

The Pennsylvania State University

The Graduate School

College of the Liberal Arts

**WORLD BANK RHETORIC:  
CONSUMING THE SUFFERING OF OTHERS**

A Thesis in

English

by

Matthew James Newcomb

© 2007 Matthew James Newcomb

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements  
for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

May 2007

The thesis of Matthew J. Newcomb was reviewed and approved\* by the following:

Jack L. Selzer  
Professor of English  
Thesis Adviser  
Chair of Committee

Jeffrey T. Nealon  
Professor of English

Rosa A. Eberly  
Associate Professor of Communication Arts and Sciences  
And Associate Professor of English

Stephen H. Browne  
Professor of Communication Arts and Sciences

Robert L. Caserio Jr.  
Professor of English  
Head of the English Department

\*Signatures are on file in the Graduate School.

## ABSTRACT

I examine the affective responses of contemporary students to rhetoric circulating around several geographically disparate humanitarian crises. I bring together the related strands of globalization/internationalization issues, economics and humanitarian concerns, and composition studies in my case for a *World Bank Rhetoric*. How do humanitarian aid organizations create positions for themselves and their audiences? How do students affectively respond to narratives of distant need and suffering? What impact on the affective shaping of student identities do these narratives have? And how can rhetoric and composition teachers better pedagogically address affect and rhetoric together?

World Bank Rhetoric (WBR) is the broad answer I give for how to approach these questions. WBR brings together three terms that juxtapose issues of globalization, economics, language-use, and identity. I examined the Web sites and mailed requests of Doctors Without Borders, Oxfam, Compassion International, DATA, and other organizations. My study suggests that for humanitarian aid rhetoric, instead of using compassion to increase how closely a person identifies with the suffering of others, alternate goals can create appropriate responses to suffering. Aid organizations create specific brand images and experiences for donors/customers. These brands can shape the relationships between donors and recipients. For my students, distant suffering is experienced as something to consume. The act of consumption shapes them, and the choice to read about suffering can feel like an ethical decision. The main object of consumption is not the suffering of others, but is a particular experience. The feelings, knowledge, and changes that go along with reading or hearing a narrative about a refugee crisis thousands of miles away are the things taken in. In this scenario, the form of consumption becomes vital. In addition,

composition teachers should emphasize critical feeling rather than just critical thinking.

Critical feeling provides a different starting point than critical thinking for studying various influences on student values. Critical feeling also emphasizes the overdetermined, highly contextual, and felt nature of argument.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| List of Figures . . . . .  | vi  |
| Acknowledgements . . . . .   | vii |
| Chapter 1. Introduction to Affective Mapping: World Bank Rhetoric, Feeling<br>Composition, and Jet-lag of the Soul. . . . .                          | 1   |
| Chapter 2. Taking Attendance: Absent Writing and the Value of Suffering . . . . .  | 44  |
| Chapter 3. Feeling the Vulgarly of Numbers . . . . .   | 94  |
| Chapter 4. Mapping Needs: Affective Spaces in Médecins Sans Frontières and Oxfam . . .   | 135 |
| Chapter 5. Changing Feelings: Mapping Shifts in Affective Responses to Children in<br>Korea, AIDS in Africa, and Suffering in the Classroom. . . . . | 170 |
| Chapter 6. Conclusion: Critical Feeling and Further Steps in Affective Rhetoric. . . . .   | 211 |
| Works Cited. . . . .   | 232 |

## LIST OF FIGURES

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| Figure 1: MSF Activity in Asia .....                              | 150 |
| Figure 2: Oxfam Programs .....                                    | 160 |
| Figure 3: Oxfam donor nations working in the Horn of Africa. .... | 162 |

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Thank you to my advisor, Jack Selzer, for patience and guidance in reading many materials. Thanks to my other committee members—Rosa Eberly, Jeff Nealon, and Stephen Browne—for fruitful suggestions and numerous phrasing ideas. Thanks also to Amitava Kumar who got many of the ideas for this project started. I also want to thank Erin Wyble, who read several drafts and was quite supportive throughout the writing process. I would also like to acknowledge the students who agreed to participate in my research—without their valuable thoughts most of this project would not be possible. Additionally, my thanks to the many other friends who helped me by discussing ideas, by serving as sounding boards, by reading drafts, and by supporting me. Finally, I want to acknowledge the important work being done by many around the world to alleviate the suffering of others. It is in the spirit of giving a small bit of hopefully helpful scholarship to that work and to those in humanitarian crisis situations that I offer this work.

## **Chapter 1: Introduction to Affective Mapping: World Bank Rhetoric, Feeling Composition, and Jet-lag of the Soul**

I believe that as a species, human beings define their reality through misery and suffering. A perfect world was a dream that your primitive cerebrum kept trying to wake up from. (Agent Smith, *The Matrix*)

Deep down, deep down inside, the eye would be destined not to see but to weep. For at the very moment they veil sight, tears would unveil what is proper to the eye. And what they cause to surge up out of forgetfulness, there where the gaze or look looks after it, keeps it in reserve, would be nothing less than *aletheia*, the *truth* of the eyes, whose ultimate destination they would thereby reveal: to have imporation rather than vision in sight, to address prayer, love, joy, or sadness rather than a look or gaze. (Derrida 126)

September 11, 2001 was not the beginning of this project. But you could say that September 12, 2001 was. I was in my second week of college teaching that day when I needed to respond, with my composition class, to the both distant and nearby pain of the day before. At 7:57 a.m. on September 12, 2001, I joined those students taking my first-year writing course in telling the mere beginnings of stories about our reactions and feelings from the past day, relegating my previously planned definition-writing activities to the back of my lesson plan folder. My first concerns about how to respond in my composition classroom dealt with immediate needs and emotions that day. Questions were about closeness to pain:



Who had a relative in Manhattan? Who had people heard from and not heard from? Yet most of my class did not really know anyone in Manhattan. National identity was the only real connection for many of the students, and in subsequent days, we began the struggle to assimilate this case of the suffering of others into our own practices and subjectivities.

In *Composition Studies in the New Millennium*, Richard Miller uses a now-common phrasing to ask, “What will it mean [. . .] to teach after September 11?” (253). His question appears in a response to articles by Keith Gilyard and Harriet Malinowitz, who both suggest that “a major strand in student texts of exploring issues of internationalism” will continue, and that critical work needs to be done in what may be seen as a new “era of composition studies” (Gilyard 228). September 11, 2001 may be a key date that many students look through to read the suffering of others, but it is also only one step towards an important critical focus on international concerns and powerful affective moments related to composition. Composition studies must address the growing global connections that shape even the small, internal aspects of students and their language contexts. Of those internal aspects I am particularly concerned with the relationship between affect and rhetoric.

Jennifer Edbauer comments on the connections between theories of affect and the classroom:

While discussing affect—via sensations, movement, body, and nonverbal aspects of experience—may indeed seem to fall outside the practical work of teaching writing, I argue that these comments reflect a fundamental misunderstanding of the affective dimension. When we ask what writing does, we are not forced into a choice between either sensation *or* meaningful practice. Indeed, writing is nothing but the proximate operation of affect and signification. (135-36)

Meaning and feeling are not separate items, and I explore how they are connected in a global context through my research on affective rhetoric. I attempt to provide discussions of affect regarding sites outside of the conventional classroom (specifically with the writing of aid organizations), but agree with Edbauer that discussing the “pedagogical practice of writing” (136) in any site can be important to the classroom. At the same time, those connections to the classroom must be drawn, and I regularly include examples from my pedagogical practices and from my students’ writing in this exploration of affective rhetoric.

Both out of and within the classroom, the interest in international concerns, combined with the prevalence of images of distant suffering on television, in the mail, and from almost any celebrity event suggests that these humanitarian crisis events and responses to them play an integral part in shaping the subjectivity both of me and of my students. My project narrates the attempt to thoughtfully consider responses to my students as they and I are shaped by (and shape) moments of distant suffering. Specifically, I examine the affective responses of contemporary students to rhetoric circulating around several geographically disparate humanitarian crises. Some of the most important responses to distant suffering are affective responses. Those feelings and emotional judgments impact material responses quite directly in many cases, and shape the attitudes of those reading or viewing distant suffering. Rhetoricians need additional tools for studying affective aspects of rhetoric, and I bring together the (un)surprisingly related strands of globalization/internationalization issues, economics and humanitarian concerns, and composition studies in my case for a World Bank Rhetoric.

As I explore throughout this text, World Bank Rhetoric is a juxtaposition of three terms that attempts to bring their various connotations and connections into conversation.

World Bank Rhetoric in this text asks how do humanitarian aid organizations create positions for themselves and their audiences? How do the narratives of suffering these groups create display an image of the organization itself? I also ask how students affectively respond to narratives of distant need and suffering. What impact on the affective shaping of student identities do these narratives have? How can rhetoric and composition teachers better pedagogically address affect and rhetoric together? Finally, I ask the question which I have already started to give “World Bank Rhetoric” as an answer. In a context where internationalism is of growing importance to everyday life, where signification is intimately tied to affective experience, and where something like the concept of Empire<sup>1</sup> describes human subjects, what approaches can rhetorical scholars take to productively bring together issues of globalization, culture, pedagogy, and economics? In other words, what is the relationship between “affect” and “rhetoric” in the not-so-separate contexts of globalization and the composition classroom? In reference to the title, the goal is to move from a simple version of consuming the suffering of others to a more nuanced understanding of that process as a form of World Bank Rhetoric.

### **Global Beginnings**

A better point of origin for my study of affective responses to distant suffering might be January 20, 1998, in Tashkent, Uzbekistan. That is when one strand of my search to understand the how and why of responses to distant suffering began. After the break-up, downfall, and declarations of various independences of the Soviet Empire, western development organizations moved rapidly into a number of new countries to participate in

---

<sup>1</sup> I describe the concept of Empire in more detail later in the introduction. The term comes from Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri’s book with the title *Empire*. They describe the world in terms of global networks and systems that create subjectivities. Their work has been under-studied thus far in rhetoric circles.

the growth of those nations' infrastructures. Early in 1998, while briefly teaching English as a second language for a development organization at a university in Uzbekistan, I got to ask questions of a variety of Uzbek citizens about that independence process. A few Uzbeks interrogated me as well: first just students, but later the police.

I'm not very familiar with Laurel and Hardy, but they're who came to mind. I'm not even sure which is the thin one, and which is the rotund one. But I thought I met them about 11:00 pm on a Tuesday night in Tashkent. I'd spent the evening at the apartment belonging to friends who worked for Resource Exchange International. I'd purchased a few vegetables for part of dinner at the market on the way over, stretching my fifteen words of Uzbek to their limit. After dinner and conversation, the thirty-degree Fahrenheit temperature sent me hustling on the twenty-minute walk back to my temporary apartment. I was staying in a third-floor room that I could always recognize from a block away by its white steel door that looked like it came from a Soviet military tank with a pigmentation problem. Half of the two-bedroom apartment served as an office, with the other half offering housing for visitors and temporary teachers like me.

The walk back required me to dive down on an underpass beneath a wide boulevard that passed directly in front of a national theater. Earlier that day by the theater I'd caught a taxi, which in Tashkent meant any car that would stop for you and was heading your way, and joined the four marked lanes that the racing Daewoos turned into six. After I came up from the underpass, Laurel and Hardy approached. They had dark gray uniforms and matching police caps, and asked to see what was in my plastic Marlboro Man bag. The bag was a significant status symbol for me, finely calculated to try to help me fit in. For everyone in Uzbekistan carried plastic bags—quality ones with reinforced handles. Some of

the middle-aged women had hand-made cloth bags with handles, but those didn't have the flashy icons of the plastic sacks. Women closer to the upper class avoided the plastic sacks, but I interpreted the sacks as a way to be seen in terms other than as only a foreigner or development worker. Having the right kind of sack could help me fit in—could say that I knew how the cultural norms worked. Coca-Cola bags weren't uncommon, especially with the bottling plant two miles from where I stayed. Taking the underground was thus like experiencing a Warhol painting with variety. Vodka brands, Levis, Daewoo, and Fanta bags repeated constantly in the human crush on the train heading to work, and there was a refined hierarchy. I never fully understood the subtleties of the rankings, but my Marlboro Man was everywhere. The profile of his rough face and exotic cowboy hat served as a constant reminder of U.S. culture and international economic disparity (I didn't see any Prada or Gucci bags). I developed a social desire for something I would never want back home.

Like many American development workers, I only spoke English. I could fake my way through with a bit of German, and had enjoyed a good conversation in German with one Uzbek professor just a few days after the encounter with the police. As with many post-imperialism nations, language was a point of national pride. The nearly 30% of Uzbekistan's citizens who were of Russian descent and who spoke no Uzbek were having a difficult time as the language of business and government, and eventually education, turned more and more from Russian to Uzbek, with English moving in as the new second language. Laurel and Hardy, however, still spoke only Russian and Uzbek, to my great relief when they indicated that my passport and other papers were not going to come back unless some cash changed hands. I picked up on this request for 100 U.S. dollars (an amount I didn't have on me) fairly quickly, but in a failed move of stubborn justice, pretended to be utterly confused about their

request. They patiently, then more vehemently explained the situation to me in Uzbek, while I hid behind my feigned ignorance of the language and real ignorance of what personal foreign policy would be most applicable here. Were these gentlemen really Robin Hood and Friar Tuck instead? Was this just a friendly redistribution of international wealth on a small scale? Was this a personal corrective to systemic injustice and a form of resistance to the export of American culture and control? Or was it standard highway (or rather boulevard) robbery and police corruption?

The heavier one did most of the talking as they guided me over to a store window, which brought us further out of the light and served as a writing tablet of sorts. The cold night made it a simple task for the taller officer to bend slightly, breathe on the window, and write the nearly universal “\$” sign on the fogged glass. It’s a common binary: virtue and justice as economic and systemic issues versus virtue and justice as personal behaviors. Does development or humanitarian aid work create systems of dependence, or is relief work a noble personal action that involves caring about individual others? In the refugee camps in Rwanda, not long before my trip to Uzbekistan, food aid went to soldiers, who were also refugees, perhaps sustaining their ability to fight and extending the conflict; yet do you let them starve, even if you could identify the difference between a soldier and a refugee? This beginning of a strange night in Tashkent spurred my interest in analyzing global issues combined with economic ones—and—with rhetoric. At the same time, all my verbal responses were accompanied or preceded by feelings, emotions, or a sense of being struck in a particular way. Even the metaphors I thought of at the time seemed to come out of thin air. Affect shaped my linguistic responses and shaped me in powerful ways. Affect and my compositions could not be separated.

## Affective Rhetoric

Conversations in composition studies about affective rhetoric are the first of three main concerns I plot together in this text. While rhetorical scholars have generally not paid much attention to writing about humanitarian crises or work by aid organizations, they have done a fair amount of recent work on both trauma and on affective rhetoric. Rhetoric and composition academicians have started to study affect more in relation to language issues as alternate forms of knowledge are explored. Steven Katz's 1996 *The Epistemic Music of Rhetoric* argues for a "nonreferential, temporal theory of response for 'describing,' researching, and teaching affective response" (15). Katz suggests that affective responses to language can and should count as an important form of knowledge. More recently, Michael Bernard-Donals' 2005 review essay about several books on literacy practices (all published in 2003 and 2004),<sup>2</sup> focuses on the common theme of affect that he finds in each of them. Bernard-Donals says recent work in rhetoric and composition has "begun to take account of what could only be called the aesthetic (or, maybe more accurately, the affective) dimension of language. [. . .] What we say and what we write may have as much to do with belief—with what we can't prove, or what we can sense about our surroundings and our fellows even if we can't know for sure—as with knowledge" (172). His angle into affect is through the pleasure or beauty of a text: how it moves a reader. He argues that even if this sort of response is difficult to chart or logically defend, it is a vital aspect of literacy worthy of study. The affective nature of responding to texts (or distant suffering) is "a transformative event, transformative because it forces individuals to become aware of what can't be forced into language, and an event because it is nonrepeatable" (180). To study affective aspects of

---

<sup>2</sup> Those books are Beth Daniell's *A Communion of Friendship: Literacy, Spiritual Practice, and Women in Recovery*; Jane Greer's edited volume, *Girls and Literacy in America: Historical Perspectives to the Present*; and Brian Huot, Beth Stroble, and Charles Bazerman's edited text, *Multiple Literacies for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*.

responses to suffering is to consider the ways distant events transform individuals. Similarly, Julie Lindquist explores “how teachers might perform emotional engagements that students find authentic and valuable within scenes of literacy instruction” (188). She focuses on how class (lower and upper, not English and math) is an affective experience and how emotional experiences are uneven and varied in the classroom. Lindquist provides useful questions about how emotions alter the possibilities for critical agency (208). While I do not necessarily assume that critical agency is the primary goal of literacy learning, I agree that affective responses shape the possibilities for other analytic and material responses (when they can be separated at all), and I work from the assumption that further possibilities for responses to humanitarian crises would be valuable in our current context.

Questions of affect in composition have also turned in both psychological and cultural directions. Robert Samuels, in “The Rhetoric of Trauma,” says that missing from cultural studies’ “interpretations of historical traumas is the role played by emotion in the experience and understanding of traumatic violence” (448). He turns to “projective identification” to understand the “sense of powerlessness” students feel and project onto others (449). Samuels goes on to describe a retreat from critical thinking about traumas through “emotional denial” and acts of “idealizing, universalizing, identifying, and assimilating” the trauma (450). Samuels’ categories of “emotional denial” follow on Lynn Worsham’s earlier argument that emotion is a “tight braid of affect and judgment, socially and historically constructed and bodily lived” (448). This braid can lead to more trauma for students, according to Worsham, as they learn how even their emotions are socially structured, and she articulates a use of compassion to assuage the senses of guilt and helplessness that go along with distant traumas



(212). While compassion is useful from the teacher, it is often a sense of compassion that helps lead to the guilt and helplessness in the first place.

Lisa Langstraat provides a more strictly cultural view of affect when she labels our contemporary “structure of feeling” as one of “Miasmatic Cynicism” (293). Langstraat argues that “When everything feels like a movie, an overdetermined narrative written and acted by someone else, corporeal reality and the experience of genuine emotion seem reduced to mere simulacra” (295), as a means of asserting that postmodernity has its own emotional culture. Responses to perceived (and actual) situations of distant suffering put to the test this cynical emotional culture, or this era of a “waning of affect” (Jameson 58) that Langstraat cites. Does the recent tsunami in south Asia really create minimal (or depthless) affective responses? How are those responses constructed? Do those affective responses lead to actions to aid those in need or to change an individual’s own practices? Langstraat describes her frustration when one of her students’ shirt referred carelessly to homelessness: “The political and lived realities of homelessness in our town meant nothing more than a flash of irony designed to bring attention to the shirt and its wearer” (303). The need just didn’t matter. She suggests that scholars need to “denaturalize affective identifications” and “need to present emotions as *actions*” (315). I attempt to follow up on this denaturalizing process by providing maps of what affective responses are connected to, and by calling these affects “responses” I implicitly support her claim that emotions are actions. The goal for Langstraat is to re-educate affective responses in a way that creates action to change social structures. I find Langstraat’s goal compelling, but wonder if all affect has really waned into irony. Perhaps it is just the types of affective responses that have changed. The current role of affective responses in rhetorical work is at issue and is part of my exploration. Perhaps also

this assumption that compassion for others in need is the key for positive action needs to be questioned.

Ilene Crawford responds to Langstraat's work by agreeing on the need for a theory of affect that goes beyond pathos as just a particular tactic for changing others (678). Crawford shifts the emphasis towards the agency of a rhetor, using Cornel West and bell hooks as examples of those who can use affective stances to empower their own responses. Crawford is interested in the power and freedom of the student rhetor, and steps back from the construction of affect a little bit. What Samuels, Crawford, and Langstraat do not yet explain is the global to individual scale of connections in constructing affect, and the role of affect in shaping relationships with others. I examine these questions of composition and affect on a broader scope, and move them to responses that are also outside of the classroom, emphasizing the wide variety of connections that go into the creation of particular affective responses. This expansion helps provide a cultural criticism (something that all of these scholars call for) that goes beyond expressive writing from students. At the same time, the emphasis on global connections and particularly on humanitarian crisis situations provides a constant check on thinking about suffering solely in terms of students (and other rhetors) distant from the suffering.

Another theorist and teacher of affective rhetoric is Edbauer, who often focuses on the nature of the local. She argues that "rhetoricity itself operates through an active mutuality between signification and affect" (134). Before any writing responds to (or creates) a context or situation, a person experiences an affective response. This feeling is an important part of rhetoric and is not entirely separable from moments that interpret meanings of a situation or respond verbally to it. In other words, "There can be no affectless

compositions” (Edbauer 133). Edbauer’s work is more in line with those emphasizing the social construction of affect, but she emphasizes the need for including affect in a full theory of rhetoric and composition. It influences but is not entirely subsumed by signifying and meaning-making aspects of rhetoric. I take a more global perspective than Edbauer too, yet I attempt to map some of the (con)textual factors that make for very local affective responses (which can partially be understood from subsequent compositions) as well. I support the movement for affect to be a central aspect of rhetoricity, not just a tool or way to sway others.

My approach focuses on students, yet resists making them the priority of the study—one role of global connections is to keep those actually suffering at the forefront. In addition, the pedagogical spaces that I consider go beyond the classroom to other everyday interactions and compositions (such as pleas for aid received in the mail from humanitarian organizations). I use “affect” as a cultural term, suggesting broader social aspects and cultural influences on felt responses. Affect is opposed to “emotion,” which in my use is a highly individualized and personalized sensation. “Feeling” is similar to emotion here—as a personal experience that can be used to consider larger affective experiences. Center stage in this document belongs to the feelings of the responder as they move toward affect, with the understanding that those feelings are shaped in a diverse, global, and almost limitless context—not just by the event or document at hand. Choosing what context to emphasize is the main rhetorical and pedagogical decision for the researcher. In this case, the field of World Bank Rhetoric implies some directions for that context. What students often need, as in the case of popular work on critical thinking, are tools for *critical feeling*. Critical feeling involves an analysis of what creates feelings, of how students (and others) feel in particular

situations, of forces shaping feelings, and of how changes in feelings happen. It also requires an understanding of the many cultural connections to events and places that construct feelings.

While my excursion in Uzbekistan may have brought international concerns together with economics, a language classroom, and responses to “needs,” a consideration of suffering within the writing classroom has also been a growing issue in the United States. In the final *JAC* issue of 2004, writing, trauma, and the classroom served as the special topic that filled two issues (rather than the forecast one issue because there was so much interest). In it, teachers and scholars struggled with connections between traumatic events, student identities, and the role of composition studies. In another venue, the first issue in 2005 of the online journal *Politics and Culture* was devoted entirely to academics’ responses to the south Asian tsunami, and included a dozen short responses written by undergraduates. One scholar, Asma Abbas, asserted the larger importance of how people write about and respond to writing about suffering. “The question of suffering—how to experience it, accost it, and respond to it—has repeatedly proven that the concepts and categories of dominant philosophical, religious, political, economic, hence ethical, discourses are not passive mediators between our intellect and the world, but actively construct the way we sense it in the first place” (1). Responses to suffering are heavily structured by the variety of discourses we participate in, even if they do not directly speak about suffering. The conjunction of international issues, sites of suffering (often intimately tied to economic issues), and composition research pushes for further exploration of responses to distant suffering. These international issues are shaping students, and they are shaping cultural attitudes towards distant events in turn.

One basic question, then, is how can I, as a rhetoric and composition teacher (both in and outside the classroom), help students (and myself) to ethically understand and respond to situations of distant humanitarian crisis? To do this, I need to ask first how discourses around suffering impact and shape the subjectivity of my students (and me). This exploration of subjectivity involves analyzing how students and others respond now, particularly in terms of the powerful affective responses to some situations. It requires asking what discourses influence those responses. It means thinking about what an ethical response might be, and how working with students might ultimately benefit both those who are considered to be in extreme need and those whose subjectivity is partially shaped by the now ubiquitous discourses around distant suffering. Ultimately, I am suggesting, the distance and international connections among humanitarian crises, combined with the powerful affective responses they create (or fail to create—leaving questions of why they do not), make a study of responses to humanitarian situations particularly important for understanding the construction of subjectivity of students and the relationships between affect and rhetoric. The very real material needs and sufferings of distant others are not secondary to this issue, but rather place a continual check on getting too far away from material needs; they also provide a goal for subjectivity: that individuals would respond well to real needs.

Affect in the classroom is not just a matter of including *pathos* in the rhetorical appeals. The recent work I explore in the previous pages says that rhetorical work is a connection between signification and affect, whether that affect is based on relationships in the classroom, relationships to symbols, or relationships to external factors. My goal is to take that further. If rhetoric is so connected to symbol-affect connections—how does this

impact student identity and practices? How do the ubiquitous but literally vital narratives of distant suffering shape students' affects? More precisely, how can rhetorical scholars describe the relationship between the signification in narratives of suffering and the affective responses of students in a broad context? And ultimately, how can composition scholars respond in the classroom to improve student understanding of affective impacts and improve the composition of affect-aware texts? The basic overall question here is this: how can rhetorical scholars describe the relationship between rhetoric and affect and then apply that relationship to the composition classroom? In the case of the aid narratives I examine, feelings swirling around the notion of compassion are the main affective responses I focus on. In these narratives affect is a contextual or environmental concern; rather than following on signification and understanding, affect often directs meaning, interpretation, and use.

### **Aid Debates**

The second location on this introduction's map of my dissertation is current debates within the field of humanitarian aid and intervention. While affect and composition debates about affect are my initial nodes of study, the rhetoric of aid organizations and how they use affect and image is just as important. Much of my analysis focuses on aid organizations (Oxfam, Doctors Without Borders, Compassion International, DATA) and specific crises (the Rwandan genocide, refugees in Afghanistan, AIDS in Africa). Mary Anderson has famously written that the greatest commandment of relief work is to *Do No Harm*, as the title of her book states. No one expects relief workers to personally injure those they are working with; the "no harm" of course means not creating more conflict and not hurting any local systems of economics or governance that are intact. Yet David Rieff and Deborah Scroggins,

to name two journalists who have covered conflict areas and relief work around the world, both have seen the near impossibility of knowing how the interaction of cultures in a crisis situation will work out. I had defined the Uzbek police officers as some combination of needy victims and corrupt perpetrators. I created a (rather imperialist?) narrative of need (by Uzbeks) and near-generosity (by me) to deal with the feelings of injustice, shame, and anger gathering around my service and robbery in Tashkent. The results of my “donation” are hard to tell. Predicting the future systemic results of intervention, as the White House recently saw in Iraq, is hardly an exact science. Rieff and Scroggins, among others, have called at moments for an ethics that needs to do good deeds with “one clear thing” (Scroggins 123). If the system cannot be predicted, humanitarian aid work should only be for the direst of situations, so one should thoughtfully, but perhaps more simply, try to feed, or donate money, or treat wounds where possible, and spend less time imposing helpful systems that may or may not work. So before moving to questions more directly about rhetoric and composition, we need some background on debates already common in the world of humanitarian aid.

Most scholarly work on humanitarianism is either practical case studies of what does and does not work in a refugee camp or a famine situation, or debate about when to intervene or not at the governmental level. Political historian Akira Iriye describes the growing sense of “global consciousness [. . .] that individuals and groups, no matter where they are, share certain interests and concerns in that wider world” (8). Iriye argues for the importance of looking at non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and while not specifically about NGOs, political scientists have created a significant body of work on several issues related to humanitarianism. Most of these debates center on an opposition between national

sovereignty and human rights. The studies generally emphasize cases where military intervention of some sort is connected to humanitarian work, often in a “failed state.” The importance of national sovereignty is placed up against a variety of specific individual rights to try to create different ways to answer when and how to intervene. Jennifer Welsh takes a long view and worries that too much intervention based on humanitarian crises and human rights violations will undermine the whole notion of sovereignty (64-65). Welsh says that nations and their governments still offer the best practical way to guarantee rights, and that undermining sovereignty leads to a variety of questionable interventions. However, some political actors (including Kofi Annan) call for a whole new basis for sovereignty, and theorists like Michael Ignatieff believe that human rights should be the focus, rather than sovereignty. Henry Shue, on the other side, argues for a strong interventionist position in cases where basic subsistence levels are not being met (*Basic Rights* 9). According to Shue, the basic function of states is to protect the rights of its citizens, and a nation can (and should) lose its sovereignty by not doing so (“Limiting Sovereignty” 13-15). Terry points out that neutrality is never really neutral when she writes that “refusing to make a judgment about who is right and who is wrong in many ways assumes a legal and moral equality between oppressors and their victims” (22). For Terry, not intervening and remaining as neutral as possible tends to take the side of those in power. Her position points to a second, related debate, about the importance of being neutral versus taking a political stance in support of one side in situations of humanitarian crisis. Nicholas Wheeler advocates speaking politically about the rights and wrongs of all sides in a situation, while Alex de Waal argues that groups should either attempt to be “public service contractors” or try “to be embodiments of citizens’ moral sense” (218). He is against the current mode of “continuing



in ambiguity” (218) between these options. These debates over when and how to intervene continue, often with useful case studies for each new situation, but they usually are far removed from daily experiences of the suffering of others that impact citizens who give to, volunteer for, or ignore aid organizations and their calls for support.

While these histories and debates are important backgrounds to studying more recent experiences of humanitarianism and the suffering of others, parallel work on AIDS gives one of the best examples of the (often missing) rhetorical aspects of this history. Paula Treichler has written about AIDS as an “epidemic of signification” (often in conjunction with stories of how AIDS in Africa is presented). She argues that the AIDS “crisis” certainly has very real effects on bodies, but that the spread of messages, signifiers, and ideas related to HIV-AIDS is an overlooked yet vital aspect of the disease to be understood better. Luc Boltanski, who works more directly with humanitarian concerns in *Distant Suffering*, identifies denunciation, sentimentality, and aesthetics as three rhetorical topics for viewing “distant suffering.” On more policy-level lines, Neta Crawford claims that argumentation and discourse ethics are the necessities for determining when to intervene in humanitarian crises. I provide a small intervention on the more individual level, as I start to fill in the also important gaps around personal and non-governmental responses to distant suffering, and the forces that shape those responses—even at the emotional level. Theorists of aid are always concerned with the role of public opinion in possible intervention situations, but have not yet studied the ways distant suffering impacts the public in very personal and powerful ways. I provide an early qualitative exploration of how some of those individuals, whose opinions and responses impact donations and policies, are affectively impacted.

