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Haul, Parody, Remix: Mobilizing Feminist Rhetorical Criticism With Video

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It's the patriarchy/ and it'll never set you free (Bethany Russell, 2015).

Feminists must create their own audiences and involve them in technology by developing projects in all forms of new media, while continuing to monitor and critique cultural images of gender (Mary Hocks, 1999, p. 111).

This article locates itself at the intersections of remix, feminist digital pedagogy, and undergraduate research. We argue here that video composing can subvert, or critically remix, the power dynamics of mainstream popular culture as well as facilitate students' desires to write against sexism and enact intersectional feminist identities. Our argument is based on video projects created for a class on the analysis of popular culture.

In "Remembering Sappho" (2011) Jessica Enoch and Jordynn Jack feature ways students can revise and expand the rhetorical tradition, including students' digital projects like blogs and websites that amplify the perspectives of southern women who are largely unknown to the public. Laurie Grobman and Joyce Kinkead (2010) open *Undergraduate Research in English Studies* by describing all the benefits yielded by undergraduate research, including enabling students to "contribute their voices to creating knowledge" (ix). While contributors to their book showcase a variety of types of undergraduate research, none feature digital projects. Jane Greer (2009) argues that including girls in feminist rhetoric is a form of feminist academic activism and "raise[s] new questions about why and how women find themselves facing both lost opportunities and new possibilities for rhetorical performance as they enter adulthood" (2). Motivated by both the historiographic mission of feminist rhetoric to broaden understanding and inclusion of women's rhetorical practices, such as southern women and young women, as well as feminist digital rhetoric scholars who elicit calls such as Hocks's invitation in the epigraph, we position these remix videos as expanding opportunities for undergraduate research and the

production of feminist digital rhetoric, mobilizing students' own feminist criticism with the video platform.

These video projects, from two sections of a course taught by Abby M. Dubisar, are organized into two themes. The first theme—media misrepresentation and rape culture—features Claire Lattimer, Jessica Thomas, and Makayla McGrew's videos that look at how mainstream media perpetuate the blaming of victims and the normalization of gendered violence as well as how print media homogenize identity and beauty standards. The second theme—anticapitalist criticism and feminist parody—showcases Rahemma Mayfield, Joanne Myers, and Bethany Russell's videos analyzing how infrastructures of power such as tax legislation, corporations, and popular music lyrics all define gender roles that disempower consumers and fans.

All six videos demonstrate the ways that multimodal composing can be a rich practice for feminist rhetorical criticism. After briefly reviewing literature on remix, feminist digital pedagogy, and co-authoring with students, we present the assignment and its parameters. Then we address the context of the course and assignment before featuring the students' own descriptions of their work.

1. Categorizing Remix and Harnessing Popular Culture's Genres

As scholars continue to discuss, remix can be a powerful rhetorical tool (Todd Craig, 2015; Lauren R. Goldstein, 2015; Christopher A. Hafner, 2015). Most recently, Dustin Edwards (2016) has organized his typology of remixes into four categories: assemblage, appropriation, redistribution, and genre play. Subversive, feminist examples of remix and landmark feminist theory served as a backdrop to Edwards's categorizing scheme (e.g., p. 47-50). He draws on critical perspectives without positioning them as wholly essential to understanding remix's

rhetorical possibilities, a choice more brightly illuminated by the videos made by Claire Lattimer, Jessica Thomas, Makayla McGrew, Rahemma Mayfield, Joanne Myers, and Bethany Russell. Instead of fitting tidily into a grid with clear columns, rows, and boundaries, remixes shape themselves into a growing and ever-expanding rhizome (Margaret Hagood, 2004) that shifts and changes as video composers use remix to launch critique.

While scholars such as Edwards (2016) have attended to remix and video's rhetorical possibilities (Geoffrey V. Carter & Sarah J. Arroyo, 2011; Brian Jackson & Jon Wallin, 2009; Jason Palmeri, 2012; Tisha Turk & Joshua Johnson, 2012; Crystal VanKooten & Angela Berkley, 2016; Bronwyn Williams, 2014), rhetoric and writing researchers have not yet positioned remix and video making as platforms for feminist rhetorical critique. We are inspired to offer students opportunities to communicate their gendered and feminist identities by Jonathan Alexander and Jacqueline Rhodes's (2016) insistence that "[sexuality] is simultaneously one of the dominant filters for and zones of conflict through which we understand, negotiate, and argue through our individuality and our collectivity" (p. 1). Popular culture intersects with such identity negotiation, in that popular culture has influenced the sexual and gendered identities of many of us.

Similarly, Abby, as the instructor, wants to write about these projects with students because we all want them to play a more central role in theorizing feminist digital pedagogy. Scholars may use student samples or descriptions of student work in their publications but do not frequently theorize students' work with the students themselves (Megan Adams, 2014; Timothy J. Briggs, 2014; Abby M. Dubisar & Jason Palmeri, 2010; Bump Halbritter, 2011). We find parallels between what we have learned from one another and the close relationship between "performance and current college literacies" that Jenn Fishman, Andrea Lunsford, Beth

McGregor, and Mark Otuteye (2005, p. 226) noted as they published together as instructors and students. Doing so is a feminist issue. For example, although Jared Colton (2016) advocates a feminist ethic of care in his "heuristic of vulnerability" (p. 20), and he smartly has students in his courses reflect on their remix choices as caring or wounding, readers gain students' perspectives only from his brief descriptions as their teacher. We begin to address this gap here and call for more student perspectives and applications of feminist frameworks "explicitly challenging systems of power and the norms of traditional scholarship" (Jen Almjeld et al., 2016).

