idea (111). The systemic-functional genre analysis allowed me to analyze each sentence and image as separate elements and rhetorically analyze them for the communicative purpose and therefore determine the significance attributed to the text. I have provided the tables that were created in the Results chapter.

After each preface or introduction was analyzed for their normalizing cues, the reference list and citations were examined for the scholarship that was used to theoretically ground the text and to serve as additional resources for instructors and students. Examining the references listed in conjunction with the normalizing cues determined the scholarship that the seminal text is essentially arguing as right, proper, appropriate, or normal multimodal composition. Therefore, the multimodal composition scholarship that is not included is essentially just outside the realm of what these seminal texts posit as “normal” multimodal composing practices for the FYC course.

## CHAPTER THREE: RESULTS

### The Normalization Process

To demonstrate the normalizing process more clearly I have provided charts that indicate the cues that lead to my understanding of the seminal texts arguments for what is right, proper, appropriate or normal multimodal composition. The tables below are divided into three columns: the original text (words or images), the communicative realization, and the normalizing cues that contribute to the process of normalizing.

Table 1: *Writer/Designer: A Guide to Making Multimodal Projects* by Kristin Arola, Jennifer Sheppard, and Cheryl Ball

Original Text	Communicative Realization	Normalizing Cues
What's the best way to get students started with a multimodal project (v)?	Posed a question to get the reader thinking about "best" and multiple methods to teach mmc	Readers are posed a question to conjure up thoughts of best practices for mmc
In <i>Writer/Designer</i> , we aim to help you answer these questions, making multimodal composing strategies and projects accessible to you and your students (v).	Explaining the objective of their text	Suggests that the text will provide the best way to get students started with a mm project.
This book helps students to develop these skills together, providing them with a rhetorical toolkit for making purposeful, relevant choices in their writing and designing (v).	Description of the lessons the text provides	Ensures the reader of the quality of the rhetorical and compositional strategies offered in the text
Although the focus <i>Writer/Designer</i> is on helping students develop compositional and rhetorical strategies, we also provide explanations of multimodality's value that will be of use to instructors who need to make the case that facility with diverse literacies and modalities will strengthen student's rhetorical and communicative skills (v).	Clarification of the skills their text offers and the guiding principles of the mmc approach	Making the focus clear for the reader assigns value to the overall skills being offered by the text

Original Text	Communicative Realization	Normalizing Cues
The book’s clear, accessible guidance for teaching multimodal composition may help ambassadors discuss multimodal pedagogy with writing program administrators, department heads, colleagues, and teaching assistants (v).	Clarification of the uses of the text Ease conversation within academia and departments to discuss the “what” and “how” of mmc pedagogy	Provides the reader with justification for the importance, or value of the mmc approach
Further, rationales on the value and significance of multimodality can be found in the Instructor’s Manual’s annotated bibliography (v).	Indication of the theoretical foundation for their instruction of mmc in the Instructor’s Manual.	Further explanation for the reasoning behind the value of mmc used in composition course indicates the credibility of the theory that informs the skills the text provides
We wrote this book specifically to help authors learn how to make conscious multimodal choices in the text they create, no matter what mode, medium, or rhetorical situation they are working in (vi).	Stating the purpose of the text	Further suggestions of the quality of text’s instructions by indicating the projected outcome for students
The book offers accessible strategies for composing with multiple modes of communication, including detailed examples and explanations of what multimodality means, rationales for why multimodality matters, and in-depth support for how to compose multimodal projects within a variety of contexts (vi).	Indication of lessons offered in the text	Allocating the high quality of the instruction the text offers
In addition, the assignments we’ve included can support authors in creating their own projects in any genre or situation (vi).	Indication of the quality of instructional resources	Suggesting value for their text for aiding in the creating personal mmc projects
The book is grounded in our own praxes, pedagogies, and rhetorical leanings.	Revealing the rationale behind the scholarship included within their pedagogical approach	Indication of the foundation for the pedagogical focus of the text, credits the source and references in the text
We are particularly influenced by the New London Group (NLG) – a group of literacy scholars who make the deceptively simple argument that “literacy pedagogy must now account for the burgeoning variety of the text forms	Verification of some of the scholars that make up the theoretical foundation of the mmc conversation	Direct indication of scholars to look to for mmc theory and pedagogy

Original Text	Communicative Realization	Normalizing Cues
associated with information and multimedia technologies.”(vi)		
<i>Kairos</i> helps our field rethink how scholarship about digital writing can be modeled in digital forms (vii).	Indication of digital academic journal <i>Kairos</i> that provides digital writing examples	Communicating the influence of this innovative digital journal has on the field communicates. This indicates the value and credibility placed on this resource for mmc scholarship
Whether you are new to teaching multimodal projects or someone who has lots of experience, we designed this book to give your students a strong foundation in the concepts and practices of multimodal composing (ix).	Suggestion of audience that could use the text; and indication of the value of the mmc pedagogy provided	Clarification of the accessible nature of the text for novices and experts, suggesting further significance for the types of instruction offered in the text

The seminal text *Writer/Designer: A Guide to Making Multimodal Projects* provides a “Preface for Instructors.” Within this preface, authors Kristin Arola, Jennifer Sheppard, and Cheryl E. Ball describe the aim of the text as helping to understand “the best ways to get students started with a multimodal project,” as well as what new technologies should be learned, and how these projects should be assessed (V). Moreover, the authors posit that their text offers “accessible strategies for composing with multiple modes of communication” with “detailed examples and explanations of what multimodality means” (Arola et. al VI). They ensure by the end of the preface that their text will help “develop the confidence and competence [students] need to leverage both old and new technologies and media for successful communication” by providing the illustration of foundational concepts that are tied to the practices students will actually use when creating their projects (Arola et. al VII-VIII).



The communicative realization for the above quotes situates the text as an effective course text to use for the instructor that wishes to incorporate multimodality into their composition course. The authors assure us that the scholarship cited and used is the “best way to get students started with a multimodal project” (V). Each quote is an argument for why the text *Writer/Designer* is the right, proper, appropriate, or normal, resource for the course that is instructing students on composing multimodally. In particular, I saw that the normalizing cues within this text were the author’s description of the text, such as the previous quote that indicates that the text will help instructors with the “best way to get students started”. Evaluative statements such as these guide instructors in the right, proper, and appropriate multimodal composing strategies found within the text and essentially because this book is widely accepted as a useful pedagogical resource this text also normalizes for our field a particular notion of multimodal composition.

Furthermore, *Writer/Designer: A Guide to Making Multimodal Projects* includes an “Instructor’s Manual” for further guidance in helping students compose multimodally by highlighting the ways the authors have implemented a rhetorical genre studies approach to multimodal composition within their classrooms (“Instructor’s Manual” 3). They include an annotated bibliography to emphasize the scholarship the text is theoretically and practically grounded in as well as to offer additional resources. This annotated bibliography acted as the reference list the authors used to determine the scholarship that the text posits as the *best* scholarship, as well as other evaluative terms, that will help students compose multimodally.