As Treichler notes in relation to AIDS, there is a tension between theoretical work and the material needs of bodies in humanitarian crisis situations. Most humanitarian aid work is done from a humanist perspective—the centrality or even sanctity of the individual serves as the basis for hearing individual stories and meeting individual needs. Poststructuralist theory critiques the authenticity of people’s stories and feelings, and focuses on the ways that social forces construct both the subject himself or herself and construct the affective responses coming from those confluences of forces that we commonly call people. The literal life or death scenarios of some humanitarian crises push this tension to the forefront. I approach these questions of affect and the suffering of others from a more poststructuralist standpoint than previous work on humanitarian aid has done. My focus is on seeing the variety of social factors that lead to particular types of affective responses and then to consider ways to reshape those forces that create desire, feelings, and affect. At the same time, scholars should not ignore the stories and feelings that people have—or rather should not ignore that node (a person) that experiences those feelings. The affective responses of people, the individual stories they tell, and their felt experiences are all major social factors in creating discursive possibilities for future affective responses. Saying that individual feelings and stories are mere ideology that covers up the real social forces misses the fact that those feelings and stories are major social forces—and misses the fact that those feelings and stories can still be important objects of analysis.<sup>3</sup> In the following chapters I tend to use a mix of individual stories and responses to situations of suffering in order to value the human response at the same time that I emphasize its role as part of a discursive

---

<sup>3</sup> I take some of my lead here from Edward Said’s appreciation for and critique of Michel Foucault. Said, concerned that Foucault “ignores the whole category of intention” (186), goes on to name the “relationship between individual subject and collective force” as a “problem” and “explicit difficulty” for Foucault (187). Individual texts still have varying levels of force and usefulness, even within a powerful cultural discourse system.

context. I also use individual responses as moments to analyze the different forces that lead to them. Ultimately, I suggest that configuring people in global affective networks does not eliminate the value or use of considering their stories and feelings. Rather, starting from individuals (whose importance humanitarian crisis situations serve as a constant reminder of) provides a way to consider global biopolitical forces that does not ignore people, denigrate their roles, or consider them dupes without agency. The value I put on pedagogy and my classroom in my work ties me in to what can appear as a form of poststructuralist humanism (even though that may often be seen as a direct contradiction in terms).

Human rights are often connected with humanitarian need situations. Human rights work is usually based on a notion of an autonomous individual. Costas Douzinas critiques rights for being applied too easily to all sorts of desire. Douzinas argues that “it is not so much that humans have rights but that rights make human” (372). Rights to food or safety are not innate things in people. Rather, as social and political structures create particular rights, particular groups of people are constructed as human. Douzinas proposes that “human rights become the postmodern version of the idea of justice or rather the expression of the sense of injustice” (354). Ethics are prior to rights, and global constructions of subjects are prior to them having rights as well. Nevertheless, those individuals that do and do not have rights are still ethically vital.

A small amount of more liberal humanist work on humanitarian aid issues focuses on the rhetoric and possibilities for speech about suffering and assistance. In July, 2005, the G8 summit met in Scotland to discuss debt relief for a number of what were once called “third world” nations. (Uzbekistan was not on that particular list, but many pushed for it to be included in further aid, along with numerous other countries.) The G8 leaders’ actions to

determine who, when, and how much debt forgiveness would be allowed to help those living below poverty levels received worldwide pressure and sparked the Live8 concert series—a take-off on the LiveAid concerts for African famine relief in the early 1980s. A few months later, Hurricane Katrina on the United States’ gulf coast displaced more citizens internally than any other natural disaster in U.S. history, and residents from Salt Lake City to San Antonio to Des Moines began to learn about what it takes to house, feed, and provide opportunities for thousands of refugees. The hurricane led to the removal of the Federal Emergency Management Agency’s director from the rescue and clean-up job, partly because the public outcry at the lack of appropriate response was so strong. Shortly after that, two undergraduate students asked me if I knew of any faculty or staff who would be interested in serving as advisor for a new club designed to get students to take action to aid refugees and to stop genocide in the Darfur region of Sudan.

The list of humanitarian crises and situations for individual, governmental, and other group response could go on and on. Decisions about if, when, and where to act or donate to help distant others is an almost daily occurrence for many people and governments. Those decisions impact other areas of international relations, and have material effects on the lives of refugees from civil wars, or tsunami victims, or others around the world. Boltanski summarizes the issue: “When confronted with suffering all moral demands converge on the single imperative of action. Commitment is commitment to action. [. . .] But what form can this commitment take when those called upon to act are thousands of miles away from the person suffering, comfortably installed in front of the television set?” (xv). His answer is to use speech: everyone should act as rhetors, “by adopting the stance, even when alone in front of the television, of someone who speaks to somebody else about what they have seen” (xv).

Action becomes an attitude of sharing information for the purpose of further action.

Increasing the number of rhetors on key topics is important, but works from a notion of individual speakers without considering the systems that produce the options for speech and the desires of those speakers.

While the suffering of others may not be a pleasant topic to focus on (in fact, its unpleasantness may be why some turn from donating), the discourses and images that create understandings of disaster situations, and the relationships and values they establish, are areas that rhetoricians must explore. Studying how present-day westerners rhetorically experience the suffering of others is one step in moving to a greater rhetorical understanding of the language and decisions involved in these truly global crisis events. Boltanski and Treichler identify the importance of language to these situations, and explore the process of shaping responses to particular contemporary moments of humanitarian need. Those moments include responses to the 1994 genocide and refugee crisis in Rwanda, the ever-increasing practice of mailed requests for money by western aid organizations (particularly Oxfam and CARE), responses to the 2004 south Asian tsunami, and the ONE campaign against world poverty (particularly in Africa). In studying these, I will add to conversations about World Bank Literature, about rhetorical methodology, and about affective rhetoric and trauma in and out of the writing classroom. Most importantly, however, I hope to stimulate further work on the rhetoric that congregates around sites of distant suffering and the affective responses to those sites, both to create more positive options for responses to suffering and to give students tools for working through the composition of their affects. Aid organizations generally work on a model of humanist subjects in need, needs that other humans need to feel compassion for and take care of. Fundamentally I ask how aid

organizations create their own images and audiences, and how this relationship-building rhetoric might be re-worked in light of critiques about representing others, critiques of liberal humanism, and critiques of the failure of compassion. As people approach aid organizations as consumers of experiences, the organizations need to consider what is being (and ought to be) consumed, and can consider how to shift donors and recipients into co-productive roles with the aid organization.

### **Uzbek Affect**

We can now return for a moment to a plaza in downtown Tashkent, where my emotions were oscillating wildly while I was trying *not* to understand the two Uzbek police officers. After half an hour of intercultural anti-communication and hot air had passed, and “\$100” had been written quite clearly in our hot air on the window, I acknowledged that I understood their demands. We then did a little bit of negotiating, since I didn’t have what they were asking for, although they’d seen my cash in the same pouch as my documents and knew I had some. (Apparently U.S. currency is quite recognizable in quick flashes, at night, mostly covered by a pouch.) Laurel and Hardy, the Brobdingnagians, and Robin Hood and Friar Tuck walked me back across the street to a more secluded area and became a bit more intimidating. Under somewhat unfair circumstances, including their positions as police officers and my position as a helper, special guest, and American (positions which simply make the situation unfair on both sides), we completed a cash-for-documents-and-leaving-me-alone transaction. I fled to my third story apartment with the great white tank door and fumed myself to sleep.

I honestly hoped that the two police officers would put the money they took to good use, perhaps in caring for their families or maybe investing in their kids' education. This wish was much more to feel better as a victim than because of any real good will towards the officers. I was hoping simultaneously that the bastards would get caught somehow. Even the possibility of my thinking that "they need the money more than I do, so I hope it goes to good use, even if they are evil ingrates" points to a relationship where the development worker is above the citizens of the developing country. It is this reflection that made me reflect more and more on contemporary responses by individuals to the suffering of distant others. In this case, I created a situation of suffering in my imagination to start to justify the robbery. I also started to realize the variety of economic, cultural, literary, and other discourses that shaped not only my understanding of Uzbeks and their "needs" or "suffering," but also my responses of going there in the first place and of justifying the robbery through an idea of suffering.

Ultimately it may have been my inability to see past the Laurel and Hardy image that prevented justice in a personal sense, and possible in a systemic sense as well. I wonder what images and metaphors my students have (or compose) of those they think of not only as other, but also as in need or suffering in some way. Images of need are common enough in popular media that felt or intuitive responses are very likely to exist. These are much more specific than just understanding people as Other, and that specificity is something I sought from my students, even as I consider how to teach them to feel more critically.

In Tashkent, I called Dave, the head development worker that I knew, the next morning. It was his family's apartment I'd been visiting the night before. He was outraged and contacted the local police chief. That police chief arranged for a meeting that very afternoon. He said

that all the officers would be in and that I could try to identify the criminals. After teaching, Dave and I caught another taxi on the boulevard and headed to police headquarters; I clutched my Marlboro Man bag the whole way there.

### **World Bank Rhetoric**

World Bank Rhetoric (WBR) is the glue—and the area of study—that holds together the work on humanitarian aid rhetoric and affective aspects of composition studies. It is the third key locale in this introduction’s map of my overall project. World Bank Rhetoric implies that issues of globalization and global connections, issues about economic disparities, and concerns about the strategic use of language and other symbols are crucially connected. WBR is a way of approaching texts—any text could be understood as part of World Bank Rhetoric—but certain texts in a globalized, contemporary world (such as aid appeals from humanitarian organizations after the advent of the World Bank in 1944) lend themselves more directly towards categorization and examination as World Bank Rhetoric examples. My combination of international concerns, assorted economic hardships, and the variety of discourses in response to them, replies to the provocation offered in Amitava Kumar’s edited volume, *World Bank Literature*. As an outgrowth of postcolonial and culture studies in the context of living and theorizing globalization, World Bank Literature (WBL) asks “for a different protocol of reading. It acts with the knowledge that what one reads in a novel about alcoholism and domestic abuse among construction workers in Seoul can also be linked to the distant machinations on Wall Street and in Washington” (Kumar xix). The diversity of connections in a global setting calls for reading to connect a variety of documents. Kumar goes on to ask, “When one does that, is critical practice responding to the intellectual and



political challenge posed by what we are calling ‘World Bank Literature’?’ (xix). In my case, the concerns are about how something like the aftermath of the tsunami in Indonesia, for example, is connected not only to Washington, D.C., but also to going to the movies or choosing which college course to take. As Bruce Robbins states in the afterword to *World Bank Literature*:

The work of mediating between concepts and sensations or perceptions, between abstract knowledge and feelings strong enough to motivate action, has often been assigned to aesthetics. It should be no surprise, then, that on the distant global stage, the need for such mediation gives literature and literary critics a relatively juicy role to play. This is the first rationale for the existence of a volume with the strange title *World Bank Literature*, and perhaps the only rationale the volume needs. (299)

My study will consider those feelings, moving beyond only focusing on ideas in literary texts. For Robbins and other contributors, world, bank, and literature serve as three separate terms to bring together. Philip Wegner articulates one version of this connection of terms in “Soldierboys for Peace”:

The construction of World Bank Literature as a field of investigation requires not only new reading strategies—sensitized to the ways various texts grapple with the problem of bringing into focus the relational, spatial, unevenly developed, and total system of global capitalism—but also a new canon of texts. [. . .] And yet, World Bank Literature cannot simply be a transformation of the canon of postcolonial studies. It must also open up U.S. and ‘First

World' canons to a variety of 'nonliterary,' in all sense of this term, texts.

(284)

In addition to opening up “First World” reading practices and text choices, I hope to follow up with analysis of images and documents related to humanitarian aid work. The field of aid, with its geographic and material distances, brings the “world” together with economic “bank” issues, but in my case the move is toward rhetoric rather than toward “the literary.” The literature considered in the *World Bank Literature* volume refers to almost any document, including the policies of the World Bank itself. In fact, one piece is entitled “All Published Literature Is World Bank Literature” (Irr). However, “literature” still implies reading particular texts to interpret them, albeit in a context of globalization and capitalist economics (often with Marxist-influenced readings). The concept of World Bank Rhetoric moves more to the forefront the persuasive strategies of organizations and the felt experiences of those influenced by key documents and symbolic structures.

While WBL is in part a critique of the notion of World Literature, World Bank Rhetoric notices the relative lack of “world” in rhetorical studies—at least in relation to composition, affect, and the production of subjectivity. So my rhetorical project is also a slight adaptation of the WBL notion of reading documents as literary items through the rubrics of globalization and economic forces, to focusing on the role of different discourses in creating relationships, values, and experiences in that “World Bank” setting. As a response to World Bank Literature, World Bank Rhetoric is less about postcolonial or world literature and more of a focus on the strategies of language happening with issues of world and bank and cultures. Literature is rhetorical and rhetoric is often literary.<sup>4</sup> The difference

---

<sup>4</sup> Kenneth Burke, in his *Rhetoric of Motives*, expands the range of rhetoric to include all that attempts identification—certainly including literary acts within that range. I am not attempting to draw a hard line

is more one of approach. My focus is on rhetorical strategies and conversations, rather than those in issues and conversations in literary studies. Rhetoric also implies use and practice and creating one's own compositions in a way that WBL does not quite do. Both versions are pedagogical in focus, but WBR can go beyond analysis to consider student compositions as acts of WBR more easily.

Even my story about interacting with the police in Tashkent, and my analysis of it, may be a type of World Bank Rhetoric. World Bank Literature shows the important role of major international economic institutions as they impact groups and lives, while I start with a more everyday scale.<sup>5</sup> Like the postcolonial studies referred to in WBL, rhetoric is a pedagogical field that must consider connections of “culture to economy, the work of the classroom to work under global capitalism” (Premnath 253). World Bank Rhetoric can speak of the student who writes about 9/11, his mother's job, a Hollywood movie, and AIDS in Africa, all in the same paper. Ultimately, like many of the WBL theorists, I see World Bank Rhetoric as a pedagogical tool. It involves an approach to rhetorical studies that encourages new learning about the range and scope of connections driving my own responses to situations of (mostly economic) inequality around the world. These situations can perhaps best be seen and call most urgently for response in humanitarian crises.<sup>6</sup>

---

between rhetoric and literature, but rather to indicate a change in community and conversation that goes with the terms “literature” and “rhetoric.”

<sup>5</sup> Martin Nystrand's edited volume, *Towards a Rhetoric of Everyday Life*, emphasizes the “rhetorical character and dynamics of language in mundane contexts especially beyond school, and the rhetorical interpenetration of school discourse and political and cultural forces transcending the academy” (ix). Simply studying the mundane can be informative about culture, but its import may be hard to argue for. I intend to put the extremity of situations of suffering, need, and disaster together with the everyday that is also part of those experiences. At this cultural moment, affective responses, at least, to distant crises at the life-or-death level are an everyday occurrence. The everyday can become even more important, I believe, particularly in grasping its effects on rhetorical experience, when juxtaposed with situations of global concern.

<sup>6</sup> The language I am using may suggest that rhetorical situations asking for particular responses actually exist prior to their construction by a rhetor—to pit Lloyd Bitzer against Richard Vatz. However, I do not intend that to be simply assumed, and I later will address the possible implications of World Bank Rhetoric for the rhetorical situation.

World Bank Rhetoric proposes that responses to the suffering of others (whether affective, linguistic, or monetary) are not strictly individual acts of compassion or kindness. Nor are they strictly ethical and power-related debates at the foreign policy level. Instead, responses are the intimately interlaced results of a variety of rhetorical forces that produce the life of the givers, receivers, and ignorers of aid. Kumar refers to World Bank Literature as a response to Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri's work in *Empire* that describes global forms of power. There they use the term "Empire" to describe the function of power in society globally, which "establishes no territorial center of power and does not rely on fixed boundaries or barriers. [. . .] Most significant, the spatial divisions of the three Worlds (First, Second, and Third) have been scrambled so that we continually find the First World in the Third, the Third in the First, and the Second almost nowhere at all" (xii-xiii). While the First and Third worlds may be found in each other in terms of economic strata, companies making investments, and standards of living, they also are found in each other through cultural artifacts and daily information about crises or moments of suffering. Hardt and Negri go on to argue that "affective labor" is one of the main characteristics of this Empire. Affective labor is "immaterial, even if it is corporeal and affective, in the sense that its products are intangible, a feeling of ease, well-being, satisfaction, excitement, or passion. [. . .] [W]hat is really essential to it are the creation and manipulation of affect" (292-93). Information about distant suffering and responses to it are all about the creation of affect, but not just in terms of satisfaction or excitement; the affective possibilities are broad. They suggest that "What affective labor produces are social networks, forms of community, biopower" as economics and human communication are linked (293). Responding to distant suffering is an affective process that creates forms of community—whether the response is an aid worker traveling to

Indonesia with medical equipment or a computer programmer feeling something after watching horrific images on CNN. *Affective mapping* is one way to describe the work of World Bank Rhetoric in pedagogical terms (whether in or out of the composition classroom). As cognitive mapping tries to teach us something about how to traverse our positions in the world (particularly the postmodern world for Jameson), my notion of World Bank Rhetoric attempts to teach something about dealing with responses to the world that are heavy on the affective side.

The composition classroom, too, is a place of potentially significant affective labor, and it networks with these other forces. The sense that Empire seeks peace, democracy, and inclusion for all is put into question when a humanitarian crisis arises. Even if the crisis is a “natural” disaster rather than the result of a conflict, the breach is a potential crisis for all. Humanitarian crises can never be completely contained, and this sense of constant (and usually distant) crisis shapes identities in important ways. While Hardt and Negri identify the importance of the production of affect in Empire, they leave to others the work of showing specific cases of the production of affect. In the case of affective responses to humanitarian crises, the production of affect is important for how it shapes the distant responder, the material response to possible needs, and the imagined relationship between people. This affective labor may push us to identify shame, guilt, heroism, disgust, or a variety of other feelings with the suffering of others. While this in itself matters greatly for a person’s own identity, and while it seems to matter not at all in terms of the real need a refugee in Darfur (for example) experiences, it is important again in that the affects shape responses to and relationships between you and that refugee—which can have very material impacts for both parties.

My epigraph from *The Matrix* at the beginning of the chapter dips into the world of science fiction to make a statement about the potential centrality of suffering. Thanks in part to Wegner's argument that science fiction is one of the "mass cultural genres and other similarly marginalized practices [that] best perform the labors of cognitive mapping demanded by the situation of the present" (284), I also allowed myself to read William Gibson's (of cyberpunk science-fiction and *Neuromancer* fame) 2003 book *Pattern Recognition* for its example of affective mapping. *Pattern Recognition* tells the story of a small, underground film project that has a cult following online. The search by individuals and multi-national corporations for the creator of this collage-like film drives the plot of the story. Cayce, the main character, has a special talent for discerning instantly if a logo, image, or other marketing tool will be successful or not. On the flip side of this awareness of consumerism is her odd allergy to many brands (the Michelin Man will send her into a panic attack at times). Cayce is hired to find the maker of the uber-hip set of short film clips that are released online and have built a large following through word-of-mouth and the emotions the clips evoke. The search is to find connections in patterns, and involves the question of whether the series of film clips is in a sequence or not. It turns out to fit together more like a spatial map in the shape of the arming mechanism of a Claymore mine. Cayce's jet-lagged travels through the worlds of international marketing and finance are continually interrupted by references to her father—who disappeared in Manhattan on September 11, 2001, but was never located alive or dead.

Gibson's story exemplifies the fluidity between the realms of multi-national corporations, small online communities, and family squabbles. He captures the sense of light-handed yet intimate control that Hardt and Negri theorize concerning, for instance,

marketing companies that pay people to go into clubs, hang out, and occasionally drop an interesting word about a product (or even a concept). At the same time, scenes of a character filming an excavation of bodies and a plane from WWII, along with Cayce's inability to escape her father's disappearance on 9/11, provide an individual, emotional map of society. The dominant affective image in the book is jet lag of the soul, because unlike the rapid movement of instant communication and intercontinental plane travel, "Souls can't move that quickly, and are left behind, and must be awaited, upon arrival, like lost luggage" (1). There is a similar jet lag in the distance between Cayce's experience of her father's disappearance and the marketing strategies of the famous Blue Ant corporation. The jet lag can be extended to the experience of my students, who cannot (as one of them says in reference to the Rwandan genocide) "contemplate the change that would have to occur or the reasoning that I would need to make me decide that the neighbor who I've known since grade school is now a mortal enemy and that I should brutally murder him" (Doug).<sup>7</sup> The speed and volume of information is faster than the most "souls" can keep up with, and the affective responses to those situations help show the distance. In mapping the distance and the connectedness, I hope to provide pedagogical means for developing responses to distant suffering at the individual level. Teaching on September 12, getting robbed in Uzbekistan, exploring Hardt and Negri's notion of Empire, reflecting on crisis in the Sudan, and remembering my science fiction reading together serve as a small set of coordinates for my own response to distant suffering the jet-lag of my own soul.

While the practice of affective mapping (explained in more detail in the following section) is one way to do World Bank Rhetoric in my formulation, affective mapping in this

---

<sup>7</sup> Throughout this document I quote from students in my classes. The names have been changed and I use only first names for these pseudonyms. I also have left all quotes in their original state, not correcting the grammar since most of them are from unedited journal entries.

chapter also includes World Bank Rhetoric for the important focus on global connections it can give. While one goal of affective mapping is to include more rhetorical factors and locations as forces than are often included in a study, the selection of locations is always limited and biased. Because this is a limited map and story of particular responses to particular events from a particular set of perspectives, it is vital to show some of the limitations. Stating my theoretical background and political biases, while useful, is insufficient. Instead, the places I go and the conversations I have throughout the research process will display the assets and limitations on this particular story and analysis. My research process will also provide the organizational narrative of the text, as I tell the story of studying responses and events in order to better respond to my own students. After all, one exigence for this study is my attempt to understand my own responses to the suffering of others. This goal makes the project personal (as all projects are to some degree) in a way that connects the research process with other aspects of my life. In bringing humanitarian aid literature, my personal exigencies, and affective rhetoric together I ask: if Empire is the situation the world is in—then what does rhetoric have to say about it? Rhetorical scholars have not addressed that sufficiently. Finally, I consider what a World Bank Rhetoric might look like in practice. Ultimately, World Bank Rhetoric is one of my answers to the questions surrounding affective rhetoric issues and humanitarian aid rhetoric concerns. WBR emphasizes the responses to rhetorical acts and the globally networked and constructed forces influencing those responses without doing away with the importance of individuals or specific moments of suffering.



## **Affective Mapping**

Affective mapping is one methodological possibility for how to do World Bank Rhetoric. The field of rhetoric and composition, the composition classroom, my travels in Uzbekistan, humanitarian aid organization literature, and theories of Empire are several key locales in an *affective map* of my project on responses to distant humanitarian suffering. In order to provide a cultural pedagogy that takes the concerns of affective rhetoric and expands them into the wider connectedness of globalization, I undertake a project of what I call affective mapping. This method provides spatial narratives of affective responses to sites of distant suffering. An affective map is a pedagogical tool that draws a variety of cultural connections to a person's affective response to a text or event. It often relies on written or oral responses from that person to discern some of the connections and the affect(s) involved. It ties felt responses to places and includes a series of connections, not just one main cause. The purpose of the affective map is to provide possibilities for connecting, disconnecting, or altering the links that exist between cultural texts and a person's affective responses. Put another way, an affective map might take the responses my students have to situations of distant suffering, note some of the affects in those responses, make further connections regarding the production of those affects, and point out places on that map for my students to take more control of their responses. An affective map reads emotional responses not just as the effect of one text, but as part of a much larger network of influences. As Hardt and Negri show, a question of affect is inextricably intertwined with the creation of subjects. Yet the actuality of other people suffering (see Sontag or Treichler) puts a limit on getting too lost in speculations about creating subjectivity—while ignoring the needs and results of actual responses. So I am asking also how my students are constructed even in their affects, even as

I almost necessarily keep in mind a goal of (self-) shaping those subjectivities to respond effectively and ethically to the suffering of distant others. In order to undertake this research, I examine responses to distant suffering in a variety of contexts, and identify dominant affective responses, creating an affective map of sorts which connects affective responses to a variety of other culturally shaping discourses, all of it leading to tentative conclusions about possible ways to alter responses. Or, to put it in personal terms, I am seeking ways to better work with my students as they compose their own identities in ways that implicitly (and, increasingly, explicitly) respond to rhetorics of distant suffering. I hope to provide the beginnings of a map of the affects. My version of an affective map in this introduction will draw together several intellectual and geographical locations in order to outline my project and to show the affective factors making the project feel necessary. Those “locations” include thinking about the global through the notion of World Bank Rhetoric, the debates taking place in humanitarian aid theory, work on affect in rhetoric and composition, my own story of conflict in Uzbekistan, and even a little science fiction. An affective map is not limited by geographic space. It works on a variety of scales and in a variety of times (and changes over time). The key connections to my current feelings about Hurricane Katrina may include a friend I have in New Orleans, the memory of other natural disasters, American social history, and a movie the event reminds me of.

Before moving on to those other elements of this chapter’s affective map, allow me to spend a bit more time explaining the notion of affective mapping. It works somewhat analogously with Fredric Jameson’s concept of cognitive mapping. Phillip Wegner’s article about a science fiction story, “Soldierboys for Peace,” is subtitled, “Cognitive Mapping, Space, and Science Fiction as World Bank Literature” (280). Before his analysis of science

fiction work, Wegner describes key aspects of Fredric Jameson's concept of cognitive mapping, including "its deeply pedagogical function, as it teaches us something about what would be involved in positioning ourselves in the world; its spatial and collective orientation; and, finally, its totalizing movement" (280). If cognitive mapping is a way to describe the main work of teaching people to negotiate postmodernity, affective mapping can be a way to negotiate the affective world of *Empire*. In this use of *Empire* I refer to Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri's work by that title. Rather than emphasizing thought alone (as opposed to feelings) in the connections between places, Hardt and Negri have shown the centrality of affect as our subjectivities are formed, and situations of distant suffering often create powerful affective responses. Jameson clarifies the idea of cognitive mapping at one point, stating that, "cognitive mapping in the broader sense comes to require the coordination of existential data (the empirical position of the subject) with unlived, abstract conceptions of the geographic totality" (52). Affective mapping approaches that existential data through the responses of individuals, and puts it into coordination with other discourses a person is socially connected to, in order to create a map of sorts. Further: just as cognitive mapping is an activity to take on after Jameson, affective mapping is an activity to do as a response to Hardt and Negri. This map is less about the social totality that Jameson and the Hardt-Negri combination seek, and more about locating the individual as a node who still does respond to real situations in the world. Affective mapping seeks to create a pedagogical tool for the person (student) responding to a humanitarian crisis, and only obliquely might imply something about the social totality. If cognitive mapping is an attempt to imagine the individual's relationship to the social whole (Jameson 54), then affective mapping in a reversal of the emphasis tries to imagine the whole's relationship to shaping the emotional,

responding person. (Hopefully it is clear here that emphasizing an individual or a social grouping requires thoughtful consideration of the other factor.) Rather than emphasizing a political aesthetic or strategy, affective mapping is a strategy for thinking about individuals (in all their produced, constructed, and networked glory). My approach takes the biopolitical creation of subjects seriously, but argues that those subjects are still quite interesting objects of analysis. In fact, individual stories and feelings can be an effective way to approach larger global forces, and many of those stories and affective responses circulate back into larger global structures (government power, economic forces, religious/value systems) and influence them. Power and influence does not just flow one direction—nor is power the only thing that matters.

In my narrative analysis, then, my goal is to provide a series of written and spoken responses to situations constructed as distant suffering. In these responses I identify some dominant experiences or affects from the speakers and writers. I work through the responses and other portions of the contexts of those people's lives to explore key connections to the affective responses. The responses and their connections to a variety of discourses begin to create affective maps. These maps recognize the importance of global economics, marketing, and politics in shaping the smallest of emotional responses, yet I intend to maintain the specificity and uniqueness of each response as well. The suffering of others is a powerful force in shaping contemporary identity, but how it currently shapes that identity is often to create feelings of impotence to carry out necessary helpful actions. Affective mapping can help show the making of this subjectivity and may begin to provide ways to reshape it. The actual process includes at least three processes: thickly describing responses (written ones are what I have the most access to, but images and verbal responses are

important as well, when they are available) to distant suffering; discerning affective elements and trends in these responses (which shape the individuals writing responses); and connecting the affective elements to a much wider network of self-shaping factors. The shamelessly idealistic goal of all this remains: to learn ways to respond better to sites of distant material suffering.

### **Following the Map**

This introduction brings together a boulevard and police station in Tashkent, my composition classroom, Sudan (to give one painful example) and theorizations of how to do aid work there, imaginary science fiction worlds, and rhetoric and composition journals into an introductory affective map that critically charts my sense of need to work on how to respond to my students in relation to issues of distant suffering. (Perhaps the preceding is just a fancy way to talk about exigence, but the point would then be that exigence is, above all else, an affective experience.) Similarly, the chapters that follow are each different examples of affective mapping, and they move from a map of how suffering is valued in a specific case, to a map of student responses, to a study of how two aid organizations create maps and feelings, to the possibilities of changing affective responses toward a place. The affects associated with the responses in each chapter serve as locations (together with the variety of geographic locations I reference) in the larger affective map of this book. The narrative moves between these chapters by following my own research process and by following responses from my writing classes in relation to each.

Chapter two begins closer to home with an analysis of suffering in the United States after September 11, 2001. I link various texts and locations to argue that particular types of

suffering became privileged or valued in that context, and that we can use affective maps to understand how the suffering of others is or is not valued. The map itself is about what counts as suffering, and moves between responses from individuals, to federal and local officials, to responses of service, to moments in popular culture. John Ashcroft's Responsible Cooperator's program is perhaps the most central text for this chapter, but part of the point of the map is that usually there is not one central text. I also consider the responses from my students in the Fall of 2001 as part of the affective map in this chapter.

Chapter three starts with a conversation in my apartment about Rwanda, and continues to examine responses to the Rwandan genocide, focusing on the statistical narratives about it that come across as vulgar to many. I describe a series of responses from my writing students, who touch on the U.S. education system, Hollywood, and their own neighborhoods in suggesting points of connection for their affective responses. In this chapter I consider the sense of equivalence or justice that come from numerical accounts, and the sense that suffering in general and in much of the twenty-first century world, are "beyond measure." While focusing on statistical narratives of the Rwandan genocide and felt responses to those narratives, this chapter argues for the centrality of affect in a societal setting where power functions on the feelings of people.

