Participatory Composition
Video Culture, Writing, and Electracy

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aforementioned folding of desire and the social: one cannot be separated from the other, particularly since all vlogs are posted with the sole purpose of gaining views. Vlogging videos are thus inherently social and not simply examples of self-present, self-interested narcissists. Rather, in a gesture of radical exposure, vloggers’ unruly “twigs of hair” move to frontal view and take on the form of comments, video responses, and remixes.

Bonnie Kyburz’s movie “Status Update” both provides a fitting complement to the discussion of vlogging in general and an appropriate coda for this chapter. In the film, Kyburz asks a fairly simple question regarding the genre of the text-based status update on Facebook: why aren’t more people updating their statuses with video? She reminds us that the technology is there, that is, mobile devices and webcams make updating one’s status with video a piece of cake. The myth of the status update is “the notion of the egocentric narcissist endlessly tweeting.” Kyburz’s film “worries with this myth by playing with the following possibility: In articulating the mundane (what we often find in status updates), we activate our desire for simple communion.” While I would take Kyburz’s assertion a bit further than “simple communion” and include exposure to a community of singularities, I see the video status update as much more appropriate than the text-based update for a number of reasons.

Most notably, however, unlike the manipulation of text, video remixes and comments literally remade our image, our so-called self-present subjectivity right before our eyes. Kyburz adds to this when she ruminates on why the textual status update still prevails over the more “exposed” video status update. She writes: “That is to say, for many status updaters, it may seem that sharing the mundane through the relatively static imagistic register of words in a box honors a stable, performing self rather than the richly multimodal, cinematically mediated sublime.” By bringing the body into the status update, the “static-ness” of the status is lifted, and suddenly, the space of the update is just as important as both the singularity doing the update and the update itself. I will elaborate on the space of the update in chapter 3, but here we can see that it serves as a fitting illustration of melding desire and the social, perpetuating subjectivity, and leaving the same sort of trace of becoming as the practice of vlogging. Kyburz concludes, “for those who contributed their video updates to my project, it seems that a kind of emergent desire…has compelled them to play.” Kyburz’s words suggest a desire that is reluctant at best, but after “playing,” after letting go of the idea that one’s image will be critiqued, the fear of self-presence lifts and participatory subjectivity takes over. The simple act of posting a video status update encapsulates the goals of this chapter with performance, participation, and production at the forefront.

3. The Question of Definition: Choric Invention and Participatory Composition

What is X?…is a question that excludes and purges. What do I want, wanting to know?…What is it to know (to no)? This contrary question allows me to interrogate the What is X? question…By saying No, we would purchase our identity. Know ourselves. By purifying the world, we would exclude that which, in our different opinions, threatens our identity.

—Victor Vitanza, Negation, Subjectivity, and the History of Rhetoric

Chora is the spacing which is the condition for everything to take place, for everything to be inscribed…. Everything inscribed in it erases itself immediately, while remaining in it.

—Jacques Derrida, qtd. in Gregory Ulmer, Heuretics: The Logic of Invention

Vitanza’s first counterthesis raises the question of definition, or What is x?, and this chapter examines this first of three theoretical constructs that create a framework for electorate and participatory practices. These three constructs are based on the countertheses and include: the question of definition (What is x?), the question of authorship (Who speaks when something is spoken?), and the question of pedagogy (How is knowledge communicated?). Examining the first counterthesis, we will link the question of definition to the classical practice of stasis theory that serves as the counterpart to chorography: Ulmer’s method of invention that comes out of the ancient conception of space, or chora. Chorography is another way to describe “choric” invention. On the way from stasis to chora, however, we will revisit the forces animating our recasting of chora as an invention. Ulmer’s reappropriation

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of the punctum, and Collin Brooke's concept of *proaireis*, in order to offer a complex and rich picture of invention for the electrate apparatus.

Thus, this chapter has three ambitious goals. First, beginning with the question of definition, we will revisit the doctrine of stasis theory, a commonplace intentional strategy that is pedagogically familiar. Sharon Crowley and Debra Hawhee suggest that the questions of conjecture, definition, quality, and procedure posed by stasis theory generate *copia*, an abundance of language wherein one might generate arguments or figures for any situation. Second, after exploring Barthes's and Ulmer's work on the punctum of recognition, we will extend their concepts into the participatory realm and then transition into a discussion of Brooke's recasting of invention as *proaireis*, a postcritical approach to invention that he aligns with Ulmer's "process of conduction" (*Heuristics* 85). Our discussion of Brooke's notion of *proaireis* acts as a relay toward our investigation of *chora* that we juxtapose with Deleuze and Guattari's dualisms for both spatiality and temporality. Displacing binaries through the generative logic of the and complicates traditional efforts to arrest movement to achieve stasis and propels us into a discussion of online video and participatory cultures through which we can see the aforementioned theoretical concepts in action. Finally, we turn to YouTube as our exemplar for *choric* invention and conclude by explaining how a particular meme, with its folds of remix and reappropriation, illustrates how spreadable (and undefinable) media can influence participation as well as global collaboration, interaction, and communication. Online video sharing sites and the cultural phenomena arising throughout them serve as striking exemplars of the theoretical concepts discussed in this chapter, especially since, as reported in chapter 1, more than 91 percent of the web's global consumer traffic will be video by 2014, according to the Cisco Visual Networking Index (VNI) Forecast, 2009-2014. These numbers indicate that video sharing and the participatory practices that are a necessary part of video culture will continue to rise. The purpose of this chapter will be to look forward by looking back: back to the age-old question of definition as it pertains to the electrate and participatory context in which we find ourselves. Combining these elements together, we hope, will create a dynamic picture of invention.

The Question of Definition: From Stasis to Chora

The central tenets of the first counterthesis are extremely important for rhetoric and composition wherein what constitutes the discipline's object of study is continuously under contention. That said, however, this chapter is concerned with how the question of definition relates to practices of rhetorical invention as well as the generation of knowledge in digitally mediated environments and, particularly, in a digital culture pervaded by video. The first counterthesis

decenters on the age-old issue of whether knowledge can be legitimized or grounded either on some universal, ontogenetic theory (that is, on some universal law, or *physis*) or rhetorically on consensus theory (that is, homology, or local *nomoi*). The first counterthesis, which is contrary to such knowledge, is informed by the Gorgian proposition "Nothing [of essence] exists." (Vitanza, "Three Countertheses" 145)

The first counterthesis is a counterresponse to the practice of systematizing discussions about the object of study in rhetoric and composition. Vitanza explains that the first counterthesis suggests two possible conclusions for its relevance to composition: "either that there can no longer be or that ethically, micropolitically, there should not be any foundational principle or covering law or ontogenetic model for composition theory and pedagogy" (148). This was and still is traumatic for the discipline (see Rickert, *Acts of Enjoyment* 9); Vitanza tells us in the first counterthesis that with any and all attempts to control, map, and construct models in the name of language, we will witness language turning "against the models that are constructed in its name" (148). Following up on this crucial point, in *Negation, Subjectivity, and the History of Rhetoric*, Vitanza warns: "Wherever there is a system (totality, unity), there is the trace of the excluded" (4). This is one of the most provocative yet pressing notions for our discussion: asking what something is, in order to define and set up boundaries, undoubtedly excludes and purges that which it is not. This purging, which creates a hole in order to re-create a new whole, deflects that which it has excluded. Vitanza emphasizes, "if what has been excluded is deflected, it eternally returns. Therefore, it is present in its absence" (15). The "hole" created by the excluded is indeed an active receptacle, a space of generation and constant reinvention, as opposed to a seemingly empty container. The practice of building boundaries and providing final answers to the question, What is *x*? creates specters of the excluded. Similarly, Ulmer explains the necessity of addressing these specters that generate new content. He suggests, "the one who invents is the one who is able to turn ghosts into agents" ("I United the Camera of Tastes" 578).