Table 2: *Multimodal Composition: A Critical Sourcebook* edited by Claire Lutkewitte

Original Text	Communicative Realization	Normalizing Cues
<p>This sourcebook attempts to address these questions, and interrogate their answers, in the hope of introducing interested readers to multimodal composition, advancing the discussions taking place in the field, and encouraging those who are apprehensive about using modes other than the written word in the composition classroom (1).</p>	<p>Explanation of the sourcebook’s purpose</p>	<p>Indication of the text as a source that will provide answers for what mmc is</p>
<p>In a broad sense, multimodal composition can be defined as communication using multiple modes that work purposely to create meaning (2).</p>	<p>Definition of multimodal composition</p>	<p>Direct statement of what mmc is</p>
<p>Multimodal composition is not simply an extension of traditional composition, and we can’t simply overlay traditional frameworks onto composing with multiple modes (4).</p>	<p>Expression of how to include this approach</p>	<p>Explaining the principles of mmc</p>
<p>Multimodal composition has as its goal to “help students understand the power and affordances of different modalities- and to combine modalities in effective and appropriate ways- multiplying the modalities students can use to communicate effectively with different audiences, and helping students employ modalities to make meaningful change in their own lives and the lives of other (4).</p>	<p>Indication of goals for the mmc approach</p>	<p>By identifying the goals of mmc readers are informed of what is valuable to accomplish in an mmc classroom</p>
<p>In addition to Shipka and Selfe, this book highlights scholars whose work points to the enhanced rhetorical awareness that composing in multiple modes, or single modes beyond print when appropriate, provides students and scholars (4).</p>	<p>Description of the scholarship included</p>	<p>The enhanced rhetorical awareness of the scholars included will contribute to the readers understanding of mmc</p>

Original Text	Communicative Realization	Normalizing Cues
As readers will see in the texts that follow, particularly those in Parts Four and Six, students can engage in a variety of multimodal composition projects in their quest to communicate with their audience as effectively as possible (4).	Evaluation of the mmc scholarship that details the kind of projects students can engage with	The text will offer examples of mmc projects for the quest of effective communication
The pieces highlighted in this book range from digital audio reflections to quilts or dresses, but what they all have in common is that they exemplify an astute understanding of audience and rhetorical awareness (4-5).	Indicating the types of mmc projects talked about in the scholarship included	Further indication of what mmc projects have been produced that will influence the reader's understanding of a mm project
From graduate students to senior faculty, many of the authors in this book come from the forefront on multimodal composition scholarship (5).	Evaluation of the scholars included in the sourcebook	The range of contributors adds to the credibility for the multiple perspectives of mmc included
Though these scholars could be considered our field's leading experts, they should not be considered the ultimate authorities on multimodal composition as the field would risk conventionalizing what should not be conventionalized (5).	Indication of the multiple trajectories that are available for mmc	The text and the field already position these scholars as experts of mmc
Part One also looks back at moments in our field's history that have played a role in shaping composition's theories and pedagogy (5).	Description of what readers will encounter in part one of the text	Because the text looks at the history of the field, a particular mmc history will be established for the reader
The work of New London Group, a group of scholars at the forefront of multimodal composition, begins Part Two (6).	Description of the beginning of part two of the text, evaluation of the scholarship and scholars	Indication of the scholars that have pioneered this approach to teach composition
The purpose of <i>Multimodal Composition: A Critical Source Book</i> is to help educators and scholars make sense of what has been written about multimodal composition by offering a brief history of it as defined by scholars	Indication of the text's purpose	Directly stating the goal of the text is to provide research on what mmc is, indirectly indicates what mmc is not as it is not included with the scholarship of this text

Original Text	Communicative Realization	Normalizing Cues
and practitioners in the field of composition (8).		
While this book offers a foundation on which readers can build their own multimodal composition scholarship and pedagogy, the scholarship in this book is not meant to advocate that, when combined, these essays represent <i>the Theory and the Pedagogy of multimodal composition</i> (8).	Warning against conventionalizing the scholarship included in the text	Statement that should help to not conventionalize mmc, however, the previous evaluations of the text and scholars have established a credibility
Rather these selections represent several theories and pedagogies that compliment, contrast, and are in dialogue with one another, and they are also meant to help readers find their own path for engaging in multimodal composition (8).	Explanation for how the scholarship could be understood as a whole	Further establishes the legitimacy of the mmc scholarship included

Claire Lutkewitte similarly positions *Multimodal Composition: A Critical Sourcebook* as a text that will guide readers in understanding what multimodal composition is and how it can be implemented in a composition course. As a sourcebook, Lutkewitte has assembled together articles and other writings on multimodal composition to be used as a pedagogical resource of scholarship that has contributed to the shaping of multimodal composition curricula. Lutkewitte argues within the introduction that the sourcebook aims to advance the discussion taking place in the field (1). Furthermore, the introduction situates the text as a book that includes authors that advocate for the “rich experiences that engage students in learning and meaning-making (1).

Before the overview of the authors and research included, Lutkewitte establishes the way in which her text defines multimodal composing as, “communication using multiple modes that work purposely to create meaning” (2). The communicative

realization indicates a definitive moment of the normalization process. Lutkewitte deems what is right, proper, or appropriate multimodal composition as she traces the conversation surrounding “what is multimodal composition” from leading scholars in the field. Lutkewitte’s text essentially makes the argument for what multimodal composition is and thusly defines, or normalizes, for the field what is right, proper, and appropriate multimodal composition.


Furthermore, *Multimodal Composition* continues the normalizing process by establishing credibility for the work and scholars included within this anthology. Lutkewitte writes, “many of the authors in this book come from the forefront of multimodal composition scholarship [...] [t]hough these authors could be considered our field’s leading experts, they should not be considered the ultimate authorities on multimodal composition as the field would risk conventionalizing” (5). The evaluative terms, “leading” and “forefront” indicate a hierarchy of scholars who are widely accepted as leaders of the field and whose scholarly work for the field offers the most innovative research. Although she warns against viewing these scholars as the “ultimate authority” on multimodal composition, the indication that these scholars are at the “forefront of multimodal composition” acknowledges the position of the scholars Lutkewitte includes within that hierarchy and orients readers towards a particular conception of what is right, proper, and appropriate multimodal composition scholarship. The evaluative terms “forefront” and “leading experts” attributes value to the scholars that are included within the sourcebook.

The reference lists included with each article, as well as the suggested further readings Lutkewitte offers at the end of the book, determine the theoretical trajectory in

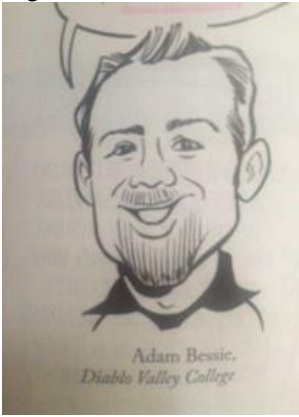

which the sourcebook is grounded. As an anthology meant to guide instructors and students in the “what” and “how” for multimodal composing, the scholarly contributions referenced within *Multimodal Composition* contributes to the normalizing process by citing and referencing a particular view of multimodal composing for the reader. As mentioned previously, the authors included could be considered leading experts in the rhetoric and composition field. Therefore, these authors and their scholarship are already privileged scholars in the field. Another aim of multimodal composition “allows for many voices -- even those new, marginalized, or unpopular voices -- to be heard (Lutkewitte 5). This is a sentiment that pushes this study. As a person of color this pedagogical approach to composition theoretically offers a more inclusive education that values the multiliteracies, distinct logics, and meaning-making practices that are inherently tied to my cultural experiences that inform my interpretation of the composition scholarship I engage with as a graduate student and the FYC courses I teach. In order to understand the normalizing process, being highlighted in Lutkewitte’s establishing of credibility for the scholarship chosen for the sourcebook, the valued practice in academia, citing and referencing, must be unpacked. I assume this is a valued practice as instructors spend time in their courses and develop course materials and reference books to understand the systems of citations that have been put into place. I emphasize this value within the field to highlight that it is also safe to assume that the scholarship referenced or cited within a work of text is also valuable to the editor or author.