Chapter four explores responses from aid organizations that request money for the relief or prevention of distant suffering. I focus on Oxfam International and Doctors Without Borders as two major aid organizations that create different brands as they relate to potential donors or "customers." I explore their brand identities through a study of the maps that they create both through narratives they write about suffering and through the arrangements of their respective Web sites. In the previous two chapters I study the way suffering is

(de)valued and the importance of affect as a broadly constructed yet highly personal thing. This portion of the book shifts to spend more time directly on the language of aid organizations. The rhetorical strategies used to create relationships between donors (who may be seen as investors or consumers as well) and the organization, along with the creation of organizational brand identities, provide more nodes on this large affective map of responses to distant suffering. I continue to provide student responses to aid organization Web sites as a counterpoint and check to my own readings and affective responses to these materials.

In chapter five I move from the maps and brands that aid organizations create to the possibility of changing affective responses to a particular place. I analyze the place of South Korea in the history of an aid organization called Compassion International. Compassion mostly works through sponsoring individual children, and in their work, South Korea has shifted from a place receiving aid and sponsorships to one that gives aid and sponsors children elsewhere in the world. I provide a counterpoint to Compassion and Korea with the issue of AIDS in Africa, particularly in Uganda. The change here is in the affective map of AIDS, as it has become more connected to Africa rather than sexuality-based identity groups, along with increasing connections to economic concerns. This chapter emphasizes two cases where affective responses and cultural associations have changed rather significantly.

I conclude in chapter six through a more direct, brief study of college student responses to distant suffering, particularly in conjunction with a writing course I taught in Fall 2005. These students provide many of their own affective maps, and allow others to understand snippets of how their subjectivities are shaped by the distant suffering of others. I

go on to draw some general conclusions about the rhetorical practice of affective mapping when doing World Bank Rhetoric.

Ultimately the current debates about humanitarian intervention and the majority of individual responses are caught up in an impossible rhetoric of justice or equivalency. There is a constant attempt to match the situation in some appropriate way. In situations of extreme suffering, a response completely equivalent to the suffering is impossible.<sup>8</sup> The difficulty of reaching the equality desired in a response leads to many difficult and unhelpful affective states. At least for individual actors (as opposed to states and governments), seeking something other than a just response (or one of right measure) may allow for both freer and more effective actions. What that other type of response is becomes part of the search in this narrative. Rhetoric around situations of humanitarian crisis is a form of affective labor (caring-centered in this case) that creates affective responses with negative effects in my students. One negative impact is the sense of a helpless self who responds out of futile necessity. A second impact is the deficient relationships and material aid that this sense of self leads to. My argument implies that it is still vital to explore individual responses and affects, even in a context where the economic and cultural forces shaping those responses receive more theoretical attention. The affective maps I describe, full of responses to various moments of need and suffering, together imply that the construction or recognition of distant others in pain is one of the most important factors in establishing identity in the contemporary condition of Empire. The intensity of responses to an event like the south Asian tsunami, along with the vast coverage and implied need for action in life or death

---

<sup>8</sup> I consider my claim about the impossibility of responding in a truly fitting or equivalent way to much suffering to be parallel to Hannah Arendt's descriptions of radical evil. In Arendt's work on radical evil no justice, and therefore no forgiveness is possible. No act can reach the level of the radical evil. The situations are not all forms of human "evil," but the attempt to find a just response to a devastating tsunami (for example) becomes frustrating, and sometimes immobilizing.



situations, when combined with the breadth of discursive sites in an affective map, makes distant suffering central to a subject's position in the context of globalization. In other words, World Bank Rhetoric suggests that the 2005 earthquake that devastated parts of Pakistan is often integral to the subject possibilities for my student from upstate New York when it creates affective responses in conjunction with other aspects of that student's life. Perhaps the perceived waning of affect really is just the effect of jet-lag of the soul.

### **Thinking about Feeling**

My own lived experience of world, bank, and rhetoric together came to a climax in a Tashkent police station. My position in relation to the Uzbek police force and to sites of much more severe suffering around the world was shaped by my post-Soviet era visit to that precinct. I don't know if the police chief was just paying lip service to us about every officer being there, or if the two I'd met the night before were told to stay home, or if I looked into their eyes that afternoon. I remember the police headquarters as a surprisingly low, grayish building. But I was already deconstructing my memory in general as I tried to do mental courtroom sketches of the officers from the night before. A bit more grass grew in front of the station than I'd seen in front of most structures in Tashkent. A fairly high-ranking officer guided us into the building and asked me to tell my story. I did in as brief and calm a manner as I thought appropriate and he apologized profusely, making numerous appeals to Uzbek hospitality in general, even if there were a few bad pomegranates. Then the show began.

The recent MTV show *The Surreal Life* pales in comparison to the scene of two lines of about thirty police officers each, standing at attention in a courtyard, facing each other at a distance of six paces. With the highest ranking police officers and my friend Dave looking

on, I was asked to walk slowly and alone down one line of officers and back up the other. I was probably eighteen inches from each face, as I tried alternately to avoid and make eye contact, pausing occasionally when one looked familiar. Could I find two individuals in a group that I had now labeled as a suffering country? I left my Marlboro man bag with Dave during the line-up, but neither my dignity nor that of the police officers was spared. After I failed a first walk-through, the police chief insisted I take another. By this point, my position as the foreign, western, viewer with the power to name the guilty (when I actually had little control over the situation—especially compared to the police chief) made me stand out even more than my friend Christina, who'd had a homeless woman loudly groveling at her feet for money in a Tashkent subway station just days before. I wanted my gaze, following the epigraph from Derrida at the beginning of this chapter, to be used for crying and feeling—not for the power of looking. I was shamed at my position of power that had no power to help anyone, or even to see justice.

I could not identify Laurel and Hardy on my quick second march either. I picked up my bag and fled as quickly as possible, holding an image of distant suffering made up of corrupt police officers, beggars in subways, crumbling concrete, and the shame of seeking justice: all in stark contrast to the rugged cowboy on my bag.

## Chapter 2: Taking Attendance: Absent Writing and the Value of Suffering

The “Rhetoric of Suffering” course that I taught in Fall 2005 was intimately tied to the first course I taught as a graduate assistant—in the Fall of 2001. In teaching that first course and preparing for Fall 2005, I reflected on the significant role that I began to describe in the previous chapter that major moments of suffering had the opportunity to play in the development of my students. My 2005 course description started like this:

Most of you were early in your high school career on September 11, 2001. You saw the variety of efforts to respond to such a tragedy and attempted to do so yourself. Many of you may remember the post-Christmas tsunami and the relief efforts afterwards as a key event of your senior year. These are events where we often just don’t know what to say. How can one respond through writing and speaking in situations where words often seem insufficient to the size or pain (or even joy) of a situation? Whether as future political officials, businesspeople, non-governmental organization workers, educators, academics, parents, or citizens, we will all have to thoughtfully, ethically, and effectively use words to respond to suffering and perhaps to serve those needing aid. [. . .] We will look at a variety of genres and historical situations—from a narrative around the holocaust, to a journalistic report on Rwanda in the 1990s, to court reporting from South Africa, to a text on photography—and read these texts both to learn about the situations they describe and to understand the strategies the writers use. Through this we will develop our own abilities to understand the possibilities of what to say and

how to say it in specific contexts to specific audiences. In the course of working on our own composition practices, we will address questions like “how is suffering defined?” “who can speak for others?” and “how does one ethically motivate an audience (to donate money for example)?” (Newcomb Course)

Writing the description, I wondered if the topic would drive students away, or somehow attract them in. The course did fill up quickly, although some of that was simply due to limited openings and the fact that my course (English 30 at my institution) was one of several honors sections of a required first-year rhetoric and composition course. In the honors sections instructors are encouraged to have a specific theme for approaching rhetoric and composition; my theme focused on language around suffering and service. The specific course description sought to connect with a potential need in students to hear about issues of humanitarian tragedy and to deal with writing about suffering distant and not so far away.

The students provided some thoughtful and honest responses to the description and the course. Adia stated,

I can't lie. When I first read 'Apocalyptic Rhetoric' in the course description for English 30, I had no idea what it meant. I remember looking it up online and reading, 'Involving or portending widespread devastation or ultimate doom,' as the definition. I never realized that entire sentence could be replaced with the word 'suffering.' With this in mind, buying my books for class was an uplifting experience; they were all about death, genocide, death, and more death. As weird as it sounds, I was really interested and actually sat and read all the book jackets before classes started. But taking a class on

‘suffering’ or how people write about it wasn’t as depressing as I thought it would be. [. . .]

Taking this class has made me notice how different types of media go about getting attention, whether it’s through print, online, or on TV. (“Journal 10”)

Adia had put some effort into thinking about what course to take. She shifts from narrating the experience of buying books about “death” to thinking about issues of attention in the media. Her comment considers the question of how something counts as culturally important suffering at a particular point. In other words, she started to think about how feelings, not just ideas, are shaped by a wide variety of places.

Another student, Tyler, had not read the course description before signing up for it. He confessed,

If I knew that this class was to be about suffering, I have to admit that honestly I would not have taken it. [. . .] I consider this to be a reasonable position and I would even guess that most others share this same disinterest in matters of suffering. Now having gone through with English 30 I realize that it is necessary in many instances to read about suffering as well as to write about it. (“Journal”)

The “disinterest” he refers to is only in some cases of course. As I explore later in this chapter, many responses to the nearer suffering of 9/11 were not so disinterested, and the goal of my affective map is to show what suffering became “interesting” or valued. For Tyler, his lack of interest changed—but he importantly takes a first step in analyzing why so many avoid analyzing or thinking about issues of suffering.

Students not in the class seemed to react with shock or laughter, perhaps supporting Tyler's point about disinterest. Tony, another student in my course, noted, "So far this semester every single time someone asks me what English 30 class I am in, and I say suffering, the response is always a laugh, wondering if I am actually being serious" ("Journal #10"). Of course there is a play on words above, with the possibility that simply taking a first-year writing course is "suffering" to some students. Because it is a general education requirement, the introductory writing course is often initially perceived as not the most desirable course. Devin describes a similar type of humorous response. "I would tell people about the classes I was taking this semester and I would always get a reaction when I got to this one. It was pretty funny actually. They would be like 'you are talking about what?!?! At when in the morning?!?!'" ("Journal #10"). It is certainly easier to have moments of laughter related to talking about suffering when the suffering is in the abstract, and might be just the slight suffering of a required class. Perhaps the ubiquitous nature of images of suffering has led to a flippant attitude towards humanitarian crises at moments; and the comfort with which people can laugh about it says more about the experience of manipulation through images of suffering than about the concern an individual has.

However, there was little laughter in my classroom on September 12, 2001. That location is where we move next to consider how suffering is or is not valued, to think about how some suffering leads to stronger affective responses societally. I explore a network of different responses (many individual writings, some other types) as part of a circle that both create a social notion of valued suffering and are created by social forces already at play. Throughout, the relationship between affect and rhetoric is a central concern, as language acts work together to create and limit the possibilities for affective responses to various kinds

of suffering. This chapter hones in on questions about affective rhetoric and composition as I consider the suffering associated with and ignored around the World Trade Center tragedy of 2001.

### **Writing Suffering**

“The dawn did not erase the preceding day’s agony—no dawn could—and so New Yorkers ate their meals, did the dishes and put out the trash, the mundane tasks of life, but nothing felt the same.” It was “a day when work meant so much less than family and human companionship” (A1). So wrote N.R. Kleinfeld in the *New York Times* for September 12, 2001, in an attempt to express the feelings associated with suffering. Kleinfeld implied that the way many Americans experienced the world had changed, and I believe that the main change was in what counted as “real” or “valuable” suffering.

In the spring of 2002 two tall beams of light both filled and reminded watchers of a hole in the New York sky. The lights functioned as a perhaps apt temporary memorial to those who had lost their lives in the World Trade Center towers six months earlier. They are appropriate in the sense that the suffering involved with the terrorist attacks was all about loss and absence—the poignant absence of loved ones and the empty spaces left by the collapse of large, symbolic buildings. The lights were a response to the suffering that attempted to fill one part of the absence that the towers’ fall created. At the same time, the use of lights emphasized an inability to completely fill the space made by the absent buildings. However, it also made clear what absence was most important, and continued to cover over other spaces of suffering and absences that may have needed responses as well. In the spring of 2003, a competition to design a more permanent filling of the Trade Center

site took place, but debate over the site still rages, and the ways of filling absences evolve. Simultaneously, as war continues in Iraq, the FBI has interviewed thousands of Iraqis in the United States who are often grappling with being absent from family and past homes. The only expressions they are usually asked for deal with the Iraqi government and military, while the silence connected to their suffering remains unspoken. How can one write about the value of absence, and point to the absences that are not even noticed?

The space of September 11, 2001, was not just New York City or my classroom. Around Thanksgiving of 2001 I happened to be driving in northern Virginia on Route 27, past the empty space on one side of the Pentagon. I was visiting a friend who works as a nurse in the Washington D.C. area. She commented on the overwhelming need to respond personally in some way, to help out, and noted the vast lines that initially appeared for giving blood. But, no longer in view of the Pentagon's cleaned up gap, we discussed the lack of available responses. Going out and buying something to help the economy, which was the main option being promoted at the time, seemed woefully inadequate, if not inappropriate. We wondered what would be an effective and ethical way to respond to this suffering, especially in a new state of war, when traditional sacrifices of goods or personal desires seemed to be shunned.

Considering my role as a writing instructor, many of my own words and my students' words seemed terribly weak or one-sided in response to suffering around the event of September 11. However, the classroom is a uniquely situated opportunity for thinking about how to respond to suffering. I want to ask broadly how we can write about suffering, particularly in the case of the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center. More particularly, it seems that suffering in this case is all about absence, but not all absences are the same, nor



do all stand out. If we conceive of suffering in this case as related to absence, there has to be some space that a person or thing is absent from. And if we view our responses (written or otherwise) as ways to fill or enter those various absences, the story that is told also enters that space. The absences we see and the writing or stories that enter those absences are highly dependent on location. We can then ask, how do the spaces in which we write about suffering impact our writing and value particular stories over others? What absences do we try to fill and what missing things are covered up, going completely unnoticed, in the ways we respond to great pain? The space of the car on Route 27, the space where the Trade Center towers used to stand, and the space of a 30 by 45 foot classroom on a large university campus create very different valuations of stories. It is crucial to look at specific sites to see how they notice, cover over, and write responses to suffering as absence. Let me begin with a classroom on September 12, 2001, and then expand the discussion to see broader cultural responses to suffering in other spaces and to see the ways stories are exchanged and suffering is written in those sites. How does the value of suffering, and even the definition of suffering shift as we jump from the classroom, to the spaces people inhabit across the United States, to governmental sites of response? Writing about absence hinges on the space an absence is from, and how the writing can show the uses of that absence in new contexts.

The students in my Fall 2001 composition course had a different affective response to suffering than my students four years later did. In this section I have created a first main example of affective mapping. It shows how charting a variety of texts can determine what counts as suffering—and what feelings toward that suffering are at a particular time. It treats suffering not just as a personal experience, although it is, but also as a constructed value that will lead to different feelings in different spaces. This example of affective mapping is, at

the same time, an attempt to respond to my students, and was an instigation for working with my “Rhetoric of Suffering” class to get them to develop critical feeling skills.

My examination of value and absence here, and by here I mean in the space of this paper and the imaginative space around this three-drawer, plywood desk that smells slightly of pipe tobacco and is illuminated to narrow, interrogation-room proportions by a single lamp, will consist of exploring one of these spaces of value. The physical space surrounding a story, along with more intangible but vital aspects of forces influencing a space for exchanging stories, can assist us in exposing how values for stories are created, hidden, and shifted in the geographical-historical space of North America in the months after September 11. Theorist Peter Hitchcock writes about the connection between theoretical, conceptual, and physical spaces, saying, “By re-imagining these spaces postcolonial theorists, for instance, are not playing the theory game (despite the lure of that interpellation) but are blasting the assumption that conceptual space does not have a geographic correlative” (108). We must continually point out the impact that physical and historical spaces have on concepts, and how the evolving factors in a space change the ways stories are valued.

This intense moment of cultural conflict called “September 11,” among its other labels, needs a couple of clarifications. The temporal area I refer to is a shifting moment. The symbol “9/11” signifies a time that includes a specific day, but also shrinks to certain moments on that day, and expands to include related moments since then. It also defines the day as belonging to a particular geographical and cultural space simply by permeating languages with the month listed before the day. The day is linked spatially to America through that simple ordering of written numerals. By cultural conflict in this context I refer to the often non-violent but intensified conflicts among value systems in the U.S. Attorney

General's office, for those connected with fire-fighters, among Arab immigrants to the United States, the Portland Police Department, families of those who died in the World Trade Center towers, the creators of U.S. foreign policy, members of Arab-American media organizations, and many others. I create a small site here to both think about the production of useful responses to the suffering of "9/11" from different temporal distances, and to encourage reflection on how ethical spaces for writing suffering can be created. Writing about absence and writing that simply is absent (perhaps I should say non-writing or missing texts) receive value unevenly in different spaces. These variations in value can help us better comprehend responses to suffering.

### **Missing on September 12**

Our classroom lay almost on one edge of a triangle that could be drawn between the three airplane crash sites in Pennsylvania, New York, and Washington D.C. In a miniscule way, my classroom, surprisingly filled that Wednesday morning with 23 of the 24 students enrolled in the course, provided a temporary site for small histories, where Adam could relate a story about a cousin who barely made it out of the World Trade Center, express the experience of still waiting to find out the location of his aunt, and use both vignettes for the bit of psychological relief that could come from expressing anxiety and making his TV experience real by telling it to others.

He sat to my left in the five rows of students in early 1990's style desks, with the rows crammed closely together in order to make walking space on the outside edge of the room, evoking a sense of structured intimacy. Even the chalkboards that surrounded the third-story class on every wall space (except where the windows opened onto a mid-campus

street) exposed a space of potential expression. You really could just write on the walls in 319 Willard Building, but no one did that morning. Students still raised hands and took turns in that environment, but they occasionally asked questions of one another too. Adam's small fragment of a personal history also traveled on new lines of use and retelling; intentionally or not, he gave that story to others for their own further understanding and breadth of communal experience surrounding the attacks. His story seemed valuable because of the connection he had to people really there in New York City.

In another space Fariba Nawa, a graduate student and the daughter of Afghan exiles, tells her story, which at least found a place to be heard on the Internet. She is a student in a different location and with a different basis for speaking, and I am sure she too was absent from class that Wednesday. Hers is a story of fear and waiting at first, and hints at the kind of space that questioning Arab men in their homes might produce. The controlling power of fear and the identification of ethnicity, in a racially charged moment, link her words to the men to be questioned, but the difference in social status, visa status, and education inscribe a gap into that connection.

I paced back home with my two Muslim friends, locked the door and sat still in shock. I hoped no one on our street knew that Muslims live in the house. Ever since the Taliban seized my birthplace, Afghanistan and Afghans have become the butt of slurs, jokes and ridicule. But stereotyping and verbal attacks are not my fear anymore. The magnitude of this tragedy may provoke violence against Muslim and especially Afghan communities in this country. Few listen to the warnings by the media that Americans should not convict any group without proof. (Nawa)

One can look at this internal worry and only speculate about the unheard stories of the men that make a questioning exchange with government authorities. What Nawa portrays, however, is a sense of fear and desire to hide, to be left alone, and to not be singled out based on ethnicity. That story of worry does not fit into the economy of security that comes with questioning about Arab friends and countries. Nawa names some of her own feelings: at least shock and fear. She describes a set of factors that provide a background for those feelings—the expectations of others on her street, the aggressions of the Taliban in Afghanistan, hurtful jokes she has heard, statements by the media. Certainly this is a very partial list of factors involved in Nawa’s shock and fear. Her feelings are a type of pain that she seemingly does not expect to be valued by most of the dominant American culture. This expectation of de-valuation leads to further silence. The quickly locked door at Nawa’s home serves as a powerful symbol of a need for separation from contact with non-Muslim others. The locked door makes her voice and suffering absent from cultural conversations about suffering, except of course that she did use the Internet and the physical distance it allows in order to speak out. Nawa’s narrative serves as a compelling but minority voice in a map of what suffering is valued in the days after September 11, 2001.

My own reluctance to share with the class much of my personal response to the tragedy the day before came from a desire to allow the students a freer space for their own early expressions, or so I told myself. However, the intensity of emotions and increased volatility of possible reactions to a story of response that I told contributed to my failure to risk releasing total control over the uses of my own story. I gave up the option to deliver a story in that context in return for the personal connection with the class, the potential for me to learn alongside them, and the emotional relief that may have returned to me and others in

attendance. At the same time, the lack of narrative from the authority figure in the classroom site (on a day when the idea of authority as a teacher appeared absurd in the face of the word responsibility) altered the space for and value of stories that were exchanged by about two-thirds of those 23 students.

In the same course several months later, we discussed a selection by Urvashi Butalia about the Partition of India. In it she seeks to provide an opening for the voices of women, children, and members of the lowest caste to be heard. We read a section aloud to help us think about the position and power of a writer in relation to what is almost completely unspoken. Her work is far from September 11, yet without Partition there is no Pakistan, a space for possible help and resistance to tracking terrorists and the war on terrorism. Butalia also worked to move beyond the political histories to begin to understand through many interviews “how families were divided, how friendships endured across borders, how people coped with the trauma, how they rebuilt their lives, what resources, both physical and mental, they drew upon, how their experience of dislocation and trauma shaped their lives” (Butalia 7). In the process, Butalia was questioned herself by some individuals, including Damyanti Sahgal, who wondered why her story could now be valued and published in another continent. The interview process took place in homes, often with a husband or other family members around. The tasks of caring for a guest and dwelling in the same family roles as usual in that domestic place could appear incongruous with questions that seemed to value these basic stories of family hardships. Butalia performs a questioning process that alters the value of stories to a level that even the storytellers have a hard time accepting. The new question can start to de-naturalize the old system of value, making an uncomfortable space until the new questions are assimilated into an adjusted natural system of value.

Adam was one of the 23 students present in class, and I was careful to (subtly) notice attendance that day. Presence in class seemed to be a way to struggle against the pain associated with absence, and it was a day where we noted absences more than usual. The gap left in the New York skyline, not to mention individual lives, associated absence with profound hurt. Questions about the missing class member bounced rapidly around the room as that single absence established personal feelings of lost security for many of us in the room. She also was a faint reminder to consider the other classroom absences, both students on other days and particular voices and conversations that often fail to signify moments of suffering. What disparate absences in other spaces were we missing?

### **Cultural Spaces**

That same day in a very different space, Ali Abunimah, writer and vice-president of the Arab-American Action Network, realized the risk of *not* telling a story. He opened an article by saying, “It is extremely hard to write this morning, and yet I feel I have to. [. . .] Rumors of Arabs being arrested, or Arabic-language materials being found by police are already being made much of. On top of the pain we are all feeling for the continuing tragedy, this fills me with fear” (par. 1). Abunimah related his fragmentary personal history of emails received over the previous 24 hours, notes full of both violence and compassion. The flow of information made his story one that came from a multiplicity of geographical sites and ideological views, put together in a contradictory unit. Abunimah’s list of emails contained many feelings that accompanied the pain and fear he named. The affective responses full of anger and violence that Abunimah read made it both difficult and more necessary to write. A full collection of emails that he received as a journalist and leader of the Arab-American

Action Network is another sample of the basis for an affective map. Those emails could be charted, connected, analyzed, and felt as a map of feelings towards an event (the September 11 terrorist attacks) and a group (Arab Americans). However, they also could work together as a pedagogical tool for showing feelings and responses back to people in order to create a critical moment about those feelings—a moment of potential pause, self-analysis, and even new affective responses.

Abunimah's space had a different form of absence than my classroom. The letters of undeserved hatred and unsolicited support, combined with the rumors that concern him, made poignant the absence of a powerful public space for his voice. Given the letters and stories of violence he had received in the previous few hours, the necessity was to try to exchange a written form of his own experience for increased attention to the security of Arab-Americans. His story established a public space on the Internet where disparate material, from compassionate Canadians to enraged Midwestern mothers, could link together. However, while many of his friends certainly created a supportive network, Abunimah's valuable but limited Internet site emphasized the absence of public listening that the classroom seemed to provide. These individual stories are not just individual. They are forces that help dictate what other stories can and cannot be valued.

The section entitled "A Nation Challenged" from the *New York Times* ran until December 31, 2001, and included numerous stories of those who in some way were victims of the World Trade Center attack. It then gave way to alternate spaces with their own stories (like the Enron scandal and more coverage of the escalating Israeli-Palestinian conflict, to name two). The process of creating that news space started with questions. Reporters had to interview family members of those who died in the World Trade Center, and had to query



locals with potentially “significant” stories of events in mid-September. The reporters’ questions were usually about personal tragedies, human interest issues, heroism, and feelings about the government’s responses. In a surprisingly similar way, I, along with many other teachers, had to begin class on September 12<sup>th</sup> with questions. I asked students to write responses to the day before, asked if they knew people in New York City or near the Pentagon, and asked what they had been able to talk about and still needed to talk about at that point. Ultimately they were the kind of questions that help to demonstrate what sort of suffering is and is not valued.

Butalia’s questions and questions from *New York Times* reporters provide instances to juxtapose with another set of stories based on questions and absences. On November 9, 2001, U.S. Attorney General John Ashcroft created a unique space for the exchange of personal histories through a directive to various anti-terrorism task forces. Approximately 5000 young men of Arab descent, in the U.S. on non-immigrant visas, were listed as people to be questioned. Access to the stories of these men being questioned is more than difficult, but if student Fariba Nawa sat behind a locked door after September 11, what kind of space for exchanging stories would FBI questions about sympathies for terrorists create? Not a safe or open one.

Perhaps it is obvious to point out that the questions and values available in the exchange influence the answers and stories to be told, but it is important to recognize that, whether it is the police and Arab men, or Butalia listening to Indian women, asking questions establishes a conceptual and emotional space. A Michigan man in the U.S. on a visa can only safely deliver information showing no sympathy with the terrorists, because the security value is not focused on his safety. Pressures on a story and the subtly leading question,

which is really the case with all questions, are unavoidable, and that act of questioning itself sets up foci in the value economy. Security, authority, mobility, access, ethnicity, and cooperation, key aspects to a story in this space, are hard to ignore, given the questions. But how does the site of a young Arab man's small apartment in Chicago, whose visa status is much more uncertain than Nawa's, affect his story?

Amnesty International has reported on numerous prisoners, including Ghassan Dahduli, who most likely arrived in Jordan within hours of when Mr. Ashcroft announced his plan. Mr. Dahduli's movements were not identical with his mobility-identity, a fact that is more poignant when one considers his briefly mentioned family.

Ghassan Dahduli, a Palestinian-Jordanian, was detained on September 22 in a Texas jail for a visa violation. He was held for two months in solitary confinement with only one hour of exercise a week in a small, enclosed yard. He was shackled during non-contact visits with his family; denied personal property; and, unlike other inmates, denied access to TV. On November 28, he was deported to Jordan. He had agreed to Voluntary Departure to Jordan, as he was afraid he would be held indefinitely in jail in the USA, and was unable to support his family. Fearing for their future, his Jordanian wife and five children under 16 (all of whom are US citizens) left the USA for Jordan three weeks ago (before Dahduli's deportation). (Amnesty International)

Five children, all U.S. citizens, and an unnamed woman, "his Jordanian wife" who took responsibility for moving her family across the world, changed their geographical space in an act that both showed their mobility and displayed cultural restrictions upon it. The round-tabled office room for deciding whom to take into custody clashes with the space of

questioning, which alters the value of six people's stories, all of whom were not part of that questioning. However, their movements remained free, and fit what many other citizens could do.

Amnesty International (AI) attempted to write about Dahduli's suffering. The organization tried to make his absence from society and from his family known. But there was no writing that could create a structure where he would not feel the need to "freely" absent himself from the country. The lack of media coverage and the unavailability of contacts for him prevented Dahduli from writing powerfully about his own suffering. That suffering included a forced absence from his family, unlike my absent student, whose absence was precisely due to being with her family. AI could directly describe aspects of Mr. Dahduli's situation, but their writing failed to create a structure where his absence could be seen and felt in a communal way. In *Confronting Empire*, theorist Eqbal Ahmad professed, "I argued that armed struggle is less about arms and more about organization, that a successful armed struggle proceeds to out-administer the adversary and not out-fight him. And that the task of out-administration was a task of out-legitimizing the enemy" (29). Amnesty International attempted to out-legitimize the U.S. government, but could not create a situation where Mr. Dahduli's situation counted as significant suffering.

While Amnesty International's efforts to gain improvements in human rights and conditions for people worldwide are noble, and sometimes effective, it is notable that their story about Dahduli's suffering and oppression is also centered on issues of mobility. This refraction of movement issues in the Cooperator's Program addresses Dahduli's daily movement in exercise, physical restraints on his movement, and international movement for multiple people. Mobility is dangerous when acts of terror happen via modes of

transportation. Mobility becomes a more precious commodity and a way to cause or prevent suffering. Stopping the movement of suspected terrorists is supposed to make movement safer for everyone else. As mobility is understood as a way to cause and prevent suffering from attacks (through hijackings and halting terrorists), restricting mobility can be a cause and prevention of other types of suffering (the pain of not joining one's family and the alleviation of some fear for other travelers). Each of these mobility struggles deserves relief attention on its own, but the value economy Amnesty International adds to here is a reflection of the system that relates security issues to cooperation (defined as working with authorities), and both to freedom as mobility. Amnesty certainly adjusts some of those values, valuing mobility greatly in relation to these particular forms of security and cooperation, but Dahduli's story can still only be of worth, even in opposition to the dominance of a law enforcement agencies picture of future spaces, in terms similar to those created and reflected in the Cooperator's Program.

Even though Dahduli's story offers a multitude of directions for use by others, his suffering is officially non-existent for the November, 2001 economy. Any violation of visa regulations under a law enforcement economy that controls movement to reduce risk negates personal pain. No matter what Ghassan Dahduli's attitude and actions were towards the United States, the clarity of law naturalizes a value for security. At the same time, Dahduli's status outside the law, as a non-citizen, ironically puts him in a position of needing to leave of his own volition, ultimately erasing his story in relation to U.S. authorities.

Dahduli's aforementioned suffering in prison can appear small in comparison with the loss of life in September 11 in New York, and perhaps large in comparison to others without direct connections to people in the Pentagon or World Trade Center towers. The

importance of suffering, and perhaps necessarily its converse, joy, may ultimately prove to be an inescapable factor in all stories we tell. Some stories of suffering or near loss found room on the internet, as do many stories, but not those told by the men sought in the Cooperator's Program.

