literacy link

Fall 2013

Contents

From the Editors' Desk 2

Documentary Theatre, Self-Scripting, and the Composition Classroom 3

The "Hostipitality" of Pot-Luck: Heavy Food, Heavier Philosophy 6

Thoughtsphere 9

Common Goods: Community and Production in the Digital Commons 10

From the Editors' Desk

Hello, and welcome to the Fall 2013 issue of Literacy Link. Pull up a chair, enjoy some of your favorite beverage, and settle down for some good reading.

Jason Kahler
Instructor of English

The extra-warm invitation is courtesy of this issue's theme, "Composing Communities." As we read through the submissions, we were struck by the variety of communities in which we live, work, and of course, write, but one of the common threads that unites the various concepts of communities is the invitation to join—whether it's a formal invitation, a spoken invitation, or some sort of implied invitation.

Sherrin Francis's piece, "The 'Hostipitality' of Pot-Luck: Heavy Food, Heavier Philosophy," tackles the philosophical and practical weight of accepting or declining an invitation to join a pot luck meal. As it turns out, how we participate in community activities is a heady decision fraught with danger and opportunity. Just mind the tuna salad.

Virtual communities and their various rules and expectations are the focus of Conor Shaw-Draves's piece, based on his nearly-completed dissertation. As our students, and writers in general, continue to tackle matters of copyright and permission in the digital age, the concepts unpacked here become more and more relevant.

Dr. Emily J. Beard
Assistant Professor of English

Nicola M. Imbracsio describes how she builds community and reflects upon community issues in her classroom in her essay "Documentary Theatre, Self-Scripting, and the Composition Classroom." Through dramatic monologue, students can begin the process of understanding their research as "a story that needs to be told." That's an admirable start for every research project.

We've also included some images from the recent Thought Sphere event, supported by our First Year Writing program and coordinated by Lit Link's very own Emily J. Beard. The pictures don't do justice to the energy our students and the volunteers brought to the tables as research papers of all sorts were workshopped, repaired, and brainstormed.

So we hope you'll join us this issue in thinking about the ways communities affect our writing, how we can write about communities, and how writing and community might influence our lives. Writing is rarely done in a vacuum; it often finds its way to an audience. We're glad you've accepted the invitation to join ours.

--E & J

Pilcrow ¶
(Character in the background of cover pages)

An old mark, rarely used today, representing the beginning of a paragraph or section. Today it is used as an invisible character in word processing applications to represent a paragraph break. Also called a blind P, reverse P, or paragraph mark.
(Rosendorf, Typographic Desk Reference, 2009).

Documentary Theatre, Self-Scripting, and the Composition Classroom

Dr. Nicola M Imbracsio
Instructor of English

As a former student and practitioner of theatre, I often incorporate theatre techniques and theories into my English classes. This semester, in ENGL 111 I use documentary theatre as a component of the final project, as students will self-script monologues based on their research projects that focus on community issues and conflicts. I use monologues for several reasons: 1) they help concentrate and solidify the work that students have been doing all semester; 2) the require students to deliver an oral presentation; 3) many of the qualities of what makes a good monologue are also the qualities of what makes a good paper; 4) asking students to write and perform their own monologues based upon their research engenders in students a sense of "ownership" over the material—which is always my ultimate pedagogical goal in all of my classes. I position these monologues within the history and genre of documentary theatre so that students' work has a research component and overall objective.

In my class, students have been asking, "How does community shape us? How do we shape community?" We've been exploring those questions through various assignments including the Memoir, the Profile, and the Analysis. Entering into the research paper, I'm asking students to research a specific community of choice and to focus on an issue or challenge that community faces. After researching (and writing a research paper with an annotated bibliography) about this issue and its effect on the community, students will self-script a monologue for performance based upon their research and interviews. I guide them through what a monologue is (and how it's different from simply "telling a story") and I introduce them to samples of documentary theatre (both in script and visually), and then we workshop monologue writing and performance, culminating in their final performances at the end of the semester.