Table 3: *Understanding Rhetoric: A Graphic Guide to Writing* by Elizabeth Losh, Jonathan Alexander, Kevin Cannon, and Zander Cannon

Original Text	Communicative Realization	Normalizing Cues
<p><i>Understanding Rhetoric</i> is the work of many hands and many years--a project that attempts to combine the best knowledge and practices from the teaching of writing with a forward-thinking approach to visual and multimodal literacy (v).</p>	<p>establish credibility of project, introduce concept of expanded notions of literacy, their approach is novel and innovative</p>	<p>“forward-thinking” “best knowledge and practices”</p>
<p>You’ll find this book covers all the commonly taught topics in FYC, offering time-tested techniques for improving critical analysis, argumentation, and the development of research questions in college writing (v).</p>	<p>Lists what the book will generally provide</p>	<p>“all the commonly taught”</p>
<p>It also reflects the latest research in composition, which focuses on the development of writers as well as writing (v).</p>	<p>Provide insight on what field of study this textbook stems</p>	<p>“latest research in composition”</p>
<p>In short, this is an effective classroom text that is thoroughly grounded in scholarship (v).</p>	<p>Description of the expected function of this textbook</p>	<p>“effective classroom text” “thoroughly grounded in scholarship”</p>
<p>When we began to work on this book, we hoped that by emphasizing multimodal approaches to composing, we would engage student writers in thinking about their identities, contexts for their research, and effective writing processes (v).</p>	<p>Description of the motive for project</p>	<p>“emphasizing multimodal approaches to composing”</p>
<p>But we also wanted to create a book that students would actually want to read--a book that could make rhetoric interesting and maybe even enjoyable (v).</p>	<p>Description of authors’ motives for the project</p>	<p>“a book that students actually want to read”</p>

Original Text	Communicative Realization	Normalizing Cues
<p>Fig 1(v)</p>  <p>Michael Pemberton, Georgia Southern University</p>	<p>Speaker identity- Michael Pemberton; speaker educational affiliation</p>	
<p>Fig 1 caption: “Engaging and light-hearted, but also carefully organized. theoretically sound, and a compelling way to teach students about critical reading and writing in a technologically advanced, information-rich society” (v)</p>	<p>Peer review/Evaluation of textbook</p>	<p>“carefully organized” “compelling way to teach students”</p>
<p>Many writing instructors have begun using comics in the composition classroom to engage students with writing that is both textually and visually rich (vi).</p>	<p>establish the credibility for the use of comics in an academic setting</p>	<p>Justification for why the text is a prime examples for multimodal composition and therefore a great pedagogical resource for the recent shift in the field toward this approach</p>
<p>Most chapters include a quick-reference chart recapping important ideas (vi).</p>	<p>Description of content</p>	<p>The text provides “important” ideas</p>
<p>A “Drawing Conclusions” spread at the end of each issue suggests assignments that will allow students to try the concept out for themselves (vi).</p>	<p>Description of content</p>	<p>Providing assignment suggestions for the production of writing</p>



Original Text	Communicative Realization	Normalizing Cues
<p>Fig 2 (vi)</p> 	<p>Speaker identity-Adam Bessie; speaker educational affiliation-Diablo Valley College</p>	
<p>Fig 2 caption: “A hip, contemporary, and witty explanation of the history and significance of rhetoric for the digital age” (vi)</p>	<p>Peer reviewer/evaluation of the textbook</p>	<p>The text will provide explanation of the significance of the Greco-Roman rhetorical traditions</p>
<p>Fig. 3 (vi)</p> 	<p>Speaker identity- Chris Gerben, speaker educational affiliation Stanford University</p>	
<p>Fig 3 caption: “This text is fun. It makes people want to come back to the ideas again and again” (vi)</p>	<p>Peer reviewer/evaluation of the text</p>	<p>Value is placed in the experience the user will have with the text</p>
<p>As you read through the text with your classes, ask students to pay attention not only to what the characters are saying, but to how information about writing and composing is conveyed both textually and visually (vii).</p>	<p>Indication of how content should be consumed by reader to emphasize multimodality</p>	<p>Explaining how the text should be analyzed multimodally</p>

Original Text	Communicative Realization	Normalizing Cues
Our hands-on style emphasizes an active approach to writing, reading, and responding to all kinds of texts and emphasizes the dialogic nature of successful academic and public writing (vii).	Offering justification of the style of textbook	Further indication of how this text is an effective multimodal composition resource
<p>Fig. 4 (vii)</p> 	Speaker identity- Ginger Jurecka Blake; speaker educational affiliation- University of Wisconsin	
Fig. 4 caption: “I am very eager to teach using this book” (vii)	Declaration of intent to use the textbook as a pedagogical resource	Evidence that this text is a valuable resource for the FYC course

*Understanding Rhetoric: A Graphic Guide to Writing* is a comic book styled textbook positioned for the multimodal composition FYC course by authors Elizabeth Losh, Jonathan Alexander, Kevin Cannon, and Zander Cannon. Just as the other seminal texts the authors provide explanation for how this text could be used by students and instructors. Within their argument Losh et al. makes key statements that contribute to the normalization process for multimodal composition. They claim that their text “combines the best knowledge and practices from the teaching of writing with a forward-thinking approach to visual and multimodal literacy” (Losh et al V). The Preface continues with more evaluative language to describe the multimodal composing instruction that the text provides. “You’ll find this book covers all the commonly taught topics in FYC,” is an

example of how the author's use evaluative language that positions the text as an effective resource for composition courses. Moreover, Losh et al make sure to establish the theoretical underpinnings for their text. For instance, they explain that their textbook "is an effective classroom text that is thoroughly grounded in scholarship" (V). As this study takes each sentence as a separate textual element, the linguistic elements found within the Preface of *Understanding Rhetoric* provide significant moments within the normalizing process. As a guide to understanding multimodal composition using terms such as *best knowledge and practice* or *thoroughly grounded in scholarship* identifies the text as an appropriate and effective text for the FYC course and the scholarship included is the most "right, proper, and appropriate" multimodal composition scholarship provided.

Furthermore, as a graphic guide the Preface included comic book, or caricature, drawings of theorists within the field. Michael Pemberton from Georgia Southern University, Adam Bessie of Diablo Valley College, Ginger Jurecka Blake from the University of Wisconsin, and Chris Gerben, of Stanford University gave their assessment of the of the textbook and the scholarship included for the instruction of multimodal composition. These visual elements described a perspective of a fellow instructor of FYC courses who have used the textbook in their classrooms. These peer reviews, placed within comic book word bubbles, contribute to the normalization process. Bessie describes the book as "A hip, contemporary, and witty explanation of the history and significance of rhetoric for the digital age" (Losh et al VI). In addition, Gerben says, "This text is fun. It makes people want to come back to the ideas again and again" (Losh et al VI). Words like "hip" and "contemporary" imply that the text will be useful in the

FYC course because it is timely. These are evaluative terms that contribute to normalize how this text is right, proper, and appropriate multimodal composition instruction.