The relative ease of access to spaces on the web for U.S. citizens makes it a major site for collecting histories that include expressions of pain or loss. One of many websites collecting stories about people's experiences on September 11 is <http://mystory.inter.net/>. It has a collection of 218 individual narratives, including one about Tony and Amanda that focuses on the personal shock of the attack and the subsequent frenzied attempts to communicate with as many family and friends as possible. "Where is she? Was the bookstore where she works evacuated? Is she safe? Does she know I am safe? Finally, one of the buddies I am with gets through to her pager via his text pager" (mystory 1). These are the questions Tony mentions in his submission to the site's readers. The site shows a picture of the Tony and Amanda together at a restaurant, eventually viewing responses from both of them in a catharsis-focused narrative. The Web site allows one to read the stories in order, search for a particular story, or jump randomly, never leaving behind the September 11 banner at the top of each page. The space requires a certain amount of Internet capability for anyone to find it and submit a story to it, implicitly basing the opportunity to be heard on a certain level of education that lets one use a computer and talk about suffering. The structure for writing about absence in a communal manner requires both a framework of sympathy and a framework of html. People can write about their own loss and suffering and gain the sensation of being heard and valued if they have access.

The moving and agonizing photograph of a tearful woman leaps out of *Time* magazine's commemorative edition for 2001 and epitomizes what could be valued as suffering. The photo shows a woman preparing to post papers with a man's image on a wall; the caption reads, "Hoping: A New Yorker seeks her fiancé" (33). Again suffering involves a search for one who is missing. Very individual anguish over the loss or possible loss of another person, specifically a close friend or family member who was apparently innocent in relation to the violence and who had a hopeful future in front of him, stands out as a real loss. And it is. The fact that the picture reflects an engaged couple, with a literal promise for a not-yet-fulfilled future, shows a particular value for what we could simply call guaranteed potential in this exchange economy.

The first word of the caption, "Hoping," presents another dominant feeling for that moment. The experience of hope, or rather the need for hope, is both what the woman with the posting is portrayed as feeling and is what *Time* pushes to its readers. Hope to regain something missing is the key. Can the culture or country regain a sense of safety that supposedly existed before September 11, 2001? Suffering here is not only missing a loved one, but missing a feeling of comfort and safety (which may or may not have reflected measurable modes of comfort and safety—which are based on feelings anyway). Tony and Amanda's feelings here may not differ that much from Ali Abunimah's, as each, for different reasons, might hope for a seemingly past feeling of relative safety, and a key form of suffering is to not have that feeling. Again, of course, I do not want to imply that searching for a missing loved one does not involve "real" and even extreme suffering. I cannot escape these same cultural values that feel so strong that I have trouble calling them cultural. What culture would not agree? In fact, that value of innocent loved ones with potential was

affirmed in a general way through the expressions of condolence from around the world. International writing about suffering requires saying not only that an absence cannot be filled, but also that it is recognized and that the absence itself is felt elsewhere. The construct of terrorism creates a translatable language for sharing in suffering. Writing suffering by recognizing absences, seeing the unseen, and pointing to the unsayable contrasts with the case of Ghassan Dahduli, whose absence was his almost alone.

Looking at the stories that are in some way connected to the September 11 attacks, we can also work a little bit in reverse from Butalia's process of asking how to create new spaces for questions. Instead we can ask what this specific space can tell us about the value of different stories, at least in November of 2001, and also how supposedly fixed exchanges shift when the space changes.

The name of a Learning Channel TV show, *Trading Spaces*, popular among some interior-design-interested demographic groups in the United States, is a clear metaphor for changes in value by changing a space. *Trading Spaces* allows two neighbors to re-do one room in each other's house, with the help of a few professionals and on a limited budget. The room (for better, and often for worse) can be utterly transformed, creating new flows with adjoining portions of the house, but often it simply hides or shifts older characteristics of the room, whether that is an awkwardly located fireplace or a kitchen counter sticking out at a unique angle. The neighbors and designers certainly produce real change, but it is never utterly new. It always involves a shift in part of the space as it aligns with other aspects of the room, whether those characteristics are the green walls, the 1960's chandelier, or a very modern red sofa. As locations for value change, or as value-producers trade spaces, the

values by which stories can be heard take part in a shift analogous to the world of room exchanges.

Value economies are created through specific techniques that can permeate different institutions similarly, but that allow for shifts in the value economy, as another post-September 11 program can help show us. The new USA Freedom Corps program asks Americans to spend the equivalent of two years of their lives doing volunteer work. The program defines volunteer activity in a slightly new way, which includes working with community organizations, serving those who do not have their basic needs met overseas, and working to protect the U.S. from terrorism. The program uses old and tested strategies of evoking guilt, promoting togetherness, and appealing to a desire to help others as ways to inspire volunteer work, and ties it all together under the rubric of freedom. Freedom as a general concept is joined to service in a way that moves beyond service in the armed forces or other organizations designed around the term freedom. To step back to late November of 2001 again, I had the first of several conversations with people about the desire or even need to be helping or serving in some way. In an odd mental way, not serving functioned as a restriction on freedom, or at least on the pursuit of happiness.

The connection between freedom as a central societal value based on service to others in a general sense, applicable to all citizens and residents of the U.S., reached an emotional plateau on March 11, 2002, the six-month anniversary of the terrorist attacks. CBS aired a documentary put together by two French brothers, Jules and Gedeon Naudet, with the help of James Hanlon, a New York firefighter and friend of theirs. The material they were taping, while originally trying to make a story about how a new firefighter “becomes a man,” changed drastically when they found themselves taping many of the events of September 11,



2001, while following downtown New York City firemen into and around the World Trade Center towers. The brothers were separated for most of the day, struggling to document events as their only way to help, while constantly worrying about each other and living through the turmoil of being overwhelmed by collapsing towers. Jules Naudet performed his service of leaving the camera running for us, even while a fire chief's tackle of him gains symbolic status as the force necessary for security. Tackling the body of the unenlightened foreigner (who is going where he shouldn't in this emergency scene) is then exalted as an act of service. And in this instance, it may have saved a life.

Because the Naudet brothers found a way to network their own story along with the societal conflict through extensive editing, what once was the story of Tony, a new firefighter, became (at least partially) Tony's story of 9/11, culminating in his dust-covered return to the firehouse, the last man back. The personal histories of Tony and the Naudet brothers were adapted and linked to cultural commodities that were already highly valued, and because their story was intertwined from the beginning with culturally valued heroic firefighters, the impact of their documentary intensified and could be used as a way to memorialize the losses on September 11 for a multitude of viewers. The brothers from France, included in the continual hugs and tears at the firehouse on the evening of September 11, became part of the serving team. In doing their own film work, they came across a sea and helped freedom by the service they could offer. Or so goes the imagery. When freedom is connected to service, and telling heroic stories about 9/11 is a form of service, then the Naudet brothers' film appears as an act for freedom. Their filmic version of representing suffering allowed "outsiders" to speak powerfully to many through their own emotional connections to New York's Fire Department, in their own potential loss of each other, and by

their ability to create and enter an absence in the media coverage. The documentary camera covers the aftermath of attack on the World Trade Center towers by following firefighters through downtown New York City and even into the lobby of a World Trade Center building. The Naudet's film then documents the impatient waiting for each firefighter from their station to return safely to the station.

In the midst of the Naudet brothers' documentary, there were a couple of public service announcements. In the first one, Tom Ridge, Director of Homeland Security, talked about the safety and security of the nation, and tied them directly to the work that firefighters, police officers, emergency medical technicians, and other health workers do (Ridge). Work that had previously been seen as service-oriented, but not central to freedom, again was linked to the freedom of the country by opposing firefighters to terrorists (not just to fires). A story about service is now a story about preserving freedom, which maybe it ought to be; but spaces open and spaces close. Service is freedom, which becomes safety and security, which becomes a "return to normalcy," and normal acts are reciprocally a way to stabilize and serve the country. While the Naudet film gives a marvelous moment of allowing "normal" stories to be of value, if not heroic, normal is still what happened in the vast before. Stories about intensified normal values, like Jules and Gedeon Naudet's closer relationship as brothers, can have a space to be valued.

Their documentary also plays with absence in terms of suspense, while they wait for each firefighter to return to the station on September 11. That suspense was very real for many, and it is a happy ending in this case with everyone returning. That happy ending fills the absence, avoiding suffering that leaves larger parts of absences empty. It points to other

endings through pictures of many who died that day, but hides some of the sense of loss that never is filled.

That which is seen as abnormal—the Sikh man wearing an eminently noticeable turban—gets shot with bullets, and not on film. Apparently an angry person mistook the Sikh man for a follower of Islam, and took out his anger on this person mistakenly associated (even if he had been a Muslim) with the September 11 terrorists. The victim had been working behind a counter, and his story spurred some efforts to discourage racial violence against those who looked Arab. The Sikh man's story has no room to be valued in a moment that values suffering based on looking for missing loved ones in an ethnically charged environment; and yet it does, as President Bush shortly after the attacks called for restraint in anger and violence towards those who look different. Different from what was not asked. The Sikh man's story, which he could no longer tell, does influence what counts as normal. The story is a step towards identifying patriots by their words, emotions, and flag displays instead of skin color or assumed cultural background—which brings the circle back to questioning young men based on their ethnicity in Ashcroft's program. Suffering as a documentary on TV was powerful and brought real tears, but it also skates over the long-term emptiness in many living rooms, or behind the counter in the Sikh man's story. That which is no longer intense disappears. How can we also create spaces in our writing that hold the steady, throbbing pain that an Arab man thinking about being questioned might feel in his own absences from family, a distant home, and U.S. expectations?

## Unanswered Questions

The Responsible Cooperator's Program initiated a new form of relationship and new absences between the U.S. government and many young Arab men living in the United States. The process involved an exchange of information from those young men, often including information about their personal histories, viewpoints, and knowledge of others, in return for the potential to have an improved visa status and the fast-track to permanent residency or citizenship. It also points out and hides other sufferings in Fall 2001. The program has been adjusted and re-administered since March of 2003 with Iraqis, causing new fears for some. The *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* reports, "Because the agents come unannounced in the daytime, husbands usually aren't home, leaving agents to question frightened wives who may have limited English skills and misunderstand questions" (Iwasaki), according to Yahya Al-Garib, an advocate for the Iraqi community in Seattle. The questions are direct; usually "Agents are asking immigrants if they know any terrorist groups, anyone who supports terrorists or anyone who works for Saddam Hussein, said Al-Garib, who met with 60 worried Iraqis last weekend" (Iwasaki). The recent questionings, often with husbands absent, add another layer to the sufferings that cannot be spoken.

The questions asked by Ashcroft's office's directive help us begin to understand the kind of values emphasized within that space of exchange, while they also create particular mental and emotional characteristics for the environment. According to the Detroit Free Press and the Arab-American Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC), the questions included asking for information about why the men are in the United States, where else they have traveled, and why they have gone to those places. Along with this line of questioning, there are very terrorism-specific questions, including that "the man will be asked how he felt when

he heard about the Sept. 11 attacks and whether he noticed anybody who acted in a surprising or inappropriate manner. He'll be asked whether he knows anyone who is sympathetic to the hijackers or other terrorists, and 'whether he shares those sympathies to any degree'" (Action Alert). The memo also features questions about "selling or supplying others with false identification documents," "knowledge of anyone who is advocating 'jihad' or urging others to overthrow the government or to attack Americans, either under the guise of religion or otherwise," and about "access to guns or to any explosives or harmful chemical compounds, or [anyone who] has any training or experience in the development or use of such weapons" (DAG 5). The questions make no pretense about either the main topic (terrorist attacks) or who has the authority to create values with questions (the Department of Justice). The gaps between an announcement and questions in the Department of Justice conference room and terrorism interrogations in a young man's small apartment still manage to disappear at times in the guise of people simply asking an open question or two with free responses, like seat neighbors on an airplane. What could be more selflessly caring than asking for a stranger's story?

The Deputy Attorney General's memo on the questioning process noted that to avoid implying that someone was being taken into custody, the interviews should usually be conducted somewhere other than the police station (Guidelines 1). That is certainly a thoughtful move, but where has the pristine conference room gone? What changes in the story, its value, and the mental environment if the officer is placed in the home of a person being questioned? A space of security, sitting in one's own wooden chair, might not feel that way any longer. The Department of Justice conference room removes outside observers from the conflict between two other inside spaces, where the home is of value to allow more

information to be elicited, and the pressures of questioning are not as tame as in a conference room where the Attorney General, the person being questioned, is in full control.

John Ashcroft's announcement—in a place physically signifying authority and with automatic access to print, radio, and television media—also implied linkages to other groups. This act of creating a space for valuing particular stories required connections with the INS, FBI, and a multitude of police departments. As a network of institutions central to regulating law enforcement and movement within and on the borders of the United States, a questioning process centered on the law and movement, but moving beyond those areas came into being. The transcript of Ashcroft's announcement of the Responsible Cooperator's Program began as follows:

The title of this initiative is the Responsible Cooperators Program. Under this new initiative, the Department of Justice will provide immigration benefits to non-citizens who furnish information to help us apprehend terrorists or to stop terrorist attacks. We are asking all non-U.S. citizens who are present in the United States or who seek to enter our country to come forward to the FBI with any valuable information they have to aid in the war on terrorism.

In return for this information, the Department of Justice will assist nonresident aliens in obtaining what are called S visas, which are available when the information provided is critical and reliable and the person is placed in danger as a result of sharing that information. S visa holders may remain in the United States for up to three years, and during that period visa holders may apply to become permanent residents and ultimately to become United States citizens. (Ashcroft)

Ashcroft's announcement emphasizes safety and security, both for the United States and for those who get interviewed. Physical safety takes precedence as a value, as does cooperation. Cooperation's definition is adjusted by the law enforcement network as working with the government, both in terms of the information given here, and in cases like patience with removing shoes and other new security requirements at airports. The new interchangeability of "police officer" with "hero," combined with security concerns, gives extra legitimacy to an announcement about preventative enforcement work, but that force is tempered by the concern about personal freedoms and racial profiling that had time to grow between mid-September and late November. In other words, the Arab man's story writes into American suffering by possibly alleviating future losses and perhaps providing information for arrests that respond to the terrorist attacks as well. Through this writing, the Arab man can avoid being removed from the country, an absence that hides the ways he already is absent from political processes.

Gayatri Spivak analyzes economic attempts to control risk and to enforce security by, in effect, reducing the futurity of transactions, making them closer to instantaneous. She defines this move, saying "The epistemic violence of imperialism as crisis-management can still operate" (171-2). Dealing with crisis gives a backdrop to creating new spaces of exchange, but as is the case with the Cooperator's Program, they can be highly controlled markets, to the point of informational violence in the process of examining the aspects of the future that appear most valuable or most dangerous. Confining Dahduli was a crisis response that emphasized future spaces to the point of hiding his physical environment, which itself overcame the geographical distance and risk-filled move to Jordan.

Even before Ashcroft made his announcement publicly initiating the program, a memo went out from his office about the questioning procedures. Section one of the memo, covering the “Manner of Conducting Interviews,” deserves to be quoted at length:

Since the persons to be interviewed are not suspected of involvement in criminal activity, the interviews will be conducted on a consensual basis, and every interview subject ("individual") will be free to decline to answer questions. In approaching the individual, you should announce your name, title and law enforcement agency, clearly explain the purpose of the interview, and ask permission to speak with the individual. As these interviews will not be "custodial interrogations," there is no need to seek a waiver of Miranda rights.

Unless the individual prefers to conduct the interview away from his home, workplace or neighborhood, you should ordinarily not ask him to accompany you to the police station or the field office. A number of these individuals may have difficulty with the English language and little understanding of our criminal justice system, and we want them and the other members of their communities clearly to understand that they are not being taken into custody and that the interviews are being pursued on a consensual basis.

You should feel free to use all appropriate means of encouraging an individual to cooperate, including reference to any reward money that is being offered for information about terrorists. However, you should be careful about mentioning an individual's potential criminal exposure. You should raise the



topic of the individual's possible prosecution only if you have both a solid factual basis for concluding that the individual has violated a criminal statute and clear authority to enforce that statute. In the absence of one or the other of these preconditions, you should avoid mentioning the individual's potential criminal exposure.

While the primary purpose of these interviews is not to ascertain the legality of the individuals' immigration status, the federal responsibility to enforce the immigration laws, as exercised by the Immigration and Naturalization Service ("INS"), is an important one. Therefore, if you suspect that a particular individual may be in violation of the federal immigration laws, you should call the INS representative on your Anti-Terrorism Task Force or the INS officials at the closest Law Enforcement Support Center. Those officials will advise you whether the individual is in violation of the immigration laws and whether he should be detained.

You should also be careful not to inquire into an individual's religious beliefs and practices. It is appropriate to ask whether the individual has witnessed or heard any persons advocating the use of violence or terrorism. However, it is not appropriate to question or otherwise challenge the validity of religious beliefs or practices.

You should keep in mind that a large number of these individuals will have a limited capability to communicate in the English language. While it might be possible to conduct adequate interviews with such persons, through

English-speaking companions or otherwise, there might be some whom you would rather interview with an interpreter.

You are free to utilize any interpreting services that are available to your agency. The United States Attorney should also inquire into the availability in their districts of interpreters in the relevant languages.

Finally, you should be aware that a number of the individuals on the list might be attending schools on student visas. Please make sure to follow all protocols regarding coordination with campus security forces whenever you seek to interview individuals who reside on college campuses. (Guidelines 1)

The memo acknowledges that the interviews must be consensual, yet does not address the issues of fear and control that can make many possible interviewees feel compelled to do the interviews or compelled to avoid them—thus arousing suspicion. Officers are encouraged to pay attention to possible immigration violations throughout the interviews—making them potentially dangerous situations for some interviewees. The stories of suffering that the people being interviewed might have are not the concern. The focus is on halting future terrorist attacks (mostly by Arab men against the United States). Language is also central to the memo. The Attorney General’s Office is rightly concerned about questions of communication and translation in the interviews, but one implication is that suffering happens in English, while terrorism happens in other languages.

The memo gave advice about working with translation issues and about avoiding accidental culturally-related insults. However, the memo also referred to the possibility of detaining or even charging some men who came forward. Page two of the memo states, “if you suspect that a particular individual may be in violation of the federal immigration laws

you should call the INS representative on your Anti-Terrorism Task Force. [. . .] Those individuals will advise you whether the individual is in violation of the immigration laws and whether he should be detained” (Guidelines 2). At this point, issues of movement take precedence, and whoever has control of the movements of terrorists, potential immigrants, and the men who came forward for the interviews can push certain spaces to the forefront. The value economy emphasizes having control over access to physical locations and the identity status needed to be in particular spaces (i.e., citizen, refugee, immigrant, student, etc.). The valuation of my story in one place, noted by particular documents, permissions, or identification numbers that I receive, allows my movement to other spaces. Identity categories map onto official mobility, as spaces for questioning force movements that often oppose that theoretical mobility, when someone feels the need to hide, for example.

Now we can say that the virtual space the Responsible Cooperator’s Program created an economy of value for stories that emphasizes specific definitions for value terms, eliminating other possibilities. I can point at a few of them, supposedly to allow at least some critique of them, yet they are all values that I, at one level, would want to remain for stories I personally tell. The space and economy of value for fragmentary personal histories permeating the Responsible Cooperator’s Program exalts several things. It privileges U.S. security in relationship to specific forms of suffering and loss; it privileges cooperation in terms of upward, hierarchical relationships; and it privileges freedom as control of mobility. The young Arab man who is happy to speak to police officers in Michigan and perhaps help prevent future attacks (along with gaining new papers to give him more mobility) might still wonder why his own privacy and his uncle suffering in poverty are not freedom and security

issues. It is not just stories, but values themselves that are silenced, and this silencing is part of allowing other texts, even my own, to speak.

As I return to security, perhaps the key value here, you have to remember that real fear kept thousands from flying in September and October of 2001, and that fear was based on horrific deaths after security breakdowns. The security concept functions as a signifier for physical safety for U.S. citizens, with one major oblique counterpoint: the concept and the actual experience of suffering. The questioning process initiated by Attorney General Ashcroft emphasizes security against particular and limited forms of suffering. Dominant suffering forms allow other spaces of hurt to be relegated smoothly to subordinate positions. In the exchange of stories in that same November of 2001, particular forms of suffering slipped out of the U.S. security-based value needed in stories of pain. Stories like Ghassan Dahduli's cannot match the right kind of suffering, even with their many uses, including my attempt to make a point about spaces for valuing personal histories.

The aforementioned memo from Ashcroft's office suggested that questioners should "feel free to use all appropriate means of encouraging individuals to cooperate, including reference to any reward money that is being offered for information about terrorists. However, you should be careful about mentioning an individual's potential criminal exposure" (DAG 2). The creation of this space for exchange and the value of these men's stories took a twist when the police department in Portland, Oregon, refused to cooperate, citing state laws against questioning based on political and religious beliefs and targeting individuals for visa issues. Here it is actually the silence of stories, and the conflict of fighting against a space of exchange that enters the web of values. The continued silence of approximately 200 men in the Portland area is exchanged for an opportunity to assert the

primacy of state laws and to make a statement against certain types of profiling. The value of personal securities is at stake, but ironically, the stories of these men who are not brought in for questioning still have no site to be heard. It is only their silence that now speaks more loudly. Oregon's example of dissent also shows the possibility for unexpected directions of exchange for stories, especially when they enter public spaces where a multiplicity of subjects can work on them. Silence is bestowed as a gift from societal leaders to "the oppressed."

The exclusive nature of a space involving FBI questioning also silences stories as far as the public is concerned, giving a perhaps dangerous exclusivity to the control over those histories. This dominant silence hides the stories of all the men listed, whether they were interviewed or not. Either the story was taken in and walled off from others in notebooks and recorders the police officers brought, or the men found the need to disappear, to not be heard. The interviews with the men are not accessible to their friends, to me, or to nearly anyone else. While the stories were told at one point, any continuation for them has been silenced, and the official space for those stories works to limit their exposure in other economies of value. The battle between this form of silencing and the earlier and rights-preserving silencing from the Portland police moved to a national media space, obscuring the fact of the continual past and future silences for these men because of their societal position. The space of conflict was nationalized geographically, and put into official spaces, limiting the possibility of seeing the local issue of particular men as examples of a global issue for visa holders. This is not necessarily to glorify the local or global over national spaces, but to suggest that by making the issue one between Portland, Oregon and Washington, D.C., the spatial issues between NW 23<sup>rd</sup> St. and Killingsworth Avenue disappear.

The volitional or accidental silence of the men who chose not come forward, who refused to answer questions, who altered their stories beyond any connection with truth, or who simply did not hear about the program, changes the locus of the silencing. The various men's resistant, or simply unaware, lack of storytelling suggests that there really was another option, but the only other option was someone else's silence. That someone else, the officer who came by and knocked, does not own the silencing; it steps back to the system behind the questioner, a space that takes security as a key value. Security is from the sole control of stories and movement, so that guesses about the government's movement based on stories become impossible to make.

These three general silences are both created and hidden. In March, the Attorney General's Office expanded its list of men to question and asked for help in locating those who had not yet heard about the program. Phrasing that assumes the silent ones have not heard about the opportunity to speak starts to whittle away the category of silence for those who choose not to speak. Similarly, the act of supporting a state law against ethnic or religious profiling in Oregon covers over the public silence of the men on the questioning list. Their rights are promoted and they will be guaranteed to remain hidden. Even my brief exploration of the silence of this group as Other can begin to erode the potential need for stories to be heard on their own terms.

For the unknown men not questioned in Portland whose stories cannot be heard, the value of that specific silence in the space of the Responsible Cooperators Program suggests that security values are usually first and foremost for U.S. citizens, who have a more guaranteed future in the physical space of the United States. It also exposes the fact that the value conflict is not just between personal liberties and security as is regularly trumpeted, but

also between opposing parties on the status of non-citizens, and between officially recognized bodies for control of story mobility, whether that body is the Department of Justice, a police department, or those with U.S. citizenship.

As with my own reluctance to speak in my classroom on September 12, many people choose or fail to speak out. Those who would write in response to suffering often need time to gestate, to gain distance, and to reflect. Yet this too is a luxury. The academic space that enables me to write this essay as part of my own way to deal with absence can slow response. The patience of waiting to respond creates room for more critique or analytic work, but often values that distance at the expense of immediate responses, which may be no less useful. Not speaking in an academic setting can have consequences, but it does not make the evening news like the missing interviews in Portland. Silence without pressure to speak is a space of safety for one's self, which elides the danger of absence and silence for others.

In the Responsible Cooperator's Program, speaking becomes a form of freedom-as-service. It is a shift in the definition of freedom. Freedom of mobility and freedom as service work differently. Freedom's association with service assists in reconciling the discrepancy between mobility and all the limitations that came with cooperation and security values. Even the visual space of a documentary-break on TV, in a show without commercials, accentuates the space for the announcement over the daily business of advertising, which hides other spaces of its own.

The Freedom Corps Program, initiated by President Bush, not only continues the relationship between service and freedom, but also moves to a slightly new value economy and shows how that change hides other values. The program, initiated in 2002, encourages volunteerism by U.S. residents. Much of that volunteer work can be done in the United

States, and the Freedom Corps Program attempts to connect people with specific service opportunities. The name says “Freedom,” and the action is community service. In the Freedom Corps Program we have security from suffering connected to freedom, a freedom that is a type of cooperation initiated by political forces. The values of security, cooperation, and futurity are still central, but their relationships with freedom as a value are reconciled to some extent when freedom-value refers to service more than mobility. This is not to say that mobility no longer matters or that Amnesty International will start critiquing the lack of social work in prisoners’ lives. Mobility is simply assumed in the service that focuses on who moves in and out of the country, in the service that involves actually traveling overseas, and in the ability to shift between any number of community institutions to help out. One value is subsumed into the background of a story-economy as new values reconcile the contradictions and paradoxes within that economy. Service is easier to reconcile with cooperating with the government and security issues than mobility is. Freedom as service helped move the freedom as mobility verses security and risk value-dilemma. The contradictions within economies of value can be the key to creating new spaces, but mobility and the contradiction do not simply disappear. Mobility is transferred to those serving, and mobility concerns start to fade in regards to those not participating in normal service. Yet freedom as service does not end the changes in value-terms. The implicit contradiction between almost requiring work, as a servant no less, and the self-determinacy usually equated with freedom will enable new permutations of the space of values. With service locations central in that development, perhaps the geographic site of working with “the poor” in a “foreign” place, or the environment of a suburban community center, will allow hopeful new spaces for value economies.



Looking back at the central values and processes of establishing value for the Responsible Cooperator's Program, we can note that I have not actually told the story of a single man who was questioned. This gap or lack endangers the legitimacy of my whole analysis in one sense, but it also allows the idea of an unvalued story or a silence to assert itself. Silence is neither entirely empty nor singular. The Cooperator's Program created the framework for multiple forms of silence, and structured space so that the absence of Arab informants and information about terrorist strategies is the absence we see. A lack of stories and attendance can signal resistance, or simply fear, or even the lack of access to media and communication that advertised the program. Yet it also is suffering through the lack of societal support. The absence of the broader community's recognition of their difficult position focuses on their difference from other residents of the United States. It serves to even cover over loss that they might feel from the terrorist attacks, just like the students in my classroom on September 12.

### **Hiding Absence**

Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri argue in *Empire* that "The production of subjectivity in imperial society tends not to be limited to any specific places. One is always still in the family, always still in school, always still in prison, and so forth" (197). It is the connection of all these places, the notion that one is always part of all of them, that makes affective mapping an important strategy. Suffering is not something different at school, versus at work, versus in the family; it is defined and structured through the impact of all these places on someone's feelings. This does not make places irrelevant; rather, the way one chooses and connects places as they create affective responses becomes vital.

Writing suffering is highly dependent on the space one is in. Writing about pain is also not a matter of connecting everyone to a universal sense of loss, nor is it simply about finding ways to fill up the space of loss. Instead, writing about suffering involves recontextualizing absences so that they will have direct uses for other specific groups. “Use” here is not in the sense of taking advantage of, but use in the sense of something of value and workable. One also must write to show new absences, and to show how certain absences have been hidden, and in doing so, attempt to create structures of things that are directly sayable. Speaking into someone else’s pain has a role, but often is empty itself, such as when condolences are given for the loss of a loved one. The suffering really is unspeakable. But what around that can be said to show the value and profundity of that suffering? The goal is perhaps to find ways of writing around suffering that allow it to be seen and valued, rather than hidden.

Whatever story one tells also involves some level of *cooperation*. In a space where cooperation is defined hierarchically rather than horizontally or in other ways (especially since horizontal networking seems to usually be a dominant cooperative form at this point), the risk of giving up control over one’s own story intensifies. That risk in a time of conflict implies at least two issues. First, there has to be some sort of power to give up. In this case, that means there must be at least a minimal space for the story to be heard and exchanged in order for a decision about the risk of speaking to occur. Second, I have been speaking about stories as some sort of transferable object or as a commodity. Yet in these exchanges, the story is not completely lost. Abunimah, whose initial published reaction to the September 11 attacks we hear at the beginning of this piece, still retains his own fragmentary history and potential changes to his own ideas about September 11, just as my student Adam can re-use

and re-tell his reactions to hearing from and about his cousin in the Trade Center towers.

When cooperation implies an upward movement, both in terms of who gets to value and use the story and in terms of the status gained in return for information, then the links for where stories are told become slightly reconfigured. The memo from Ashcroft's office encouraged officers to build semi-permanent links with the men who came in, formalizing lines of communication that tend to run vertically through the power stratification of society, and beginning to limit horizontal connections when the story is about security and cooperation itself is hidden behind laws and walls.

In *Country of My Skull*, an intense look at the role of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa, journalist and poet Antjie Krog spotlights the importance and precision of how Archbishop Desmond Tutu questioned Winnie Madikizela-Mandela. She points out in a conversation with another journalist that by focusing on Madikizela-Mandela's honor and her code of conduct, Tutu allowed her to admit to wrongdoing and maintain her honor, setting a certain cooperation standard. Through this, "A space was created for the first time for both her and her followers to admit in an honorable way that things went wrong. Dare one ask for more?" (Krog 340). The Truth and Reconciliation Commission stands out as a highly politicized instance of a new site for stories to be exchanged. For perpetrators of violence it was very literally an exchange of the truth about violence, suffering, and the ends people met for the possibility of amnesty. Turning themselves in was a very literal risk to their own freedom. Those designated as victims were also given a place for their stories to be exchanged in a market that valued, or at least tried to value, reconciliation and the possibility of peaceful future relations above all else. Tutu's questioning process within this space helps demonstrate the importance of reconciliation in

that context, where one portrayed as a criminal was even allowed to maintain honor and was called beloved, in order to make a space within the space of the commission for Madikizela's followers and their victims to perhaps dwell in the same area again. To cooperate is to risk, and the men who spoke to police questioners are not so far removed from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and its possible amnesty, but the force of a public sphere has disappeared in the November, 2001 version.