The question, What is *x*? has been appropriated by many in the field when working specifically with rhetorical invention. As James Berlin describes in *Rhetoric, Poetics, and Cultures*, a central tenet of social-epistemic rhetoric...
concerns uncovering and identifying contradictions (binary constructions) present in society. The practice of uncovering and identifying binary structures is linked to the doctrine of stasis: finding a place on which to stand and generate arguments. Stasis theory, although from the Classical tradition, remains relevant for invention purposes in most of the prevailing epistemologies of writing in use today. We do not refute or renounce stasis theory, but rather read the residue of what it has been asking writers to do for centuries. In other words, we hope to affirm the knowledge that stasis theory necessarily excludes. In his translation of Aristotle’s Rhetoric, George Kennedy suggests the following regarding the theory’s history:

Much of what Aristotle discusses in [Chapter 15: “Ways of Meeting a Prejudicial Attack; the question at Issue”] was later absorbed into stasis theory, the technique of determining the question at issue in a trial. This subject was first organized systematically by Hermagoras of Tenos in the second century B.C. and supplies the major theoretical basis for inventionary theory in the Rhetoric for Herennius and rhetorical writings of Cicero, Quintilian, Hernogenes, and later authorities. (265)

Because Aristotle himself did not systematize what later became stasis theory, Kennedy suggests that he “does not seem to have realized the fundamental rhetorical importance of determining the question at issue” (265–66). Through Kennedy, we can see that determining the question at issue did not always necessarily involve a systematic series of questions to answer. While we do not intend to recover the lost origin of the doctrine of stasis, we do find it interesting that perhaps the ambiguity of what Aristotle “did not do” (since most of the other sections of Rhetoric are divided into several categories) carries some significance. Stasis involves defining something to the greatest extent. Yet, although the process of determining the point of stasis, or of eliminating that which does not belong, is important for forensic discourse, such a process is highly ambiguous and arbitrary. As we will see, Roland Barthes plays off of this ambiguity, which, he contends, allows access to that which cannot be articulated in language. In addition, Thomas Conley suggests that the “curricular innovation” of stasis theory (which was primarily used as questions for debate in a trial or to clarify wording of the law) is one of the most significant events of rhetorical invention (32, 33, emphasis added). Conley’s suggestion helps explain Kennedy’s later assertion that Aristotle’s “failure to treat stasis as a part of invention and to create a technical terminology to describe it is probably why The Rhetoric was rather little studied” (Aristotle 265). Therefore, it would follow that a systematization of the ambiguous parts of Rhetoric, most notably how to invent places to stand, motivated people to read and use it for pedagogical purposes.

Perhaps because of the historical significance attached to stasis theory, discussions about it abound in scholarly articles and composition textbooks in our field, thereby attesting to its longevity and applicability to practices of rhetorical invention. Along with the aforementioned popular textbook by Crowley and Hawhee, Ancient Rhetorics for Contemporary Students, we turn to two more examples that we feel are important for our discussion. First, Janice Lauer, when discussing Michael Carter’s article “Stasis and Kairos,” argues that stasis is a “method for identifying the issue at hand and also for leading rhetors to the topoi appropriate to it” (Invention in Rhetoric and Composition 184); she explains that stasis classifies issues as questions of fact, definition, quality, and procedure and thus reduces the possibility of confusion and noise. “Leading to the topics” will be an important contrast to our casting of chora. Second, while dated, Virginia Anderson’s article “Confrontational Teaching and Rhetorical Practice” is extremely useful for illustrating how stasis theory is connected to empowerment-oriented rhetorics. Anderson argues that instructors, especially those who espouse critical pedagogy, should rely heavily on stasis theory for inventionary purposes. Doing so, according to Anderson, allows instructors to evade opposition from the subsequent “resistant” students who feel that they must conform to their instructor’s own political views, while still allowing students to become aware and critical of their own cultural biases.

Stasis theory, Anderson claims, represents not the instructor’s politics, but “Western tradition” (211). Therefore, students will not resist the questions posed to them, since “Western tradition” is asking them; instead, they will systematically answer the questions, thereby realizing that “beliefs they have taken for granted do not look so obvious to everyone” (211). Stasis theory is pedagogically favorable, and it forces students to take a stand. Stasis theory affords systematized short-cuts for “how to invent” and is not usually seen as an area of contention in the field. In other words, its “status” is typically considered “obvious” to anyone seeking to invent ideas. Stasis theory provides a systematic guide for “how to” invent written arguments and assumes that answering the question, What is x? will be no problem for writers.

However, we argue that if writers begin by tossing out anything that feels irrational or irrelevant, their writing reproduces what has already been predetermined by social codes. Vitanza, in the first counterthesis, helps explain
From Punctum to Proairesis

We now explore what is deflected in the name of defining things to achieve stasis. Both Barthes’s work with third meanings, particularly in his text *Camera Lucida*, and Ulmer’s appropriation of Barthes provide access to this deflected residue, to what has been systematically pushed aside by asking and subsequently answering “What is it?” In addition, Collin Brooke’s recasting of invention as *proairesis* will illustrate an alternative that, again, does not dismiss stasis theory but reappropriates it. Ulmer describes Barthes as ultimately searching for these deflections: the “undefinable,” the “inaccessible.” He writes:

Much of Barthes’s work in the last decade of his life consisted of the development of a methodology—a procedure or operation—that would provide access to the third meaning... Barthes addresses a level of reality that exists at the limits of knowledge excluded from the extant codes of both opinion and science. This is the level of the third meaning—the obtuse, the oblique, the novelesque, the filmic, the biographical. (“Barthes’s Body of Knowledge” 224)

Barthes finds this access in photographs and film stills that produce obtuse, third meanings. These third meanings do not so much destroy as subvert traditional forms of interpretation (Barthes, “The Third Meaning” 64) and are usually experienced as feelings or emotions that arise instantaneously when in contact with photographs or images. Barthes believes that the photographic image contains a message without a code, making verbal articulation impossible. While Barthes develops his theory in relation to still images, we will remotivate it in relation, as well as in application, to online video, which inevitably adds a participatory element (to be discussed shortly). First, however, we will spend some time with Barthes’s reading of photographs in *Camera Lucida*, sparking a passage toward the question of definition and its role in participatory culture.

Barthes is troubled by the question, What is it? in relation to pictographic representation. His journey is triggered by the tremendous desire to know if something exists (What is x?), which is the first question of stasis theory. However, this question is complex, and Barthes eventually discovers that the confusion and ambiguity resulting from his desire to know if something exists is actually what he has been looking for all along. In fact, Ulmer describes the writing that Barthes exemplifies as “that of a writer who ‘catches’ language from another text the way something catches fire, ignites” (“Barthes’s Body of Knowledge” 222).

Barthes’s desire drives him to “learn at all costs what a photograph is in itself” (*Camera Lucida* 3). The (overwhelming) question he poses to himself is “does it exist?” However, the first question of stasis theory cannot be answered; it simply cannot be determined. Barthes reports, “I wasn’t sure if photography existed [or] that it had a ‘genus’ of its own... photography is unclassifiable” (3–4). Therefore, not only the first, but also the second question of stasis theory remains unanswered; they simply cannot be determined. Barthes believes that the photograph’s infinite reproduction of that which has happened only once produces its ambiguity and singularity, its ability to evade classification. Frustrated by attempting to define photography in general, Barthes turns to the photograph in particular. He feels suppressed by the “voice of knowledge,” which continuously urges him to dismiss/deflect/exclude what is disturbing him about the photograph and to return to something that can be codified, grounded in representation and rationality.

This disturbance or disorder, initiated by the inability to define and revealed by the desire to write about photography, suddenly “corresponded to a discomfort [he] had always suffered from: the uneasiness of being a subject torn between two languages, one expressive, the other critical” (8). He focuses on why some photographs “wound” him, or evoke a corporeal reaction, while others are just “there.” We have explicaded Barthes’s dilemma in detail to show the complexities that arise from simply asking, “is it?” Barthes, for an instant, attempts to follow procedure or, perhaps, protocol: defining what “is” to the audience to establish the point of stasis. However, what Barthes finds, by resisting protocol and following his body, is that arriving at a definition is the very thing that suppresses desire. In other words, standing still is not an option, and he cannot simply ignore the immense internal agitation he feels while looking at certain photographs. He cannot not move, or shift ground as he investigates his desire to write. There is no place to “stand.”

The principle of adventure allows Barthes to “make photography exist” (19). The adventure is neither mapped nor planned; it happens in a flash that can be neither predicted nor apprehended in such a way as to establish
a firm ground upon which to build an argument. Suddenly, and with no comprehensible warning, certain photographs become animated. Barthes explains that the adventure works both ways: the photograph reaches and animates him just as he animates the photograph. This is a wonderful explanation of the participatory experience we undergo when interacting with images and video online, and we will elaborate on this connection shortly. However, Barthes calls the participatory experience “a wound: I see, I feel, hence I notice, I observe, and I think” (21). Curiously, the wound includes the co-presence of two discontinuous elements: an experience that calls for a third conception to complicate, as well as to break out of, the otherwise clear demarcations of a binary structure. Barthes searches his own lexicon to describe that adventure, that certain co-presence in the photographs that wound him, but his language (French) makes it impossible. Instead, Barthes chooses two Latin terms, *studium* and *punctum*, to describe the experience of interacting with photographs.