Pemberton describes *Understanding Rhetoric* as “theoretically sound, and a compelling way to teach students about critical reading and writing in a technologically advanced, information-rich society” (Losh et al V). The phrase “theoretically sound” invokes a sentiment of validness, soundness, and completion for the reader of the theory included. As the review of the theoretical foundation of the multimodal composing instruction of the text provides, these are as excellent words of assessment as any author hopes to expect from their scholarly peers. However, these words are also contributions to the circulating discourses about multimodal composition. Providing for readers and users of *Understanding Rhetoric* an assessment from compositionists of the “right, proper, and appropriate” scholarship the book offers. And furthermore, as a text that has been circulated heavily at the last two CCCC conferences, the text has become a popular and innovative FYC instructional text and contribution to the dominant narrative of what multimodal composition could be.

Table 4: *On Multimodality* by Jonathan Alexander and Jacqueline Rhodes

Original Text	Communicative Realization	Normalizing Cues
<p>In 2009, Cynthia Selfe Published an essay in <i>College Composition and Communication</i> (CCC), “The Movement of Air, the Breath of Meaning,” that both galvanized compositional practices and articulated the potential consequences for our disciplinarity in a way that provoked immediate attention and debate (1).</p>	<p>Introduction of the beginning of the multimodal composition debate; giving historical context of this conversation for the field</p>	<p>Indicating the beginning of the normalizing process for the field. Selfe’s essay “provoked immediate attention and debate” The previous contributions, that just so happened to be people of color, sparked no comparable interest in the exploration of other modalities in quite the same way.</p>

Original Text	Communicative Realization	Normalizing Cues
<p>Selfe’s impassioned argument, grounded in her understanding of what the literacy education of contemporary US college students most needs, created immediate buzz when it appeared (2).</p>	<p>Indication of Selfe’s argument’s effect on the field</p>	<p>Indicating that it created an immediate buzz refers to the beginning of this normalizing process for the field which also speaks to the existence of the unseeing, where as previous research articulated these arguments prior to 2009, Selfe’s argument galvanized the field to look more closely at mmc as a practical composition pedagogical approach.</p>
<p>Viewing the situation in another way, however, advocates for Selfe’s position agreed with her that rhetorical practices are in fact the proper domain of composition studies (2).</p>	<p>Classification of composition studies acts</p>	<p>Stating that it is Selfe’s position puts her at the forefront of the MMC movement for the field. Also indication that the field decides on what is “normalized” by the proper domain of the discipline</p>
<p>In her introduction to Bedford/St. Martin’s critical sourcebook on multimodal composition, which collects important articles and chapters on the subject, Claire Lutkewitte offers a tentative definition of multimodal composition as “communication using multiple modes that work purposely to create meaning” (3).</p>	<p>Listing what work could be found in the text and what the general topic discussed within the text</p>	<p>Finding a reference of another seminal text emphasizes the circulating nature of the multimodal composition discourse that is becoming normalized for the field. Alexander and Rhodes choose to use the tentative definition Lutkewitte offers for multimodal composition, which indirectly indicates what a normalized perspective of what multimodal composition is for the readers of this. As a book that could be used a theoretical resource for multimodal composition this clear indication of what mmc is another example of how perspectives become embedded in the circulating discourses and narratives that develop subjectivity.</p>
<p>Our concern focuses on that evolution, on the fits and starts, the push and pull, the steps forward and backward as composition grapples with what it means to engage in, support and study multimodal composition (4).</p>	<p>General indication of the authors’ purpose of the study</p>	<p>Sufficiently articulated element that gives evidence that the field of composition is in the process of normalizing the subjectivity of multimodal composition. Alexander and Rhodes indicate that at the moment there is debate grappling with defining multimodal composition for the field.</p>

Original Text	Communicative Realization	Normalizing Cues
<p>David Sherridan, Jim Rodolfo, and Anthony Michel argue in “The Available Means of Persuasion: Mapping a Theory and Pedagogy of Multimodal Public Rhetoric” that, in the current “transformation of rhetorical education,” the “academy’s privileging of the written word; the cultural logics that circumscribe the use of certain modes, media, and technologies; and the division of rhetorical labor-- [all] would be exposed for scrutiny (7).</p>	<p>Emphasis of Sherridan, Rodolfo, Michel argument</p>	<p>The term “cultural logics” is important within this argument because it indicates the relationship between cultures and the normalized ways modes are used to make-meaning within that culture. Thus, if we are to encourage students to utilize the multiple literacies they bring with them to the classroom, the distinct logics of how the students multimodally compose are embedded within the multiple cultures they represent.</p>

Jonathan Alexander and Jacqueline Rhodes’ *On Multimodality: New Media in Composition Studies* was also a seminal text that was included in the study for the highly theoretical research work offered. Alexander and Rhodes’ text makes the argument that composition scholars must familiarize themselves with the rich histories, distinct logics, and different affordances of the multiple forms of new media available for the composition process.

This text is different from the other seminal texts because it is not positioned by the authors as an instructional aid for the FYC. Instead the authors hope to invoke notions of broadening the composing modality choices for the field as well as “the field of play for students with different learning styles and differing ways of reflecting on the world; [to] provide the opportunity for them to study, think critically about, and work with new communicative modes” (Alexander and Rhodes 1). I categorize this text as a pedagogical resource that could be used for theory building for multimodal composition. Because the text has such complex theory, this text may be best used for a graduate course that

discusses the theory and praxis of multimodal composition or a composition instructor may use it as foundation for their teaching philosophy, however, I am not saying that the text could not be used in a FYC course because of the elevated discourse.

Furthermore, as a book that was premiered at the last two CCCC and winner of the 2015 CCCC Outstanding Book Award, this text and the voices included within contribute to the circulating narratives of the field's multimodal composition discourse. Within their introduction, Alexander and Rhodes invoke quotes from Cynthia Selfe's 2009 published essay, "The Movement of Air, the Breath of Meaning." They describe her essay as one that "galvanized compositional practices and articulated the potential consequences for our disciplinarity in a way that provoked immediate attention and debate" (Alexander and Rhodes 1). Selfe is a scholar that is well-known in the field of composition as well as referenced or cited in all of the seminal texts of this study. This research assumes that an authority figure within a particular field or discipline is a part of the normalizing process. As one of the field's experts of multimodal composition, there is strong credibility placed on Selfe's work and her scholarship. Thus, Selfe and other scholars cited within the texts that include the most forward-thinking, innovative, and theoretically sound multimodal composition research are heavily looked to as contributors for the circulating multimodal composition discourses for the field.