Not only does this historical space for stories show the creative power of questioning, but it exemplifies the risk factor of cooperation. Cooperation with the TR Commission worked less hierarchically than in the Responsible Cooperators Program, but the Commission still had a major form of authority. I hesitate to equate the World Trade Center attacks with decade long struggles like those in South Africa or surrounding the Partition of India and Pakistan, but just as the events in those lands are not simply the moments creating or ending apartheid, nor the second that made Partition official, September 11 is not a single morning. Those decade-long struggles can suggest that the complexity of cooperation and risk involves more than reporting to authorities.

Absence as suffering is always structured. Rhetoricians must understand the conditions that make absences visible, and then think about how to create those conditions through our own writing. Only as it is used in a communal way does absence gain value as suffering. How can one write suffering in a way that shows the structured use of suffering for communal value? If absences must become useful to others in a particular space to gain value in society, we must look for ways to recontextualize stories of loss, or to point to the unspeakable in new settings that show a broader use. Well before the "present" World Trade Center attack, but with reference to prior moments of crisis around JFK's assassination and

economic battles, cultural theorist Evan Watkins talks about the role of information as a commodity and claims, “Information *is* information only if and when some conditions of use are made conceptually visible. Unlike other commodities, the very identity of information depends on conceptualizations of use” (104). A person necessarily must be able to see how information, or some form of a partial personal history in our case, can be used before that information takes a position of some value in a space of exchange. I want to suggest that the story is not valued simply because of the use-identity the receiver has for the story either, but for the spectrum of foreseeable potential use values for a range of people who may receive the story. Put another way, the story an Arab man tells to the police takes its material, verbal form based on questioning that helps direct it to a particular form and use that the Department of Justice establishes. That line is cooperation. Yet each decision the Department of Justice makes about flight security and personal mobility functions as a response to the hidden, partial, and adjusted stories these men give. As they timidly or boldly come forth with their stories, these immigrants give shape to the previous emptiness of a department in the U.S. government. I could say that they shape the space of activity and values a thousand miles away in Washington D.C. through an explanation of only one way that false ID papers and visas are produced.

Incongruencies appear between the perceived exchanges in different physical spaces in this security and cooperation economy. In Ashcroft’s announcement, “the Department of Justice will assist nonresident aliens in obtaining what are called S visas, which are available when the information provided is critical and reliable and the person is placed in danger as a result of sharing that information” (Ashcroft 1). In the conference room connoting law enforcement, potentially heroic witnesses can be pictured, exchanging their personal safety

for the good of the country and their own visa status. The safety risk for informants, easily handled by such a powerful and official institution with security guards for its own space, masks the alternate risk of getting in trouble for a lapsed visa for some of the men. The latter risk is much clearer when a police officer comes to your workplace and no TV cameras are recording it. Incongruent values and risks in story exchanges occur when the space moves. In a sense, an official economy of exchange falsifies (without lying) the perceived risks and values, because no exchanges occur in the space and conditions where an official declares values.

Writing can try to present suffering directly, as in the TV documentary. It can also focus on actions to avoid the pain of absence, as in the Responsible Cooperator's Program. But because this writing all takes place in spaces where many stories are de-valued or ignored, one must think about how to write in ways that establishes structures that create poignant absences. In a terrible way, the terrorist attacks created a powerful symbolic absence, perhaps even related to other suffering. How can our writing and our classrooms speak powerfully in ways that allow others to recognize absences and the unspeakable?

Writing about suffering as absence can involve attempting to fill that empty space, but should more look at how to move that empty space to new settings, so others can see its use and the writer herself can experience it anew. Writing about suffering also must work to show the other absences that are covered by the obvious suffering in a space. In the classroom, once time passes, new absences become obvious in the space where all that was once noticed was a missing student.

## **Time's Presence**

Time matters for the affective map itself. The notion of affective mapping is ideally at least four-dimensional. The connections to affective responses shift spatially as time passes, and connections to events that impact affect reach backward (and potentially forward with the imagination) in time. Six months after September 11, 2001, I could give a new class two very disparate readings about the causes of the September 11 attacks, and ask for, among other things, a personal response to the analyses given in those two articles. Creating a space or a market for stories to be valued in moments of exchange seemingly necessarily includes some form of questioning process. The simple act of asking another individual a question about their personal history initiates a setting where they can work to develop a story to give you in exchange for any number of things in return. The creation of that story is again limited by the risk factor, risk of personal feelings, future uses of your story, or for some, even personal danger. Again, the manner of questioning is key to determining what information might be withheld in that micro-market of values.

Butalia also realizes and lingers on the importance of listening and not simply asking new questions, but asking in new ways, especially while talking with Indian women. She notes, "I realized too that in my questioning, something I had not taken into account was that in order to be able to 'hear' women's voices, I had to begin to pose different questions, to talk in different situations, and to be prepared to do that most important of things, to listen: to their speech, their silences, the half-said things, the nuances" (100). To create the power of a space for exchange of these "unheard" stories, Butalia not only had to convince some tellers that their stories were potentially of value, but had to dwell on the type of site she was creating for the exchange of personal histories through her questions.

In a small but similar vein, I changed the type of questioning process for my class, six months after September 11, seeking to create a space for the exchange of stories that has particular parameters. Months later, the absences one notices have also changed. I would have to look back at my attendance sheet to have any idea who was present or absent that day. Instead, my students noticed different absences in the responses to war in Afghanistan. In a basic way, the more recent space in my class values academic reflection over emotional expression to a greater extent than a September classroom did. It is an analytical space, one where I structure arguments on the chalkboard; and the wooden desk that I sat on on September 12 sometimes imposes itself between the class and me, as the drive for analysis takes over the classroom. A few students let their emotions pour forth in an assignment that involved analyzing an article focusing on the role of U.S. foreign policy in creating conditions for violence, but most students actually stepped back and observed the rhetorical tactics of the author, even when encouraged to respond personally. The issue of questioning grows into a reflection on how to use questions to create places in the class for new forms of creative and critical thinking to be valued.

Academic and activist Eqbal Ahmad has spoken about the importance of pointing out the moral paradox in the position of one's opponent in order to gain the political backing of others, and how that tool was often necessary for political change (29). It is in the realization of moral paradoxes within our own cultural spaces of value that we may begin to be able to alter some of those spaces for exchange. However, timing is vital in the process of pointing out paradoxes, and changes in association, like linking freedom to service, can often overcome more apparent paradoxes without changing material conditions.



In March of 2002 a student of mine read an article by Arundhati Roy in the September 29, 2001 edition of the *Guardian*. The student brought out the temporal factors in valuing personal stories and responses. The Roy piece, entitled “The Algebra of Infinite Justice,” acknowledged the horror and loss of September 11, but focused on the role of the U.S. government in creating a context through foreign policy actions for an attack like that to occur. The astute student pointed out how she was surprisingly un-offended by the article, and actually found parts of it compelling, while noting that if she had read it on September 29<sup>th</sup> her reaction would probably have been quite different. The space fluctuates significantly over time, and often has small windows for certain stories. The student’s statement is like a larger example of counting to ten when a person is angry at someone else. The sense of feeling or affect is often most powerful at an initial moment—and one feeling tends to be dominant (such as anger or pain). However, over time, the feelings become more mixed and complex. The student was still offended by the article at moments, but also intrigued, curious, perhaps sad, and a few other feelings. A whole complex of feelings can come from that one reading, just as a whole complex of texts can go into creating a particular feeling. This student’s observations are part of a practice of affective mapping as she notices differences in feelings she has and considers reasons for some of those differences.

I have questioned here how spaces for value work with partial personal histories, and how value-economies established exchanges after September 11. My questions in writing here create a particular space where I take control over fragments of fragments for my own exchanges. This academic space allows the stories I have used to be traded for extending a theoretical conversation, potential publication, learning for myself and those I teach, and the possible furthering of my career and power to create more lines of exchange. I have, almost

of necessity, established a space where the stories of those 5000 Arab men are not heard, but are networked with a series of other stories. Nevertheless, the question about my own continued responsibility to those whose stories I have taken temporary control of, after they released those histories in other spaces, haunts each quote. As I make a space, in this and other writings, with particular analytical and behavioral values, the stories from these men that I have not heard must link constantly to new bodies, examples, and spaces, escaping the false limitation of the “5000 Arab men” label. As their stories cooperate, in the sense of network with to create a new temporary subject, with New York City public service workers or small farmers in the mid-west, additional fluctuating spaces with leveraged value systems are created.

### **Back to 2005**

My class in 2005 can be part of the affective map around September 11 as well. These maps include the dimension of time, and the changes in feelings about an event as temporal distance from it increases matters greatly in affective maps. The affective map is a time/space snapshot that is based around an event, a person, or some other node. The temporal element makes historical connections to an event important. Particular feelings and affective responses are validated and others are invalidated in the immediate and later aftermath of a crisis.

Mapping a variety of felt responses and the cultural value they hold can assist us in considering our own feelings and the feelings of our students, and in creating tools to even reshape affective responses at times. In my “Rhetoric of Suffering” class, Matt noted,

Depending on the overall views of society at any given time, it may be society that downplays the importance of foreign suffering. Society may say that we as a nation are already over-extended and cannot shoulder anymore of an aid burden, due to tax increases. Another mindset that will have similar effects is the thinking that we already have enough problems within our own borders.

(“Suffering Abroad”)

He describes thought-based or reason-based limitations to providing aid to distant others.

However, many of those reasons are the arguments used to support feelings and desires. The act of affective mapping can help display where suffering is felt as a valuable thing and where it is a shameful or unimportant thing—in ways that go beyond the reasons given to justify those feelings. On the same topic, my former student Adia claims, “Connecting distant suffering to a citizen’s personal life here is the most difficult obstacle to overcome.

When a person’s life, cultural, and economic situation is completely opposite of a situation of suffering, it’s hard to invoke compassion and not pity” (“Journal 9”). An affective map, like the map of suffering after September 11, 2001, that I have presented, attempts to show those connections to distant (or nearby) suffering, but it also shows the disconnections in an attempt to make space for new affective responses and further acts of critical feeling.

While an affective map can show the value of suffering, or how feelings are created and distributed across an area, it can also show some of the factors involved in creating affective responses, and can help identify those feelings.

The various narratives in this chapter, put together as a map of what could count as valuable (or consumable) suffering shortly after September 11, 2001, suggest that identity is tied to the valuation of affect. As one story is able to be heard, while another is literally un-

consumable (as a story of suffering at least), some narrators gained embraces as sufferers, while others were shifted to positions of protestors or suspects—with accompanying feelings. For my students, affect is a fluxuating experience. The feelings did not just happen in moments, but drifted and shifted over time. Affective responses flowed to new positions, making connections to economic foreign policy issues or particular Hollywood movies (for example) more dominant as time passed. This affective map is like the “marauder’s map” in the Harry Potter series—it is designed to show movements of people (or feelings) in a setting of many rooms (or cultural connections). Affect here does not so much describe feelings invoked by particular rhetorical acts; rather, affect describes the way a person experiences the network of rhetorical acts around him or her. In this sense, affect is more than a rhetorical tool to use, it is central and constantly changing in a rhetorical environment. As that rhetorical environment is global and tied to economics or consumption, we have the importance of affect to World Bank Rhetoric.

In the next chapter I will continue to focus on affective rhetoric, but will shift the emphasis to humanitarian aid narratives as they create felt experiences. I focus on affective responses from my “Rhetoric of Suffering” class to narratives about the genocide in Rwanda. We read one text about Rwanda and reflected on the feelings that it created. In the case of Rwanda, many (or most) narratives about the genocide there are statistical stories. The prevalence of statistical narratives in situations of suffering creates a need to consider the affective responses they evoke and how they do so.

### Chapter 3: Feeling The Vulgarly of Numbers

Pain, I feel, is relative. It is impossible to measure up pain and call it any greater or any lesser than any other. [. . .] Some situation may be, literally, the end of the world, but that does not stop others from feeling that their less pressing situation *is really* the end of the world. It is unfair to compare suffering. Suffering holds a special meaning, a special definition for each individual. To me, suffering is little kids watching their family apart. [. . .] I think people compete with suffering the same way they compete with anything else. It's actually kind of sick. (Janise "Journal Entry," emphasis in original)

About counting: A possible answer to this question of How many?, if an answer is needed, is to be un/founded in my view of counting, which is simply: *one, two,* and '*some more.*' And no more. (Vitanza 182, emphasis in original)

The shower in number 28 only dripped at about ten drops per minute. With a little multiplication, it comes to 600 drops per hour; 14,400 drops per day; and 432,000 drops per month. It would take until half way through day 56 to reach 800,000 drops. The frequency of splashes were enough for Salim, the 50ish man who could fix anything except the quarrels he had with his job, to come in and work on my shower. While he worked, I sat at my slanted desk and skimmed books about humanitarian interventions—trying to discover what

debates had been taking place about international responses to situations that managed to count as humanitarian crises.

Salim and I usually chatted a bit when we saw each other, briefly covering his work and my studies before moving on to more mutually interesting topics like college sports and locations we wanted to move to. On his way out, after fixing the shower, Salim noticed the cover of the book I was currently working through. Paul Harrison and Robin Palmer's *News Out of Africa* doesn't give much away besides the title on a first glance at its bright yellow cover. When I mentioned that it was a book about responses to a refugee and warfare situation, Salim immediately (and quite reasonably) assumed the book was about the 1994 Rwandan genocide, where approximately 800,000 humans were killed (almost as fast as the rate of my dripping shower). He lamented how messed up people can be and expressed his inability to understand how you could start killing your neighbors. Meanwhile, I nodded, feeling both agreement and a need to historicize and contextualize those killings. Before I could say something dumb or contribute any historical background, though Salim mentioned the Koran. He used it to assert the proverb that "if you take a man's life you kill a whole nation," and shook his head at the impossible notion of ever killing anyone. On his way to the next apartment, Salim authoritatively stated that he would not kill someone even to save his own life, and that all we can do is pray. His plea for prayer had the tone of suggesting a futile grasp at any hope, and at the same time, a powerful invocation by the faithful.

Salim's conviction served as a vivid reminder of the oft-stated (but not always believed or acted on) point that most followers of Islam are quite interested in peace—even in non-violence. His reflections on Rwanda could not be distanced from the ongoing conflict in Iraq, where views of Islam and violence in the United States drive public opinion and

impact policies. At the same time, his frustration with killings mirrored the tone and intensity of his frustration with being overworked. Only the desire for proximity to his son kept him from quitting and moving to a more desirable position in South Carolina. He ran some of those numbers for me too. How can one measure ten to fifteen fewer hours of work per week, plus maybe 8,000 more dollars per year, against an additional 600 miles from your only child? Salim's own impossible numerical questions provided an affective link to the numbers in Rwanda, as his religious devotion mapped in the unknown numbers of dead Iraqi civilians (perhaps in the tens of thousands) and the over 2,000 (as I write this) lost U.S. troops. Salim still talks of leaving town, but hasn't packed up his truck and taken off yet.

As it turns out, *News Out of Africa* is not about Rwanda at all. It is primarily about famine and the Biafran conflict from the late 1960s. Biafra is perhaps the key beginning point of heavy contemporary media coverage of international humanitarian crises. Major news coverage started with *Life* magazine's extensive photo spread of the Biafran civil war in July 1968, including the now commonplace images of suffering children with distended bellies (Cagnoni). The battle over oil, over political lines of control (lines drawn by colonizers in this newly postcolonial setting), and over the power of various ethnic groups turned into a major famine that received significant print and image time in the American and European popular media. Harrison and Palmer's book tells part of the story of news coverage of Biafra, explaining how images of starving Biafrans led many to call for aid for them during the battle with the Ibo group that was dominant in Nigeria at the time. Harrison and Palmer explain how the Biafran leadership quickly learned to use western media to make the famine look even worse than it was, including hiring a public relations company and leading a British diplomat to suggest that "the Biafrans had mounted 'the most successful

public relations campaign of all time’” (22). Rumors of a million people near starvation in Biafra were perhaps exaggerated, but the vast needs were quite real. It received a level of attention, particularly for a time where Cold War news and Vietnam were the lead stories, that exceeded the coverage of Rwanda’s 1994 genocide and refugee crisis. Are Biafra and Rwanda interchangeable? Certainly this is an inappropriate suggestion. But for Salim, in his devout care for life, both places could indicate feelings of impotence and loss beyond all counting when he thought of Africa. This vulgarity of numbers in a cultural moment that has moved beyond measure is the first affective response to map here. The student affective responses that I will describe also show a disconnect in statistical narratives. This disconnect makes responses that try to match the numbers both necessary and impossible. The attempt to negotiate feelings connected to this dilemma is what I describe as the vulgarity of statistics.

To kill one person is to kill a whole nation. The numbers in this sort of logic approach infinity as the generations of missing descendants go on. Incomprehensible numbers like Salim’s led him to feel sick about 1994 Rwanda—yet the same sickness could come from a single death. One loss has infinite consequences too. But numbers were vital to responses to the Rwandan genocide. An early editorial from the *Chicago Tribune* set the numbers at 100,000 dead in two weeks (“Rwanda’s Descent” 42). While the death toll (no church bell has tolled this long) would settle around a popular consensus of 800,000, other figures took prominent positions as well. By late July, the U.S. government pledged \$270 million extra for Rwanda (“Lifesaving Aid” A18). In case you aren’t quickly doing the math, it comes out to \$337.50 per person—a kind of value that should not be stated, but that is implied in every donation and allocation of funds. (This is the first time I have written



with a calculator on and at my side, and I'm not sure the results are appropriate, but then, they are just numbers.) Can I spare thirty bucks a month to "sponsor" a Rwandan child? Well, that's two decent meals out, an on-sale DVD of *The Simpsons Season 3*, or most of a tank of gas for an SUV. The most common ratio, however, was deaths per day. (How cold do I have to be to write this? Yet how common were and are these ratios.) Ernie Suggs, for example, introduced an interview with Paul Kagame (now Rwanda's president) by mentioning the need "to overcome the 100 horrible days in 1994 when roughly 1 million Tutsis and moderate Hutus were slaughtered by Hutu extremists" (F3). Modernity and globalization are all about speed. Communication speeds up, travel speeds up, deaths per hour speeds up (or at least the knowledge of it does). There is no need to give the rate per day for those 100 days. Don't do the math; it's too much.

Of course there are numerous political events behind the numbers. Rwanda had been under Belgian colonial rule for the first half of the twentieth century. Under the Belgians, the Tutsis, supposedly the lighter-skinned, taller, and thinner group, had been put in most positions of power. After Rwanda gained independence, in 1959, the Hutus ruled. As Bill Berkeley notes, whether these distinctions of color, height, and shape were real or not, nearly 100 years of rule based on ethnic group had produced very real differences and fears (103). By 1994, Tutsi militia groups<sup>9</sup> were rebelling against the Hutu leadership, and President Habyarimana was working on a deal that would allow more political power for the Tutsis. However, there were hard-liners in Habyarimana's government who wanted to continue to exclude the Tutsis. On April 6, 1994, Habyarimana's plane was shot down and all on board perished. While nothing has been proven, most believe that the extremists in Habyarimana's own government were behind the attack. They used the event to wage a major propaganda

---

<sup>9</sup> The main group was the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF). They were mostly exiles based in Uganda.

campaign, much of it over the airwaves on RTLM radio, blaming the Tutsi militia for shooting down Habyarimana's plane. Hutus were encouraged to attack Tutsis, and the serious killing began in early April of 1994.

How many people have to be killed for it to be regarded as genocide? The sense that you could count up to a genocide adds to the vulgarity of this question. According to the UN, genocide

means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such:

- (a) Killing members of the group;
- (b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;
- (c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;
- (d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;
- (e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.

(“Convention on the Prevention”)

The “intent to destroy” a “group”: that intent is tough to measure, and the group implies all sorts of questions about the kinds of assemblages that are privileged to count as groups. If only two people are left in an ethnic group and one is murdered, is that genocide? This too almost sounds like a vulgar joke. Two minus one is simple math. The Greeks spoke of the metaphysical problem of the one versus the many. This is the problem of the one versus the too many. By Salim's logic, one is already too many, and is a kind of genocide. And the Rwandan genocide is too many to make counting either meaningful or helpful for understanding it.

Philip Gourevitch, who traveled to Rwanda after the worst stretch of killings had ceased, presents the contradiction of one versus too many in his eerily and almost improperly beautiful *We Wish to Inform You that Tomorrow We Will Be Killed with Our Families*.

We imagine it's a greater crime to kill ten than one, or ten thousand than one thousand. Is it? Thou shalt not kill, says the commandment. No number is specified. The death toll may grow, and with it our horror, but the crime doesn't grow proportionally. When a man kills four people, he isn't charged with one count of killing four, but with four counts of killing one and one and one and one. [. . .] The crime is wanting to make a people extinct. The idea is the crime. [. . .] What does suffering have to do with genocide, when the idea itself is the crime? (201-202)

Somehow more numbers accumulates into more suffering, yet each death, each need, is unique. Students in one of my freshman classes read Gourevitch's book, and Nikita, whose laptop in class made him stand out as particularly interested at times, took issue with Gourevitch's focus on the one.

Gourevitch talks about his feelings while walking through the church and how the dead people blurred together. He goes on to say about the genocide as a whole, 'The death toll may grow, and with it our horror, but the crime doesn't grow proportionally.' Or in other words, killing two people is no worse than killing one. Then he says something that I completely disagree with: 'The crime genocide is wanting to make a people extinct. The idea is the crime.' This is not true. The main crime in genocide is the killing of the people itself.

Suffering is what makes things bad, not abstract ideas about suffering.

(“Journal Statement”)

Nikita presents the value of a return to numbers. When numbers, limited as they might be, are ignored, then the abstract idea of a loss, of a death, of suffering is left. He takes numbers one at a time, counted, not just a total figure. Yet I can only count so high (I fizzle out at a couple hundred) before each number loses its singularity. Perhaps even a very small amount of suffering is good. This is a dangerous (and perhaps vulgar again) implication, and in a case of genocide I can see no way to apply it. However, Nikita reminds us that the suffering of others can create a sense of the vulgarity of statistics precisely because those numbers seem necessary to understand the event. Numbers can help, and should not just be ignored.

While no exact number can be determined, 800,000 deaths is the most widely accepted figure for the Rwandan genocide. This does not account for killings in battles and responses to the genocide. The Tutsi RPF defeated the Hutu-led Rwandan government about three months after the genocide began. Fearing retribution, approximately two million Hutu left Rwanda, most moving to refugee camps in Zaire, Tanzania, and Burundi until they were forced to return two years later. Fiona Terry notes that the Rwandan Armed Forces (FAR—the Hutu government’s army) “fled into Zaire virtually intact” and used refugee camps there as bases for forays into Rwanda until 1996 (156). Humanitarian assistance played an arguably vital role in furthering the ability for Hutus now in Zaire to continue their attacks. In late 1996 hundreds of thousands of Hutu Rwandans returned to their home country, leading to new issues of rebuilding communities and of legally prosecuting killings that involved thousands of people. As I struggle here to avoid oversimplifying the complex Rwandan situation in the mid-1990s I wonder where the breaking point is. Where does

something become complicated enough that we just throw up our hands and do nothing?

Perhaps the simplicity of numbers can be useful too. In this chapter, my students convince me that consuming statistical narratives of suffering is a matter of affect more than detail or evidence, and that the choice of what narratives to consume is often seen as an act of service or solidarity that goes “beyond measure” in shaping individuals.

### **Number Theory**

Salim, Nikita, and narratives of Rwanda started me thinking that one major point of affect to map in contemporary responses to the suffering of others is the vulgar statistic. Narratives of Rwanda could not escape an obsession with numbers: the number of people killed, the number of people doing the killing, the time it took to do the killing. Yet the numbers could give no stereotypically modern sense of grasping and categorizing the situation. For suffering, there must be subjects somewhere. A person suffering is a tragedy—a one who can stand in for the many. Jennifer Edbauer refers to the work of Gay Hawkins to argue for the “notion of the affective body as relationality” (140). Affect is not just a feeling here, but is a relationship to a context, an event, a document, or a moment of suffering. Edbauer states, “Before you can possibly *get* writing enough to respond, *it gets you*” (140, emphasis in original). This applies to numbers as a type of writing too. The numbers “get” or strike the reader with a feeling or reaction before there is a chance to comprehend them and come up with a written or reasoned cognitive response. The affective element is prior to and constitutive of other forms of response. It is this realm of being struck by affect that a mapping of the context and of later written responses can help explore. Numerical narratives are one major example of writing that creates affective involvement of

specific types. If affect, then, is a type of relationship to a piece of writing or a context (not that the two are particularly separable), the question in this chapter is what sorts of affective relationships to the Rwandan genocide (as known through numerical narratives) do my students have?

As I read to find ways to think through extreme tragedies, often struggling with the common farce of doing academic work when money, food, and medicine are most needed, I find some solace in the work of Paula Treichler. She not only reminds us of how crises are overrun with language that has tangible effects, she also asserts that statistics are a form of narrative with significant limitations. In *How to Have Theory in an Epidemic* she explains, “[T]he familiar statistical chronicle of the epidemic is a specific kind of narrative based on a specific kind of knowledge. Not only does it leave certain important questions unanswered, it cannot even ask them” (Treichler 2006). The questions she says cannot be asked mostly have to do with identity and cultural values. Her work focuses on AIDS, and particularly when AIDS narratives are set in Africa, the parallels are strong to other responses and stories of the suffering of distant people. She argues that with AIDS in Africa:

The overwhelming difficulty of even characterizing the diversity of the epidemic, let alone containing it, suggests that statistical measures—numbers—may once again be functioning as [Raymond] Williams says they did in the late nineteenth century: to offer us the illusion of control. As these numbers are taken up and deployed for various urgent purposes, however, they may take on a life of their own and reinforce a view of HIV disease as an unmediated epidemiological phenomenon in which cultural differences (such

as differences in sexual practices) can simply be factored into a universal equation. (Treichler 115)

Treichler is rightly concerned with the issues numbers hide and the tendency to control an unmanageable situation through statistics. However, those statistics are not simply accepted as thorough responses by many trying to respond in some sort of “appropriate” way to distant suffering. The inability of statistics to grasp a situation, to ask other questions (like about emotional pain, or what it feels like to be completely uprooted), often gives them a vulgar character that is vital to mapping affective responses to distant suffering. The statistics, like that 800,000 (mostly Tutsi) Rwandans were killed in 1994, are themselves a response to distant suffering and part of the production of additional responses that impact survivors in Rwanda and future policies around ethnic violence.

Statistics measure, but more than that, when they become vulgar, they not only remind us that suffering is outside of measure, but also that these statistics mainly produce responding subjects. Vulgar statistics (they are vulgar when experienced as such) create a necessity for action combined with an overwhelming impotence—giving an affective state that does more to change the emotional subjectivity of someone hearing the statistic than it does to give practical actions for feeding and clothing refugees. Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri suggest that we are in a global situation where “the creation of wealth tends ever more increasingly to what we will call biopolitical production, the production of social life itself, in which the economic, the political, and the cultural increasingly overlap one another” (*Empire* xiii). The production of affects, relationships, and connections (a profoundly rhetorical sense of production) stands out more than the production of goods or even services in this description. Boundary lines between countries (for example) certainly still make for tangible

differences, but “in the globality of biopower every fixed measure of value tends to be dissolved, and the imperial horizon of power is revealed finally to be a horizon outside measure” (*Empire* 354). In other words, even when measuring works, it answers the wrong question. Affective mapping helps us go beyond measuring to ask questions about feelings, about how subjectivity is shaped, and about how identities and global needs are connected. Again, personal feelings and individuals matter with affective mapping—but people here are often vital nodes to link together to see some of the processes that shape their feelings. The global and the individual have to come together.

According to Hardt and Negri, the current state of the world as Empire has some control over numbers of lives, but to a greater degree produces “the very unfolding of life itself, the process of the constitution of the world, of history” (*Empire* 30). Even in a vulgar way it is tough to measure the production of the identity, affections, and connections of a Texan aid worker or a Hutu shopkeeper. The question then is not just about what issues statistics and measures may be hiding, but about the kinds of responses in affect, relationship, and subjectivity that statistical narratives (in conjunction with other overlapping discourses) are producing. If individual affects are produced in global power structures (and in the stories that come out of those structures), what affects are produced? And how can social forces be used to change felt responses? Ultimately, I ask how can my students respond “beyond measure” to ethically aid those in need without being consumed themselves by the affective production of those “need narratives”?



## **In Class**

In September 2005, many of my students wrote responses to Gourevitch's book, while some focused instead on the movie *Hotel Rwanda* and others simply described their own remembered experience of learning about the genocide from their grade school days. Here too, numbers scrolled across the page for many students. Tony computed that "Nearly a million people were systematically killed, usually tortured and left to die, for a year. That brings it to around 333 men, women, and children killed every hour. This isn't completely accurate because the majority of the killing was done in the first couple months, making this average almost triple for the first few months" ("Journal Statement"). Devin picked out some of the more powerful quotes. "The numbers are staggering. The two most striking sentences [in Gourevitch's book] to me are these. 'Take the best estimate: eight hundred thousand killed in a hundred days. That's three hundred and thirty three and a third murders an hour—or five and a half lives terminated every minute.' The sheer enormity of it all bothers me. In order to accomplish this level of mass murder there has to be some order to the chaos" ("Journal for the week of September 19"). Order makes it easier to assign responsibility, and numbers certainly imply a sense of order and coordination that may not have actually existed. Numbers also still hold an ability to catch attention and imply accuracy in describing a situation. Whatever else went on or was felt, that 800,000 number seems to say something quite real.

Tim, like many students, made a connection to the Holocaust. "After the Holocaust, the world came to an agreement to 'never forget' the horrors of genocide. Obviously, the world could not forget almost a million people being murdered in Rwanda. It just chose to ignore the carnage." He continued with some discomfort about the comparison. "There was

a systematic killing which took place, much like the Holocaust, but just on a smaller scale. (It's kind of unsettling to refer to so many deaths on a 'scale,' but there is no other way to compare.)" ("Journal Entry," emphasis in original). Yet somehow the need to compare remains. Tim's own awareness of his use of "scale" indicates again the feeling of inappropriateness tied to statistics about suffering and death. His grade in my class was on a 100-point scale, and he had recently chosen a school to attend after comparing a number of factors and rankings, but these scales are so completely other to what he is discussing that the notions of measurement fail. His reflection also indicates the disparity of scales between locations globally. A scale for poverty, for instance, is nowhere near \$10,000 annually (like the approximate U.S. figure for a poverty threshold) for an individual in Rwanda. Suffering is not measured differently in Rwanda than the U.S.—even when the limited (in number, but never in individual impact) losses of Hurricane Katrina gain much more attention than Rwandans could dream of. Rather, subjects and their affective responses are produced differently in different locales. The set of scales Tim has for measuring what university his family can afford and the scales for measuring the level of involvement in the genocide requiring a jail term breaks down the notion of arithmetic correspondence. The equality of justice, which is all about right measure, seems laughable. Forget adding up to four, two may not equal two. The question then could be, how can one produce a greater correspondence or equality between the scales—or at least translate between them? Perhaps this focus on correspondence is still too tied to an impossible equivalence, as attempts to count and measure suffering continue to fail. Numbers make evident the vulgarity of trying to compare suffering. Responding to suffering may need to be less about equivalency and more about the potential relationship, imaginative ideas, and freedom for all parties involved.