Barthes looks at a photograph of a war-torn street in Nicaragua. He notices the copresence of soldiers and nuns walking down a deserted street, claiming that the photograph does not please, interest, or intrigue him. “It simply existed (for me)” (23), he writes. Hence, what he feels about this and several other photographs “derives from an average affect, almost from a certain training... it is culturally that I participate in the figures, the faces, the gestures, the settings, the actions” (27). Culturally coded reactions and interests constitute the *studium*: predictable, inert responses that stand still, frozen in stasis. Barthes continues: “To recognize the *studium* is inevitably to encounter the photographer’s intentions, to enter into harmony with them, to approve or disprove of them, but always to understand them... for culture (from which the *studium* derives is a contract arrived at between creators and consumers)” (27-28). Barthes’s notion in regard to culture as a contract is extremely important to note; for this contract between creators and consumers is what achieves stasis. Hence, to arrive at the *studium* is to arrive at stasis; to understand what has been produced and to share that understanding with a common culture.

The second concept, the *punctum*, cannot be separated from the *studium*; it is neither better nor worse than the *studium*, but the punctum breaks through, interrupts, and disrupts the *studium*. The element that “arises from the scene, shoots out of it like an arrow and pierces me” (26), becomes, Barthes explains, the punctum. It is a wound, a prick, a mark made by a pointed instrument, and the wound comes by way of a detail. However, the detail is usually not present because of the photographer’s intentions; the person looking at the photograph feels the detail and is overcome by it. The sting of the punctum cannot be articulated by something that can be defined. Another of Barthes’s photographs shows a blind gypsy violinist somewhere in central Europe being led by a boy. In contrast to his reaction of the first photograph, Barthes experiences a punctum with this one: the texture of the dirt road stings him. This “wound,” the texture of the road, gives him the “certainty” of being in central Europe. Here is where Barthes realizes the utter significance of the punctum. He recognizes, with his “whole body,” the “struggling villages” he passed through in Hungary and Rumania long ago (45). The punctum provides access to the unrepresentable by breaking out of the banality of both the *studium* and definition. The punctum of recognition emerges from the body, instigating disruption and disturbance, a sort of disorder. Each disruption sets in motion a network of associations, which can then be paralogically linked. Stasis theory only concerns the *studium*: There is no wound, since the stasis questions reproduce cultural conventions and, thus, strengthen the contract between creators and consumers.

The concept of the punctum is important for reenvisioning the question of definition for the electrate apparatus, since it provides access to knowledge residing in the body. Although Barthes acknowledges that the punctum of recognition gives access to the third meaning, he continues a Modernist theory working out of the dialectic of tragedy: one acts, one suffers (through the wound), one learns. We especially see this at work in the second half of *Camera Lucida* as Barthes mourns for his mother’s death. This is why we turn to Ulmer’s rereading of Barthes in “Barthes’s Body of Knowledge,” an essay read by few yet one that remains central for the question of definition and electracy. In this essay, Ulmer discovers a way to evade Barthes’s mourning for what is not, and thus moves out of the negative mode of critique. Ulmer understands the punctum experience as a moment for connection, for conduction to occur, rather than a moment for mourning. Ulmer explains that the punctum “represents an alternative to the conception of knowledge that underlies normal academic writing... the primary quality of Barthes’s approach is its renunciation of the notion of knowledge as a mastery over the object known” (224). Ulmer’s description of the punctum of recognition connects invention with discovering patterns in an aleatory manner. The punctums that arise, Ulmer suggests, will identify works that are “events,” works that evoke a bodily, emotional response and sting one into an “awareness of reality” (228). These works are linked, but not contained, in a set and are invented from accidental occurrences. Ulmer explains: “The past moments thus rescued [by way of the punctum] are not a spectacle for nostalgia,
but tools for opening the present” (Teletheory 112). This assertion, “tools for opening the present,” is crucial when discussing the question of definition, since these past moments are not to be defined or mourned; rather, they are celebrated as triggers that set future linkages in motion.

As previously discussed, one of the main goals of this chapter is to extend Barthes’s and Ulmer’s important work by involving it with the participatory realm. Such involvement is necessary since even Ulmer’s former students have critiqued the personal aspects of these inventionial practices by aligning them, for example, with “navel gazing” that “produce[s] work no more innovative than the self-exploratory essays encouraged in freshman composition classes” (O’Gorman i). Recall Ulmer’s postulation that “what literary is to the analytical mind, electry is to the affective body: a prosthesis that enhances and augments a natural or organic human potential” (qtd. in Ulmer, “Chora Collaborations”). No doubt one may oppose this somewhat cyborgian notion of a virtual prosthesis; yet, as Alex Reid suggests in his essay “Exposing Assemblages,” “the externalization of the subject in the emergence of community, which is difficult and abstract in the print world, becomes more palpable and material in digital media networks.” Moreover, Reid adds, “this palpability is even intensified by the shift from text into video.” In other words, if we move the discussion from static images to moving images, the means of which videographers communicate throughout online video and participatory cultures, we not only recognize a sharing of relations, but upon such recognition see and, more importantly, feel the making of meaning. In fact, according to Clay Shirky, such “sharing makes the making better” (qtd. in “Storytelling”). Jean Burgess and Joshua Green, in YouTube: Online Video and Participatory Culture, also attest to the generative nature of video sharing. Indeed, they emphasize that participation is a crucial requirement in the YouTube architecture, an architecture that “has never functioned as a closed system” (66) and thus encourages, and almost demands, sharing and repurposing.

Given this shift toward participation, which we argue gained momentum with the rise of video and participatory cultures, we turn to Brooke’s recasting of the classical rhetorical canons in Lingua Fracta: Toward a Rhetoric of New Media and call particular attention to his term for encapsulating the changing role for invention in digital culture: proairesis, an open-ended mode of invention. Brooke explores the possibilities of a proairetic interface, which contrasts with modes of hermeneutic invention that seek resolutions, closures, and stopping points. While navigating the possibilities of a proairetic interface, Brooke draws heavily on Roland Barthes’s distinction between readerly/writerly texts in S/Z (1975), which he suggests opens a “transition from literary/textual object to interface” (65). Proairesis unsettles and moves us to respond. It is a practice that evades stasis. The goal is not to respond by defining that which unsettles us, but rather to encompass both critique and performance in a remix or reappropriation. As Casey Boyle suggests in a review of Lingua Fracta, Brooke offers an approach to new media invention that “generates without a set end, deferring endlessly any sense of resolution.” Proairetic invention is less concerned with achieving stasis and more interested in creating points of departure from which future inventions will traverse and take place. We see proairesis occurring in video culture with videographers creating, re-creating, and commenting on videos with virtually no original content, thereby complicating traditional notions of invention.

An example of proairesis is a popular video composed of shared clips depicting several celebrations from across the globe after Landon Donovan, a player on the U.S. World Cup soccer team, scored a dramatic game-winning goal against Algeria during the 2010 World Cup. One clip showed a young man celebrating by running up and down a flight of stairs in his house. While this example is not new or unique, it represents a transformation of the traditional genre of the “home movie” into something that reveals cultural patterns and norms through the banality of “home” life that operates differently from staged filming. In video culture, proairesis aims to provoke, reed in, and generate responses and editing by (multiple) viewers, both in textual and video formats. As Brooke says, proairesis is “contingent on the present moment, [and] the constantly changing conditions to which it responds” (Lingua Fracta 77).