For those not familiar with documentary theatre, I will give a brief synopsis: Documentary theater, also known as "theater of fact," is a complicated, experimental and conceptual genre. While documentary theatre has its roots in ancient Greece, it has become more defined recently as we thrive in a culture that increasingly consumes news and information. In its modern form, the genre was pioneered by two German artists—Bertolt Brecht and Erwin Piscator in the 1920s—who focused on issues of social conflict, class tensions and power structures. In documentary theatre actors use pre-existing documentary material (i.e.. newspapers, government reports, interviews, etc.) as source material for the original script. The resulting monologues incorporate this source material, often verbatim—weaving in quotes from interviews, details from newspapers, etc. to effect and create character. Events are not acted out, but relayed from the point of view of the person being interviewed.

I selected to use documentary theatre in my composition class because the focus is on the text and its meaning, not the action. In fact, there is very little action on the stage—but rather a series of monologues derived from non-fiction sources. Additionally, in documentary theatre, no interview or news source is weighed as more important or more dramatic than another. The actors convey what they know is accurate and allow the audience to develop their own political points of view. Asking students to compile and create their own monologues from interviews, research, and news sources encourages them to see their research as a story that needs to be told, and that information can be arranged in a strategic way as to influence their audience's perception of reality.

More important, documentary theatre promotes understanding and dialogue between people with differing points of views and deeply ingrained histories of conflict. For this reason alone it is vital in a composition classroom of students who are just starting to think critically about texts, historical and daily events, and their own lives. The value of documentary theatre—of all theatre, in fact—is its ability to acknowledge and emphasize the differences between people and begin building bridges between those distinctions.

Below I outline the elements of a good monologue. Again, a quality monologue's similarity to a good piece of writing is striking.

Photo Courtesy of University Communications

The Elements of a Good Monologue

Element #1. Your character must have a strong want. Think about the times you have become the most aggressive, upset, or combative. Most likely, if you felt this strongly, it was related to something you wanted or cared about very much. A character in a play or a monologue needs to want something badly. Without a strong want there is no drama – or comedy for that matter. Often the character needs to get something from the person they're delivering the monologue to. They may need to unburden themselves by revealing a secret. Or they may need to get themselves charged up to do something difficult. They might speak a monologue to build courage, strength, or bravery for a task ahead. Or they may want to speak in order to change the way someone feels about them. Or if the monologue has an internal struggle – they may be speaking in order to change the way they feel about themselves. Whatever it is your character wants, we need to hear that want clearly behind the words they're speaking.

Element #2. The monologue must have high stakes. There must be something important or significant at stake for your character. If the character doesn't get what they want, what will be the consequence? Perhaps they'll lose social standing, lose a friend, or lose their self-respect. Stakes give the monologue dramatic tension. Without stakes, a monologue is a walk in the park; it's unimportant. There has to be something at stake for the character, so that if they fail to achieve their goal in the monologue, there will be significant negative consequences for them—either in a tangible or emotional form. When working on developing your monologue, ask yourself: what is at stake for this character?

Element #3. Variety of Tactics/Persuasive Moves. A great monologue has a character use a variety of tactics to achieve their want. A character might try to flatter the person they're talking to as a tactic in order to make them more receptive to hearing them out. If flattery doesn't work, or isn't working by itself, they might switch gears and try the tactic of intimidating the person. Intimidation isn't working; or it hasn't clinched the deal? Perhaps they try enticing whomever is listening to them with something they know the other person wants. An enticement can be promising or even giving the person hearing the monologue something tangible, but more often emotional, that is of significant value to them. In the end, a monologue is about persuasion. It's about making the right "persuasive moves," which are designed to work with the person who is hearing the monologue. And it's about having the character use a variety of persuasive techniques to achieve that. And the tactics you employ don't only have to be geared outwardly toward the person whom the character is speaking to. If the monologue has an internal struggle going on, where the character is trying to convince themselves of something, then ask yourself: What must the character do to persuade themselves to take an action they know they need to, or to face something difficult, or to change something about themselves? The possibilities – and tactics – are limitless.