While measured knowledge may break down, my students valued knowing anything at all, felt shame at not knowing about Rwanda, and experienced information almost as a form of active intervention. Seth asked, “How can someone like me, who was well educated throughout my schooling, know so little about something that killed so many hundreds of thousands? This is an atrocity all in itself” (“Genocide, what Genocide?”). Beth expresses a similar frustration, with a moral twinge added, at her lack of knowledge. “Although I was not even into the double-digit ages at the time of the Rwandan genocide, I feel a certain degree of shame that I had not been aware of such a violent event until Hollywood brought it to my attention in the form of *Hotel Rwanda*” (“Journal Statement”). The shame here is distinctively not about a failure to act, but about a failure to know. Knowing about another person is experienced as a moral act, particularly when that person is suffering and far away. But this is a different kind of knowing than statistics gives, and it runs the danger of reducing the need for more materially tangible forms of action.

While my students lamented educations that tended to ignore both histories of Africa and events too close to the present, Lisa added a moral imperative and action to the feeling. She exclaimed, “I feel that as a person inhabiting this planet I *should* be aware of the terrible things that go on. [. . .] These people’s suffering should not be ignored, and somehow I felt as if, having not taken a little bit of time out of my day to learn about it for so long, I was being lazy and selfish” (“Journal Statement” emphasis in original). Lisa sees ethical value in a sort of planetary consciousness that Mary Louise Pratt describes as one of the keys to eighteenth-century colonialism (9-10). Lisa expresses a need to act, and in an age where knowledge is ubiquitous, the issue is what bits gain time, attention, and space. The *action* of knowing, of taking in information about the Rwandan genocide and refugee camps created at

least a small feeling of aiding the suffering and affiliating with them. Luc Boltanski argues that those who even watch distant suffering on television can ethically act by becoming rhetors. He claims that, “when confronted with suffering all moral demands converge on the single imperative of action. Commitment is commitment to action. [. . .] But what form can this commitment take when those called upon to act are thousands of miles away from the person suffering, comfortably installed in front of the television set?” (xv). Boltanski senses a demand—a feeling that suffering puts constraints on the viewer’s behavior that seemingly cannot be complied with. What action can measure up to what the television displays? His answer is to use speech: “by adopting the stance, even when alone in front of the television, of someone who speaks to somebody else about what they have seen” (xv). For Boltanski, this stance is at least a start. Lisa takes it a half-step back (or sideways?), implying that a person’s character is (at least in part) based on the information she takes in, and the act of learning about Rwanda is a form of self-shaping that feels like a moral good even before undertaking any more traditional forms of action or service.

Heather continues the theme of feeling a major advantage by knowing about suffering. In her case, the knowledge that helps seems to be of a more historical and personal nature. She muses,

I feel as though I am among the privileged to now have a better understanding of the crisis. I use privilege in an ironic sense. I’d choose knowledge over ignorance any day, but it certainly wasn’t anything enjoyable even to learn about. [. . .] First I saw *Hotel Rwanda*, then my English teacher included curriculum and literature from different countries around the world and provided historical background for them. This past spring, a Rwandan

missionary came to speak at a public school in my district and also at my church about the genocide and also about what is going on in Rwanda today.

In addition, reading this book [*We Wish to Inform*] has only added to my knowledge. It makes me feel like a better world citizen to know about what is going on. (“September 30<sup>th</sup> Journal”)

Does knowing about Rwanda make one fit into a special secret society? Heather describes her feeling of good citizenship well, and points out her own discomfort in the new knowledge. Information is not scarce, so personal, contextualized, historical information that takes time to comprehend is scarce. A feeling of relief comes for Heather with her increased knowledge of Rwanda. She can include it among the increasing breadth of places that impact her, that make her a “better world citizen,” in an act of knowing that both creates and expels a sense of responsibility at the same time. She learns about Rwanda, feels responsible to do something about it, and in the act of knowing has shaped herself in such a way that she has done something small about it. Heather’s focus on how she is shaped has both an insight into how individuals value what shapes them, and may be problematic in stopping at the level of simply adding to her knowledge. Information is not scarce in my students’ world. When that information is difficult and even painful, it becomes even less common. For a student, knowing is often the main activity you are supposed to do anyway.

Several students’ knowledge of Rwanda affected them more like a work of fiction would. The killing of Tutsis seemed unreal, like a horror story. One student, Marilee, reflected, “My mind starts to equate the history of Rwanda as a mere story, a piece of gruesome fiction that horrifies me with its brutality. [. . .] I feel as though my mind cannot digest all that I am reading at once, and therefore tries to shield itself by remaining detached

and preventing the stories from getting personal [ . . . ] I have found that it's just not possible" ("Journal Entry"). Her response is to fight the feelings of horror through a detachment that could easily carry over to more material responses.

Manthia Diawara in "Toward a Regional Imaginary in Africa" describes a theorized version of Marilee's response. He argues that

A globalized information network characterizes Africa as a continent sitting on top of infectious diseases, strangled by corruption and tribal vengeance, and populated by people with mouths and hands open to receive international aid. The globalization of the media, which now constitutes a simultaneous and unified imaginary across continents, also creates a vehicle for rock stars, church groups, and other entrepreneurs in Europe and the United States to tie their name to images of Afro-pessimism for the purpose of wider and uninterrupted commodification of their name, music, or church. Clearly, the media have sufficiently wired Africa to the West, from the public sphere to the bedrooms, to the extent that Africans are isolated from nation to nation but united in looking toward Europe and the United States for the latest news, politics, and culture. (64)

Diawara names the importance of the imagination in responses to Africa. And if the vulgarity of statistics is a major feeling in response to Africa in the Rwandan genocide, the association of vulgarity with Africa makes Afro-pessimism a gentle term. However, at times that vulgarity is instead associated with those counting and not acting, or with those who ask questions such as, how many U.S. soldiers is it worth risking to possibly save a specific larger number of Rwandan lives? Or even more vulgar, how many approval points in the

polls is it worth to intervene or not? The first question locates the horror of the situation in a geopolitical context that implies such questions, the second question locates the vulgarity in anyone who asks. For Marilee (and for me at times), Rwanda becomes almost entirely imaginary in a tactic of my own self-protection, and the genocide serves as an intensification of what the rest of Africa might be like. One student in my class, Derek, noted that Africa, to him, unfortunately consisted only of Egypt, South Africa, and a large undifferentiated mass in the middle. Rwanda's numbers are nearly impossible for him (or me) to imagine. Diawara and Derek bring the issue back to one of World Bank Rhetoric. Global economic issues are all about statistical narratives, but rhetorical work can help expose the connections to and feelings about particular places.

Doug feels a rebellion of his imagination similar to Marilee's. "I still cannot contemplate the change that would have to occur or the reasoning that I would need to make me decide that the neighbor who I've known since grade school is now a mortal enemy and that I should brutally murder him" ("Journal 3"). These students reflect on honest attempts to identify with various subject positions in Rwanda, but the imaginative work is done through the idea of a basic person-to-person transfer. There is no allowance for the significant historical and cultural differences shaping the possibility of killing neighbors. This chapter's affective sketch includes the vulgarity of numbers, a sense of shame, and a feeling of moral action at knowing about Rwanda; the connecting lines to actually feeling identification with any Rwandans (whether victims, perpetrators, or both in some way) are unavailable.

Derek gave the greatest number of measurements in his response to Gourevitch's book, and did those measurements through a geography of sorts. Derek goes on international service trips yearly—mostly to the same village in Nicaragua—and learned about the

genocide in Rwanda earlier than most. “The genocide in Rwanda I first discovered in the middle of my high school years when I first heard a song called ‘In All Rwanda’s Glory.’ A friend of mine who was in the Ayudanica Service Team with me explained the song’s meaning and the situation that exists in this Central African country. From the start, I was hooked” (“Journal Response #3”). He was hooked on learning about Rwanda and doing what was possible to help. However, he grew cynical about the U.S. government’s choices about intervention. Derek writes, “But hey, give us some credit, we did send money and food aid to the government in Sudan (laying on some sarcasm). Why do we have troops in the Middle East rather than a country where 800,000 people have died? But I digress” (“Journal Response #3”). Statistics again serve as key evidence here, but Derek then goes on to compare Rwanda in size to Vermont and in population to Chicago—noting that it is so small that the name “Rwanda” on maps usually appears out in the ocean. The final comparison is about strategic concern to the U.S., and Mars wins out in importance. How many people watched the Mars rover landing, or have photos from that voyage as part of their computer wallpaper or screensaver? Is Rwanda truly that alien from the U.S.? Derek suggests that the difficulties in imagining being like a Rwandan are so great that the national imagination finds Mars closer and more compelling. Every once in a while a debate pops up about funding for NASA, and how much it should or should not get with all the problems on this planet. But Mars is an imaginable adventure. It is Ray Bradbury’s *Martian Chronicles* or Kim Stanley Robinson’s newer *Red Mars*, *Green Mars*, *Blue Mars* series. Where is the response of excitement for Rwanda? Where is the literature preparing the imagination to fund aid? *Red Mars* kept me engrossed for hours when I needed an escape from researching suffering. It makes Mars—a place of significant suffering if humans were there—into a



complex political, technological, and cultural site. Is a Rwandan adventure/thriller story what we need to prep imaginations? Perhaps this idea is vulgar too (even without statistics), but the issue is not one of avoiding shaping imaginations, but rather how and in what directions to shape them.

### **Out for Coffee**

At 8:00 pm on a Wednesday in the new Starbucks in town I found one student whose imagination was prepared to think about Rwanda, who took action a bit further than knowing, and who had his “adventure.” Starbucks may point out which parts of Africa their various beans are from, and may show what coffee is “fair trade” coffee, but I still can’t stand the stuff. As I ordered a hot chocolate I recognized the tall, recent graduate taking my order. It only took us a few seconds to determine which class I had taught Rick in before he finished his art degree. In passing I asked him what he’d been up to besides grinding beans, and he threw out that he’d been to Rwanda and was now staying in town and working at Starbucks to continue his Rwanda photography project for a while. I let his statement slide past while I had hot chocolate, talked with my friend Katherine about her women’s studies classes, and tried to quickly figure out how best to ask him about his experience in Rwanda. I wondered why he responded as he did to that particular place. Just before leaving I caught Rick’s eye and told him briefly of my endeavor to understand responses to the suffering of distant others—and to think through how to work with my own students as events like the Asian tsunami or Rwandan genocide impacted them. He was more than eager to show off his photos, so we set up a time to meet the following week.

It took us two tries to have lunch together and talk. Rick missed the first one because of work calling him in at the last second—another reminder of a fundamental limitation on his response. How the needs of children in orphanages in Rwanda affected him (and me) had to run through Starbucks’ work schedule and the financial pressures of a low-wage job and student loans. More than once Rick described himself as rich and privileged (by virtue of living in the U.S.), but how he could respond to a perceived distant need was never far removed from issues of paying rent. When we did meet, he started on what was at least his second (maybe many more) cup of coffee, while we used the commonality of food to equalize what had once been a teacher-student relationship. When I asked about why he had gone to Rwanda and what exactly he had done there, Eric replied with a familiar narrative about connections a few times removed. His friend Walt knew a guy from Rwanda whose brother ran an orphanage there. Eric learned a bit about Rwanda, the genocide, and later effects on children. He also had a strong compulsion toward service through his religious faith.

However, Eric’s drive was all about identity politics as well. He described his experience as a white, Christian, male in a university art program as a time of thinking about his demographic’s relationship to capital “O” Others. Rick wondered what to do with the reality of his privileged position, and developed a senior art project that would use a variety of photographs – many in Rwanda – to explore the relationship of an American male to those less privileged in terms of global economy. In Rick’s case, it was not just numbers that subsumed identity issues as his project moved towards a focus entirely on Rwanda, 11 years after the genocide. The identities of the Rwandans became his main concern. He moved towards another privileged role of trying to “speak” for those whose needs tend to be

ignored. “What is my responsibility?” he asked, “to keep going, keep unearthing the unheard and unseen.” Rick has a sense of responsibility to make those vast numbers into subjects in contexts where they are not yet subjects. His photographs attempt to both comment on the lack of subject status for many Rwandans (as he explained about his photos of children covering their eyes) and to show the children as more than just abstract needs (as in his more candid shots and photos with subjects in martial arts poses). The photographs of 11-year-olds in Brazilian street fighting poses, of children who took those positions both to show off for the camera and because actual fighting skills are needed for getting food first on the streets, all at once present a skilled person, a needful situation, and an unexpected connection. My family once “sponsored” a child from Brazil. We gave \$20 or \$30 each month to help provide food, clothing, and education mainly for one young boy. I wonder now how he would have posed in a picture. What would he think of Rick’s images of children? Would he recognize those fighting stances, and would he understand them as a response to a nearby combatant, as a lack of international aid, or as something else entirely?

So why was Rick still in town working at Starbucks? His friend Walt was also working on an art project to remember and provide aid for Rwanda’s people. He was making books, books, and more books. Two-thousand-five-hundred books of 320 pages each.<sup>10</sup> Yes, the numbers are central to a response again, and they do multiply to 800,000 blank pages. He will arrange the books in a grid pattern for display and charges one dollar to put your handprint on a page. The money collected—going all the way up to filling the pages—will be donated to aid organizations in Rwanda. Rick is sticking around to help with the binding of these books, and to display his photographs around or as part of the exhibit. Walt’s

---

<sup>10</sup> You can learn more about Walt’s project by going to his website:  
<http://www.antiochinternational.org/800000.asp>

project recognizes the contradiction of the huge numbers and the individuality of each, and provides an experience of imprinting part of yourself on a symbolic Rwandan who is gone forever. Is this imprint a reaching for the dead, a claim of power, or a responsible criminal's set of fingerprints? In any of these cases, Walt's project attempts to overwhelm, and from my position makes one of those handprints seem less than negligible. Walt's grid provides a physical space—a map even—for affective responses. He symbolically (yet physically) sets Rwandans in a public U.S. space. Yet without Rick's pictures, only the dead are present. Affective responses are sometimes limited by only being responses to the dead, not to the living, making the situation truly beyond hope.

Rick, through repetition, made sure to let me know that his affective response was not one of guilt, nor a need to feel good through helping people, nor of an overblown sense of power that he could actually fix all that much. Instead, his response was tied to a creative need and a feeling of calling. "This photography was what I was made to do," he claimed and then combined this artist's urge with a Christian need to love others. A religious notion of love that emphasizes material needs, a job at Starbucks, a strong artistic impulse, Brazilian street fighting, struggles with the position of the white male in the contemporary art world, and a brother of a friend of a friend with an orphanage: all these factors networked Rick to "[never] forget"—the title of his senior art show. His is an attempt to make the vulgar numbers manageable—not by further categorizing into smaller numbers—but by trying to create subjects through his photography, an act that comes with a sense of painful privilege for Rick.<sup>11</sup>

---

<sup>11</sup> Certainly the notion of "creating" subjects is problematic here. Rick did not present himself as actually making the children in his photographs into subjects in the abstract. Rather, he emphasized an idea that they were individual subjects but were not experienced that way at all back in the United States, and he wanted to bring their subjectivity back.

A weblog (not Rick's) called "Camera Rwanda" mirrors Rick's idea of photographs of children at orphanages, but, ironically, is entirely textual. A number of blog entries are from Rwandan children who lost parents in the 1994 genocide, including one from Rwamunigi Kapiteni, age 11, who wrote to an American audience, "I love playing soccer. I love rice. I love America. I love eggs. I love omelette, mandazi (breakfast role [sic] made from wheat), and cassava. I love studying. I love cars. I love dancing." Here is a map without measure. The love statements have a consistent rhythm with no sense of comparison or proportion between eggs, America, dancing, or anything else. It is a partial inventory of the self, where love of studying may have no more importance than omelettes, and identity is a conglomeration of desires without divisions between areas of life or scales. Kapiteni is not a number or an individual in a basic identity category here, but rather is an aggregate of things loved. These loves are not to be counted or compared, just added to when more connections are produced. The weblog creator, who identifies online as a woman from Arizona, traveled to a Rwandan orphanage and in 1994 helped make "I love America" possible—in all its ambiguity.

The lost generations older than these children, and the not-yet-born generations lost in Salim's perspective earlier, remind me of the "lost" generation X (my generation) in the United States. When looking through many of the first reports of killings in Rwanda, I noticed that they were overwhelmed by coverage that same day of Kurt Cobain's early April 1994 suicide. If a generation supposedly doesn't care, has worse economic opportunities than its parents, has tons of choices in life—but none particularly good or compelling—then Cobain's death maps well onto non-intervention in Rwanda. His suicide (a few days before the major killing in Rwanda started) was explained not as an inability to deal with the horrors

of the world and the hatred of some towards others, but rather as a consequence of the impossibility of making a good, meaningful, or even compelling choice—indicating apathy as a response to frustration. “Oh, well, whatever, never mind,” says Cobain in “Smells Like Teen Spirit.” Somalia<sup>12</sup> had recently taught the U.S. government and citizenry that intervention and non-intervention in ethnic violence were both bad options. What meaning or hope was seen in “chaotic” killings where most outsiders could not really tell the sides apart? If no good choice was available, perhaps choosing not to care made more sense to some than the kind of sense pressuring the government to intervene might make. Cobain had checked out on the world and its impossible options, and while generation X definitions may only be stereotypes about one limited group, the urge to check out and even avoid the kind of knowledge my students seem to value so highly was and is a powerful affective response.

### **Home Theater**

Cobain is one and Rwandans are many, and the mirror-image of the statistic is the individual: the one case that “humanizes” and stands in for the suffering of those vast numbers. Perhaps the individual case is the remedy for measured narratives. Maybe someone can respond properly to an individual case. Maybe the vulgarity of statistics that brings impotence with a need to act wouldn’t be in specific stories. Where better to find such stories than Hollywood—and how could I pretend to understand affective responses to the suffering of others or try to respond to my students without taking in a few films? As one college student, Janise, noted,

---

<sup>12</sup> The United States military was attempting to provide aid to Somalis in 1992 and ended up in dangerous gun-battles, eventually losing a Blackhawk helicopter and crew. Images of dead U.S. soldiers dragged through city streets in Somalia were shown worldwide, and U.S. troops were pulled out shortly after.

Before I watched the film [*Hotel Rwanda*], I viewed some of the director's commentary where he said that for the film, he dealt strictly with the story of Paul Rusesabagina and not so much with the genocide comprehensively as Gourevitch did in his book. I actually found this method of telling of Rwanda much more effective. I made a connection with this man and really felt something for him and the situation. I cried hysterically during the movie and even for a couple hours afterward, something I never experienced with the book. ("Statement")

Janise went on to defend books against movies, but claimed that the small, individual focus is what made the movie such a tear-jerker. Tears may not make for a better understanding of the political situation in Rwanda, but they do have an assumed value in stirring people to act. While this value is questionable,<sup>13</sup> the one beats the statistic almost any time—although the one gets some of its power from being a small part of the statistic—whether as a handprint, a child in an orphanage, or a hotel manager.

Terry George's *Hotel Rwanda* tells the story of Hutu Paul Rusesabagina, who probably saved hundreds of Tutsi lives (over 1200 according to the movie) by letting Tutsis stay in his hotel as he attempted to keep out those who would kill them. The film, with its one hero and one specific family for the viewer to become most attached to, asks vulgar questions of numbers on a singular scale. How much is a human life worth? The film starts with a sequence of bribes or extra payments made to gain favor in business settings. Soon, though, the stakes rise. Paul, depicted as a caring master at making relationships work through under-the-table gifts, comes home to find most of his Tutsi neighbors in his home.

---

<sup>13</sup> See Hannah Arendt's *On Revolution* for a thorough critique of pity and compassion in relation to suffering and the poor, particularly as it removes the possibilities for action.

When a Hutu military official is going to kill them all, Paul offers to pay for them. The military man requires 10,000 francs per person, and Paul negotiates down to a lump sum for them all. What is a neighbor worth? In another scene, the leading officer for the few remaining UN peacekeeping troops bitterly tells Paul that the West has deserted Rwanda. The UN colonel implies a link to the racism in U.S. history, particularly in the pre-Civil War constitutional statute making slaves count for three-fifths of a person, when he blurts out “you’re not even a nigger Paul; you’re an African.” What would an African count as in that earlier moment of U.S. history? Two-fifths of a person? One-fifth? If a tragedy is when an individual must choose between two options that will both lead to some evil, then perhaps Paul’s situation is tragic. But when the terms of the choices themselves are without justice, it becomes vulgar. Paul even tells his wife that he paid the bribe of a Volkswagon to have her transferred through work to Kigali, so they could be closer when they were first dating.

I watched *Hotel Rwanda* for the first time one afternoon and evening in my apartment. For some reason, I had resisted going to the theater to view *Hotel Rwanda*. Perhaps I felt that I could control any emotional impact and be a good researcher better in my own living room. Katherine came by three-quarters of the way through, and I explained some of the historical context for the concluding scenes. The movie’s characters at least openly admit to trying to shame people into sending help. The audience may feel ashamed and emotionally wrenched, but they do not gain a significant understanding of colonial history, contemporary foreign policy discussions, or Rwandan politics. The main political lesson is that bribes are always the way to go—and perhaps the only way to get things done in Rwanda. The film is still a story about one man who did small heroic acts. But as a film, it feels like fiction; it has that cinematic sense of an escape from one’s current world—which



is the real world. The film simply is a devastating, shameful world to escape into. And if one does feel compelled to act, Paul is the main example. Yet who can do what he did? Paul's actions were all based on his connections to Rwandan and Belgian officials. The main example of heroism is unreachable for most—if not in courage, then in connections.

What is a Sudanese life worth? Perhaps 25, 50, 100, or more dollars? In the DVD case for *Hotel Rwanda* a little card from Don Cheadle, the lead actor, asked the viewer to “Imagine, and take action” via Amnesty International. Here the film tried to function as the material for the imagination to work with. A similar short appeal appeared just before the film began, and both referenced ethnic violence and starvation in Sudan today. The postage-paid reply card from Amnesty International listed \$25, \$50, \$100, and “other” as the possible amounts to give to help protect human rights in Sudan. This is the one clear action made available to people, but what is it to protect human rights? Rights are abstract and unquantifiable. Paul and his family are the particular, the one, but any money given goes toward the defense and creation of a concept. In the vagueness of the appeal, AI misses out on a chance to perhaps ask people to be imaginative with their skills, money, and contacts—using Paul's example in a more direct way that is more within the realm of imagination for viewers. *Hotel Rwanda* attempts to be that story of a specific case of suffering that does more than show sufferers. It attempts to stimulate the imagination with heroic characters and a variety of emotions—and it does so successfully for many of my students.

Beth, a first-year college student who saw *Hotel Rwanda*, observed the importance of imagination and made connections between Rwanda and Sudan herself.

That based-on-a-true-story movies can create a public resurgence of interest in the true story is an interesting reflection on how much our culture is

influenced by forms of entertainment. Certainly, I will criticize neither the film industry nor its patrons for this, since I am a patron myself and because I feel that as long as people are becoming more aware, where they get their information ceases to matter. (“Journal”)

But what sort of knowing is this? I think the type of information must still matter. Perhaps Beth is right. If one can create a sort of buzz around a topic, then the types of information will grow, and the single inspirational story really leads to much more than additional Kleenex sales and a couple of Golden Globes. However, Beth also questions her optimism. “One line from the film resonated deeply with me and made me doubt any movie’s ability – or even any news report’s ability—to evoke enough sympathy in someone to try and change things, though: ‘They’ll say, ‘Oh, my God, that’s horrible.’ And then they’ll go on eating their dinners” (Beth, “Journal”). Beth is involved with a student group attempting to make people more aware of the violence and humanitarian needs in Sudan, and her experience of people ignoring Sudan makes the notion of just going on with dinner seem all too true for her. The response of horrified inactivity is almost cliché at this point, reminding us that there is no necessary connection between shock or compassion and action.

Beth goes on to suggest that the issue is a failure of imagination. “If people realized that they, too, could be victims, maybe they would do something more to help before going back to their dinners” (“Journal”). If this were the case, then perhaps a good individual story from Hollywood could inspire service and aid (how well-informed and useful that aid would be is another question entirely). Beth suggests putting yourself in the place of the victim, but numerous students, at least in the case of Rwanda, implied that they had tried and simply could not. The situation was too far outside of their context, history, and experience. While

Beth means well and is reaching for a way to inspire people to act, perhaps this goal of putting yourself in the victim's place is vulgar as well. How appropriate is it to even reduce others to victims, let alone to then pretend to occupy a position where perhaps several close family members have been killed and you are now a refugee? Acts of imagination need to take routes other than putting the viewer in the potential position of a victim; they need to find ways to aid viewers in imagining alternative scenarios, ways to aid others, and the real pain of situations that you cannot directly experience. Even when help could be given and is not, the position of the perpetrator of killings is also not fitting. Taking responsibility does not have to be an act of taking blame and imagining oneself as a killer. In fact, as the refugee camps in Rwanda have shown, the line between victim and criminal is not so simple.

Journalist and activist David Rieff asks about those in Rwanda, Somalia, and other recent crisis situations, "Was it really safe to assume that *none* of these starving people had any politics, or that it was impossible to be, simultaneously, an Aidid supporter *and* a victim of the famine in Somalia?" (36). Instead of simplifying the positions of those in Rwanda (or elsewhere) and trying to imagine one of those roles, the imaginative need is locate some of the many connections from my own position to the situation – connections that may be more distant than placing myself in someone else's shoes, but that have more possibilities for small, practical responses. Perhaps Rick had the right idea by simply using his self-proclaimed identity as a photographer in Rwanda. Instead of responding to the demand of huge numbers, he started with his own skills to shape a somewhat giving mutual relationship on a small scale.

## Premiere Theater

A year before *Hotel Rwanda*, Hollywood had taken a shot at portraying humanitarian aid work, and even with less-than-glowing reviews for the movie *Beyond Borders*, I felt I needed to go see this film for how it would teach viewers to affectively respond to distant suffering in humanitarian crises. At seven on a Sunday night in October, 2003, my friend Jackie and I were the first two of a grand total of five people in the movie theater to see *Beyond Borders*. I figured that I ought to see how Hollywood dealt with humanitarian aid work if I was going to have any hope of understanding my students' responses to a natural disaster or famine. The short piece I'd seen on a television morning show that day had focused on the possibility that Clive Owen, who played Nick--the male lead in *Beyond Borders*—might jump from his humanitarian doctor role to one as the next James Bond. The connection didn't bode well for the film, and Owen never was named as the next 007. However, for a time at least, the images of children in the film took precedence over the new, steamy actor.

The fact that only five of us were in the theater was apparently not an anomaly. *Beyond Borders* grossed slightly over \$2 million its opening weekend, coming in a dismal eleventh in the box office rankings. One reviewer complained that “It's never even somewhat clear how, when and why Nick disengages from the problems of one country and moves to another” (Blank 7). Nick does move between Ethiopia, Cambodia, and Chechnya, places that are connected in the film almost solely by his presence and the need for food and a doctor. But in real life it is not uncommon for relief workers to move from place to place, particularly when political conditions or civil war make staying somewhere seem impossible. Shortly after the film was released, some members of the International Committee of the Red

Cross and Doctors Without Borders left Iraq because of attacks on relief workers there.

Nevertheless, the film opposes the British and American part of the world, where aid workers come from, to a strange linking of East Africa, part of Southeast Asia, and Chechnya, where the suffering is.

Those four main settings—Ethiopia in 1984, Cambodia in 1989, Chechnya in 1995, and London throughout—were captured by the singular image of a child and his or her adopted parent figure. In one of the opening scenes, Nick, the English doctor working at a camp in Ethiopia, barges into a fancy fundraising party with Jojo, a 10-year old boy that Nick nursed back to health a continent away. Cold War policy appears, briefly, as funding seems to have been pulled partially because of Ethiopia's connections to the Soviet Union. Nick uses the boy as a painful and harsh picture story of what the partygoers are ignoring, even as they congratulate themselves on raising money for refugees. The film used individual children throughout. One child in each place sits as the emotional locus for that portion of the film, setting up those suffering as the most innocent of victims in this movie of shockingly clear good and evil characters. Only some of the aid workers were more complex, mixed characters.

The second child is almost all bones. Sarah, played by Angelina Jolie, is inspired by child number one to bring food to Nick's camp in Ethiopia, and stops the trucks along the way when she sees a vulture sitting ten feet from the child along the road, waiting for him to die. The second boy is younger, but his age is difficult to determine. He is her project and passion in Ethiopia, and does recover at least minimally by the time she leaves the camp. Both of the first two boys fit what appears to be a dominant image of African suffering in appeals for aid in the United States: the young, black, gaunt boy, with big eyes, a sad look,

and protruding bones. It seems devastating to call this a cliché, but it is a recognizable icon for suffering in Africa. These children serve as an overt move past the huge numbers to focus on one person in order to make a parent-child type connection for the audience. Yet at the same time, the individual child is often shown without context, so that much of the individuality is lost. He or she then starts to stand in for whole nations of people.

In Cambodia, heart strings are pulled completely taut, as the viewer slowly watches an infant play with a hand grenade given to him by a member of the Khmer Rouge. An aid worker dies saving the child (whose future we know nothing about), but the extended time where the child holds the ring on the grenade keeps the viewer to the flame of the combination of a dark Cambodian jungle (even with a reference to “Heart of Darkness” and/or *Apocalypse Now*), an innocent child, evil Cambodian fighters, and an intervening aid worker.