Brooke aligns his postcritical approach to online invention with a “process of conduction,” a process that Ulmer outlines in Heuretics through a “space (chora) for experimentation that is the counterpart to analysis and interpretation” (Brooke, Lingua Fracta 85). As Brooke notes from Ulmer’s Teletheory, the affix or combining form duction is “shared by the fields of logic and electricity” and it allows for a “description of a reasoning or generative procedure” (85). Electrate reasoning is neither the finalization of form nor a linear procedure to a predetermined end; rather, it is a process of exposure, an experience of now-time, during which one—in being-with or connected—feels “the form-taking of concepts as they pre-articulate thoughts/feelings” (Manning 5). In short, electrate reasoning works proairetically, creating conditions for innovations to emerge. While Brooke characterizes proairetic invention with discrete sets of technologies and social networks,
like Flickr, Wikipedia, Google Reader, and Zoom Clouds, we believe that online video culture relies on proairetic invention and electrate reasoning, both of which express the question of definition to spaces of participation where strict boundaries of belonging, such as “inside” and “outside,” blur and thus necessitate movement. According to José Gil, “the meaning of movement is the very movement of meaning” (qtd. in Manning 28). Once again, however, now in reference to online video and participatory cultures, standing still is not an option. Instead of getting things “set” for an argument (stasis), proaireisis aims to unsettle stability. What is x?2, then, is reworked, repurposed, and remixed to ask, What is the productive potential for x?

Video and participatory cultures provide new ways of eliciting participation, encouraging remix, and writing the punctum: welcoming the disruptions instead of systematically excluding them. We can see that this process does not reflect on but reflects in, thus creating possibilities for that which cannot be expressed in language to move to the forefront. In the final section of this chapter, we will offer examples of what is expressed in the language of online video and participatory cultures, which, as a language of popular culture, is understood through sharing, or being-with, relations of exteriority. We now turn to the chora, the “active receptacle” that provides the methodology for this rediscovery.

The Holey Space of Chora

As deployed in the work of Julia Kristeva, Jacques Derrida, and Gregory Ulmer, the chora transforms our senses of beginning, creation, and invention by placing them concretely within material environments, informational spaces, and affective (or bodily) registers. . . . By refocusing on what falls outside discourse proper, like emotion or the chora itself, or redistributing rhetorical agency across a network of human or nonhuman agents, these writers suggest we can (and should) reapproach the conventional question Plato wrestles with in the Timaeus, which is how to move from static ideas to vital activity, from the speculative theory of the Republic to a dynamic, vital Athens. The chora, brought forward into our age, stands to radically reconfigure our understanding of rhetorical space.

—Thomas Rickert, “Toward the Chora”

In “Toward the Chora,” Rickert revisits the work of Plato, Kristeva, Derrida, and Ulmer to present chora as a complex ecology for rhetorical invention. Rickert explores how contemporary work on the chora argues that there are no delimitations between inside and outside and that inventional practices are not linear methods with which to establish a discursive place where topics emerge and develop, but rather involve being “immersed in, negotiating, and harnessing complex ecologies of systems and information” (253). Rickert’s effort explicates chora from its pre-Platonic connection to both a “dance” and a “dancing floor” (254), and traces the concept through the following: Kristeva’s semiotic chora as a “particular form of beginning, one [Rickert] would like to describe as ‘invention inventing itself’” (262–63), and Derrida’s idea that choric “invention may inhabit a paradoxical or impossible place within rhetoric, precisely because of its always-ongoing withdrawal” (265). Working heuristically through the chora, Ulmer “makes of the chora an invitational methodology” (269) and can then theorize and practice how this seeming inconsistency or paradox [the chora] is actually productive (270). Therefore, despite the apparent impossibility of the chora, in terms of its necessitating becoming or inventio through generative withdrawal, Rickert explains, “The impossibility has nothing to do with what we can do with choric invention except the one, self-reflexive exception: what is impossible is that a discourse of representation can capture invention” (270). In other words, representation can delineate particular paths, like stasis theory, that one may follow with intent to invent. “But,” as Rickert acknowledges, “the impossible emerges when we try to equate this with invention itself” (270).

Inspired by the question of definition, we have thus far devoted the majority of this chapter to tracing a theoretical circuit leading to chora, and we will now build on Rickert’s theoretical precedent and unpack the perspective of other researchers who have worked with chora in various capacities (see especially Rice, The Rhetoric of Cool; Saper, Artificial Mythologies; and Jarrett, Drifting on a Read) to create possibilities for “choric,” rather than “topic,” invention. Rickert makes a point that is crucial for our effort to restore movement to invention and, specifically, to definition. He writes, “one thing choric invention provides us with is a way to put invention itself back into question, not as a metaphysical problem (a la ‘What is invention?’ with ‘invention’ being defined as a category with X number of characteristics), but as an inventional problem” (“Toward the Chora” 262–63). This lifts invention out of the practice of accessing topoi and into the practice of making, or, in other words, of nonstatic generation.

Chora is an indeterminable space between being and becoming that, being neither intelligible nor sensible, evades conceptualization and must be “grasped” by some sort of sensuous or, as Plato describes, “bastard” reasoning (qtd. in Walter 136). Like Rickert, we also turn to Ulmer’s casting of chora in Heuretics. Using the chora, Ulmer attempts to reason by means of
intuition, chance, and pictographic representations: that which usually gets excluded in what we know as "academic writing." Unlike a literate, heuristic method (such as stasis theory), wherein a set of procedures directs one's path to varying outcomes, this aleatory method attempts to grasp that which cannot be articulated in language and is realized through the methodology of chorography: "a way of gathering dispersed information into an unstable set held together by a pattern that is the trace of understanding or learning" (213). Chorography does not offer a set of preestablished procedures; it creates a network in which to feel an invention that is both sparked by a punctum and remembered by the body. The chora, Ulmer explains, is "most resistant to interpretation (hermeneutics)" (63) since it relies on analogy and chance. However, it is important to keep in mind that chorography is not simply coincidence; rather, it asks one to be attuned to occurrences that do not fit into general, hierarchical methodologies and to make something from such occurrences.

E. V. Walter, who Ulmer turns to, explains that Greek writers used the words *topos* and *chora* to differentiate certain typical features in the experience of places, and he first locates this distinction in the opening lines of *Oedipus at Colonus.* Here, Walter acknowledges, we hear Antigone referring to the place that she and Oedipus presently rest as "choros": a holy place. Later, when Oedipus speaks about where he must die, he uses both terms: "topos stands for the mere location or the container of the sacred choros, the grave" (Walter 120). The "holy" space of the chora, according to Walter, is also very sacred: "holy," the place where the literal remains of the dead remain." Ulmer explains that we might think [of place] before it was split into topos and chora, à la the dancing floor that Rickert points out when tracing pre-Platonic understandings of chora. Accordingly, Walter "distinguishes [chora] from topos by noting that the former term names a grounded mode of thought that was available in Plato but that has been buried" (70). The chora is a generative space where inventions appear and disappear, leaving only traces, without becoming grounded. Byron Hawk explains that Ulmer "confuses the binary of chora as space and topos as place. Rather than chora as metaphysical space and topos as literal place, Ulmer sees the chora as cultural space that emerges between metaphysical space and physical space" ("Hyperhormetic" 75). We see a direct connection between Hawk's assertion and Deleuze and Guattari's treatment of smooth, striated, and holey space. We suggest that their discussion, both in general and in very specific regard to their third term "holey space," complements the concepts we have explicated above as well as adds another layer of complexity to the notion of chora and the question of definition.