Element #4. Hook Opening. A good journalist, novelist, or magazine writer always needs a hook—a killer first line that pulls the reader in and makes them want to read the next line, and then the next, and the next. Similarly, a monologue with a strong hook should peak the audience's attention (of course the rest of the monologue has to pay-off the excitement and expectations it sets up). There are different kinds of hooks:

- A headline, which encapsulates the story the monologist is about to launch into—it lets us know what happened, but now we want to know how it happened and the monologue that ensues answers that question for us.

- A Thesis or Argument hook sets up an argument—something the character believes, wants their listener to believe, or wants themselves to believe—and the rest of the monologue serves to prove that this opening statement is in fact true.

- Relationship Dynamics hook is a first line or opening statement that quickly sets up a dramatically charged relationship between the monologist and whomever they're addressing.

Element #5. Button Closing. When your monologue ends, you don't want the audience to wonder, is he/she done? Is this a dramatic pause? You want your ending to be clear. Like a gymnast nailing their landing, a "button" is a line that gives an actor a clear end-point to work with. A "button" can bring the thoughts expressed in the monologue to a conclusion. Often it is the moment when a character finally accepts something, finally overcomes an obstacle, finally figures something out, or comes to a decision point. What is a decision point? The moment when a character is ready to take – or is taking before our eyes – a decisive action. Think of a monologue like a mini-play. The arc of the monologue should build to this final line. If the monologue's hook opening brings a question into the audience's mind, the button close should answer it.

Photo Courtesy of University Communications

Element #6. Include detail that engages the audience. What should a monologue make us do? Empathize! If the audience isn't feeling what the character is feeling, if they aren't going through something with the character, the monologue has not achieved its purpose. One of the most effective ways to engage your audience is to engage their senses. We all share a common five senses, and using them to describe something that happened to us brings our audience right into the experience with us. For instance, using sensory details can communicate to an audience how a character is feeling without the writer having to label the emotion. If someone tells us that when so-and-so approached them, their heart began to race, for instance, we know they're excited or scared (depending on the context) without them having to spell-out for us what emotion they were feeling. Can you write an effective monologue that engages empathy without sight, sound, touch, taste, smell? Sure, but it would be a lot more difficult. Talking about ideas, situations and feelings without linking them to sensory experience may work when connecting with people in real life, but it generally tends to be less effective for stage and screen. Writing that taps into our senses holds incredible power to move us.

Element #7. Character overcomes internal obstacle(s). Some of the most interesting monologues feature internal struggles. Shakespeare is filled with soliloquies that do this; the canon of modern drama contains a number of examples we can draw on as well. Watching a character conquer their own self-doubts in the course of a speech or soliloquy will hold an audience's attention. For an actor, internal-struggle pieces provide a terrific one-person showcase. The actor playing this material is given an opportunity to show themselves in a state of weakness and turmoil from which they are able to emerge stronger, even changed, as they overcome the internal obstacles/doubts/fears that stand in their way. Good writing is complex and layered—a monologue can have a character grappling with both internal and external forces simultaneously.

Element #8. Balance Past and Present Action. So many monologues get stuck in the past, recounting stories that don't connect with the here and now. A great monologue connects with the present even when it discusses the past. We can feel the current relationship between the monologist and the person hearing it. Often we can see the monologist adjusting what they say based on how their listener is reacting. And we can feel that the character wants something, is seeking to gain something (be it tangible or emotional) from whomever or whatever they're addressing. Keep in mind, while the monologist is often addressing another person, they can also be addressing a part of themselves, an idea, a force, etc. So, as you write a monologue that has your character recount a story, think of how they are using it as a tactic to accomplish something with whomever or whatever they're speaking to now. Your character might recall a story to prove a point to their listener. To hurt their listener, your character might bring up a memory they know is painful for them. To make peace and reconnect with someone, a character might talk about a time when they were friends. Here are a few examples of how a character can use past events to deal with their own internal obstacles: A character may recount a painful memory—something that is holding them back—in order to heal. To fight sadness in the moment, a character may recall a happier time. To fight weakness in the moment, a character may recall a story that illustrates their strength. Walk the tightrope between past and present action well and you'll be on your way to a strong monologue.