The fourth child is a young girl back in London. She is Sarah and Nick’s daughter (he knows nothing of her), from a liaison in Cambodia after they escaped from the Khmer Rouge. She is less important to the film, except perhaps for the contrast she provides with the other children, and the lack of attention she gets from her parents. Humanitarianism may often start with war, whether that is civil war in Cambodia, fighting in Chechnya, or the history of the Red Cross/Red Crescent, but it thrives on children. A child can end up serving as the emotionally charged carrier of many messages, all seen without history or research, because who can deny a needy child? Jojo’s story was known to none in the reception hall, but impacted more than one; the child who seems all bones carries the message of starvation and even drought—whether or not that is a main cause. Linking an infant with a hand grenade presents the viewer with no greater understanding of political forces in Cambodia,

and perhaps they don't always have to be known, but it does say that this is a place of cruel, indiscriminate war and loss of innocence. And the girl in London in bed with her stuffed animal? She too carries connotations of safety and youthful innocence, but also conceals a history—not just of her family, but also of imperialism, of economic ups and downs, and of cultural struggles. In the culture of humanitarian aid, the child is still perhaps the most potent and most limiting image available. Perhaps it is no coincidence that some of the most successful development programs involve long-distance support of a child—marketed as adoption—and that the desire to adopt a child from one of these suffering places is a common reaction. The adoption is a chance to ignore the numbers, the large statistics, and simply think of one. I am one, and I can help one, at relatively little sacrifice to myself.

Most critics harshly reviewed *Beyond Borders*, one suggesting that it is a “preachy melodrama that devolves from monotony to absurdity” (Germain). My somewhat less calloused companion cried through much of the film and sobbed for fifteen minutes in the car afterwards. “I don't want to be part of this world” was one of the first things she could get out, before she too asked about how hard it was to adopt a child from Cambodia or Ethiopia. The movie website proclaims, “*Beyond Borders*: Where hope survives.” That claim couldn't be further from Jackie's opinion. To her, no hope was given. It inspired guilt, and a vaguely nihilistic sense. There is horror, and nothing can really be done to improve it, and people are terrible to each other. A person must do something, but it is all too big to really do anything about. I was reduced to vague reassuring words and the sense that individual stories cannot escape statistics. In fact, they may make you feel like a bad parent who can never be a parent to all those who need one (which in most cases is not exactly an equal or healthy relationship to distant others).

## Responding Beyond Measure

How can I talk with my students about the vulgarity of numbers? (I think about this while biking on a country road.) This vulgarity leads to an experience of impotence at one's ability to matter or act in a meaningful way. It leads to shame for some, and an increased valuation of simply knowing about distant suffering for others. These numbers tend to turn distant people, who have been brought close through communication and economic connections, not necessarily into objects (instead of subjects), but into fictional characters. They are children who know Brazilian street fighting, or heroes who work miracles with hotels, or even the victims that must be there for heroes to come through. The vulgarity of numbers shatters the imagination, making even single cases feel fictional at times.

How do people respond? Salim says to pray, Heather says to be informed, Rick uses his artistic talent, Jackie wants to adopt, and they all try to escape the numbers. I do not want my students to respond to distant suffering through shame, impotence, or nihilism. Nor should foreign policy and international aid feel like science fiction about Mars. All these responses are connected to an inability to make formulas work, the impossibility of making numbers match up. In a sense, the vulgar statistics show the difficulty (or impossibility) of experiencing justice in some situations. Hannah Arendt calls for justice when possible and forgiveness as a political tool when it can end a bad line of back and forth responses. However, she says there are those "offenses which, since Kant, we call 'radical evil' and about whose nature so little is known. [. . .] All we know is that we can neither punish nor forgive such offenses and that they therefore transcend the realm of human affairs and the potentialities of human power" (*HC* 241). What can a response be in those situations that go beyond justice, forgiveness, or repair? Hardt and Negri emphasize the need for creative



connections directly between people globally. They argue, for example, that relationships between Rwandan children and my students mediated by narratives of statistics that come from the UN, the U.S. government, and CNN produces the subjectivity of all involved in ways that further the power of empire (see *Multitude* 18-25 for example). This can be a strong case. The individual impotence and shame can keep me in line, trusting the government to do real action, calling for more intervention worldwide, and thinking that peace through democracy and free trade may be best.

Perhaps I have been implying or asking a poor question all along. Thinking about appropriateness of responses often implies some sort of measure as well. Perhaps I should ask what response is inappropriate (not equivalent to any situation) but instead simply good (to use a vague and loaded term)? Another vulgarity is to think that any response could fit the suffering of someone else. Even though those in danger, pain, and emotional anguish in Rwanda were and are the most important figures when responding to the genocide there, a good response might start with me, far away. What can I do, give, or say in general? How can that be applied to a specific case like Rwanda? If the response involves a need for equivalence with the huge statistical figures, and if it must somehow resolve the vulgar questions of numbers, like how many “acts of genocide makes a genocide” (journalist voice on *Hotel Rwanda*), then impotent givers of aid and fictional victims will continue to be produced through the discourses around suffering. Perhaps the notion of “beyond measure” can be intensified, where the response is a gift from what one has—not to reach an impossible equality or fairness, but to take a role in producing both self and other as subjects. The measure of a response (if one can call this a measurement) would be in the roles, characteristics, and types of subjects produced. Of course there is a danger in talking about

producing the subjectivity of others, particularly those who are in weak positions geopolitically. However, any response will in part produce those others, as will a non-response. Those distant moments of suffering also already work to produce me (or my students) as subjects in particular affective positions, so the reasonable next move would be to consider the impossible numbers less, and even to focus on single representative others less, and to think more of producing myself in relationship to another. A colleague of mine recently raved about David Bentley Hart's work in both critiquing and finding the value in postmodern theoretical and rhetorical work. In an attempt to show a non-violent, persuasive rhetoric, Hart argues for the "unanticipated gift and unhopd-for reconciliation" (443). He compares it to a "martyr's expenditure, which is made in the hope of a return that it is powerless of itself to effect" (443). This type of gift goes beyond statistics, bribes, and equivalencies to produce aspects of the giver and the hope of new relationship with others. Is it then arrogant to think of freeing my students from a tyranny of numerical needs? Or rather, I might try to provide activities and readings that shape new relationships to distant others in need. Perhaps people should base the relationships on sharing skills, not out of necessity, but out of an opportunity to shape each other.

This move towards production is part of Rick's response as he thinks about when to photograph and when not to photograph Rwandan children. It is also a snippet of my students' response when they consider knowledge an action as it shapes them into people who willingly know some historical context for situations of seemingly distant suffering. These may not be sufficient to the type of subjectivities most desirable, but they are a direction. The continual shaping of a subject that happens through responses changes the possibilities for future affective responses. If the vulgarity of statistics is part of a map of

affective responses in a time where literally immeasurable distant suffering and humanitarian crises are a significant aspect of shaping people, then teaching responses not based on numerical narratives might help one respond in the suffering world. World Bank Rhetoric here attempts to address the language around complex, immeasurable, and unsayable stories by mapping the sets of feelings and responses that do impact people emotionally and materially. Statistics and singularities are only two types of portrayals of humanitarian crises. I must consider other narratives and the affective responses around them.

Aid narratives often depend on statistics. They focus on numbers of people, of deaths, on time, on inches of rain, on ages of children. Hardt and Negri's theoretical work, along with the responses of my students, suggests that more than conveying measurable information about others, narratives of aid and suffering convey subjectivity possibilities for potential donors. My students, and others, consume suffering and aid narratives as an act of self-shaping—creating people who will respond materially in various ways to the needs of others. Aid organizations need to take into account their role in providing shaping experiences for consumers of information. They should be informative (including numerically), but they are not just objective purveyors of data or organizations attempting to convince others to donate money. Their narratives provide material for shaping the subjects who will play all sorts of important roles in humanitarian, political, educational, business, and other situations.

The narratives about Rwanda, and my students' concern with how little they knew about Rwanda, suggest a need to think about teaching more in terms of attention. What areas of our information-rich (or overloaded) society should receive the attention that allows those areas or information to shape the learner? This is not an issue of depositing key information

for students. Instead, the selection of material is for the inescapable shaping of attitudes and feelings that happens in the learning process. I am arguing that even statistical narratives are fundamentally affective in their rhetorical impact. That statistics can be affective is not new, but I am also claiming that affect's relationship to rhetoric is one that emphasizes the role of attention, subject-formation, and experience. Affective rhetoric, at least as my students read narratives of the genocide in Rwanda, involves the capacity to understand and shape environments, attitudes, and felt experiences through narratives (statistical or otherwise).

My affective response—that numbers about suffering have a sense of vulgarity about them—serves as a directing theme in this chapter. The impossibility of responding in a measured or completely just way to the suffering of others does not mean that questions of justice should be ignored entirely. At the same time, thinking of responses beyond measure and beyond justice may be important. What concepts (for example: freedom for the democratically-minded, grace for the religiously-minded, or power for the poststructurally-minded) can provide the bases for ethical responses that can openly focus less on numbers and measure? For my students, the beginning of this ethical response comes with the concept of subjectivity. As they attempt to adjust their own subject-positions (I am assuming here that individuals play an important, albeit partial and limited, role in shaping their own subjectivity) around narratives of suffering, they are making personal changes beyond measure.

The concern with students and aid organizations in this chapter will shift even more towards the aid organizations with students as consumers in chapter four. In chapter three I considered student-responses to aid narratives about Rwanda; chapter four shifts the focus to responses to specific aid organizations and asks more directly how those organizations create

brand images and experiences for consumption. What happens when the numbers involved are not stats, but rather are dollar figures, in the constant calls for money from aid organizations? How do the mailed marketing tools of humanitarian organizations work with other cultural experiences to shape affective responses to suffering?

#### **Chapter 4: Mapping Needs: Affective Spaces in Médecins Sans Frontières and Oxfam**

I have to confess: I find most Nike ads quite appealing. Nike clothing also looks sleek and stylish to me. While taking a break one day from examining the Web sites of humanitarian aid organizations, I surfed over to the “NikeID” Web site. The ironies of shifting in a matter of seconds from studying how groups write about suffering to lusting over expensive athletic shoes were not lost on me. The privileged position I held (and hold) was clear. I did not actually purchase shoes—I was just in it for the feelings of confidence and coolness involved in checking it out. The “NikeID” site allows users to pick one out of several types of shoes and then to personalize them. Site visitors like me design the visual appearance of the shoe by choosing colors for the base and virtually all features and attachments. I spent twenty minutes creating a great orange and gunmetal gray running shoe, and got to feel a sense of creative ownership and uniqueness through the process. Of course, the shoe would be quite expensive to purchase (you have to pay for choosing the colors and for more individualized production), and the number of personalized shoes Nike will make each week is quite limited.

In a “Writing in the Humanities” course I taught in 2005 we read portions of Naomi Klein’s *No Logo*. The book makes a compelling argument about the power of brands, and asserts that major corporations are selling an image and feelings that go along with that image more than they focus on selling products. Klein says that a “new kind of corporation began to rival the traditional all-American manufacturers for market share” in the mid- to late-1980s. “These pioneers made the bold claim that producing goods was only an incidental part of their operations. [. . .] What these companies produced primarily were not

things, they said, but *images* of their brands” (4, emphasis in original). One of the main perpetrators of this “branding” of the world, Klein claims, is Nike. She denounces the company’s labor practices while delivering a detailed analysis of Nike’s marketing practices (famous for the “Just Do It” slogan) that create a sensation of confidence, success, and individuality for many observers. Maybe Nikes do make you run (a little) faster—because you are buying self-confidence, not just shoes. Klein certainly did not convince my students that they should pay much more attention to the power of brands, although they were fascinated by Klein’s discussions of tactics that are being used to invert and subvert the messages of advertisements.

Nike’s advertising is something that could be studied in World Bank Rhetoric. Nike is not part of the World Bank, but as a major international corporation it works globally in ways that impact economies in many locales. This economic impact is often at the service of driving a particular brand image. So how does Nike’s advertising connect to the rhetoric of aid organizations? At the “NikeID” site the company sold me not just on a shoe or even a brand image, but on an affective experience that let me have a creative role. The active role set me up as a participant in the Nike organization, not just as a customer. When I then moved back to studying the Web sites of aid organizations, specifically Oxfam and Doctors Without Borders / Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), I had a new interest in looking at how they sold themselves as brands and created relationships between the cases of suffering they presented, the potential donors, and themselves as organizations. Exploring the Web sites of two major aid organizations, in other words, became an exercise in World Bank Rhetoric. These organizations are focused on gathering funds to both help distant others in need and to support their own organization and growth. They have to sell the organization to an

international pool of possible donors, in order to help people in need around the world, while creating connections and feelings from possible donors toward distant others.

One way to think of an affective map is as an analysis that ties felt response to places; it involves a series of connections between places and emotional responses (as they lead to other responses). In this case, my analysis is of Oxfam and MSF as they work to create feelings about spaces and about themselves and as they connect locations together. One key is the global connectivity of these aid organizations and the references they suggest; my students make connections to Hollywood and other locations that impact their feelings about the places Oxfam and MSF describe. A network of factors shapes student responses: from Hollywood, to family experiences, to aid organization brands, to economic status. This chapter focuses specifically on the maps that Oxfam and MSF present as part of their attempts to sell their brands to potential donors.

I start with some reflections that the students in my “Rhetoric of Suffering” writing course had about these and other Web sites. The students observed how much the visitor to the site is a “customer” or “consumer.” What these organizations fail to accomplish is to create any kind of affective relationship that would allow one to be a participant in the way that “NikeID” (for perhaps much less noble purposes) exemplifies. Observing the student responses and feelings gives a rubric to aid citizens’ and rhetoricians’ reading of the Web sites and helps set the terms of debate in the realm of consumers and brands. After providing some background about aid work and types of spaces related to humanitarian aid, I continue with an analysis of online materials from Oxfam and MSF which shows how MSF ties in feelings towards their organization with feelings about places of suffering through the rhetorical maps they create. Their brand exudes a sense of adventure in tough places—places



that they go for you. MSF gives people a sense of being outlaw helpers. Oxfam, while also creating important rhetorical maps, creates a major economic divide in its maps, creating feelings of affiliation and membership for donors who can let Oxfam be the intermediary connecting themselves and those in economic need. Their brand gives people more of a sense that Oxfam is a tool for all of the good, unified helpers out there in the West to use. The feeling is all about donors' virtue as a community—or even as a club. The brands presented by each organization can be approached through the maps that they create, and the sense of spatial connection each organization establishes is vital to understanding the brand. In the end, these brands are compositions that create affective experiences tying together global issues, economic concerns, and felt responses to symbols—and students experience the brands more from the position of consumers than as donors.

### **Student Responses**

Before exploring the Web sites of Oxfam and MSF, I want to establish the role of consumer that many visitors to those organizations can take on. I gave my students the option of going to different Web pages for aid organizations and making their own observations about those sites. One of the most striking aspects of their observations was the sense that visitors to the page were consumers, or even customers. It led me to wonder: what exactly is being consumed or purchased by these customers? What relationships do they have to each other and the organization in question? One student, Amy, went to Oxfam's Web site and noticed the bonds or relationship built between Oxfam's individual donors. She took a sense of community away from the site more than anything else. She writes, "My first impressions of the Oxfam International website were developed by the content on the

‘About Us’ webpage. Within the first paragraph, the audience is given both a sense of strength in numbers by the fact that they have organizations located in a hundred countries and the sense of purpose and achievement by the phrase, ‘find lasting solutions to poverty, suffering and injustice’” (“Journal Entry”). Amy’s observations of Oxfam reinforce the notion of a community of donors. The feelings are those of togetherness and camaraderie. The affective response can even be a pleasurable one, as the potential donor feels part of a larger effort to do good in some way.

Another student, Adia, visited MSF. She had a more troubled response than Amy when she brought up the role of a consumer:

Websites like Doctors Without Borders/Medecins Sans Frontiers have so many issues to tackle that by the time you scroll to the bottom of the page, you lose focus. The main page is cluttered with pictures of despair and different relief projects, which leave the reader/consumer slightly lost when it comes to action. There is no ladder of importance when it comes to humanitarian issues, they are all injustices suffered by people around the world, which leaves readers with the question, “who needs help first?” This basic question is what makes humanitarian organization websites ineffective. (“Journal Entry”)

Adia talks about feeling confused and lost in the lack of prioritization. The lines are less clear than they are in the case of the community of donors with Oxfam. I will discuss later how the maps Oxfam and MSF create on their sites help provoke these different responses. Here I want to emphasize that it is the “reader/consumer” who is lost. At first glance it seems that injustices and suffering are products for consumption. The consumer tries MSF’s

brand of suffering, perhaps hoping to both help others, and also hoping to personally shape his or her own identity. Helping others is centered on the question, “who needs help first?” Self-shaping occurs through the feelings associated with choosing to consume this information about suffering. In Adia’s case, then, the product may actually be her own feelings that are provoked through interactions with the Web site. This product involved too much confusion, so it did not work out in her case, but other organizations may provide a better experience of consuming feelings.

I gave my students a wide variety of choices about which organization’s online presence to explore. Regarding a different organization, the ONE Campaign, which works against poverty worldwide, Heather also felt the role of a customer or consumer. She says,

I think the bracelets [for the One Campaign] have caught on because it is in human nature to want credit for something they do. [. . .]

The One campaign is based on the support of celebrities to give it publicity. Clearly placed around the website are the head shots of different celebrities, namely: Brad Pitt, Jay-Z, Joss Stone and Jamie Foxx. Celebrity support brings credibility to the campaign because people trust a familiar face. Also, it is a proven tactic of advertising to use celebrities to draw in customers, or in this case financial supporters. (“Journal Entry”)

For Heather, the notion of customers comes up again. As with Adia, the customer/consumer idea is tempered by a second version of who visits the site: “financial supporters.” To Heather, the One Campaign site is clearly a form of advertising. The presence of celebrities supports her initial impression, since what else are celebrities but continual advertisements for themselves or some other cause or product? Here the experience of being a customer

may be more pleasant when one gets to feel a connection to a favorite celebrity. There are lots of choices, and Heather notes a few in the paragraph that I just quoted. The One Campaign is cool. There is no way around it, and its Web site for many visitors brings out that feeling of attractiveness tied to generosity.

My students are taking the role of potential customers as they approach aid organizations. While the organizations themselves may attempt to put people in other roles, such as donors or even investors, the students describe themselves as customers. The role of investor is particularly emphasized by Oxfam, which discusses future benefits for a variety of constituents based on monetary contributions. Large donations are often approached more like investments, in a place, organization, and brand; however, the small, individual act of giving can often be an experience of consuming a feeling of helping others—a feeling shaped by the aid organization's maps and brand.

In a time where Nike has learned to make customers into co-creators, it is important for aid organizations to consider ways to push their relationships with potential donors beyond simply producer/consumer and toward options for greater involvement and creativity for people interested in helping others through an organization. This type of change in strategy could increase giving through the creation of desirable long-term relationships with people. At the same time, greater donor involvement could move away from some of the troubling ethics of rhetorically producing the suffering of others—especially when that suffering is part of an aid organization's brand and is something to be consumed by later readers or viewers. The suffering of others can become an adventure in affective experience in some cases, without any intention of treating people's pain in this way. Next I will give some background on aid maps, and then I will explore Oxfam and MSF's Web sites at a

particular moment in order to show how their rhetorical maps create affective responses to their organizations and brands.

## **Aid Background**

My emphasis in the Web site analysis will be on the maps the organizations create, the relationships implied by those maps, and the affective responses associated with those relationships. Prior to moving directly into Oxfam and MSF's Web sites, let me offer some background about geographic spaces and aid organizations. Fiona Terry tells a story about being "the head of the French section of the humanitarian medical association Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) in Tanzania when we took the controversial decision to withdraw our assistance from the camps" (2). This was after refugee "camps had been used as a base from which the former extremist government, army, and Interahamwe militias launched raids on Rwanda to continue the killing they had started in April 1994" (1). The lines between refugee and combatant, between victim and perpetrator, had been severely blurred, for even those attacking from the camp were in significant need, and many "true" refugees had probably killed others before in Rwanda's battles between Hutus and Tutsis. The humanitarian aid organizations assisting nearby had to decide whom to help and whom to ignore, and in doing so, they had to work with and around powerful ways of categorizing groups and spaces. Just as victims, combatants, refugees, and aid workers are major categories for discussions about aid, types of locations are also integral to defining aid work. The spaces humanitarian organizations present, from "'humanitarian corridors'," to "'safe areas'," to "conflict zones" (Terry 30), create the rubric from which aid workers and politicians make decisions. Working through the paradoxes about who is harmed and who is

helped by humanitarian aid requires an understanding of how humanitarian aid organizations create category boundaries and represent others. Their presentations of groups and lines between people are part of making these (perhaps unavoidable) paradoxes possible.

Aid organizations also have to get funding. One major way is to get money from individual donors who visit their Web sites or read their materials. This financial context makes the way the possible donor feels about the organization at least as important, or perhaps more important, than how that person feels towards those in need. Terry hints at the importance of spatial representation through her list of terms like “corridors of tranquility” (30), and David Rieff implies a similar need for analysis when he discusses the use of “global village” in a world where we have access to information from places like southern Sudan, but no context for it (32-33). However, these terms are based on what aid organizations want to implement, rather than on an analysis of how aid organizations portray others.

Fredric Jameson has described a postmodern society that needs to do “cognitive mapping” (51) in order to locate itself spatially in culture. The analysis here is another example of an affective map that focuses on space in terms of feelings towards others (those being served) from a particular position (the humanitarian organization). Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri in *Empire* have briefly argued for the generality of life in non-governmental organizations (NGOs). They claim that for humanitarian organizations, “what is at stake is life itself” (313). They claim that these groups do not represent those without a political voice who are suffering: “What they really represent is the vital force that underlies the People, and thus they transform politics into a question of generic life, life in all its generality. These NGOs extend far and wide in the humus of biopower” (313).

Representing life and geographic spaces may avoid some pitfalls of speaking for others, but it creates dilemmas when very different individuals and groups are in those spaces and trying to live. While Hardt and Negri's general point is well taken, these organizations are representing themselves as much as they are representing "life itself." In fact, talking about their work as an act of representation fails to address the creation of affect-based relationships that is one of the most powerful tasks these organizations do.

Mapping need will help us understand what exactly these aid organizations are presenting. Rather than strictly representing people-groups or specific incidents, these two aid organizations create feelings that go along with specific areas or geographic spaces. I call these spaces *life-aid zones*. Life is abstracted in a way that emphasizes the space itself and a person's feelings towards it. Beyond that, while similar in focusing on spaces, Oxfam and MSF work to create different relationships between donors and those spaces. Oxfam bases their mapping on money. Financial status determines the place on their map, and feelings are then associated with rich and poor places. MSF maps the world based on where they are active. This attempts to link feelings for places more closely with MSF as an organization. The primary relationship is between the donor and the adventuresome MSF workers, rather than between the various donors as with Oxfam.

Past maps of aid and conflict are important to understand first. Many humanitarian aid organizations began their work during the height of the Cold War. Amnesty International started in 1961 at the initiative of Peter Benenson, a lawyer in Britain who wrote an article about prisoners worldwide. "The imprisonment of two Portuguese students who had raised their wine glasses in a toast to freedom moved Benenson to write this article which proved to be the genesis of AI" (*About AI*). MSF began in 1971, still as a move to "address any

violations of basic human rights encountered by field teams, violations perpetrated or sustained by political actors” (“MSF role”). Oxfam began in 1942 to aid people ravaged by WWII, and then operated in the emerging Cold War environment. Akira Iriye argues, “International organizations and nongovernmental organizations, whether engaged in cultural exchange or in relief work, were demonstrating that there were other themes in international affairs than the Cold War, that geopolitics defined only one aspect of the postwar world, and that visions of global community had not disappeared” (52). While Iriye is correct, I would further suggest that these organizations were partially responses to the binary politics of the Cold War. The struggles between the United States and the Soviet Union created a map with the First, Second, and Third Worlds on it. While humanitarian aid organizations mostly worked within that Third World space, they often created small ruptures in the dominant map by not allying strictly with the United States or with the former Soviet Union. By basing maps on economic situations, humanitarian crises, and post-colonial conditions, aid organizations contradicted the Cold War categories and created those ruptures with their own categories—even if such work was often under the radar for most.

Organizations were founded specifically to work beyond national limitations from the firm sides of the Cold War, and even to respond to the rights violations directly or indirectly caused by Cold War politics on any side. They tried to look at human rights apart from the capitalism/communism divide. Language, whether that language is about being outside or beyond national politics, remains integral to the missions of organizations like Amnesty International, Oxfam, and MSF; but the international context has radically changed. Many rights and aid issues are now outside of nationalist politics. Large oil companies in Ecuador and internal rebels in Cote d’Ivoire are two more contemporary dangers that Oxfam and MSF



are working in relation to. Moving beyond older Cold War binaries is no longer enough of a step, and humanitarian organizations have adapted to some degree, but protecting particular material needs and human rights before political players enter may not be as useful when a variety of business and political interests also prioritize those rights for their own interests. Aid organizations often create their own binaries, based on material needs or differences between the servers and the served, which can lead to myopic and one-sided forms of cultural understanding. The western world no longer functions under the three worlds concept when globalization and terrorism (for example) are primary foreign policy categories, and humanitarian aid organizations can be quite complicit in unintentionally mapping others in ways that match nationalistic interests.

### **Alternative Maps**

Several contemporary writers show shifts in the maps their work draws, and can perhaps provide in-roads for thinking about the paradoxes of humanitarian aid through the rubric of world bank rhetoric. These texts complicate the simple identities and binaries of good and bad that are implied by many humanitarian aid documents.

Deborah Scroggins's recent journalistic *Emma's War*, which is about Emma McCune, an aid worker who married a Sudanese warlord, makes a start at showing the complexity of humanitarian aid maps. Scroggins shows how the aid worker vs. conflict victim vs. oppressor divides break down in unexpected ways, and how linking Emma's experiences to broader issues can help us conceptualize new maps, categories, and times. Philip Gourevitch's book, *We wish to inform you that tomorrow we will be killed with our families* (which was discussed in more detail in the previous chapter and was one of the texts for my

“Rhetoric of Suffering” writing class), also provides new maps as it shows the limits on movement for a journalist in Rwanda. Hotels, churches, conflict areas, refugee camps, and the distant United States are linked in sometimes surprising ways. He also struggles with the difficult warrior/refugee distinction within the camps.

A final useful example is Adam Hochschild’s *King Leopold’s Ghost*. The book gives a history of Belgium’s King Leopold II’s campaign to make the Congo his personal colony. Hochschild celebrates the work of Edmund Morel as one of the first founders of the modern humanitarian aid organization and as an individual who brought systemic change to the Congo. Hochschild links characters together, including Stanley and Livingstone, Joseph Conrad’s Kurtz, King Leopold himself, missionaries to the Congo, and Euro-American political leaders. His map of the forces that went into the colonization of the Congo, and his account of the subsequent connections that Morel’s investigation drew to help change the Congo, does not provide a blueprint for how to represent others or for how humanitarian aid organizations should work politically. However, Hochschild and Scroggins, while perhaps overly celebratory and condemning at times, give us a glimpse of the kind of representational mapping of forces, spaces, and even individuals that can encourage useful understandings of people in need. They are both valuable attempts to represent others in a humanitarian setting through categories and connections that can shed additional light on the paradoxes that come when aid organizations create maps and write about the suffering of other people.

The histories these books relate can take even more innovative forms when maps are created on the Internet. A variety of historical moments can be linked together, and the very structure of a website could call binaries like refugee/warrior or server/recipient into question. New Web pages will not solve the issues of humanitarian aid. However, the

paradoxes that Terry, Rieff, Gourevitch, and others describe are based on categories that come from the ways governments and aid organizations describe people and places. Shifting the categories and maps can create innovative ways of thinking about aid and conflict situations that might begin providing new material answers.

## **MSF**

For this analysis, I will focus on the Web sites and some of the releases published in 2002 by Oxfam International and Médecins Sans Frontières. Both of these organizations are non-governmental, both are major figures in the humanitarian aid world, and both primarily support basic material needs. However, they both also have a political, rights-centered aspect that is difficult to separate from material needs, something which is reflective of many aid organizations right now. MSF claims to have a dual purpose of “providing medical aid wherever needed” and “raising awareness of the plight of the people we help” (“Homepage”). Many of its published materials are designed to inform people of specific, seemingly distant situations, and to solicit help in monetary, volunteer, or political form. I have chosen materials emphasized by these two organizations from one general time period, fall of 2002, rather than descriptions of a specific place, in order to better show connections between locations globally. The analysis may suggest alternative forms for presenting the stories of people being served.

In MSF’s contemporary maps we can see new ways of linking and aligning countries. An October 16, 2002, article by Diderik van Halsema on MSF’s Web site summarizes work done in Afghanistan in the face of over a million Afghans who returned to their home country. Not surprisingly, spaces for this story are chosen based on zones of suffering and

service. What is important to note first is how the article itself is placed on the Web page. While the places in Afghanistan and neighboring Pakistan are mapped together in the article, readers access the article itself by clicking on Afghanistan in a drop-down list of countries between “East Timor” and “Bangladesh,” all under the heading “Asia.” Most of the list is alphabetical, giving the reader a word-map that does not base spatiality predominantly on geography. The list runs down the left side of the screen, while the middle of the page is headed with the words “MSF activity in Asia,” which is also the title of the page (“Asia”). The top of the page contains a series of images of people apparently from the locations being served. None of the people look happy or quite well, and the shots are mostly facial ones. This does suggest the personal nature of giving, as the people in the images usually gaze back at the Web site visitor. Right below those images are some general links for visitors: a person can either learn more about MSF and its work, or can link to “donations,” or can “volunteer” to help in some way. Aid is very generalized here, and the person helps MSF as much as helping any particular group of people in need—or so the impression is created. The rest of the page consists of small headings that serve as links to reports and press releases about MSF’s work throughout Asia (see Figure 1). One featured press release in late April, 2006, states, “Prevented from working, the French section of MSF leaves Myanmar” (“Asia”). The headlines are about MSF’s work as the active subject, not about donors or people in need. This focus on the organization itself can lessen problems of representing others, but can lead to making the organization the main thing to promote. The list of countries on the side is for one continent: the large and varied region called Asia. However, the list is based on countries where MSF has a significant number of workers. It links spaces together based on service to people suffering, not just on the existence of suffering.

Figure 1: “MSF Activity in Asia”

The screenshot shows the MSF website's 'MSF activity in Asia' page. At the top left is the MSF logo. A navigation bar includes links for HOME, COUNTRIES, CONTENT, ABOUT MSF, DONATIONS, and VOLUNTEER. A 'RELATED LINKS' section is on the right. The main content area is titled 'MSF activity in Asia' and features a prominent article: 'Why the French section of MSF has ended its activities in Myanmar'. The article text states that the French section of Médecins Sans Frontières ends its medical programs in Myanmar (Burma), and Dr. Hervé Isambert, MSF Program Manager, explains the reasons for the departure. Below the article are two columns: 'Latest press releases' and 'REPORTS'. The 'Latest press releases' column lists several items, including 'Palestinian Territories : MSF refuses to be a 'social palliative' of EU & US policies' (13/04/2006), 'Patent application for AIDS drug opposed for first time in India' (30/03/2006), 'Prevented from working, the French section of MSF leaves Myanmar' (29/03/2006), 'Beyond the Headlines: Top ten list of under-reported stories in 2005' (12/01/2006), and 'MSF calls on Thailand to protect access to medicines in the face of US pressure' (11/01/2006). The 'REPORTS' column lists 'Six months after the Asia tsunami disaster' (24/06/2005), 'Repression of North Korean refugees' (06/01/2004), and 'DOHA DERAILED: Cambodia - A backhanded welcome to the WTO' (10/09/2003). On the left side, there is a sidebar with a search box and a list of regions: Asia (selected), Africa, Americas, and Europe. Under 'Asia', a list of countries is provided with blue underlined links: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Burma, Cambodia, China, East Timor, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzia, Laos, Lebanon, Mongolia, North Korea, Pakistan, Palestinian Authority, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Nepal, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Vietnam, and Yemen.