We might recall that Deleuze and Guattari work from what Reid, citing Vitanza, has called "third interval ways" (Reid, *Two Virtues* 190; cf. Vitanza "Abandoned to Writing" para 4), which resist stasis and champion the ebb and flow created by choric invention. Stuart Moulthrop, one of the first scholars to study electronic media and its relation to theory and practice in English studies, connects Deleuze and Guattari's notions of spatiality to the changing culture of digitized writing. Academic writing as we know it is traditionally invented from striated space: the "domain of routine, specification, sequence, and causality." It manifests itself in "hierarchical and rule-intensive cultures . . . like the university," and "the occupants of striated space are the champions of order—defenders of logos" ("Rhizome and Resistance" 303). One invents measurable arguments from existing places through striated space. Smooth space, on the other hand, is dynamic, understood "in terms of transformations instead of essence" (303). Ulmer explains that its "logic" is associational [and] organized as a network (Heuristics 34). Thus, our momentary location is less important than our continuing movement or line of flight. Moulthrop continues, "this space is by definition a structure for what does not yet exist. It propagates in a matrix of breaks, jumps . . . smooth space is an occasion; Deleuze and Guattari call it a becoming" (303). In smooth space, movement occurs and cannot be controlled or resisted in the traditional sense; rather, we charge into the very thing we are trying to resist. Ulmer remarks that the task will be "to build, in place of a single argument, a structure of possibilities" (Heuristics 34; cf. Bolter 119; see also chapter 5). Using a combination of Moulthrop's and Ulmer's descriptions of smooth and striated space, we see a crucial point regarding Deleuze and Guattari's dualisms: smooth space is not an alternative (good) to striated space (bad). Instead, as Deleuze and Guattari explain more than once, there must be binaries, but these binaries do not exist in opposition, wherein one is privileged over another. Instead of creating only two possibilities, their dualisms fold into each other and restore the flow of desiring production to create countless becomings, lines of flight, and assemblages: desiring production that is possible in the "hole" before deterritorialization occurs. Such becomings are what allow for the possibility of a cultural praxis to emerge. Folding avoids stasis and (Aristotle's notion of) grounding; therefore, everything becomes re/included. This has been thoroughly explained by, among others, Barthes, Deleuze and Guattari, and Agamben, however, it may nevertheless be tempting to read the smooth and the striated as traditional binary oppositions: a reading that excludes and deflects holey (choric) space.
The processes of smoothing and striating, their passages and combinations, happen persistently. There is no finality for smoothing and striated space: no "whole" or One to ever reach. This is also very different from simply affirming kairotic eruptions from smooth space: eruptions that may initially appear to reverse dominant, oppressive striations. The movement and energy changing along smooth spaces spark striation again only to unfold smooth space and then striated space again and again. John Rajchman describes this generative process: "[Deleuze] speaks of 'disparation' that does not divide space into distinct parts, but rather so disperses or scatters it to allow the chance for something new to emerge" (Deleuze Connections 55). This process shows that liberation will not happen by simply engaging in a negative deconstruction. Hence, the third term, holey space, provides the passage, a place where both the smooth and the striated meet and the third meaning can be accessed. As intensities residing in the "cracks," the third meaning can only be felt. Once felt, a mood is produced that remains in a constant state of generation; the mood, when felt, links elsewhere, but never stops. Thus, unlike "Aristotle's doctrine of place," we must affirm the dwelling space where the mood is felt; it cannot be separated from the third meaning, because it is in its composition. Deleuze and Guattari remind us, "Nothing is ever done with: smooth space allows itself to be striated and striated space rements a smooth space, with potentially very different values, scope, and signs. Perhaps we must say that all progress is made by and in striated space and all becoming occurs in smooth space" (Thousand Plateaus 486). However, progress and becoming are not separate opposable entities. Even the striated space of the university gives rise to smooth spaces that might be linked to moments of invention: becomings that happen in smooth spaces are striated, then those striations are smoothed, creating perpetual movement among/between intensities. Becomings happen perpetually, yet are usually dismissed (excluded) for not fitting in the realm of what can be deciphered through rationality and the dominant structures in place. Deleuze and Guattari tell us that we can become multiplicities, "transformational multiplicities, not countable elements and ordered relations" (503). Thus, transformation can and will occur, but described as a becoming, it is neither predictable nor systematizable. Transformational multiplicities might be seen as "holes" in smooth/striated space through which invention takes place. Holey space becomes invented and reinvented, persistently "flowing out," never to be filled up.

This notion of holey space differs from viewing cracks, fissures, and holes as simply gaps needing to be filled or demystified in order to resist dominant ideologies: a view remaining in the negative with one seeing such holes as indicating a sort of lack in one's learning or ideology, and thus yearning for what is supposedly missing. Holes instead are seen as affirmative responses. D. Diane Davis's explanation in Breaking Up [at] Totality is paramount: "But lack theories are negations that assume holes in the whole: affirmative responses, on the other hand, assume a wild and overwhelming excess of 'parts' that will never make a whole: there can be no final One, no final Totalization, and therefore no lack" (57). Hence, dominant ideologies will be resisted by affirming the intensities that reappropriation through the cracks, and then reassembling them into new combinations through remix and reappropriation.

Circling back to Hawk, we want to highlight his assertion that, through choreography, "invention becomes something neither unconscious nor conscious. It becomes attentive—a way of being-in-the-world, a way of becoming" ("Hyperrhetoric" 88). The choreographer captures (through a series of punctums) and arranges "memories that float between the cultural and the personal": that which resides in the chora, the space between de- and re-territorialization. Hence, invention brings what the body knows intuitively into awareness. Practice within the chora, then, will be understood, as Ulmer explains, "in the order of making, of generating. And it must be transferable, exchangeable, without generalization, conducted from one particular to another" (Heuristics 67).

The chora affirms the singularity and potentiality of the whatever being. Vitanz's refers to the chora as the "chora (us)" to show that, in electracy, acts of production require "Total Collaboration" ("Shaping Force"); hence, when working with the chora, there is no such concept as the individual writing subject who invents arguments, or, as Chris Anderson identifies in reference to online video culture, "the lone genius having a eureka moment that changes the world" ("How YouTube Is Driving Innovation"). The chora cannot be apprehended by reason. According to Walter, the chora is "a knowledge that must be grasped [with one's entire body, not just his or her hands] because it cannot be conceived and it cannot be perceived" (122). It is neither in the rules of rational thought nor a product of sensory experience, "but something else: a curious, spurious mode of grasping reality" (122). Material for invention exists everywhere, so it must be evoked rather than found or uncovered. Recall Ulmer's suggestion that when one invents using choreography, he or she is able to turn "ghosts into agents" ("I Untied the Camera of Tastes" 578): not securing ownership or mourning for the lost, but calling for perpetual movement. Thus, the chora, the space where "grasping" takes place, cannot be separated from that which is grasped;
Rickert explains it in this way: "Such invention takes place in material and affective situations that in turn create us" ("Toward the Chora" 265).

Interestingly, and similar to the aforementioned practice of stasis theory, "what's there" and "what's not there" are also important for chorography. The difference lies precisely when "what's there" becomes known. First of all, in regard to stasis theory, "what's there" becomes known when the subject critically "reads" his or her world and identifies definitions and contradictions. For chorography, however, "what's there" becomes known once something is felt by the body and caught in the chora through a network of "punctual" rather than conceptual linkages (Ulmer, Heuristics 228).

Inventing through the chora affirms what the body might "know," instead of simply casting memories and knowledge in the body as emotional feelings that the rational person would dismiss as irrelevant to serious work. Ulmer warns: "one of the difficulties in grasping chora is that, being neither intelligible nor sensible, it has to be approached by extended analogies. Analogy is inherently ambiguous" (67). We have come back to the inherent ambiguity of invention. Thus, in practice, and in the space of the chora, the inventor will experience punctums of recognition, third meanings that "arise out of the particular way memory stores information in 'emotional sets,' gathering ideas into categories classified not in terms of logical properties but common feelings" (143). The moods and memories recovered then link elsewhere through an unfolding and rhizomatic network of associations. They become moments, events, celebrations, and collaborations during which inventions then "catch" and come into appearance.

Describing how one's movement through a choric space can spawn a network of associations, Ulmer looks to the aborigines who, as nomads moving through their space, conducted "a sort of cognitive map or allegory or mystery...a collective story in which the culture and civilization and landscape that the people moved through were one in the same" ("Ulmer Tapes" 4.04). In his own discussion of aboriginal dreamtime or "the Dreaming," Walter argues that the aborigines "cannot separate their way of feeling from their way of thinking about places. The Dreaming," he continues, "grasps the nature of place holistically as a unified location of forms, powers, and feelings" (139). Walter explains that this sort of dreaming, or holistic, corporeal experience of an in-between space, necessitates "an exceptional mode of perception—dreaming with our eyes open" (123). As a kind of dream logic, or as Ulmer describes in Heuristics, a "dream time relay," (39), and as we mentioned earlier, chorography is not a process through which one reflects on what he or she sees, but rather a process through which one reflects in reflecting in necessitates experiencing all possibilities as events rather than found topics for invention.