By subverting the tradition of professors writing about students, this article is a remix of the research article. We hope that writing and rhetoric instructors and their students see it as an invitation to engage feminist rhetorical criticism, perhaps as one in a variety of critical perspectives, in their multimodal assignments. As a multivocal, multiauthored article, it positions students as central to the understandings of writing studies scholars, about how rhetoric can work in students' lives, building on their popular culture literacies and featuring the ways in which students can creatively take up the rhetorical frameworks that rhetoric and writing courses offer.

Beyond fulfilling a pedagogical desire to have students create analytically grounded popular culture texts in a rhetoric and writing course on analyzing popular culture, teaching with video composing offers students practice in using the tools used by cultural critics who launch arguments using public platforms like YouTube. For example, when Abby and Jason Palmeri (2010) featured remix videos that students made in a political rhetoric course during the 2008 U.S. presidential election, they wagered that "if political video remix is one way in which young people participate in public civic discourse, then it makes sense for us to engage students in both analyzing and producing these kinds of texts" (p. 78). They thus implored instructors to position

students as rhetors equipped to analyze and craft genres legitimately exchanged in public popular culture spaces like YouTube.

More recently, Elizabeth Losh (2014) has emphasized "critical capacity" as a necessary framework that students need in order to craft effective remixes because many student remixes can be "superficial, uncritical, amateurish, or naïve" (p. 234). While similar criticism could be launched against more traditional student essays as well, we agree with Losh that students can benefit from guidance on locating an audience, adapting critical frameworks, and assessing the rhetorical strategies that remix accommodates.

Thus, the intersections of feminist rhetorical criticism and digital pedagogy serve as fruitful places to engage students with video composing. As is the tradition in technofeminism (Alexander & Rhodes, 2016; Kristine Blair, Radhika Gajjala, & Christine Tulley, 2009; Jacqueline Rhodes, 2005), we can use digital platforms to apply both rhetorical analysis and a critical feminist lens in order to reveal infrastructures of power and inequity within discourse that occurs in public spaces. We take up Cheris Kramarae's (2009) call to enact feminist pedagogy in combination with active learning as a way to decenter authority (p. 392). Feminist content creators, such as those Kramarae included, continue to use resistance strategies, harnessing video platforms to do so.

We draw on such samples of feminist critique videos in our class. For when video of National Football League (NFL) player Ray Rice severely beating his fiancée, Janay Palmer, in 2014 became public, commentators nationwide tried to make meaning of the atrocious imagery. Using a variety of rhetorical strategies, people responded to the video and its representation of domestic violence. Adopting the genre conventions of a makeup tutorial, a popular YouTube genre known for showing viewers how to apply various cosmetics, comedian Megan MacKay's

(2014) *Ray Rice Inspired Makeup Tutorial*[1] critiques Rice's violent behavior but also criticizes the patriarchal codes that normalize such violence. Further, MacKay used her video to offer resources for viewers experiencing such domestic violence. With wit and humor, MacKay connected the feminine performance of wearing makeup with the NFL's tradition of covering up its players' violent behavior. By using such videos as samples in teaching the possibilities for a feminist rhetorical remix, instructors like Abby can show how a simple and fun genre like a makeup tutorial can be used to launch powerful cultural criticism.

While many composition teachers use popular culture themes for their writing courses or draw on individual examples, such courses can also position popular culture analyses as central texts for study because they illustrate the very tensions that animate the study of rhetoric, especially who can access power and how. Instructors teach rhetorical strategies to help students understand how persuasion operates and craft effective arguments, missions that align with YouTube content creators like MacKay (2014).

2. Introduction to the Course and Assignment

Videos by students in our course motivate an interest in intersecting video assignments with feminist rhetorical criticism and popular culture genres. But Abby teaches students multiple methods of rhetorically criticizing popular culture, including methods centered on feminism, Marxism, disability studies, dramatistic/narrative, animal studies, fandom studies, psychoanalysis, media, culture, and visuals.

Students in the course come from a variety of Liberal Arts and Sciences majors because the course counts as an arts and humanities general education course. Speech majors earn

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[1] Available to watch online https://youtu.be/zyNa9kqq8mk

elective credit by taking the course, and English majors can use the course as either an elective or to fulfill the "critical reading and textual analysis" requirement. The class especially attracts majors from animal ecology because it fulfills their "written/oral communications course" requirement. The course's assessed projects include a short dictionary writing assignment and speech on popular culture, two written exams, an analytical debate paper, reading quizzes, and the final video assignment.

For the final video project, Abby requires students to make popular culture themselves and apply the tools of rhetorical criticism they have learned. Even though the project is the final assignment of the course, Abby initially introduces it during the first class session. Since the class does not meet in a computer classroom, students must have access to video software, either on their personal devices or via campus computer labs. Although the class discusses the varieties of software that students can use and the unique affordances of composing with video, students cannot compose the projects together in the same space. Access to technology has not been an issue for students, as they have accomplished the assignment effectively by using a range of software, from basic video remixing software built into browsers such as Firefox to Final Cut Pro, available in campus labs. Even though Universal Design for Learning (Jay Dolmage, 2015; Melanie Yergeau et al., 2013) informs Abby's pedagogy, and the assignment's parameters are flexible and adaptable, the assignment could be revised for better accessibility for students with vision or hearing impairments, such as by having all students caption their videos or pair an audio track with other sensory materials.