To further illustrate the normalizing process within *On Multimodality* I must go back to the effects Selfe's essay had on the field of rhetoric and composition. According to Alexander and Rhodes, her words motivated the discipline and provoked immediate attention. Their analysis could indicate the beginning of the multimodal composition normalizing process for the field. The description "provoked immediate attention"

alludes to a moment in the history of multimodal composition as a discipline that had yet to be sparked for the field. Selfe's essay focused on "the prevalence of sound as a modality of communicating experience" (Alexander and Rhodes 1). However, African American rhetoricians have contributed decades of scholarship detailing aurality within African American culture. Geneva Smitherman (2006), Henry Louis Gates (1988), bell hooks (1989), Jacqueline Jones Royster (1996), Molefi Kete Asante (2004) and many others have provided tremendous insight on oral literacy and African American culture as a predominantly oral culture. However, the move for the field to explore multiple modes for composition instruction occurred in 2009. This move began the debate within the field for what is "right, proper, and appropriate" multimodal composition.

In addition, *On Multimodality* provided interesting normalization cues for this study. Alexander and Rhodes comment that, "In her introduction to Bedford/St. Martin's critical sourcebook on multimodal composition, which collects important articles and chapters on the subject, Claire Lutkewitte offers a tentative definition of multimodal composition as 'communication using multiple modes that work purposely to create meaning' (2)" (3). Finding a reference within this seminal text of another seminal text from this study emphasizes the circulating nature of the multimodal composition discourse that is becoming normalized for the field. Alexander and Rhodes choose to use the tentative definition Lutkewitte offers for multimodal composition, which indirectly indicates a normalized perspective of what multimodal composition is for their readers. As a book that could be used as a theoretical resource for multimodal composition this is a clear example of how perspectives become embedded in the circulating discourses and narratives that develop subjectivity. Furthermore, Alexander and Rhodes highlight that



Lutkewitte's text is a collection of important articles and chapters on multimodal composition. Their analysis was a direct evaluation of the scholarship the seminal text offered. Thus, their analysis of Lutkewitte's text becomes a part of the circulating discourses as well as further credits both texts as right, proper, and appropriate texts for the instruction of multimodal composition.

These texts are widely accepted in the field as useful and effective texts. Moreover, the discourse within these texts positions the work as such. A rhetorical genre analysis allows us to see specific moments in the introductory narratives that ultimately un-see people of color. In particular, there are very few people of color cited and referenced within the text. More importantly, the scholarship from people of color quite often follows a long history of scholars of color that produces research on bettering, building, and empowering their communities, articulating the experiences of survival within oppressive institutions, educational and professional, for future scholars to find solidarity, hope, and maybe some peace of mind. However, access to these texts and even the literacies needed to acquire this scholarship for the audience that should be exposed to these empowering narratives the most are limited to those who found a way. This body of scholarship is also "Othered" in ways that categorize it as a particular kind of rhetoric, such as African American rhetorical studies. This Othering is problematic because the scholarship that is not included within these seminal texts are ultimately excluded in the normalizing process for what is right, proper, appropriate, or normal multimodal composition.

Therefore, the discourses that obtain ideologies, arguments and practices from multiple cultural lenses are normalized for audiences as a particular kind of rhetorical

work and opportunities for scholarship that are available for inclusion within these widely accepted instructional texts that are missed. In particular, there is research, such as Banks' work, that explicate multimodal practices from non-Eurocentric cultures that, at this normalization rate, will continue to be "Othered" and un-seen for the field. As multimodal composition scholarship continues to grow, I can't help but wonder if categories will develop such as African American multimodal composition that relegates the practices of the DJ, or other African American rhetorical figures as a particular kind of multimodal composing. If the circulating narratives that are widely accepted by the field, given away at one of the field's largest national conferences, normalizes a multimodal composition that continues to privilege scholars already privileged within our field, where is the room for the "new" marginalized voices?

To resist these moments of un-seeing radical renovations must occur on a curricular level. The field must recognize, value, and utilize the discourses, ideologies and meaning-making practices from multicultural, multimodal, and multilingual perspectives. Though, as I have shown, citational practices can indicate how we come to value and understand scholarship, it is not enough to just cite and reference people of color and their scholarship, for there is no set number of scholars and scholarship of color that a text could include for it to resist a discourse of un-seeing. However, I posit that we could start with the integration of the "Othered" scholarship in these widely used texts as a part of the "what" and "how" of multimodal composition. From dance, to hip-hop literacies, to code-switching and the "spaces" people of color inhabit, to orality as a central theme in African American rhetorical studies—bodies of scholarship are excluded in the normalizing processes of the emerging field of multimodal composition. We must begin

to value these bodies of work as modes worthy of not just examination but also as examples of meaningful practices with distinct logics and rhetorical affordances that are ultimately beneficial for us all.

### **Un-Seeing**

As mentioned previously, the theory of “un-seeing” comes from Malea Powell’s article “Blood and Scholarship: One Mixed-Blood’s Story”. Powell discusses how the dominant American historical narratives taught in school, such as Christopher Columbus and the discovery of America and Manifest Destiny “un-see” Native American experiences of mutilation, rape, and murder that characterized the first wave of genocide. Her article confers how these narratives, or stories, are circulated through American society and are told in a way that “un-see” the physical bodies and experience of the Native Americans. Because of this the Native American identity and culture is often denigrated to a culture that is extinct, which is why Powell, a Native American rhetoric scholar, seeks to undo this “un-seeing”. For this study, the “un-seeing” theory can be applied to the circulating narratives of multimodal composition. The seminal texts play a major role in determining for the field what is right, proper, and appropriate multimodal composing, as discussed in the previous section. However, the purpose of this study is to tease out moments of un-seeing to indicate those missed learning opportunities from non-Eurocentric cultures.

For example, Arola et. al provides exceptional instruction and activities for composing multimodally in *Writer/Designer: A Guide to Making Multimodal Projects*. The authors’ goal for the text was to develop an effective textbook that would guide students and instructors through the process of creating multimodal projects and it is safe

to say that the text is grounded and supported in important multimodal theory and practice. Moreover, the version of the text given away at CCCC provided an instructor's manual in the middle of the text for further aid of instruction. Arola et al provides an annotated bibliography within the instructor's manual to situate their pedagogical approach and offer additional resources for users of their text. For them, "these sources provide a theoretical and practical grounding for understanding the what, why, and how of multimodal composition, multiliteracies, and more" (Instructor's Manual 4). Therefore, the annotated bibliography indicates the foundation of this seminal text and the multimodal composition trajectory the text is situated within.

I assessed the annotated bibliography for the multimodal composition scholarship that was included to determine the notions of multimodal composing Arola et al provides. The authors ground their text within well-known scholars and influential multimodal composition scholarship, such as Cynthia Selfe's *Multimodal Composition: Resources for Teachers* and Jason Palmeri's *Remixing Composition: A History of Multimodal Writing Pedagogy*. In addition, the seminal text *Multimodal Composition A Critical Sourcebook* by Claire Lutkewitte was also included within the annotated bibliography and described as a text that "brings together the most influential articles on multimodal composition" (Instructor's Manual 30). Authors like Jody Shipka, Gunther Kress, Theo van Leeuwen, Anis Bawarshi and many others were included within this annotated bibliography. However, within their annotated bibliography, out of the 25 sources, there were hardly any articles or texts that stemmed from non-Eurocentric rhetorical traditions. "Composing (media)= Composing (embodiment): Bodies, technologies, writing, the teaching of writing" edited by Kristin Arola and Anne Wysocki, was an edited collection

of essays that offer approaches for theorizing and teaching with new media as it relates to embodiment (Instructor's Manual 27). According to Arola et al, this book includes a wide range of texts, naming Pow Wow regalia as one. Having not read the text myself I can only assume that there is research on Native American clothing and/or ornaments as a type of text.