Chorography as a process through which one reflects in rather than on, brings us to Deleuze and Guattari's temporal dualism between chronos and kairos: The former is quantitative, whereas the latter is qualitative and thus subversive to control and dominance. Prior to exploring this temporal dualism, however, we stress that kairos not be privileged over chronos as various versions of postmodern rhetorics might do; rather, we align ourselves with Brooke's notion of a posthuman rhetoric that "finds room for both [chronos and kairos]" ("Forgetting to Be [Post] Human" 790–91). Though, finding room for both necessitates that we move to Deleuze and Guattari's third term for a temporality: haecceity. That said, recall that Deleuze and Guattari are not concerned with "finding room" for different conditions of space or time; rather, analogous to how they describe smooth and striated spaces, they describe chronos and kairos as happening, instantaneously, in a perpetual refolding fold. Deleuze and Guattari attribute the origin of haecceity to Duns Scotus, who, as they write, "created the word and concept from haec, 'this thing.'" However, they also call attention to how haecceity is sometimes written "ecceity," which adding rather than detracting from one's understanding of the term, "suggests a mode of individuation that is distinct from that of a thing or a subject" (Thousand Plateaus 540–41). In other words, similar to the other third terms, haecceity resides outside subject-object relations within which singularities are thought to exist only in relation to other singularities. In the Dialogues, Deleuze argues that there are "no more subjects, but dynamic individuations without subjects, which constitute collective assemblages...Nothing becomes subjective but haecceities take shape according to the compositions of non-subjective powers and effects" (qtd. in Deleuze Dictionary 274, emphasis added). Considering how haecceities take shape, as well as recalling Walter's description of "the dreaming" as that which "grasps the nature of place holistically as a unified location of forms, powers, and feelings" (139), we may now explore the connection between chorography and Deleuze and Guattari's dualism of time; for it is the act of grasping, touching, or linking to the hole (chora) that sparks the formation of haecceities. In fact, as previously mentioned, Walter explains that chorography necessitates "an exceptional mode of perception," because the "illegitimate reasoning" (123) by which the nature of chorah must be grasped elicits "a wider experience of clutching or holding that does not stop with the hands but sometimes involves the entire body" (133). Therefore, working in tandem with chorah, haecceities
and definition, particularly by way of constructing binary oppositions, are conceptualized in the electrate apparatus. Deleuze and Guattari show us that there is no way to escape dualisms without resorting to a negative deconstruction and thus suggest turning to the fold: that which, like holey space, gives rise to third terms and creates multiple possibilities for invention and production. Since this concept has been reinterpreted by other postmodern theorists, and reworked again and again, we want to wrestle with how the debate over dualistic invention has changed (or not) in the electrate apparatus.

Electrate Reasoning: The Logic of the “And”
We begin with an exemplar of the sort of dualisms Deleuze and Guattari work to avoid by quickly turning to the later work of Berlin, wherein he aligns himself with Teresa Ebert and others who advocate a "resistant-postmodernism" in direct opposition to "ludic postmodernism." Berlin, as well as other scholars adding to the many debates regarding postmodern issues in the late 1990s, may not come across as destructive; however, resistant postmodernism nevertheless argues intently against the "merely ludic," thus closing down conversation and allowing Berlin to continue arguing for the "possibility of individuality and agency" (Rhetorics, Poetics, and Cultures 108) within a "postmodern" framework.

We can now connect this debate from the late 1990s to online video culture in order to illustrate how postmodern debates, despite insistence of their being "old hat" (which Rickert dispels in Acts of Enjoyment), are remixed in reference to, as well as throughout, the online world. For example, in regard to online video and participatory cultures, Alexandra Juhasz constructs five binary oppositions in "Why Not (to) Teach on YouTube" in order to argue, as well as to perhaps satisfy her persistent skepticism, that YouTube is not an ideal site for higher, disciplinary learning: aural/visual, body/digital, user/owner, entertainment/education, and control/chaos. In other words, comparable to how Berlin favors a predetermined postmodern framework within which individuals can make and remake their "contingent narratives" through a series of interactions with the social, economic, and political forces surrounding them, Juhasz clearly favors a predetermined university framework within which "experts" (i.e., professors) and "experts-in-training" (i.e., students) build knowledge in the "disciplinary space" of the college classroom (193). Of course, such disciplined space, exemplary of Deleuze and Guattari’s straited space, appears in opposition to the open, or smooth, space of YouTube; yet, again and as Deleuze and Guattari argue, "the [two] spaces can happen simultaneously" (Thousand Plateaus 475). As Tamsin Lorraine explains, "Deleuze and Guattari are interested not in substituting
one conception of space with another, but rather in how forces striate space and how at the same time it develops other forces that emit smooth space” (qtd. in *The Deleuze Dictionary* 256). Because of the tendency to polarize epistemologies and theories, we argue that Deleuze and Guattari’s treatment of binary constructions is extremely productive for thinking about electrate writing and participatory culture.

By displacing binaries, electrate reasoning “functions not in terms of matched pairs (signifier/signifieds) but of [external] couplings or couplings” (Ulmur, “Object of Post-Criticism” 102). Furthermore, such exterior relations—linking by means of “the conjunction, ‘and’ . . . and ‘and’ . . . and” do not impose binaries by which the space between is “a localizable relation going from one thing to the other and back again,” but rather spark “a perpendicularly directed, a transversal movement that sweeps one and the other away” (Deleuze and Guattari, *Thousand Plateaus* 25). Rachman explains the importance of these connections in Deleuze’s thought, which is known as the logic of the “and.” Rather than draw up boundaries by asking what something “is,” the logic of the “and” keeps the question going, much like the rhizomatic network of associations created through choric invention. “We must thus make connections. But this pragmatism—this And—is not an instrumentalism, and it supposes another sense of machine. It is not determined by given outcomes, not based in predictive expertise. On the contrary, its motto is ‘not to predict, but to remain attentive to the unknown knocking at the door’” (7). The “unknown” remains at the threshold, not to cross over into the realm of analysis, but to stay there and work at the level of production. Rachman explains that “connection requires a style of thought that puts experimentation before ontology, ‘And’ before ‘Is’” (6), which, he contends, makes it a form of pragmatism. Recall Rickert’s understanding of choric invention as that which “puts [s] invention itself back into question . . . as an invention [rather than metaphysical] problem” (262–63). In other words, Rickert does not ask what invention “is,” but rather reanimates invention and, particularly, its relationship to definition. Moreover, returning to Rachman’s understanding of connection as “a form of pragmatism,” Rachman explains, “the principle of such a pragmatism is posed in the first sentences of *A Thousand Plateaus*, where Deleuze and Guattari declare that multiplicity, more than a matter of logic, is something one must make or do, and learn by making or doing . . . We must always make connections, since they are not already given” (6).

The emphasis on making is crucial, for the connections created cannot ever be known in advance; however, they can be discovered through associational or “And” logic. Rachman tells us, “Making connections involves a logic of a peculiar sort. Outside established identities, divisions, and determinations, logical and syntactical as well as pragmatic, it has often been assumed that there is only chaos, anarchy, undifferentiation, or ‘absurdity’” (8). Rachman’s characterization of Deleuzian connections as pragmatism is different from the “ludic” label often imposed on such connections. For instance, we may imagine these connections in terms of the hyperlink, which Dave Weinberger identifies as “a new type of punctuation”: “The old types of punctuation tell you where to stop, [whereas] the hyperlink encourages you, beckons you, to continue” (“The Virtual Revolution”). Thus, electrate reasoning is movement, or, more specifically, the performance of meaning through the touching of external relations that map a space in movement.

In the first counterthesis, and coinciding with this act of mapping space in a movement, Vitanza (by way of Lyotard) advocates paralogy, wherein the central focus is to “bear witness to differend’s . . . that is, to bear witness to the unintelligible or to disputes or differences of opinion that are systematically disallowed by the dominant language game of homological science and are therefore ‘silenced’” (“Three Countertheses” 146 cf. Lyotard *The Differend* 13). In other words, it is necessary to link, but not how to link (147), which is another way to describe the logic of the “and.” The notion of paralogy reinforces what has already been said about proaireis, chora, haecceities, and “total collaboration.” We see all of the theoretical contentions from this chapter playing out, quite literally, on video sharing sites, and we wish to conclude by providing an exemplar that we hope resonates into the next chapter, where video and participatory cultures will be the focal point for tarrying with the second counterthesis.