This project is scaffolded with the examples students have read and discussed in class and the familiarity students have gained with varieties of rhetorical criticism. Before composing with their video software, students practice adopting multiple critical personae in class discussion

sessions and in an alphabetic writing assignment. These class discussions and essays become quite dynamic and energize students to adopt and evolve their own critical perspectives. Having taught the course several times, Abby has observed students move from binary, taste-based responses to popular culture (e.g., "I like/do not like it") to much more nuanced and informed critiques, especially around how popular culture texts can plot themselves on a spectrum between subverting existing power structures to reaffirming hegemonic norms.

Addressing possible meanings of a popular culture text they have selected, students choose one type of rhetorical criticism to perform in their final video. Overwhelmingly, they have chosen either feminist or Marxist criticism to use in their final project, a trend that might be motivated by such critics' habit of revealing power structures and ideological constructs. While reading and responding to students' proposals, watching their projects and the subsequent revisions, and reading their final reflections, Abby has noticed that many students find this assignment to be a conduit to expressing their feminist identities, using the tools of rhetorical criticism to articulate them and subvert pop culture's sexism. Teaching this assignment has caused Abby to believe that students need ways to communicate feminist identities, and they can use popular culture to do so.

After the semester ended, Abby e-mailed nine students from her two fall 2015 Analysis of Popular Culture courses to ask them to co-write this article and present their work at a statewide conference on transforming gender and society. Abby identified the nine students as potential coauthors because they used feminist rhetorical criticism in their final video projects. As Abby wrote to the students, her hope for further broadcasting their videos was to expand the audiences available to their work as well as inspire other writing and rhetoric instructors to teach with video composing as a vehicle for rhetorical criticism, imitating the very tools that popular

culture critics, such as YouTube contributors, use to launch criticism of popular culture. Of the nine students Abby contacted, six expressed interest in writing more about their video projects and helping to convince other instructors to teach such assignments.

These six students presented their videos at the April 2016 women's and gender studies conference on our campus. Before the conference we all met to talk about how the videos could be revised for the conference audience, how the students could introduce their projects, and what questions they anticipated from the audience. After the conference Abby confirmed that all six students wanted to continue on with writing an article about their videos for writing and rhetoric instructors. All the students agreed and Abby began drafting this article, initially inserting sections from the students' reflective essays that they wrote for class as starting points for their sections of the article. The students then all revised and expanded their sections and reviewed the article in its entirety several times throughout the writing process, adding details and descriptions.

The students' videos fall into two broad themes: media misrepresentation and rape culture (Claire, Jessica, and Makayla) and anticapitalist criticism and feminist parody (Rahemma, Joanne, and Bethany). The assignment prompt for the videos offers suggestions for popular culture genres that students might use to address expectations and assumptions of audiences who watch YouTube videos and other publicly shared videos. Among the suggestions are: commentary vlogs, music videos, let's play video-game commentary, parody tutorials, remixed movie trailers, and video remixes that comment on an issue or present research. Students may also propose to create a video based on a YouTube genre that is not on the list, genres that suit their rhetorical purposes. Rahemma, Joanne, and Bethany each chose genres that were not on the list, making an annotated commercial, a haul video, and lyrical parody,

respectively. To complete the assignment, Rahemma and Bethany wrote on and over the existing videotext in order to make their arguments, not manipulating the video track. By reading material by Negativland (2005) and other artists who theorize copyright and copyleft, students learned the implications of reappropriating copyrighted materials for the purpose of conducting criticism.

3. Feminist Rhetorical Criticism: From Writing to Video

The students featured here chose to use feminist criticism in their videos, drawing on a number of course texts and discussion topics. For example, Barry Brummett (2015) characterized feminist criticism as a diverse set of practices that are unified by the assumption that "there is gender inequality between men and women, particularly in today's industrialized economies, and thus power differentials" (p. 180). Brummett's introduction to feminist criticism follows his description of Marxist criticism, which includes a few paragraphs on standpoint theory (p. 179), so Brummett built his characterization of feminist criticism on Marxism's concern with power. Brummett relied briefly on Judith Butler's work in regard to gender's performativity, and he highlighted how language often disempowers women, as does popular culture's habit of objectifying women. Brummett also shows how texts can empower women via alternative rhetorical forms and ways of seeing (p. 185), bringing in queer theory to address normativity (p. 186). While this introduction is quite brief to those familiar with feminist rhetorical criticism, for students in a 200-level course it provides accessible frameworks and multiple options for applying a feminist lens to popular culture, which Abby buttresses with examples of feminists and gender-focused scholars performing criticism (John Fiske, 2011; Rachel Fudge, 2004; Roxane Gay, 2014; Jessica Hopper, 2015).

In composing their videos, all the students featured here made choices that helped support their main argument, mostly by commenting on power structures and gendered implications. The students highlight how government policies, capitalist investments in gender roles, popular music addressing gendered romantic relationships, and mainstream media portrayals of gendered violence such as rape wrest power away from women in order to empower capitalist, hegemonic institutions. To compose their videos, students researched topics that would engage their audience of classmates, often elaborating on a topic from an earlier project. Students gathered clips and other draft materials and submitted for peer response a draft video, at least 30 seconds of a video and audio track. After receiving feedback from their classmates and Abby, they expanded their video's argument as well as attended to technical matters like sound volume, length of time for intertitles, and more.

In the remaining sections, the students provide a brief background on themselves before describing their video and its rhetorical purpose. The article concludes with ongoing implications for student projects like these.