Element #9. Discovery! We don't want to see a character do something they've done a million times in the same way they've always done it. For example, a door-to-door salesman calling on someone and giving his rehearsed speech is boring. But, take that same door-to-door salesman and have him realize during their rehearsed speech that what they really want is to leave sales and sing opera. That's another matter entirely. A monologue is dramatic when the monologist doesn't know exactly what they're going to say until they say it. We are seeing them figure things out, right now, in the moment, as they speak. We are seeing them make decisions about how they are going to proceed with every sentence. Often we are seeing a character come to a realization, a personal discovery, or a new or more complete understanding of something for the first time. We do not want to know where the monologue is going to end when it starts. The element of surprise, of discovery, of unexpected directions, twists and turns makes for an entertaining journey.

Element #10. Exercise restraint to build dramatic/comedic tension. A character trying hard not to cry is much more interesting than one all-out-bawling for two minutes straight. Most of us try to avoid displaying strong, overwhelming emotion. A good monologue shows that struggle to keep strong emotions under-wraps. That's not to say you can't have a character have intense emotional outbursts, only reserve those expressions for key moments—perhaps the climax of your monologue. Have your character work, just as a real person would, to keep powerful emotions bubbling up just under the surface under control. Watching a person about to explode, about to be overwhelmed with emotion, but exercising will power and holding back is interesting. It builds expectation—are they going to lose it? Are they going to maintain their cool exterior? What a character doesn't say, or doesn't do—what they might be on the verge of doing—tells a story that contains inherent dramatic tension.

The "Hostipitality" of Pot-Luck: Heavy Food, Heavier Philosophy

Dr. Sherrin Francis
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The first potluck to which I was ever invited was during my junior year in college. I was studying in London and a group of American students decided to put together a traditional Thanksgiving Day feast. I was asked to bring the pumpkin pie. Simple enough, I thought. I learned too late that most London bakeries did not sell pumpkin pies, so I had to wing it and actually BAKE a pie. Due to strange ingredients, inexperience, and the metric system, I ultimately ended up with 25 pies, none of them very tasty. And so began my long and sordid history with the potluck. In the modern American work world, the potluck is a pervasive office phenomenon, and for someone who does not cook often or well, it is a dreaded one. In every place that I've ever worked, I have been solicited at some point to bring goodies from my kitchen. I suspect that many of you have, too. If you have not, don't worry: it will come. And when it does, you should consider the philosophical significance of the potluck decisions you make.

Decision one: Will you participate?
Generally, someone organizes the potluck, or at least kicks off the idea and picks the place. These organizers are, in a sense, the hosts. They are extending their hospitality in putting together this event, and they are responsible for making sure there is a wide array of casseroles, desserts, paper products, and seating. Everyone else, as a guest, is responsible for bringing a dish to place on the common table. To be a part of a community and to share a common table, one must participate, engage, and, as Heidegger would say, be "in the world." So when faced with an invitation to a potluck, your first decision, whether to participate at all, is of great significance. It may seem simple, but it is really a decision as to whether or not you are choosing to live an "authentic" life in the Heideggerian sense: are you actively participating and engaging with other people as opposed to leading a solitary life?

Decision two: Will you be a good guest?
I am not particularly adept in the kitchen. The potluck plays on one of my biggest weaknesses, brings it right out into the spotlight for all to see (or rather, to taste). Thus, once the office has announced the potluck, one may find oneself as I do in a double bind of hospitality/hostility. Jacques Derrida calls this "hostipitality".

Derrida wrote extensively about the underlying paradox of hospitality: hospitality and hostility have the same etymological root, and thus hostility is always an inherent element to hospitality. There is no such thing as "absolute" hospitality, which would entail an unconditional generosity. On the contrary, everyday hospitality, he says, is "the greeting of the foreign other as a friend but on the condition that the host...maintains authority." If there is necessarily a host, and this host necessarily defines the conditions of welcome in his home, there can be no unconditional welcome. And this isn't true hospitality, then, because it's so tied up in rules, expectations and power structures.