**Tubes and Tubing: Archive and Choric Remixing of the Question of Definition**

*YouTube serves as our exemplar for choric invention. In an essay I cowrote with Geoffrey Carter, we characterized YouTube as “an ever-changing and growing networked ecology” upon which “Tubers” (i.e., participants) drift and reinvent meaning “through the re-purposing of . . . rhizomatic Tubes” (i.e., videos) (i). Analogous to the way in which chora is spacing, YouTube is tubing as it incites connection and networking, and we put forward “tubing” as the participatory practice of YouTube. Burgess and Green argue that one of the “fundamental characteristics of co-creative environments like YouTube is that the participants are all at various times and to varying degrees audiences, producers, editors, distributors, and critics” (82). Even lurking entails participation, since doing so contributes to the rise in view counts for videos, and material users upload and write on the site is*
inherently participatory. Although YouTube is commonly understood in terms of the relative value of individual videos, Ryan Skinnell argues that the impact of a single video or even several videos "must be considered in light of the accumulative effect of collecting millions of user-generated videos together—YouTube's archive" (2). Skinnell does acknowledge that YouTube's archive replicates traditional features of archives, such as finding aids, organizational strategies, and permissions; however, rather than limit his investigation of YouTube's archive to such definitive features, Skinnell explores the archive as "a revolution in the role of archives": Whereas archives have traditionally been limited to materials privileged and preserved by archivists, YouTube's archive is "generated and predominantly adjudicated by the community of users" (2). Therefore, one is invited to view YouTube's archive as what Alex Reid calls "a communitarian video network" (10), or, as mentioned earlier in relation to my perspective and Geof Carter's, an "ecology": "the interrelationship [or spacing] between any system and its environment" ("ecology," OED, 3rd ed., def. n. 10). In addition, Henry Jenkins argues, "Video is a tool that allows us to reflect on ourselves and on our environment. And that's a foundation for social empowerment" ("Storytelling" pt. 2). While such views of YouTube's archive reasonably lead some scholars, like Rick Prelinger, to suggest that YouTube is not really an archive (268), the same view leads others, like Pelle Snickars, to argue that YouTube is "an important archival media phenomenon... that offers completely new ways of thinking about both storage and the distribution of information" (294). One such way of thinking then is to posit YouTube's archive as chorion: an in-between space in which the process of withdrawal perpetuates traces, as opposed to cultural objects with assigned conditions of belonging, that appear and disappear through "the touching of tubes."

To understand YouTube's archive as chorion is to celebrate accessibility and, thus, disrupt the role of traditional archives to keep content contained. This notion of containment, however, precedes archival tradition, linking back to "Aristotle's assimilation of chòra to space and matter" (Rickert, "Toward the Chória" 253). As Walter explains, "Aristotle . . . restricts place to its physique. In his way of thinking, topos [the concept under which he subsumed chòra to signify 'pure position'] (120) does not represent a great metaphysical principle but merely stands for the inert container of experience . . . and chòra means the room or capacity of the container" (121). In contrast to Aristotle's early effort to ground choron, as well as to the value bestowed upon topic invention, Ulmer explains that "the writer using chorography as a rhetoric of invention will store and retrieve information from premises or places formulated not as abstract containers, as in the tradition of topos, but by means of . . . spacing" (Heuristics 73). That said, however, one may argue that YouTube, with its reputation as a digital repository for users' broadcasts, is little more than an online container for disconnected tubes to amass and collide. For instance, in implicit opposition to the notion of "the touching of tubes," Juhasz claims, in her video-book Learning from YouTube, that "YouTube promotes empty and endless collisions isolated from culture, history, context, author, or intention. Collision without consciousness." However, to claim that YouTube is defined by unconscious collisions that occur within and of itself is to see YouTube as a "container." Through this description, Juhasz asserts distinctions between online and offline: the former, a location, defined apart from the individual, in which to store bits of information that entertain more than inform. Her notion of containment privileges topos over choron and thus ignores the potentials of YouTube as a choronic archive where communication happens through the proairetic touching of tubes.

The "touching of tubes" can be understood through Deleuze and Guattari's description of machinic assemblages. They explain: "There are not individual statements, there never are. Every statement is the product of a machinic assemblage, in other words, of collective agents (i.e., multiplicities) of enunciation" (Thousand Plateaus 37). For example, not only do the capacities of tubes emerge through relations of exteriority within YouTube's ecological network, but such capacities also continue to emerge as Tubers, "not captive to YouTube's architecture" (Burgess and Green 66), link tubes across the web. According to Henry Jenkins, "YouTube represents a shift away from an era of stickiness (where the goal was to attract and hold spectators on your site, like a roach motel) and towards an era where the highest value is in spreadability" (qtd. in Skinnell 7). Therefore, YouTube's archive is not so much a "place" as it is a choronic space, folding time and space in and out of the platform. In other words, tubers communicate through YouTube's archive by moving meaning, whether by creating their own tubes, commenting on tubes, remixing tubes, or by sharing tubes on YouTube and through the web.

Lisztomania: Remixing Spatiality and Temporality

We conclude with a video meme that began as an homage to 1980s high school films, consisting of a simple mash-up of dance scenes merged with a current pop hit from the band Phoenix, entitled "Lisztomania." In the original mash-up, the user "avoidantconsumer" shuffled dance scenes from
an assortment of John Hughes's brat-pack films to make a music video for the hit song. The video was subsequently taken down by YouTube for copyright violation (see vinimonotube, 2010); however, another user has since reposted avoidantconsumer's remix (see jaimealedagullairei, 2009). According to Julian Sanchez, a Washington-based writer and journalist, this original mash-up is an example of “stage one remix,” which involves “individuals using our shared culture as a kind of language to communicate something to an audience.” Stage one remixing often creates the conditions for procreative invention and elicit reasoning to occur.

What is most pertinent to this chapter, to the question of definition, and to choric invention, however, is what Sanchez calls “stage two remix” or “social remix”: a process whereby one remix inspires interested participants to invent similar remixes that contain nuanced content and thus divergent lines of communication. The first social remix in the Lisztophania meme responds to avoidantconsumer's original “Lisztophania” video-remix. It features a group of friends in Brooklyn, New York, who filmed and shared their own live-action, brat-pack dance scene, mimicking the dance moves from Hughes's 1980s films while on top of a building. The video, titled “phoenix—lisztophania brooklyn brat pack mash up” (thepinkbismuth, 2009) not only remixes the dance moves and sequencing of the original, but it also offers sweeping views of the New York City skyline and portrays the group of people as if they are friends, New Yorkers, modern day brat-packers, and Lisztophania all merged together. With over 400,000 views, this social remix has elicited countless others, all spotlighting a specific geographic location (from San Francisco to Rio de Janeiro, Winnipeg, Manila, and Versailles, to name just a few), a specific group, ranging from families to friends to individuals, and the same (yet very much repurposed) dance moves from Hughes's 1980s iconic films. Importantly, however, each group's social remix both responds to previous remixes and creates procreative openings for other remixes to be made, and some morph into entirely new situations (i.e., in a bedroom or local convenience store) to add to the burgeoning network. "Lisztophania" is also a term describing “Lisz fever,” an affliction dating back to the 1840s that triggered intense levels of hysteria in fans of composer Franz Liszt. Each remix is posted as a video response to another Lisztophania video, and they inherently work with one another: not as a dialogue, but as an invitation for innovation and creativity. According to Sanchez, this "social remix," involving relationships among all of the versions, "isn't just about someone doing something alone in his basement"; rather, the practice “becomes an act of social [and participatory creativity]. And it's just not that it yields a different kind of product in the end; it's that, potentially, it changes how we relate to each other.” In other words, Sanchez argues that these remixes mediate people's relationships with each other, and he explains that the brat-pack characters are used as a "template for performing the social reality of each group." The result is that these videos become platforms for "articulating the similarities and differences in the groups' social and physical worlds."

This meme does not stop with the act of social remixing. The group of friends from the Brooklyn version not only had the opportunity to meet with Glassnote Entertainment Group (i.e., Phoenix's record producer), but Lawrence Lessig used the meme to describe how, in response to their becoming platforms for social interaction, the videos have challenged copyright laws in a new way, considering that the premise of the remixes lies in commercial material and the “original” remix was removed (Lessig). Lessig claims that the Lisztophania videos highlight how both the commercial culture and the culture of Internet sharing are merged to encourage innovation. The Lisztophania videos are prime examples of spreadable media, which defy definition, since their goals inherently include both social remix, potential innovation, and cultural intervention. In writing about the cultural potential of online videos, Chris Anderson points out that in video and, particularly, in meme culture, “ideas spawn from earlier ideas, bouncing from person to person and being reshaped as they go” (“Film School” 115). The brat-pack phoenix Lisztophania meme, with its complex layers of remix and reappropriation, certainly shows Anderson’s assertion in action, as its global reach illuminates how spreadable (and undefinable) media can influence not only participation, but world-wide collaboration, interaction, and communication. These videos also have the potential to serve as a platform to expose cultural differences and not-so-sunny events occurring in specific locations. Participating in this meme invites investigation into local geographies and cultures, which serves as critique and performance to expand the network already in existence.