4. Media Misrepresentation and Rape Culture (Claire, Jessica, and Makayla)

While some students had learned about feminism in other courses and through their own research pursuits, the brief introduction to feminism as a critical perspective from our course materials sparked their ideas about composing a feminist video. In his coverage of feminist rhetorical criticism, Brummett (2015) described how patriarchal language and images perpetuate inequality, pointing out that "patriarchy may be so deeply ingrained in a society that one need not consciously set out to disparage women but that nevertheless a text may do so. Such

denigration needs exposure" (p. 183). Thus, in class we talked about how infrastructures have built-in oppressions, and both Claire and Makayla show how the pervasiveness of rape culture within the infrastructures of popular culture and news media requires an intervention. Through studying Fiske (2011), students saw how news media perpetuate a tradition of serving the dominant populations (pp. 120-150), a notion supported by Jessica's study of magazine covers and their homogenization of beauty and identity. While such magazines claim to have universal appeal to a general audience, they actually perpetuate the hegemonic power of white, thin, femininity.

4.1 Claire

I am a 21-year-old white female 3rd-year student majoring in animal ecology. After graduation I plan to go to vet school. In my major, I generally receive course assignments such as short papers and quizzes. I do not normally get to do creative, critical projects for classes.

I have a passion for feminism and resisting rape culture, so I chose to show in my video how media representations of rape culture and victim blaming normalize gendered violence. I define rape culture as the normalization of rape that blames victims for the crimes committed against them, which I find to be pervasive in mainstream media.

My video[2] opens with comedian Daniel Tosh telling a rape joke in his stand-up act and then moves to a news clip of Southern Methodist University students chanting a pro-rape cheer. Because these two and all the clips in my video come from mainstream sources, the video shows how pervasive rape culture is in popular culture and news media. The video goes on to show how news outlets facilitate victim blaming and express concern for rapists, upholding normative

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[2] Available to watch online, with captions: https://youtu.be/tBUB0bTLn0Q

masculinity and patriarchal power. A defense attorney, positioned as an expert consultant on the Daisy Coleman case, for example, asks "What did she expect to happen at 1 a.m. in the morning?" His rhetorical question suggests that Coleman could have prevented her own rape if she had been home. The video ends with this written question: "Because Daisy Coleman snuck out (as many teenagers do) she deserves to be raped?" And it is followed by this response: "Maybe if rape wasn't taken so lightly in our culture, more victims could have the justice they do deserve."

The 4-minute video includes a wide range of videotext types, from the Tosh rape joke to a video game clip with player commentary about how the woman player should just "let [the violence inflected on her] happen, it'll all be over soon," to the 2015 Bloomingdale's print ad encouraging readers to "spike their best friend's eggnog." And I used alphabetic text slides to set up the scene of the news clips that I incorporated into the last half of my video. This variety of source texts shows how widespread across media such narratives can be.

The rhetorical purpose of my video was to show how rape culture could directly affect the outcomes of real rape cases. The news clips from the Coleman case, as well as the clip of Coleman's mother talking about the case and its victim blaming, show the power of the media to perpetuate rape culture. I wanted to persuade people to notice how their words and actions, and what they support, can affect rape victims. In making my video, I thought a lot about the best way to put together the clips and pictures so that my message was clear. I think the video assignment was a great project for getting me to think deeply on a big issue in society. It also showed me how ingrained this problem is in our culture. And I liked being able to apply the different criticisms we learned to the clips and images that I found.

After I presented this video at the research conference, audience members asked how the concept of power plays into rape culture. I elaborated on how rape has little to do with sex and everything to do with stripping the power away from someone else, so power is the root of rape as a crime.

As the instructor, Abby finds Claire's video particularly powerful in its engagement with popular culture's connection to news media and the obligation that popular culture bears to promote justice. Rape culture was not a topic that the students specifically discussed in class, so Claire independently connected the feminist theories and application of feminist criticism in the readings to the work we studied on media representation and power. Claire's adept demonstration of how media representations of rape can influence the outcomes of rape cases emphasizes how high the stakes are for coverage of violent crimes and why audiences should take seriously popular culture's perpetuation of rape culture. While college instructors might feel that they do not have the vocabulary to address rape culture or that it is not a topic that rhetoric needs to address in classroom spaces, Claire's video shows how the pervasiveness of rape culture necessitates its presence in our considerations of why critical thinking must be applied to popular culture and news media.

4.2 Jessica

I am a 21-year-old black female and a junior in graphic design with a minor in advertising. My video,[3] which shows how popular magazine covers' representations of beauty homogenizes individuals, is about 2 ½-minutes long. Starting out with a text slide that reads, "Everyone deserves accurate representation; the media has come a long way but," then shows

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[3] Available to watch online, with captions: https://youtu.be/MSVvHwJu9cw

bubbles with the many different identities a person can have. When the bubbles fade out, it continues with a slide that reads, "Mainstream media still distorts reality to the point where some groups of people are misrepresented, aren't represented at all, or allowed only one social identity." Then it shows a picture of a woman who exemplifies the "beauty standard," which includes being thin and having light skin and straight hair. The video also describes and illustrates how being heterosexual is another "standard." It moves on to show how women's beauty and fashion magazines tend to adopt those standards. The video includes my findings about the ethnicities of the cover models and shows how unrealistically women's bodies are portrayed. It also analyzes and demonstrates the unrealistic portrayal of men in men's magazines. After that it briefly touches on television, showing that about 33% of reoccurring characters on television shows are people of color, and only 4% of reoccurring characters identify as LGBTQ (GLAAD, 2015). The video ends with a text slide of my main claim, "Accurate representation in the media has increased, but we still have a long way to go." Throughout my video, I used the song "Bright" by Kehlani (2015) because the lyrics directly address how the media affect self-esteem.

My research for this video involved picking magazines that claim to have popular appeal. I picked the women's magazines *Glamour, Vogue, Cosmopolitan, Elle, Seventeen,* and *Vanity Fair*, looking at all the covers in 2015, and researching the people on those covers. I did the same thing for the three men's magazines that I picked: *GQ*, *Men's Fitness,* and *Men's Health*.