The hostility comes in when the host and his rules are challenged. By agreeing to participate, you are accepting a particular role within the structure. Being welcomed by the host is contingent upon your performance as a guest. Simply put, if you decline the invitation, you send the message of rejection to your community. And yet if you choose to participate in your community and accept the potluck challenge, then you become a guest and are suddenly obligated to play not only by the rules of the potluck, but by the bigger rules of hospitality.

Decision three: Will you bake?
If you are invited to a potluck, you must bring a contribution. To arrive empty-handed is contrary to the very core of potluck: The potluck is an exchange. More importantly, it is an exchange that privileges the homemade. There is an economics to potluck, and the homemade dishes are generally the most valued because of the time and labor involved. In Marx's terms, Mr. Kahler's tuna pasta salad has more exchange-value than the Chick-Fil-A nuggets.

The value of homemade items has been one of the most difficult aspects of potluck for me to reconcile. I recognize that it is not in the spirit of the potluck for me to bring the paper plates and plastic forks EVERY TIME. And yet, I do. Or I run out to the local grocery store and pick up a meat tray. Not very creative. Not very time consuming. And not very connected with my community.

In the past, I haven't worried too much about it: just making the gesture of putting a dish on the common table seemed to me to be adequate. But lately, this has become a bigger decision, intimately connected to the strength of my working relationships. Not only do I want to belong to a community of educators who like to bake, but I want to belong to a community of people invested in one another and invested in this particular, singular place.

So at some point after deciding to participate as a good guest, you will also have to decide, "Will I bake? Will I contribute something more than purely economic?" And what you are really asking is the significant question, "What is the value of my fellow guests, my co-workers, in terms of my own irreplaceable time and labor?"

Decision four: Will you eat?
If you decide to participate in the potluck then not only must you bring a contribution, but you must eat other contributions. You must not just drop something off and run away.
But the idea that one must eat poses a whole new set of considerations. Why must we eat? Because with regard to "being-in the world," there is also a certain "being-with" when it comes to other people. We are not solitary entities and it's not until we begin to communicate and interact with other people that any sense of spirit, community and love can come about. In order to do this, one must exceed the limits of one's body.

How do we exceed such limits and achieve "being-with?" It's more than just proximity of physical space. One must connect with another person, one must touch and be touched, both figuratively and literally. Jean Luc Nancy calls it philosophical penetration. Eating, digesting, he says, is one possible way. To eat something that someone has made personally, in the privacy of his own home, is an intimate act, an exceedingly personal "being-with." The casseroles at a potluck thus take on the potential of allowing you to infiltrate the stomach, the guts, the very blood stream and spirit of your co-workers.

But with the ability to philosophically penetrate a co-worker also comes the possibility of infection and viruses. E-coli, spoiled ingredients and other general forms of food poisoning directly the affect the intensity of the potluck experience. I worry about this when I bring something homemade: How will my contribution infiltrate the guts of my coworkers in a negative way?
As you decide whether you will eat, remember that the casseroles at a potluck are sublime: they have the power to instill both admiration and fear in the guests that they infect.

Corollary to decision four: Will you sniff?
Here is the corollary to the very serious rule that you must eat: you must not sniff. You must not make a face, and ask, "What is it?" You take a bite, and you eat it. No one wants to take home a full casserole dish at the end of the day, and you certainly don't want to humiliate the host. (Note: a dutiful host should assure that vegetarians and other special-dieters can abide by the rules of hospitality by making appropriate dishes available that they are obligated to eat. The host should assure that we are all afforded the same opportunity for hostipitality.)

If you sniff and do not eat, you become an unwanted guest because you've broken the rules of the host's hospitality. By refusing to extend beyond the limits of your body, by refusing to be penetrated by someone else's contribution, you are not "being with." You are, at best, an intruder. The intruder, according to Nancy, neither affirms nor negates a situation. He is in between, and this is problematic. No one knows what to do with the intruder in polite society.