Finally, not only does the prompt renewal of avoidantconsumer's original mash-up illustrate participants' readiness to respond to actions that contradict the ephemeral values of their coming communities. but it also speaks loudly of such values as one can see from the two currently "highest rated comments" written below the re-posted video: "hahal suck it WMG!" (from nCorelli); and, “Thank you for posting this again. It really sucks the original got taken down for copyright reasons, but I'm glad it’s been reuploaded :D” (from yukinkoicy). Although one may consider these brief
comments to be informal offenses, they ultimately reveal a popular—not to mention, obtuse—sentiment shared among participants in the growing global online video community. With that, we now turn to chapter 4, where mild to extremely severe comments like those revealed above will be central to the chapter’s theoretical underpinnings.

4. Who Speaks When Something Is Spoken?
Playing Nice in Video Culture

And in this game one speaks only inasmuch as one listens, that is, one speaks as a listener and not as an author.

—Jean-François Lyotard, Just Gaming

And the question is how to write as auditors rather than orators.

—Cynthia Haynes, “Postconflict Pedagogy: Writing in the Stream of Hearing”

But the purposes and meanings of YouTube as a cultural system are also collectively co-created by users. Through their many activities—uploading, viewing, discussing, and collaborating—the YouTube community forms a network of creative practice.

—Burgess and Green, YouTube: Online Video and Participatory Culture

In the spring of 2010, a YouTuber who went by the moniker “peachofmeat” posted a video in which he revealed that he had just pulled off the YouTube scam of the century by manipulating Facebook fan pages. To grasp the severity of the scam, we must first understand the importance of “subscribers” to any one YouTube user. As both Burgess and Green and Alexandra Juhasz have pointed out, achieving popularity on YouTube catapults particular users into YouTube fame, and to achieve popularity, users must not only accumulate numbers of views on their videos, but they must also work to accumulate subscribers. The gesture of subscribing sets in motion a sort of loyalty, or, as Patricia Lange has reported, an obligation for reciprocity, which is known as “sub for sub” (“Achieving Creative Integrity”). The act of subscribing, then, is something prolific YouTubers hold as almost a sacred move; it notifies users any time their subscriptions have been active on YouTube, and it creates what they call the “YouTube Community,” which distinguishes the site from other video sharing sites (TheWillofDC). Peachofmeat
Rickert expands. She defines it like this: "Oedipalization—or the internalization and identification with an authority figure to which one is attached emotionally—is the specific way the patriarchal and bourgeois family produces individuals whose affective orientation to authority best supports the early period of capitalist development."

Worsham continues with a description of the deoedipalized subject, which is crucial to my forthcoming use of Giorgio Agamben's "whatever" being. Worsham writes, "More specifically, postmodernism produces a subject who is variously described as de-oedipalized, narcissistic, feminized, lost, fragmented, and schizophrenic. The de-oedipalized subject is deeply ambivalent because it is locked in a perpetual crisis of abjection in which it oscillates between self-exaltation and dejection, between euphoria and hostility or rage."

3. To add to what I have said about the "whatever" singularity as positive, I turn specifically to Vitania. Vitania equates "oedipalization" with negation. To be oedipalized is to be defined under the sign of negation. Following Deleuze and Guattari (1987), Vitania argues, "the unconscious has no 'No' there. (Hence, again, one postmodernist activity is to denegate what modernists, such as Freud, have placed there in metaphorical acts of colonizations.) But what did Freud do? He simply negated consciousness; hence, the unconscious... Freud, however, proceeded nonetheless to territorialize the unconscious. He specifically said, when he sailed to that country (where I'd was there Ego shall be), that he found Oedipus there. Found Castrated there. Found lack there. The Oedipus story is a story of prohibition of the negative. Of repression. Therefore, in the negative (the unconscious), Freud tells us, we have the negative (prohibition, lack). Which leads to negation in infinite regress (Negation, Subjectivity, and the History of Rhetoric 318). This passage is crucial. The conceptualization of a subject/singularity that is a deoedipalized "whatever" being would not view the unconscious as that which is under negation; instead, it would become a place of affirmative desiring production. This production does not "lack"; its holes are kept perpetually open.

3. The Question of Definition: Choric Invention and Participatory Composition

1. The status of rhetoric and composition, as well as its asserted conceptions at various universities, makes defining its object of study a central concern, since defining "what we do" is something that occupies not only institutional conversations but also frequently our journals and conferences more so than other disciplines. In other words, for such a young discipline, rhetoric and composition has spent a considerable amount of time defining its object of study. In fact, Helen Foster's Networked Process: Dissolving Boundaries of Process and Post-Process argues at length for a name change from rhetoric and composition to rhetoric and writing disciplines, and her book represents a study interrogating the very notion of what the discipline does.

2. Jacques Derrida, out of whom Ulmer primarily works, addresses this at length in several works, most notably, Specters of Marx. However, I will be using Ulmer's work as primary texts since he has remotivated Derrida (and Barthes) in his own line of flight. Avital Ronell has also written about this at length, especially in Dictations: On Haunted Writing. Refusing and unable to define precisely those out of whom she works, Ronell's writings are always "haunted" by the specters of events/other people she does not name.

3. The article we are referring to appeared in 1997. While Anderson has modified her views since then (see "Property Rights: Exclusion as Moral Action in "The Battle of Texas"), we still believe that the earlier article is relevant, because it demonstrates how many successful critical pedagogues use elements from the Classical tradition to support their practices.

4. Anderson specifically critiques Dale Bauer's class, which advocates radical pedagogy, because her students are so resistant to the idea of a radical pedagogy.

4. Who Speaks When Something Is Spoken?
Playing Nice in Video Culture

1. Others in rhetoric and composition, including Linda Adler-Kassner, Vicki Tolar-Collins, Nancy Deloy, Anne Ruggles Gere, Rebecca Moore-Howard, Andrea Lunsford, and Krista Ratcliffe, have also challenged the issue of authorship but by way of the question of textual ownership. These challenges rely on feminist theories to disrupt "restrictive theory and practice." Joy Ritchie and Kathleen Boardman see feminisms as "our best hope for inclusion and proliferation of difference, multiplicity, and uncontrollable excess" ("Feminism and Composition" 603). While I affirm what Ritchie and Boardman "hope for," I also question that this "hope" may be the very thing that stiles their dream for a liberating rhetoric.

Lee-Ann M. Kastman Breuch also contributes to this conversation by suggesting that one of the most useful concepts from what has been put forth as post-process theory is the "rejection of mastery," since "many post-process scholars associate the process movement with mastery" ("Post-Process 'Pedagogy'" 127). Breuch goes on to say that the reason for this rejection is that process theory suggests that writing is a "thing" or an object to be mastered. I return to Breuch's article at length in chapter five.

2. Akorn explains that desire is tangled up in interactions involving discourse and thus works extensively to introduce desire into discourse. In doing so he links Kinneavy's "persuasive" discourse with Lacan's "master discourse" because "it fixes desire in relation to knowledge" (Changing the Subject 68). Next, Akorn links Kinneavy's informative discourse with Lacan's "university discourse" because it is concerned purely with the transmission of knowledge (68). Akorn suggests that university discourse works when subjects desire to put aside their real desires, to serve as keepers or transmitters for signification. Persuasion, on the other hand, works when subjects desire to put aside their divided nature to promote a potentially disputable truth (68).

3. Yarbrough also discusses Stanley Fish, whom I will not delve into in this chapter. He discusses Fish's notion of "knowledge communities" and "theory hope" and concludes that, by way of Fish, "it does not really matter how we teach composition" (After Rhetoric 219). He objects to Fish's use of interpretive communities by arguing that discourse creates communities instead of the other way around. This helps him support his claim that the required composition course should be abolished and replaced with a course on discourse studies. Yarbrough claims: "to teach at all we must teach objects. There can be no teaching of 'language' or 'culture' or 'life' or 'the world' any more than, as Fish says, we can teach 'the situation' or even particular situations. What we can teach are the objects affecting situations, including responses to those marks and noises people make within situations. Attempts to 'improve student writing' in general are useless—we can only help students' abilities to effect changes..."