My video shows how media portrayals of individuals tend to project a kind of "ideal" beauty type, a homogenized beauty "standard" that could be harmful to those who consume media. My video might lead people to question why they consume media that do not represent them. It also might cause them to demand more diversity. The video focuses on portrayals of

race and gender in magazines and briefly touches on depictions of race and sexuality in TV programs.

As a graphic design major I am taught the details of layout, typography, and printing, but I have never been formally taught about ethics. A few professors have touched on social design and sustainability, but we have not really critiqued the designs that get put out into the world and discussed whether or not our job is to help change the images they might promote. One thing that stuck with me from a class for my advertising minor was a question that the professor asked us to consider: "Do you take the job advertising and promoting something that goes against your morals and beliefs because it's the only job offered to you or do you say no and wait for something else?" I think about that question when I imagine my future work as a graphic designer, and composing the video helped me learn more about where progress is needed.

I received peer response feedback on my video and several students asked why I did not pick magazines like *Ebony*. I realized that the people who asked this question missed the point I was trying to make: The magazines that claimed to be general interest to appeal to a wide audience do not actually represent their diverse audience. Rhetorical criticism can help popular culture audiences notice inclusivity and diversity and whether representation matches reality.

Abby respects how thoroughly Jessica narrowed down her topic and video in order to make an effective and specific argument. Her composing process is a valuable example of how constraints, such as an imposed time limit, can lead to creativity and clarity. Further, Jessica's video exemplifies how videos accommodate rhetorical criticism in academic contexts, as she reveals her research process as well as identifying and critiquing the pervasive homogenization of a beauty standard. This standard gains power through its persistent repetition, as Jessica's research and illustration shows.

4.3 Makayla

I am a senior in animal ecology and a 2016 graduate. My video,[4] *Rape Culture in Advertising,* begins with the statistic that one in six women is a victim of sexual assault (RAINN, 2009). It then transitions to clips with text slides that guide the audience to analyze the clips. The first clip is a news report of the 2015 Bloomingdale's ad that says to "spike your best friend's eggnog when they're not looking" and depicts a man gazing at a woman who is laughing and looking away. The reporter hesitates before starting to claim that the ad promotes date rape, but she interrupts herself to say that "well, a lot of people say it encourages date rape." In her hesitance to argue that the ad promotes date rape, the newscaster reveals the news media's resistance to criticizing ads. Text slides then explain what the ad is trying to accomplish before the video shows other ads from the past, such as Budweiser's "up for anything" campaign. The video then includes a provegan commercial and a text slide with an analysis of the commercial. The video ends with this argument: "These are just a few of many examples of rape culture in advertising. Unfortunately, with how rape culture is portrayed there won't be any changes any time soon in advertising." Although this argument is pessimistic, the proliferation of examples demonstrates the advertising industry's reliance on prorape scripts.

I consider my video to be a cultural commentary remix because it brings awareness of an issue within American pop culture by using images, video clips, music, and text to point out how certain advertisements promote that issue. By using multiple texts to make its argument, this video builds on and extends the rhetorical criticism of others in this video genre. I extend on critical videos that just use video clips and audio by including background text before, in

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[4] Available to watch online, with captions: https://youtu.be/jTdnB2lus8Q

between, and after the clips and images. Combining text with images and video clips helped me build my argument.

For example, the People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) commercial (2012) shows how PETA used rape culture to relay its message of helping animals. In the 30-second commercial, a woman is shown walking down the street in a neck brace wearing only her bra and underwear. She is wearing a neck brace because of the condition BWVAKTBOOM, or Boyfriend Went Vegan and Knocked the Bottom Out Of Me. The ad claims that going vegan could cause sex to become rougher, which implies rape because the woman probably asked her boyfriend to stop, but he kept going to the point of injuring her. The ad implies, then, that it is okay to treat women horribly as long as animals are being saved.

My experience with composing this video made me think about the concepts of pop culture analysis through the critical characteristic of being interventionist (Brummett, 2015, p. 89). Participatory media help raise awareness about an issue and get people to think about how culture can be changed. My video uses examples to raise awareness of the issue of rape culture and argues that the current portrayal of rape culture will continue if we do not demand that it change, which can cause viewers to want to change that portrayal. By using the video genre, the argument can reach more people rapidly and could perhaps motivate more people to try to change the normalization of rape.

As an instructor, Abby was struck by the measured pace with which Makayla moves from one example to the next in her video. She used her video as a teaching tool in order to invite audiences to perform a rhetorical analysis of the clips she found, guiding their learning. Makayla's choices in her video composition also show how advertising and news reporting on advertising, an interesting example of one form of media covering another, perpetuate the

normalization of gendered violence. Even though corporations have publicly apologized for their

prorape campaigns, the attention they gain from the ads leads students like Makayla to believe

that promoting rape culture is a deliberate strategy that marketers use to gain attention.

Makayla's video makes audiences think about the cliché "there is no such thing as bad publicity"

and how certain bad publicity can reinscribe violence against women.

5. Anticapitalist Criticism and Feminist Parody (Rahemma, Joanne, and Bethany)

One powerful way that video can broadcast arguments is by mixing genres and parodying

existing forms of media. Such revisions to existing texts reflect feminist goals, especially by

promoting alternative rhetorical forms and ways of seeing (Brummett, 2015, p. 185). The act of

performing rhetorical criticism intervenes in the status quo in order to reveal undergirding power

structures and ways that gender and autonomy are interlinked.