Decision five: Will you ask, "Who?"
Generally, it is expected that participants will ask of one another, "What did you bring," or "Who brought that?" This is the fun, social part. (Unless, of course, people are only sniffing your dish.) Anonymity is anathema to the hospitality of the potluck, but to ask, "Who?" immediately draws the hospitality of the potluck back into the realm of rules and obligation. In order for the power structure to work correctly, we must identify ourselves and our contributions which function as the extension of ourselves. So as the reluctant participant, I am again thrust into the spotlight as my dish begins to represent my self and beyond. That is a great responsibility, one that you invoke every time you necessarily ask, "Who made this?"

In Conclusion
The potluck, I have come to appreciate, is really just an analogy: homemade goods are to potluck as we are to our community. We should make the decisions above not only in regard to gooey butter cake, but in regard to those we choose to "be-with." It is not enough be a fork-and-plate bringer when it comes to the community that is developed in our workplace. We must participate fully and authentically, as faculty, managers, administrators, as whoever we are. We should be the kind of potluck-as-lifestyle participants who infect one another not only with conversation and committee meetings but with dishes and concoctions that reflect our individual time and energy.

What's more, we should strive to infect our students with the notion of hostipitality. We should invite them, we should obligate them, as our guests, to feel our classes in their guts at some point, for at least a brief moment. With any luck, our hostipitality will generate an intensity big enough that they, too, feel what it's like to "be with" us in the spirit of the community, of hospitality, and of the potluck. And, with any luck, they will bring us homemade cookies in exchange.

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Literacy Link is made possible by the continued generous support of the Office of the Vice President of Academic Affairs.

Thoughtsphere

Photos Courtesy of Jason Kahler

First Year Writing piloted a research paper event in November with the aim of supporting students during their research paper writing and researching. With the student-selected name of Thoughtsphere, we had many volunteers from the English department and across campus to help make this event a success. The event emphasized topics such as brainstorming, organization of ideas, citation, research help, writer's block, and grammar help. The majority of the students who attended rated the event as helpful and beneficial. We look forward to making this an annual fall semester event.

Common Goods: Community and Production in the Digital Commons

Conor Shaw-Draves
Assistant Professor of English

British artist Damian Hirst's 2007 piece of art, "For the Love of God," is a platinum cast of an 18-century skull, covered in over 8,000 diamonds, and whether or not covering a human skull in diamonds is "art" or not is debatable, but what this piece demonstrates well is Arendt's definition of the function of "work"—"For the Love of God" is a piece that exemplifies a man-made attempt at immortality. The skull, which sold for $100 million, is something that will physically endure and will carry with it Hirst's name. However, as a piece of immortal "work," it must also exist out of the eye of the public, as it is much too valuable to display for extended periods of time. So what the public is left with is the image of the skull in a series of photographic representations of the skull itself, circulated on the Internet. This is where the lines between what is the author/inventor's personal property and the commons of the Internet begin to blur and a third line, that of a Limited Common Property regime, begins to appear.

Enter Cartrain, a teenage graffiti artist from England. Cartrain accessed the media commons, obtained the photographs of Hirst's art, and created with the images "new" works of collage art, many of which with a negative spin against Hirst and his work. Hirst demanded that Cartrain remove all pieces from the Internet and any money earned. Cartrain complied with the demand, but then later retaliated by stealing a box of rare pencils from Hirts's concept piece "Pharmacy" at the Tate Britain in 2009. Cartrain later allegedly sent a ransom note stating he would sharpen the pencils if his artwork was not returned.

These incidents obviously raise many questions about copyright laws and fair use, but they also illustrate the Arendtian distinction between "work" and "action," and demonstrate how action can manifest in an artifact that is potentially as immortal (or more so) than that produced by work alone through the development of a commons around the image of "For the Love of God." This commons bears the traits of an LCP regime in that Cartrain and Hirst function as the "insiders," both working with a similar piece of art in a collaborative process, while others, although not entirely excluded, do not have the same membership status as the insiders.