However, this is the only text with an annotation that makes mention of a non-Western artifact of study or multicultural practice. Furthermore, Bill Cope and Mary Kalantzis' edited collection *Multiliteracies: Literacy Learning and the Design of Social Futures* is described to have chapters that explore issues ranging from multilingualism and cultural diversity (Instructor's Manual 29). In addition, the seminal text *Multimodal Composition: a Critical Sourcebook* is also included as a source. Being that I have engaged with the text for my research, although the annotation does not say so, Lutkewitte does include a section that deals with culture in relation to multimodal composition. Thus, my analysis of *Writer/Designer* reveals that three out of the 25 articles annotated discuss non-Westernized cultural practices for composing multimodally. For the purpose of this study, this would indicate that less than fifteen percent of the multimodal composition instruction theoretical foundation includes a non-Eurocentric perspective of composing multimodally. Furthermore, the annotated bibliography is within the Instructor's Manual, a resource not provided to students. Therefore, it would be up to the instructor to provide these additional readings for their students.

Along with their comic textbook Losh et al's *Understanding Rhetoric: A Graphic Guide to Writing* provides an Instructor's Manual, written by Elizabeth Losh and

Jonathan Alexander. A works cited and additional resources section were provided for readers. These included five well-known scholarly sources: Henry Jenkins' *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide*, *Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art* by Scott McCloud, Jason Palmeri's *Remixing Composition: A History of Multimodal Writing Pedagogy*, Cynthia Selfe's *Technology and Literacy in the Twenty-First Century: The Importance of Paying Attention*, and "Made Not Only in Words: Composition in a New Key" by Kathleen Blake Yancey. These influential scholarly contributions have shaped the field and the ways we understand new media and multimodal composition tremendously. However, as the works cited and essentially the theoretical foundation for *Understanding Rhetoric*, this indicates a particular perspective of multimodal composition; a perspective that does not consider multiple cultural perspectives and practices for multimodal composing. Furthermore, the Instructor's Manual states that the book focuses on "reading and writing print-based work that appears without illustrations" because the book is likely to be used in a FYC course (2). Although the authors take advantage of the multimodality of using the comic book genre for their book as well as instructing students on being aware of the multiple modes available for communication and expression, the core of the textbook focuses on instructing students of already privileged rhetorical concepts and compositional practices, such as the production of print-based texts. This is evident in the title of the textbook, a guide to teach writing. Thus, *Understanding Rhetoric* offers instruction for writing and composing that is theoretically grounded in multimodal compositional practices that are already privileged by the field.

What is interesting, however, is how Losh et al incorporates a multicultural

perspective within the text. The authors arrange *Understanding Rhetoric* into eight sections. Each chapter deals with concepts of rhetoric introduced and discussed by caricature versions of the authors, Liz and Jonathan. A “Reframe” section is included at the end of each chapter, where students, Luis and Cindy, work through the rhetorical concepts introduced in the chapter. The authors incorporate a moment where Luis meets Cindy and her mother for the first time. During their encounter Cindy’s mother begins speaking Vietnamese, revealing that Cindy is probably Vietnamese American. Once they introduce themselves, Cindy begins to speak to Luis in Spanish, and he replies in Spanish as well, indicating that Luis must be Hispanic/Latino. This moment indicates an awareness of the multiple cultures represented within our composition classrooms, as the authors created Luis and Cindy based on their combined 40 years of teaching experience. Furthermore, their identities seemingly influence the types of composition they produce throughout the book. For example, Luis must write a research paper and chooses a topic that relates to Cindy’s mother’s life experience as a Vietnamese refugee. However, these are one only moments of acknowledgment of these students’ multilingual, multicultural identities.

Furthermore, unlike the other seminal texts, I have used *Understanding Rhetoric* for my own FYC courses. Therefore, I am thoroughly familiar with the content that is offered within this seminal text and can give more in-depth analysis of the way multiple cultures are represented. I recognize that the authors incorporate Frederick Douglass within the “Strategic Reading” section. A small portion of Douglass’ autobiography is illustrated to demonstrate how individuals may picture what they read in their minds. His inclusion and the analysis of the text for his “language of logic” served purposes of

instructing students on how to read critically (Losh et al 78). Douglass' text is used as an example for how Greco-Roman rhetorical concepts can be analyzed and applied when writing. For example, Douglass' description of his experiences as a slave was analyzed for students to understand how ethos, pathos, logos, and kairos were at play (Losh et al 78). Although very useful and insightful, the analysis of Douglass' words continues to privilege Western ways of meaning-making, which runs the risk of continuing a pattern of "un-seeing" African American scholarly contributions. This moment could have been a chance to unpack how multiple linguistic modes and rhetorical traditions are enacted, as well as a chance to apply African American rhetorical concepts that are useful for the composing process. However, missed opportunities for the incorporation of African American rhetoric, and other non-Western rhetorical traditions look a lot like this, where non-Western scholarship is analyzed through a Western rhetorical lens, which limits the students exposure to scholarship and ways of making meaning and communicating from multiple public spheres. Furthermore, it is another example of how rhetorical traditions from non-Eurocentric cultures are continuously "othered" by being left out of instructional texts that are "theoretically sound".

As the seminal texts contribute to the normalization process for multimodal composition the foundation of theory and practice is embedded within the multimodal composing discourse provided. Therefore, the scholarship included within these texts are the scholarship that become directly associated with the "right, proper, and appropriate" multimodal composing. It is important to mention here that I do not wish to challenge the effectiveness or importance of the scholarship that the texts provide. However, the scholarship that has become normalized argues that multimodal composition is an



important pedagogical approach because it allows for those marginalized voices to be heard (Lutkewitte 5). Alexander and Rhodes explain that the field often elides the unique rhetorical capabilities of different media “consciously or not—in order to colonize the production of multimedia texts with more print-driven compositional aims” (19).

Similarly, Shipka argues, “in an attempt to free students from the limits of the page, we institute another, limiting them to texts that can be composed, received, and reviewed onscreen” (11). Scholars that advocate for the multimodal pedagogical approach for composition make similar arguments that the field’s privileging of the production of print-based, dominantly linguistic genres as valuable knowledge production practices risks missing and undervaluing the meaning-making and learning potentials of other representational systems and technologies (Banks, Alexander and Rhodes, Arole et al, Lutkewitte, Shipka). Lutkewitte posits that, “multimodal composition offers the opportunity to discover other ways of knowing and communicating ideas besides the ways we know and communicate through traditional print-based writing” (11).

Furthermore, the New London Group assert that that increasing cultural and linguistic diversity calls for a broader view of literacy than tradition literacy pedagogy, which has conventionally taught reading and writing as formal, “monolingual”, and “monocultural” (61). They affirm that literacy education should provide learning opportunities to successfully prepare students for full equitable social participation (New London Group 60). Specifically, Lutkewitte paraphrases Selfe’s reasons for incorporating multimodal composition within the FYC classroom because, “asking students to compose in just one mode (mainly the printed word) limits those students who belong to cultures that rely on the use of many different modes” (4). Therefore, it is important for the multimodal

composition instructional resources to incorporate those marginalized voices and provide instruction that reflects the increasing cultural and linguistic diversity.