The three videos featured in this section enact feminist rhetorical criticism by drawing on

each student creator's reaction to a single source text. Much like how music critic Hopper (2015)

relied on her own experience as a rock music fan in her essays published in her book *The First

Collection of Criticism by a Living Female Rock Critic*, from which students read selections for

our class, Rahemma, Joanne, and Bethany relied on their own reactions to popular culture and

public policy in order to craft their videos. Whereas Hopper (2015) poignantly addressed what it

meant to her to be a fan of music that excludes her as a woman by insisting that girls deserve to

expect more from music and that music owes girls "reasons to stay, to want to belong" (p. 20), so

Rahemma, Joanne, and Bethany addressed their feelings of exclusion caused by the sexism that

they found perpetuated in their source texts. Of particular note is Joanne's choice to satirize a

relatively new video genre, the recently popular YouTube genre of the "haul," which generally

involves individuals recording themselves with a webcam and holding up consumer products that they purchased as they comment on them. Tricia Romano (2010) notes, "[Haul] videos are the virtual equivalent of watching a girlfriend show off her finds after a shopping trip." As a particularly feminized genre, Joanne subverted the somewhat trite focus of haul videos— shopping—in order to take seriously the topic of sexist tax laws. Rahemma and Bethany literally wrote and sang over the narratives promoted by their source texts in order to revise the original arguments promoted by the commercial and song, respectively, and critique the embedded ideologies of gender performance and consumerism.

5.1 Rahemma

I am a female with a degree in journalism and mass communications and am currently working toward a degree in secondary English education. My background in journalism has taught me to always look at media through a critical lens. In my video,[5] I write over Mattel's *Imagine the Possibilities* commercial (Barbie, 2015). The original video, which has the look and feel of a nonprofit message supporting girls and their job prospects, is in fact a Barbie doll commercial. Throughout the commercial, young girls are positioned as a college professor, a soccer coach, a veterinarian, a museum tour guide, and a business traveler. As they perform these professional roles, hidden cameras record adults with whom they interact reacting with surprise and laughter. The original video ends by showing one of the girls, the one who was positioned as a college professor in front of a classroom, playing with Barbie dolls in a makeshift college classroom in her bedroom. Thus, Mattel argues that Barbie facilitates girls' ambitions and enables them to "imagine the possibilities" of their adult, professional lives.

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[5] Available to view online, with captions: https://youtu.be/wfNLHw1p9qU

In my video, I keep the commercial intact, but add written text to revise its message. For example, Mattel opens with the question, "What happens when girls are free to imagine they can be anything?" My first line of text predicts what happens next: "Enter the super cute little girl with endless dreams." Then I go on to write, "Aren't they adorable." My tone is meant to be sarcastic in order to point out that Mattel is invested in featuring cute girls as performers just as it is invested in packaging its Barbie doll as an icon of normative beauty and idealized appearance. The commercial initially tricked me into thinking it was a public service announcement, so I wanted to point out right away its actual intentions: to portray a saccharin version of girlhood in order to sell Barbie dolls. At the end I write, "Don't let Mattel fool you" and ask the audience to "imagine the possibility" that Mattel does not actually care about girls' ambitions but only wants to profit from them.

The rhetorical purpose of my video was to show that companies might bundle what they sell in pretty packaging and good causes, but that we, as consumers, should take a closer, more critical look at what companies are really selling us. My video is deliberative and epideictic, critically looking at Mattel as a company and inviting the audience to take action. I ask viewers to enact a feminist and Marxist critique of Mattel's commercial, prompting them to consider what it is really trying to do, which is to sell a product and make a profit.

When presenting my video at the conference, I showed the actual commercial before showing my annotated version of it so that viewers would get the full impact of what I was saying rather than having to simultaneously figure out what the commercial was about and interpret my criticism of it. This approach is an example of Losh's (2014) "unmixing" because I showed my audience the original (unmixed) as well as my revision (remix) of the commercial (p. 234).

From her perspective as the instructor, Abby noticed the significance of the look and feel of the source text Rahemma used, a commercial that initially appears to be a feel-good documentary about girls. Rahemma adeptly harnessed the mixing of genres that video accommodates and, in fact, turned the video narrative into a public service announcement that rejected commodifying girls' ambitions. Just as corporations, like Mattel, can mix video genres to gain traction on YouTube and other platforms, students can mix such genres in order to apply critical thinking to the ideologies being promoted and address the underlying arguments concerning capitalism's investment in youth culture and desire. Barbie remains a popular topic for students in rhetorical criticism courses, which can lead to clichéd projects, but Rahemma's video smartly addressed the nuanced ways that Mattel tries to sell Barbie dolls by rewriting the video's message.

5.2 Joanne

I am a white, female student in the English Education program and am originally from the United Kingdom. In the U.K., a luxury tax is applied to menstruation products such as tampons so I made a satirical haul video to help women and girls have a "luxurious" period. My video[6] is made up of two parts. In the first part I perform a "haul"; that is, I pull out of a red gift bag all the supplies needed to have a luxurious menstrual period: wine, ice cream, Midol, and more. As I reveal the bag's contents, the cost of all the items is calculated on the screen so that the audience can watch the rising tally as I show off the products. In the second part of the video, I comment on the luxury tax and further explain my haul. I describe four reasons why the tampon tax is discriminatory: (a). As a goods-and-services-tax, which is a flat rate and not based on income, it hits lower income families harder; (b). tampons and other menstruation products are

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[6] Available to watch online, with captions: https://youtu.be/DceNsfBCGMw

not luxury items because menstruation is a natural function; (c). there are no taxes that apply to men only, so the tax is institutionalized sexism; and (d). the U.K. government pays for contraception but taxes basic hygiene products, which is illogical and unfair.