Cartrain's appropriation of Hirst's work, first and foremost, corrected an issue that Hirst brought up himself, i.e. that the skull was too valuable to display and would have to remain under high security for its entire existence. By creating something new with the image, Cartrain gave it a new way to circulate and thus breathed a new life into an object that is necessarily under lock and key. Of course un-doctored images of the skull still exist online, but Cartrain's collage art took these images and added to them, gave them new meaning, and made them potentially more interesting (and affordable) for an entirely different audience. The collaborative action between Cartrain and Hirst created something new and potentially more interesting than the object created by the work itself. The same goes for Cartrain's theft of the pencils from "Pharmacy," although the "product" of the action is slightly different. The theft created a story about Hirst's art that, again, expanded the experience of the art far beyond the walls of the Tate Britain. By forming a commons with Hirst, Cartrain made it possible for Hirst's art to bypass the traditional and formal channels of media and gave it a much broader scope and audience.

Second, the Cartrain/Hirst LCP opened up to another community of members when the artists collective, Red Rag to a Bull, stepped in to raise funds for Cartrain. This collective appropriated the image of "For the Love of God" as well as Cartrain's collage images that used the skull to create further works of art that were sold to raise money for Cartrain. The use of not only the original images but also Cartrain's art again expanded the scope, audience, and purpose of the artwork as well as adding to the story that was developing between Hirst and Cartrain. So now because of the LCP that grew up around the image of the diamond-encrusted skull, there is a vibrant collective of artists, adding to and creating new forms of art and media that have ever-expanding audiences and pathways for circulation and generation of revenue. The actions of this collective have made use of these pathways in ways that the product of Hirst's work never could.

The key to action is that it is dependent on the presence of others. In order for action to not be work or labor, one cannot act by oneself, but rather has to act within a group: "All human activities are conditioned by the fact that men live together, but it is only action that cannot even be imagined outside the society of men." Without the presence of others, action is reduced to labor, and man is reduced to laboring only for bare survival. Of course Arendt draws this distinction primarily to distinguish man's involvement in politics, but we can also draw from this man's involvement in other creative processes (which, of course, often

involve necessary political maneuvering). What this also does, then, is give us a pathway into analyzing these processes from a perspective of an LCP, looking at the activities of the group as the important "product" rather than the product of that activity itself.

I argue, then, that it is important to incorporate this into a pedagogical approach, to open students to the idea that, when dealing with networks, the emphasis is not, nor should it be, on the end product, but rather the process or action that get them to that product. Whether they are curating a Facebook feed or creating and circulating memes, the lasting "product" comes from the participation in community rather than singular authorship—becoming a part of a digital commons.

Photo Courtesy of University Communications

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Call For Papers

The editors of *Literacy Link* invite members of the campus community to submit articles for the Winter 2014 issue. Articles should be related to the theme "Perfect Timing."

Submissions may address a variety of literacy practices including such topics as issues, strategies, activities, research, critical thinking, writing across the curriculum, and book reviews.

For the theme of "Perfect Timing," the editors would especially welcome submissions that explore the power of the right writing at the right time, stories of encountering texts at particularly important moments, and explorations of writing that had strong influence on events or thinking.

Literacy Link is a campus publication that began in the winter of 1992 with the support of Dr. Robert Yien and the Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs. Founding editors Sally Cannon and Jenny Senft, in the first issue of *Literacy Link*, focused on three key areas of literacy: writing, reading, and thinking. Over the years, individuals from departments across campus have added to the conversation.

Articles for *Literacy Link* should run 500 to 1,500 words in length. Authors should follow either MLA or APA format.

Please submit articles to:
SVSU Department of English
Literacy Link
Emily J. Beard and Jason Kahler, Editors
7400 Bay Road Brown 326 University Center, MI 48710-0001

Submission deadline for the Winter 2014 issue is February 8, 2014.

For more information about *Literacy Link*, visit www.svsu.edu/literacylink