In the final section of the *Multimodal Composition* sourcebook, Lutkewitte incorporates selections that highlight different literacy practices. She makes note that the articles chosen for this section emphasize “distinct cultures that rely on their abilities to use multiple modes to communicate... [and] serve as examples of the different type of research projects that would greatly benefit our field in terms of investigating multimodal composition” (Lutkewitte 7-8). Steven Fraiberg’s “Composition 2.0: Toward a Multilingual and Multimodal Framework,” was an article included within this section. Fraiberg makes the argument that multilingual composition is important to research because of the ever-increasing globalizing world. The article “Locating the Semiotic Power of Multimodality” by Glynda Hull and Mark Evan Nelson, discusses the meaning-making affordances of different modes. Their study, as well as the other two articles included within this section, “Heritage Literacy: Adoption, Adaptation, and Alienation of Multimodal Literacy Tools by Suzanna Kesler Rumsey and “Remixing Basic Writing: Digital Media Production and the Basic Writing Curriculum” by Catherine C. Braun, Ben McCorkle, and Amie C. Wolfe, highlights the importance of multimodal composition in practice. The selections for this section raises questions of what may have been learned about multimodal composition had more practical scholarship grounded in non-Eurocentric rhetorical traditions, such as Banks’ Digital Griots text, been included. For this study, it is not just the small percentage of scholarship from and about people of color that contributes to “un-seeing” within the normalization of process. For the inclusion of these articles demonstrates an awareness of the importance of the multimodal

composition happening within non-Western cultures. Rather than merely including articles that research multimodal composing and its relationship to culture, what would the normalization process look like if the multimodal composition instruction stemmed from non-Western ways of meaning-making? How may our students respond to scholarship that theorizes multimodal composing with non-Western rhetorical concepts?

To demonstrate how “un-seeing” occurs within the seminal texts I must combine the normalizing discourses found in the introductions and prefaces of the seminal text with the scholarship cited and referenced. As previously discussed, the introductions and prefaces of the seminal texts provided linguistic cues that indicated notions of “right, proper, and appropriate, or normal” multimodal composition. Pairing the normalizing discourses with the analysis of the scholarship that is referenced and cited reveals the “right, proper, and appropriate” perspectives of multimodal composition being normalized for the field. The seminal texts offer influential and important multimodal composition research that contributes to the circulating narratives about multimodal composition. However, these texts missed out on valuable opportunities to provide Thus, multimodal research like Banks’ *Digital Griot* as continued to be “othered,” even within this progressive, more inclusive approach to teaching composition.

The scholarship, research, theoretical frameworks, assignments, explanations, etc. offered in the four instructional and pedagogical books privilege a medium that is dominant in academia, the book. Moreover, texts that require linguistic as the dominant mode, such as essayistic, print-based, screen-mediated genres of communication are predominantly the texts that the FYC course asks students to produce. Alexander and Rhodes, maintain that composition’s embrace of new and multimedia often makes those

media serve the rhetorical ends of writing and more print-based forms of composing” (19). Although, these texts acknowledge multimodal composition as the practical instruction and theory of designing texts that account for the globalizing and multimediated modes of expression and communication afforded by new media and technology, there is still scholarship at the forefront of the multimodal composition conversation that is lacking in these texts.

Multimodal composing practices that stem from non-Eurocentric cultures are valuable for research, but are rarely deemed as valuable academic practices for the transfer of knowledge. Even as multimodal composition advocates acknowledge the necessity for the composition course to provide opportunities for students to compose in ways that prepare them for the multimediated, multimodal communicative public spheres, in reality, the dominant assignment genre in academia is the academic essay. Other dominant methods of communication and transferring scholarship are the journal article, annotated bibliography, proposal, and personal essay. Thus, multimodal composition as a field continues to privilege print-based, essayistic practices, instead of offering students opportunities to engage in the multimodal practices found in other histories, such as Banks’ DJ compositional practices to produce a mixtape.

To illustrate my point, in the space that I have left, I want to offer a brief examination of the practices listed in Banks’ work, of the DJ and the multimodal composing practices utilized in the production of a text. Banks makes the argument that particular rhetorical traditions within African American communities, such as the remix and mixtaping as archiving, which I argue are multimodal communicative practices, use all the new mediums afforded by technology to write and create texts while placing value

on what has historically been valued within the community at the same time. Within this concept Banks continuously makes connections to the scholarship of African American Literacy as grounded in history, knowledge and community as well as the experience of struggle against dominant literacy instruction through the practice of archiving within the African American mixtape culture. The DJ is an ideal rhetorical model for multimedia writing because the practices of the DJ demonstrate “social resistance and affirmation...to link divergent and sometimes competing narratives without flattening their differences, and helps us to keep cultures and technologies linked (Banks 30). Moreover, the oral traditions of African Americans such as the DJ’s historical role of producing texts to resist oppression, as detailed in Banks’ book, represents the rich rhetorical affordances and “distinct logics” described by Alexander and Rhodes that are provided through exploring other cultural perspectives than Western notions of multimodal composing and how knowledge is produced and transferred. For instance, Banks writes,

“On perhaps their most basic level, the practices of the DJ offer us important conceptual metaphors for writing practices we already teach and value:

- The shoutout as the use of references, calling the roll and identifying and declaring one’s relationships, allegiances, and influences as tools for building community and locating oneself in it
- Crate-digging as continual research—not merely for the songs, hooks, breakbeats, riffs, arguments, and quotes for a particular set or paper but as a crucial part of one’s long term work, or learning, knowing, and interpreting a tradition
- Mixing as the art of transition and as revision in the Adrienne Rich sense of

writing as re-vision

- Remix as critical interpretation of a text, repurposing it for a different rhetorical situation as 2010 CCCC chair Gwendolyn Pough challenges the field to “remix: revisit, rethink, revise, renew” in the conferece call
- Mixtape as anthology, as everyday act of canon formation, interpretation, and reinterpretation
- Sample as those quotes, those texts, those ideas used enough, important enough to our conceptions of what we are doing in a text (or even in our lifelong work) to be looped and continually repeated rather than merely quoted or referenced” (26).

Banks’ book reminds us of the need to find openings to use multimedia practices in purposeful ways in today’s highly technological and digital writing practices that avoid omitting, misrepresenting or misconceptualizing African American histories. During the civil right era, the role of the African American DJ was to use coded language to announce secret civil rights organizational meetings when broadcasting, (Banks 19). Thus, the DJ is considered a griot because of the historic ways the DJ in the African American community “tells the stories, carries the history, interprets the news, mediates the disputes, and helps shape the community’s collective identity” (25.) The lack of citing and theorizing multimodal composition from and about people of color’s scholarship overlooks the value of these practices and theory. African American culture, in particular, shows multimodality as it functions as a key framework for analyzing the communicative acts of African Americans historically, because it demonstrates the survival and meaning-making tactics enacted in multiple modes.

Moreover, I would also like to take a moment and highlight the multimodal and

rhetorical survival strategies of people of color. African American culture provides an interesting site of study as their acts of composing texts for purposes of resisting systems of oppression, racism, and inequality were and continue to be vividly multimodal. For example, African slaves were forbidden to speak their native language or learn traditional literacy, which was the dominant mode of knowledge acquisition and transfer. Although slaves did secretly find ways of acquiring traditional literacy, songs and other aural modes of communication were utilized to send messages through the Underground Railroad, to navigate their path to freedom, as well as make the hard workday go by.