I chose the haul style video because it is a relatively new genre of video on YouTube that has become quite popular. Content creators share items they have bought on sale, for going on vacation and other purposes. People seem to feel empowered when they outsmart the capitalist system by buying such discounted items. Take that, cathedrals of consumerism (Fiske, 2011, pp. 10-33)! I wanted this video to be funny but informative so that the audience would understand why the tax on feminine hygiene products is both unjust to women and misidentified as a luxury product. Although I made my video with a female audience in mind, I still wanted men to view the video and understand that periods are not a luxurious experience for women. Because most politicians do not discuss issues such as the tampon tax, constituents need put pressure on them to act. In the second part of the video, I argue that while some taxes are important and necessary, this tax hits lower income, struggling families hardest. If young women, especially, cannot afford hygiene products, they might miss school and suffer in other ways. I want my audience to understand clearly that having a tax that affects only women is an example of institutional sexism.

I deliberately chose all the details in the video, from the chocolate, Midol, ice cream, and Pearl tampons to the red polka dot dress and red lipstick. I chose to look like the stereotypical Stepford wife in order to personify the retro and patriarchal thinking behind legislating and taxing items that are strictly for women. When reading feedback from my classmates, I was disheartened that a few (eight) of my classmates chose to write about how distracting my cleavage was and how I should rethink the camera angle or not lean over so much. My video is

informative, and its message is important, yet people commented on my body. These objectifying comments demonstrate one reason why writing and rhetoric courses should teach students how to apply feminist rhetorical criticism: so they can point out that such body-shaming comments are attempts to silence women and reiterate that they are objects to be looked at, not individuals with ideas.

The body shaming that Joanne experienced through the peer response comments concerns Abby. While some students might request feedback on their physical appearance as part of their argument's style and delivery, should they choose to appear in their videos, Joanne's eight classmates assumed they should discipline Joanne Myers's body, not believing that she intended to enact all details of her performance. Abby plans to address this issue before future video response sessions.

When Joanne first told Abby about her topic idea, Abby was impressed that Joanne connected the tax with institutionalized sexism. While the topic of haul videos had briefly come up in class, we had not studied this form of video in depth. Yet it perfectly fit with Joanne's rhetorical purpose. Since Joanne was also enrolled in Abby's Gender and Communication course during the same term, she was steeped in how gender is not only taught through cultural norms and communicated to us verbally and nonverbally, but also legislated by policies and government procedures.

Inspired by Joanne's video, Abby might have students create parody hauls in her popular culture course so that they can subvert patriarchal capitalism and empower consumers, however briefly or superficially. Hauls represent a youth subculture defined by a public display of good taste that is carefully assembled in a video with exacting attention to detail (Alexis Petridis, 2014). They showcase a "segment of contemporary youth culture [invested in both] longstanding

gender tropes even while traversing the new language territory made possible by Web 2.0 forums such as YouTube" (Laura Jeffries, 2011, p. 60). Joanne's video powerfully shows how parodying a haul video subverts the hegemonic power of patriarchal capitalism, introduced in class with discussions of shopping for pleasure and the implications of spending money as a leisure activity (Fiske, 2011, pp. 10-33).

5.3 Bethany

I am a 20-year-old exchange student from England. At Iowa State for my sophomore year, I am studying literature and planning to pursue a career in creative writing or theatre. My video[7] exposes the sexist message in Megan Trainor's (2015) song "Dear Future Husband." I rewrote the lyrics as captions to the original video, ridiculously exaggerating the gender binaries of the original in order to highlight the heteronormative gender stereotypes that the modern music industry continues to support. I am especially proud of my rhyming parody lyrics that launch my critique, such as "You're no match for me: Heteronormativity" and "They make you think you're free/With your own money/But it's the patriarchy/and it'll never set you free." Using the original tune and video, I sang my lyrics myself, at times making the captions' font size larger or stylizing them in other ways to emphasize my point.

I was inspired to do this revision of "Dear Future Husband" because the original lyrics[8] perpetuate the categorization of men and women into gender binaries and the expectation that a woman's purpose is to be a wife and a man's purpose is to win her. Popular culture seems to latch on to a handful of songs and play them repeatedly, so that its effects are nearly unavoidable. Often we hear a catchy tune and eventually replay the song ourselves (if only in our heads), regardless of the content. Trainor achieved fame after her song "All About That Bass"

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[7] See Appendix A for the transcript of Bethany's video.
[8] Available to watch online: http://tinyurl.com/hh2nabr

became internationally known for its celebration of curvier women. The underlying message in that song, however, is an insult directed at "skinny bitches." Instead of being a song that champions all women, it praises some but demeans others. Feminist rhetorical criticism can help students see the arguments artists make with their songs.

I have always found it important to transfer content that I learn in class to my everyday life. But this project has made me become more actively involved in changing what I think is wrong. It is important to analyze what popular culture is teaching us and how we can reject what we do not agree with. When I presented my video at the conference, I was asked whether Trainor herself is doing a parody of outdated gender roles because the original song's spirit is based on classic American rock and roll of the 1950s and 1960s. I would love to give Trainor and her team such credit, but I think such showcasing of retro norms helps perpetuate the sexist stereotypes that my video is critiquing.

When Bethany showed her video in class for peer response, Abby was impressed that she had sung the song herself, performing her argument to enact her rhetorical goal. Bethany's approach shows how composing video can really emphasize writing, as she rewrote the song to fit the message that she wished Trainor (2015) would have delivered. Like Hopper (2015) and others who write from a persona of being a music fan who wants to feel represented by the music, Bethany teaches her video's viewers that songs do not have to trot out regressive gender binaries and heteronormative roles in order to be catchy and popular. Bethany's video inspires Abby to have students initially approach remix as a rewriting exercise, adapting the structure, style, and melodies of popular songs to fit the intersectional, feminist purposes that her students optimistically pursue. Just as Janine Butler (2016) asks students to enliven music video captioning by breaking captions free from the bottom of the screen, we could ask students to

compose captions that break free from the sexist, racist, ableist, and other normative features of popular music.

6: Conclusion and Further Research

Itself a remix of the research article, this multivocal, multiauthored article is an invitation to writing and rhetoric instructors to engage feminist rhetorical criticism, perhaps as one type of a variety of critical perspectives, in their multimodal assignments. We hope that this work prompts further research that theorizes the use of popular culture in writing and rhetoric courses as well as investigates how popular culture analysis matters to curricula.

For instance, writing instructors and students could theorize their use of popular culture in their classes and projects, working beyond our habit of including popular culture in our classes because it is handy and available. For example, Stephanie Vie (2016) stated that 80% of the writing instructors she surveyed use YouTube in their classrooms. Instructors could work more substantially with students to theorize YouTube and its growing significance to higher education, especially as it serves as a platform for making popular culture. As Seth Godin (2016) recently declared, the Internet is built on video, an idea that instructors can interrogate with students in order to consider the persuasive possibilities of video-based arguments.

Investigations of how and when we use popular culture, video based or otherwise, has a history that is ready for revival. For example, Fred Kroeger (1968) encouraged writing instructors to engage with their students' popular culture by playing popular songs in the classroom and having students write about them. He commented, "Every college English teacher ought to tune in to a local popular record radio station once in a while, even if he must shudder through the whole experience…one must be human to bring Humanities to the masses" (p. 337).

He mentioned the instruments used in the songs he plays in class and their emotion-provoking sounds as well as rhetorical devices such as non sequitur and false analogy that students identify, showing how multimodal elements fit together with the song's lyrics in order to form an argument.

Additionally, students and instructors could conduct archival research to understand the curricular endorsement of popular culture and our institutions' linking of rhetoric with popular culture. For example, our course used to be called Propaganda Survey and Analysis, revealing a historical investment in critical thinking. The use of terms such as propaganda and manipulation in the course description especially show an investment in teaching students critical strategies for adeptly reading media sources and popular culture messages.

Regarding undergraduate research and coauthoring with undergraduate students, the possibilities are nearly limitless for instructors to conceive of assignments as future publications, assigning genres they wish to write about with students and better understand as practitioners of rhetoric. As Laurie Grobman (2009) shows, "Because authorship is always implicated in power relations…granting authorship to undergraduate researchers in composition may transform not only the discipline but also the way scholars in rhetoric and composition view their scholarly selves" (p. 179). Locating such authorship at the intersections of digital pedagogy and feminist rhetorical criticism enhances opportunities for instructors to reflect on their teaching choices with their students, for students to shape the field, and for all of us to promote the spreadability of projects composed in writing and rhetoric courses.

As Hocks (1999) stated in the second epigraph, "Feminists must create their own audiences and involve them in technology by developing projects in all forms of new media, while continuing to monitor and critique cultural images of gender" (p. 111). We end on this note

because beyond being a remix of the traditional research article, this article is also a remix of our class since it brings together students from two separate course sections and highlights trends found in the work of those who have chosen to use feminist criticism. We found an audience in one another. Feminist students can create their own audiences in response to instructors' flexible assignments, doing so to launch critique. It bears repeating that these projects were not done in a women's and gender studies class or created by women's and gender studies majors. Instructors can thus invite students to communicate their own intersectional identities and values through multimodal assignments, as the students here have done, remixing the possibilities for how and where students' ideas can take shape and mobilize rhetorical criticism.

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Appendix A

Dear Future Husband,
Who has absolutely no say in the matter,
You better do exactly as I say or else…

Take me on a date
Every single day,
From 5am to 12am they are the times you
must adore me.
If you don't behave
You'll reach an early grave.
You're no match for me:
Heteronormativity.

Girl you can have a perk:
You know we'll let you work…
'Cus in the end you're under all the
patriarchal jerks.
They make you think you're free
With your own money
But it's the patriarchy and it'll never set
you free.

Your information on women might be
hazy: Once a month we go crazy,
We just can't control ourselves.

Dear Future Husband,
Here's a load of things you need to know if
You wanna understand the hormonal
world of women.

Dear Future Husband,
If you want to get the only thing men crave
(SEX),
Tell me my
butt/boobs/waist/hair/nails/makeup are
great.

Women are always wrong.
To explain is long.
So, not and smile and make her think that
she belongs in the world of men,
Then knock her down again.
Women have their place they're not even

in the race (HUMAN).

You gotta know how to treat her like
lady.
'Cus every woman is a lady.
Even if they say they're not. (What? Who
wants to be a lady?)

Dear Future Husband,
Women are demanding that's the way that
we are.
Don't try to fight it,
If you don't wanna split,
Admit you're wrong.

Dear Future Husband,
I'm your only priority in life.
You'd better say bye to your family now and
get it done.

You will do everything that I say:
Open doors on all fours do the chores.
Just be a classy guy.
Flash your cash and buy—
Buy me a ring. Buy—Buy me a ring.

You gotta know that all women like to be
owned.
Give up our names, our independence
And this ring is the way it starts.

Dear Future Husband,
Who has absolutely no say in the matter,
You better do exactly what I say or else…

Dear Future Husband,
Women are demanding that's the way that
we are.
Don't try to fight it,
If you don't wanna split,
Admit you're wrong.

Future Husband,
Better love me right.