Looking to the African American culture for the multimodal composing and analysis employed by Black people to survive the oppressive systems that made dominant modes of communication inaccessible to them and their resistance of dominant discourses that stereotype them as a marginalized, underprivileged group, can be a model for complex rigorous processes of rhetorical decision-making in multiple modes, which Shipka asserts is an important goal of the composition course (3). African American culture and other non-Eurocentric cultures also answer the call for cross-cultural, multilingual insight for composition pedagogy (New London Group, Alexander & Rhodes, Lutkewitte). As an African American graduate student I am familiar with scholarship from African American rhetorical traditions. My previous experience with this scholarship influences my understanding of the un-seeing theory. Because I am familiar with the rich rhetorical history and multimodal practices described within African American rhetorical work I am aware of the body of knowledge that could lend itself to multimodal composition and valuable theory and praxis.

In part, we value the incorporation of marginalized voices and multimodal

composing practices from “othered” cultures in theory, however, practices and theory that comes out of non-Eurocentric rhetorical traditions are scarcely implemented within the classroom. These practices are interrogated for their distinct logics and affordances, however, the modes students are most comfortable composing in, the multiliteracies that students bring with them to the FYC classroom, are rarely privileged by academia as a valuable knowledge-making practice. Culture is usually last on the list to consider for multimodal composition, as illustrated in Lutkewitte’s sourcebook. The position that culture holds within the theoretical assumptions exemplifies a notion of non-Western cultures as an after-thought in relation to multimodal composition, which contributes to the continued “un-seeing” of people of color within the academia. Alexander and Rhodes draw on David Sherridan, Jim Rodolfo, and Anthony Michel’s “The Available Means of Persuasion: Mapping a Theory and Pedagogy of Multimodal Public Rhetoric” to make the argument that, “in the current ‘transformation of rhetorical education,’ the ‘academy’s privileging of the written word; the cultural logics that circumscribe the use of certain modes, media, and technologies; and the division of rhetorical labor-- [all] would be exposed for scrutiny” (7). I highlight this moment within their text to unpack the term “cultural logics”. For the purposes of this study the term is important because it indicates the relationship between cultures and the normalized modes used to make meaning within that culture. Thus, if we are to encourage students to utilize the multiple literacies they bring with them to the classroom, the distinct logics of how the students multimodally compose are embedded within the multiple cultures they represent. Moreover, texts that “unsee” available scholarship from multiple cultural perspectives and/or provide multicultural practical instruction for composing multimodally miss the chance to provide



students the opportunity to study multimodal composing from multiple perspectives. Thus, this study hopes to make the case that scholarly representation of the globalizing nature of communication as well as the vast cultures represented in our classrooms exposes students to the distinct logics for composing multimodally that permeate non-Eurocentric cultures and are just as valuable methods of making-meaning.

## CHAPTER FOUR: CONCLUSIONS AND LIMITATIONS

My work seeks to highlight those undervalued, unpopular voices within the multimodal composing scholarship to resist conventionalizing the field. Not only to provide education that is accessible to underrepresented and marginalized students, which should be reason enough, but to provide *all* students with a model of what it looks like to have the ability to communicate and participate fully in a multicultural, multilingual, multimediated, multimodal public sphere. Banks asserts that the exigence for the composition course to utilize valuable multimedia practices of the DJ is for “black students to see themselves more genuinely in writing classrooms and theory and can benefit all students for a greater appreciation of the multiple connected and diverging cultural influences on writing” (14). In order to provide education such as this, we as a field must first account for the significant gaps in the accessibility for *all* students and limitations on the valued ways of knowing and meaning-making reflected in the educational structures of American institutions and within the emerging normalized scholarly discourse found within the narratives of the four seminal texts.

A limitation to this study could be that I am assuming these texts are popularly used for the field because they were given away at CCCC for the past two years. However, there may be other instructional texts that may be seminal in the multimodal composition conversation. In addition, this is my interpretation of the seminal texts for normalizing cues of what is right, proper, and appropriate multimodal composition and scholarship, while others may disagree with my analysis.

Multimodal composition comes to us as a response to the need to account for the needs and practices of marginalized students then the privileging of print-based modes

might be a racialized, gendered, etc practice. In theory the multimodal approach to composition is useful for the incorporation of marginalized, “unheard” voices. However, more work must be done in practice. As mentioned previously, the university and its stakeholders must understand the effects of privileging print-based modes. Therefore an implication for the field should be to revamp university requirements for the incorporation of multimodal scholarship. There are schools that have allow the production of multimodal projects for low and high stakes assignments in their composition courses, and even for the production of scholarship. In addition *Kairos* is a popular academic journal that specializes in publishing digital, multimodal scholarship. However, the American secondary and higher education systems emphasize alphabetic, print-based text for the acquisition of “cultural capital”. Multimodal composition instructors who are not already should be familiarized with multicultural perspectives for composing multimodally. Moreover, scholarship stemming from non-Western rhetorical traditions must cease being “othered” within our discourse. This study makes the argument for African American rhetorical and compositional practices to be incorporated in the “theoretically sound” instructional texts for multimodal composition, such as Banks’ DJ. However, Hispanic/Latino, Native American, and Asian rhetorical traditions can also benefit the multimodal composition classroom. Furthermore, to answer the call that Lutkewitte articulates of providing multimodal instruction that empowers students to think of themselves as a composer, instructors must provide scholarship from non-Eurocentric cultures. Scholars of color continue to advocate for rhetoric and composition curricula that privileges non-Eurocentric cultural traditions and acknowledges people of color’s multimodal traditions rooted in their experiences. Scholarship such as Banks’

*Digital Griots*, Susan Delagrange's "Wunderkammer," Angela Haas' "Wampum as Hypertext, and Xioaye You's "The Way, Multimodality Ritual Symbols, and Social Change" are examples of scholarship that is available from multiple cultures and describe multimodal composing without compositional aims that have yet to be utilized in multimodal composition pedagogical resources. However, the multimodal composition pedagogical focus should not just study the culture and compositional practices but be informed by non-Eurocentric rhetorical traditions and perspectives. Furthermore, FYC courses that aim to incorporate the multimodal approach should also incorporate multimodality within the course materials. Providing instructions and assignments multimodally, depending on the best way to transfer the information, and examples of multimodal composing that will demonstrate the rhetorical affordances and distinct logics new media offers.

I would like to end by making it clear that I am not critiquing the seminal texts for being ineffective or not being insightful resources for multimodal composition. The instruction they offer stems from highly regarded scholars of the field and thoroughly researched findings. However, the multimodal approach to teaching composition theoretically assumes the incorporation of multicultural perspectives as it reflects the fast, continuously globalizing public spheres, as well as creating more spaces in academia for those marginalized. These texts miss opportunities to incorporate non-Eurocentric scholarship to normalize the "what" of multimodal composition. All this considered, the field risks conventionalizing by normalizing a discourse that will continue to limit students to the academic requirements of screen-mediated, digital, print-based essayistic modes of meaning-making instead of exploring and gaining experience with the vastly

multimediated, multimodal communicative systems provided by the multicultural discourses found in our public spheres and the new technology that has transformed the realm of communication representation.

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