Someone has to be at least trying to aid in some way for an area to count as suffering space.

The list provides connections between these countries that a person might not make

otherwise. It is a convenient organizational tactic, yet it emphasizes the global connections of places distant from each other with different histories.

What MSF's mapping strategy does not do is help establish the basis for any connections, or give explanations about linkages between sites. Each country is portrayed as having isolated zones of suffering, as not connected through common histories or communication, yet the nations are linked together by this international aid organization. Even within countries, MSF is the focus. The most recent and prominent press release from the Afghanistan page for MSF (which still has the list of countries in Asia to link to on the left-hand side) focuses solely on MSF's workers, reporting that "Almost one year after killing of five MSF aid workers, MSF calls for action from Afghan government" ("Afghanistan"). Hardt and Negri have described the isolation of contemporary revolts, claiming that, "Perhaps precisely because all these struggles are incommunicable and thus blocked from traveling horizontally in the form of a cycle, they are forced instead to leap vertically and touch immediately on the global level" (55). In a similar way, the countries in this list impact the reader in a global way through the abstract category of spaces for serving the suffering. Which country a web-surfer clicks on can be arbitrary; each describes global suffering in its local space. The individual articles do have links to other pages, but almost solely about that one country. You have to go to the master list to jump to Yemen or Iran. This format universalizes the suffering in a universe of those being served, but only shows histories together in the abstract. With a few exceptions, like refugees moving from Afghanistan to Pakistan and back, even poignant stories only impact you on emotional and abstract levels. There is no sense of connected histories between places.

One of the first headings in van Halsema's article is "The Yellow Desert." The area is described briefly in terms of its location in Afghanistan, and then as "the operational area of an MSF team based in Kandahar" (par. 3). Van Halsema describes it in more detail explaining that,

"Zhare Dasht" is Pashtun for "Yellow Desert." The area lies in the Sanzari district, over an hour's drive to the west of Kandahar in the south of Afghanistan. Since mid-August this has been the operational area of an MSF team based in Kandahar. It is the site of the latest of the four projects which MSF is implementing in the south of Afghanistan with a team of seven international and over 70 Afghan staff members. (van Halsema)

This initial introduction to a space is in terms of the work done there. Spaces that readers see are created through the connection of Afghani regions with MSF activities. The name "Yellow Desert" is a translation of a Pashtun term, "'Zhare Dasht'," but it gains the status needed for presentation by the presence of aid workers there. The MSF website describes their work, so of course the places they have medical personnel will dominate the stories, but the article is entitled "Afghanistan at one year," and presented as the situation for Afghans, not MSF workers.

While the title refers to Afghanistan as a country, as does the link, the article itself focuses on the Afghans or regions within Afghanistan. The article refers to border areas, the south of the country, and refugee camps, but almost never to the country as a whole. Van Halsema creates a main distinction between those who are in refugee camps and those who are not: "The Afghans in the official camps are the best off. The 60,000 in the no-man's land and around Spin Boldak have much more to endure. The Pakistani and Afghan authorities

want to get rid of the Afghans and have exerted so much pressure on the UNHCR to move them that there is now a plan to transfer them to Zhare Dasht” (van Halsema). This focus on regions and camps allows these areas of different forms of suffering to prioritize regional boundaries within the country and to stand in for the country as a whole. Afghanistan has been fragmented enough and ruled regional by enough different leaders in the recent past to make this depiction of regions perhaps more useful than a national picture. Ahmed Rashid’s study of Afghanistan and the Taliban describes battles over oil pipelines (in one example) where numerous warlords, regional leaders, and the increasingly powerful Taliban all had to be wooed in order for a pipeline to be safely stretched across Afghanistan (171-82). This fragmentation has continued into struggles to create a central Afghan government after the post-September 11 U.S. invasion of Afghanistan. For van Halsema, however, it is again the service to suffering that sets boundaries. Letting the zone of suffering act as a palimpsest for the country allows a conflation between the two, where other responses, defended through the suffering, can involve intervening in a space based on national boundaries.

The article makes several distinctions between types of suffering and service in different regions, but they are all centered on what we might call basic needs. The article claims “some 400,000 Afghans are wandering around in the South, searching for food and shelter” (van Halsema). Suffering comes from a lack of nutrition and covering, but here the aimless mobility of refugees is emphasized. The fact that they do not even have a destination to hope to reach exacerbates the pain. No progress looks likely, nor is MSF service to them directly mentioned. MSF considers other refugees much better off. They are the ones who “were taken to various official refugee camps on the Pakistani side of the border where they received the help they were entitled. MSF runs official programmes in two of these camps:



Rhogani and Lande Karez” (van Halsema). Having a fixed space to settle in at least provides the food and shelter needs, which is apparently done well in this Pakistani camp space. The status of the land, even more than the people, is what dominates much of van Halsema’s language. One key description he presents is of the southern part of Afghanistan:

The harvests have been meagre for years in the South. Some experts say that the groundwater level falls by two metres per year. Dry riverbeds, encroaching desert and wells that need to be dug ever deeper—sometimes to a depth of 60 metres—are making life so hard in this part of the country that many Afghans have become completely dependent on international aid.

(“Afghanistan after one year”)

Feelings towards the land and its ability to sustain people are central to MSF’s analysis. This space is one that gives a sense of antagonizing people as it “encroaches” and “mak[es] life so hard.” This land is an enemy, making MSF’s adventurers necessary for aiding in the dangerous situation. Even refugee camps are better than this desert because the camps are oases set up by MSF workers. Van Halsema refers to 25,000 Afghans who “have been living in a chaotic camp where it took a long time to get aid started. MSF was present there from the outset to provide the people with medical support (vaccinations, basic healthcare and the like) and to tackle the presence of malnutrition among the children” (“Afghanistan after one year”). MSF presents an image of adventurers who do not just deal with humanitarian crisis situations, but who also go out and battle chaos and nature. Supporting their work could be like watching and financially supporting a favorite outdoor extreme athlete, though of course with incalculably more significant potential results.

MSF also mentions the national composition of its team in Afghanistan, emphasizing the dominance of Afghans in the group. MSF has aid areas “in the south of Afghanistan with a team of seven international and over 70 Afghan staff members” (van Halsema). In Cote d’Ivoire, MSF constantly depicts its teams working with local hospitals and with the Ivoirian Health Ministry (“MSF reinforces”). Much of the support is of local workers, but the detailed descriptions by MSF are of the “international” leaders who have journeyed far.

A group of Afghan refugees that tried to enter Pakistan later were less fortunate than those in the chaotic camps. “They were stopped and since then have been stuck in a piece of no man’s land, practically on the border but just on the Pakistani side. [. . .] MSF was present there from the outset to provide the people with medical support (vaccinations, basic healthcare and the like) and to tackle the presence of malnutrition among children” (“MSF reinforces”). This group at least has a space to stop in, and does not necessarily need to search for food like those in the “South,” but medical needs then become a focal point. A group that seems to be in similar circumstances includes the “35,000 Afghans on the Afghan side of the border, dispersed over five camps around Spin Boldak” (“MSF reinforces”). They are classified as internally displaced rather than as refugees since they are still in Afghanistan.

These descriptions of camps and needs have a variety of spaces. “Zhare Dasht,” the “South,” a “no man’s land,” refugee camps in Pakistan, and camps near the border within Afghanistan are the key points on this verbal map of MSF aid work. The spaces create a hierarchy of needs, and the geographic area itself displays the level of suffering. The ability to move from a camp around Spin Boldak to Zhare Dasht is a significant form of mobility because Zhare Dasht is lower on the scale of suffering. Clearly, being able to move

somewhere with better nutrition is vital. Rhetorically, spaces can be linked hierarchically by the absence of basics for survival and through the presence of external help. While helping individuals is an ultimate goal, throughout this spatial linking the Afghans appear only as numbers. It is not a lack of concern that lets numbers be the simple way to mention people, but rather the fact that MSF is actually creating what I call *life-aid zones*: geographic areas that can be defined and described by how well they can support groups of people in need. Life-aid zones are about life because food, shelter, sanitation, and medical needs dominate the descriptions of these spaces. They are also about aid because the presence or absence of aid defines the boundaries around these regions. The humanitarian assistance given and the movements of groups between zones network them together. As a potential donor, I am directed toward MSF's work in each area. Their intervention is what holds everything together. My feelings are then connected to MSF as an organization itself. How do I feel about their work? How do I react to their stories?

In most cases donations would be based on a potential sense of connectedness to MSF, rather than to a specific place they talk about. If I can feel like I am joining the aid workers presented on the site, if I can identify with them, then maybe I will donate. One drawback to the primacy of the connection to MSF is the sense of distance between the donor and the aid workers. There is no involvement or creative act (like "NikeID" has). The feeling of being a helpless observer, or confusion about where to focus (as Adia mentioned earlier) is part of the affective experience. This is not to say that Web sites for humanitarian aid organizations should be all about making donors feel great about their experience at the site and their place in the world. Rather, the issue is one of involvement. Allowing visitors to make meaningful choices can create a relationship where the visitor feels more a part of

the organization than at present with MSF. This element of choice can lead to more action and a sense of empowerment, rather than the feeling of impotence I discussed in relation to Rwanda in the previous chapter. There is nothing necessarily wrong with an aid organization working to set up relationships with possible donors. However, the question is how they impact potential donors, creating relationships that have serious material effects on people in need around the world. The difficulty is to avoid hiding the horror of some situations, and to ethically treat those whose pain is presented, while bringing potential “customers” into a relationship of mutual creativity and production.

## **Oxfam**

On Oxfam’s main Web page the organization has a link to the Web sites for Oxfam bases worldwide. You reach a list of countries and regions that function as a map of where service begins. The list runs alphabetically through America, Australia, Belgium, Canada, Germany, Great Britain, Hong Kong, Ireland, Netherlands, New Zealand, Quebec, and Spain. This list of providing countries is separated from the lists of sites where Oxfam works. It provides a connection between places initiating service that is on an entirely different map from places where people are considered to be suffering. While it is a reality and part of Oxfam’s concerns that some nations are considerably richer than others, and in better positions to provide material goods, the complete separation of home bases from sites of service can further an us/them binary. This binary is based on material circumstances from Oxfam’s perspective, rather than issues like ethnicity. However, when spaces of suffering and bases for service stand in for whole nations, and when those two types of maps are opposed to each other, the situation is ripe for others to let other identity factors represent the

whole of a space. The Cold War format of the First, Second, and Third worlds is traded in for smaller geographic pockets of what might be revamped versions of the First and Third Worlds. Here the First World is the network of locations that can provide material resources and the Third World is defined by its needs. One list includes America, Australia, Belgium, and Canada next to each other, while a “Third World” list includes the Philippines, Sri Lanka, North Korea, and Palestine next to each other. There is the group, or club, of donors and the group of aid receivers. In the case of humanitarian organizations, deterritorialization occurs as spaces move from givers to receivers of help, where the givers still have control of both mapping spaces and the production of livable spaces.

The aid worker herself is the connection between the two maps. She supplies service bases and life-aid zones. It is only the aid worker that can step between the two, letting the Zhare Dasht also become “the operational area of an MSF team based in Kandahar” (van Halsema). While it is important that movement only can happen for those on one side, it is a fairly common reality based on wealth, one which many aid organizations would happily change if they could. A more pertinent issue for the representations of space in these organizational materials is that the aid worker no longer has to move out from the home-base map. The aid worker is both a marketer and a fundraiser—providing materials for those in the service zones to act for themselves.

Oxfam presents Narcisa Nuis Mashient Jimbiti as an example of someone working to aid her own community, but it does not show her in order to present her needs. Instead, Oxfam describes her work for the rainforest that the Shuar people live in. Writing for Oxfam, Thea Gelbspan introduces the issue by stating that, “The Shuar have lived on their ancestral lands and maintained their traditions for centuries. Proposed oil drilling projects

present significant problems to their culture and their fragile rain-forest environment” (“Future in Ecuador”). The central topic is the land itself, as Oxfam describes both the impact that oil companies might have on the land is liveable and the work that Jimbiti, with the Independent Federation of the Shuar People of Ecuador (FIPSE), can provide for protecting health needs and the environmental conditions in that forest space. Gelbspan says Jimbiti “is torn between tradition and her growing social consciousness that keeps her engaged and working for her people. Her deep concern about the health and survival of the environment and Shuar culture compels her to continue her work in defense of their lands and rights” (“Future in Ecuador”). Along with showing Oxfam’s emphasis on investment and development, which is perhaps less exciting and sometimes more practical in the long-term than MSF’s work, Gelbspan creates a divide between local workers like Jimbiti and the donors who can invest in her work. The assertions about Jimbiti’s feelings are made from the outside, without quotes, and imply that personal development means to become like Oxfam members in Jimbiti’s “growing social consciousness.” These paternalistic moves allow potential donors to be in the position of members of a knowledgeable club who can feel good not only about helping others and their lands financially, but also about aiding their personal development.

The divide on the maps provided by humanitarian organizations’ representational practices is not strictly East/West, nor is it North/South, although strong tendencies toward these divides can be seen. It is a material divide that allows for major humanitarian aid bases

Figure 2: “Oxfam Programs”

## Programs & campaigns

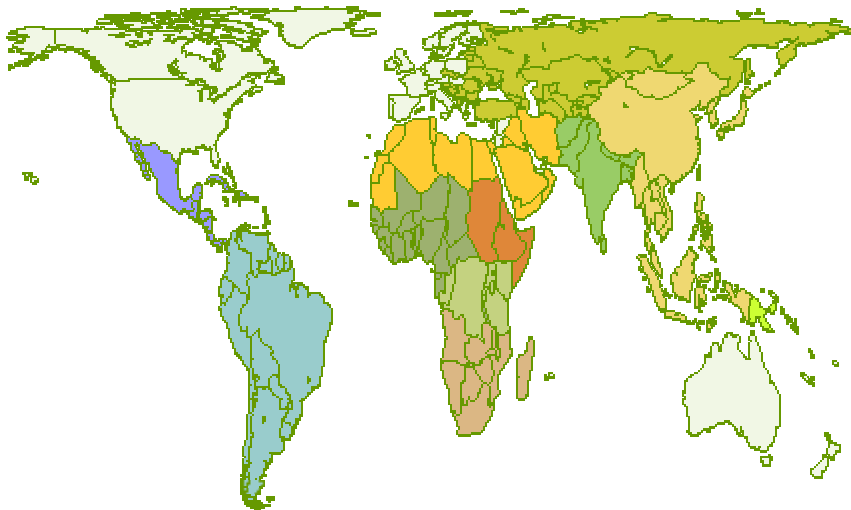


Children from Burkina Faso consult a globe to identify countries in their region. Credit: Crispin Hughes/Oxfam

In all our actions Oxfam’s goal is to enable people to exercise their rights and manage their own lives. From long term program work and short term emergency relief to immediate campaign action, Oxfam believes in empowering people. Oxfam strives to work with local partners and takes a rights based approach to our development work.

On advocacy and campaigning for changes at the global and national level, the Oxfams link their work to practical changes at grassroots level. We are part of a global citizens movement campaigning on such issues as trade, arms and education.

**Click on the map** to see where the Oxfams and our partners work or fund projects. This information covers the period 2003-2004.



Oxfam’s 11 regions: Central America, Mexico, and the Caribbean (CAMEXCA); South America; Central and East Africa; Horn of Africa; Southern Africa; West Africa; East Asia; South Asia; Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union; Maghreb and Middle East; Pacific

Related information  
[HIV/AIDS](#) – With over 40 million people living with HIV world-wide, HIV/AIDS is now the worst pandemic ever experienced in human history. Unlike other diseases, because of the socio-economic factors, HIV/AIDS is hitting the productive sectors of society the hardest. The loss of life among those who work in sectors like rural agriculture, education or healthcare is staggering.

[Domestic Programs](#) – Oxfam works to alleviate poverty and injustice around the world. In addition to Oxfam’s work in developing countries, Oxfam also operates domestic programs. These programs involve activities in affiliate countries, which address issues of poverty, inequality and exclusion at home.

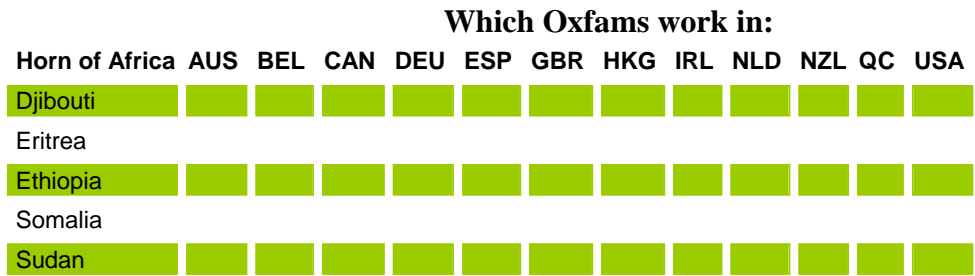
[Sudan](#) – Over the last two years 2 million people have been forced to flee their homes in Darfur, Western Sudan - many having seen their families killed, abducted, abused or raped - and are now living in makeshift shelters in camps or on the edge of villages in Darfur and across the border in eastern Chad.

to be both in the east and the west. These places move together on a new map of the world, that does not have the First, Second, and Third worlds, but rather a scale of aid providers and a scale of places with needs recognized by those providers. The map uses countries, but emphasizes life-aid spaces as more important regional distinctions. One main map is color-coded by region that is in need of aid. Canada, the United States, Australia, and much of Western Europe are relatively colorless, and no identifying terms appear when the cursor rolls over those locations, unlike the rest of the map, which identifies the regions of need. Figure 2 shows the map as it appears on one of Oxfam's main pages. Unlike many more familiar maps, the northern hemisphere is minimized and the southern hemisphere (the area of "need") dominates the map. Africa is right in the center and has more sub-regions marked on it than any other continent.

Oxfam sets up a relationship for the donor, affiliating him or her not with recipient nations, but with other donor nations. When you click on a region of the world, you can see a chart from Oxfam that has countries in need listed on the left side and donor nations listed along the top. Then corresponding boxes (as you can see in Figure 3) are colored in differently at various times for locations where the Oxfam based in a particular donor nation is working. The aspect of the grid I want to point out is not about what countries are working where, but rather the fact of the grid itself. A set of geographically connected nations in Africa are on one side of the grid (in another case of charting and measuring the immeasurable), while a set of nations from a variety of locations—but predominantly from Europe—form a club at the top of the chart.



Figure 3: “Oxfam donor nations working in the Horn of Africa”



AUS - [Oxfam Australia](#) | BEL - [Oxfam-in-Belgium](#) | CAN - [Oxfam Canada](#) | DEU - [Oxfam Germany](#) | ESP - [Intermón Oxfam \(Spain\)](#) | GBR - [Oxfam Great Britain](#) | HKG - [Oxfam Hong Kong](#) | IRL - [Oxfam Ireland](#) | NLD - [Novib Oxfam Netherlands](#) | NZL - [Oxfam New Zealand](#) | QC - [Oxfam Québec](#) | USA - [Oxfam America](#) [ [Return - World map](#) ]

This information covers the financial year 2003-2004 and refers to areas where Oxfam is involved in one or more of the following: operational programs (development or emergency), working through partners and/or working through another Oxfam affiliate. Information presented does not include Oxfam America, as details were not available at press time.

The sensation is one of unity with other donors, that “we are all in this together.” The brand focus is less about aid workers (as with MSF), and more about human habitats. With Oxfam, a donor feels like he or she might truly change the world, because much of the funding goes to creating livable human habitats. Oxfam creates feelings of adventure for the individual donor (rather than for the aid workers as with MSF) as a Web site visitor travels to new places, almost like a participant in a safari traveling with other members of the “donor” world into the lands of the “recipient” world.

### **Permanent Vulnerability**

The spatial connections these organizations create through images can also hide the histories of individual sites and cover over many past connections between places. MSF and Oxfam often respond to immediate life-or-death needs, and the spaces they emphasize are seen in terms of present capacities to support life. The sense of urgency that comes with immediate needs fixes the present moment as the only one, covering over layers of past

stories for a region. Organizational awareness of future hardships establishes a sense of time based on risk. MSF and Oxfam represent the unchanging present of a region and, contradictorily, its potential to support life in the future.

The title of the MSF article, “Afghanistan at one year,” offers an entry into the temporal scope of stories MSF tells. While “one year” has no explicit referent, the obvious connection is to the military action in Afghanistan following the September 11, 2001, attack on the World Trade Center towers. Time starts at the point of (mostly) western military intervention. The MSF intervention corresponds with that time. While it started activity in the Zhare Dasht region of Afghanistan in 1995, political forces made it difficult for MSF to work until the U.S.-backed military action one year before the article appeared. Time revolves around intervention in a region, and is always in reference to distance from the present. In the Life-aid zones MSF often performs immunizations and preventive medical work. The future, though, appears in other terms as well. Halsema claims that “the success of Zhare Dasht depends on the availability of water. [. . .] [W]ells are going to be worked on again and efforts will be made to dig deep enough so that they can cope with the demand for water” (van Halsema). Time in the desert is based on when there may or may not be changes in how it can support people. MSF makes efforts to alleviate the risk of future suffering, but uncontrollable factors like rain make life there a gamble.

MSF is also providing medical aid at a hospital, in a prison, and in neighborhoods in Cote d’Ivoire, where internal political struggles have made food and medicine hard to get. They describe one neighborhood in Abidjan as “precarious,” full of “vulnerable families who, having been threatened with expulsion, are at even greater risk” (“MSF reinforces”). This small zone, a neighborhood, has no past in the article. It appears as a place fixed in time

and full of danger. The only temporal movement is in the intensification of danger for the future as “Threats and intimidation against these communities are hardening, not easing” (“MSF reinforces”).

Risk appears even more centrally in some of Oxfam’s materials. In a September 30, 2002, article about food needs in southern Africa, the future takes center stage. The article begins with a boldface paragraph stating that findings from “a three-week vulnerability assessment indicate that another 1.6 million people are in urgent need of food aid” and that the “crisis throughout southern Africa is worsening faster than was originally projected” (“Southern Africa Food Crisis”). The “food crisis” is spoken about as a fixed situation, which will simply get better or worse in degree in the future. Time is presented through changes in speed, the acceleration and deceleration of needs within a historically static moment. Intervention can change the speed and direction for basic needs to move, but the life-aid zone has no clear historical past. One form of intervention the southern Africa article describes is the use of genetically modified (GM) corn. Its use involves a risk because of “the possible impact on human health of eating GM foods, possible loss of export opportunities, and potential effects on agriculture if GM genes cross into local varieties. In the life-aid zone of southern Africa, time functions in terms of risks and benefits from intervening aid organizations, but the risk is to the space itself as much as anyone in it.

In a larger scale, Oxfam’s article about Narcisa Nuis Mashienta Jimbiti, a young activist in Ecuador, presents the fixity of time. She works with an organization that pushes for the rights of the Shuar people and the rainforests they live in. The article claims that “The Shuar have lived on their ancestral lands and maintained their traditions for centuries” (Gelbspan). Not only are they fixed in time, presented as changeless over many years, but

that fixity ought to be maintained. While the importance of cultural preservation is too big an issue to address here, the notion that the Shuar have not changed emphasizes the flatness of many aid organizations' temporal representations. The Shuar have only one historical moment, but here, that moment is at risk. Again, the people are tied to the space, so that any risk to their fixed culture is about the geographic space as well. Future changes could be good in this case, through establishing improved relationships with the Achuar and Quechua people's and by giving women like Narcisa new roles (Gelbspan). The companies wanting to drill for oil in their forestlands provide the negative risk to "the natural environment and livelihoods, and, as a result, human health" (Gelbspan). Changing roles for women and a variety of different relationships with peoples like the Achuar are covered over in this statement of change. Future change comes from the seemingly eternal conflict with the Achuar to the creation of a space of cooperation. The reader is in the position of a distant explorer, one who learns about another culture and human habitat that the wealthy should preserve.

While this presentation of a fixed time has ramifications for hiding histories and changes in a place or group, it also impacts readers' feelings. It leaves the sensation that a situation cannot really be changed—from within or without. This leads to feelings of futility and uselessness in responding, combined with curiosity at these completely Other unchanging places. The passive viewer, watching and reading about an unchanging place, tends to be an inactive and disconnected spectator. It is the need for creative production in relation to spaces of suffering that makes me value having a course on the "Rhetoric of Suffering." Students are given the opportunity to choose events and organizations that may shape them when an instructor creates opportunities for active classroom work. The

branding of organizations, events, and even humanitarian crises may have negative ramifications, but this branding is so common that it is worth considering how to use these branding processes to create productive affiliations.

In my course, after assignments like a book review, a rhetorical analysis, and a group project on exploring multiple sides of an issue (all of which had to relate in some way to the theme of service and suffering), I asked students to do a “Creative Research Essay.” Their task involved choosing a genre, format, and issue and—based on our class discussions—writing an ethically responsible research essay on an issue they wanted to work on in depth. I wanted the students to consider forces shaping affective responses to suffering, and implicitly I asked them to do work in World Bank Rhetoric. Some of the text of the assignment sheet read as follows:

For this paper [. . .] you will select a specific public case of suffering and/or service and write your own response to it. You are encouraged to think about the types of responses we have read in this class, and to draw writing strategies from some or all of them. This is a flexible assignment—which will probably make some of you happy and others uncomfortable. However, you are required to research your topic and include sources in your paper. You also must be arguing a point of some sort (this time your own view, or something you present as your view at least). However, the way you argue it may be through fiction, through an academic essay, through an analysis of a specific cultural artifact, or through a dialogue—to name just a few. The genre of the paper is up to you—but be creative—and at the same time, consider what sort of audience you are writing to and creating. Also consider

how to ethically write about the topic you have chosen. One person might write a short play about people on a roof in New Orleans after the hurricane. Someone else might do an analysis of news reports about Sudan in 2005. Another paper could have a more traditional thesis statement and point-by-point argument about how the U.S. government should currently respond to the situation in Chechnya. Your paper could even be about the ethics of responding to certain kinds of situations of suffering—but would use one main example. (Newcomb)

Students produced everything from letters from a Bosnian pen-pal before, during, and after the fighting there (based on interviews with someone who had lived through the fighting there), to a close analysis of local government's responsibilities in New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina, to a play featuring a pair of Chechnyan siblings, to a reflective study of why distant traumatic situations do not emotionally impact many people. These were not perfect papers, but they brought a sense of creativity and possibility to a few dire situations, and encouraged students to be constantly aware of the relational ethics involved in writing about the suffering of others. The paper with the Bosnian pen-pal was based on interviews with the writer's friend who grew up in Bosnia. The student-author had to consider what questions were and were not appropriate to ask given her relationship with the interviewee. She also had to integrate her own creativity with concerns about representation—and chose to do a fictional account in this case. She also presented the pen-pals as changing figures, not as static beings that were needy or helpers.

These papers could even be understood as maps showing portions of those students' own affective responses to moments of distant suffering, and small steps toward a skill of

critical feeling, which remembers the issues, inequalities, and connections circulating around terms like “world,” “bank,” and “rhetoric.” The play about Chechnyan siblings involved research into Chechnya and the crisis there, but explicitly had those siblings moving in separate paths around the world. The varied locations they moved to in the play—for financial and personal reasons—mapped a rhetorical world that could change the way the student-author thought about feelings and rhetoric.

My students provided new spatial connections between feelings and places after they had critiqued aid organization Web sites from the role of consumer or customer. It is precisely that customer position that limits some organizations. Having a brand for an aid organization is not bad in itself. What organizations like Oxfam and MSF may need is a brand that visitors can become participants in, not just as customers, but as creative producers. This can remove some of the distance felt between the individual donor in Nebraska, the aid organization, and the refugee camp in Afghanistan. The value of connecting these disparate locations is the value of World Bank Rhetoric, that not only acknowledges the emotional and material connections between these places but also explores how those connections are rhetorically created, changed, and potentially used. It may be problematic to base so much on the needs of donors, rather than on the needs of those who are in a humanitarian crisis, but the needs of the organization are central in the current model. With the direction for change that I propose, ultimately it is the relationship between two groups of people that is central—a relationship that can ideally be based on mutual needs and gifts.

While this chapter has argued that humanitarian aid rhetoric in the context of specific aid organizations is about the creation of a stylized experience for potential consumers

(donors), the next chapter shifts the focus to how affective responses to a place or issue can change. Oxfam and MSF's brands highlight the conjunction of world, bank, and rhetoric for the classroom and in larger public arenas. The World Bank Rhetoric analysis of their narratives shows the positions that students are placed in in relation to distant others. Much affective rhetoric positions readers as consumers, so either changing that positioning to a useful form of producer (maybe inspired by Nike, but not using it as a model), or making the consumer role an appropriate and ethical one is vital. The next chapter will explore how affective responses to South Korea and AIDS in Africa have changed, and therefore what possibilities might exist for guiding changes in affective responses to other places and situations. It continues my exemplification of World Bank Rhetoric and explores less brand-based affective experiences in humanitarian rhetoric.



## **Chapter 5: Changing Feelings: Mapping Shifts in Affective Responses to Children in Korea, AIDS in Africa, and Suffering in the Classroom**

One of my premises, as I indicated in the introduction, is that in the global condition of Empire the stories and images of humanitarian crises and the suffering of distant others is a shaping force for students. Because of the potential affective power of distant suffering and the sense of constant crisis management by governments, aid organizations, and individuals, images of suffering can saturate someone's feelings. Thus far, I have drawn several affective maps that can help rhetoric and composition teachers approach "critical feeling" skills more directly with students. The preceding chapter emphasized places of suffering around the world and affective responses to brands that depict those locations. Here I address the notion of a change in affective identity; this chapter does not focus on a change in how people in a specific location understand their own culture or community, but rather addresses a change in the rhetoric and affective responses about a place and situation. This shift, especially from recipient nation to donor nation, creates a whole new set of feelings about that location in a context of World Bank issues.

At the same time, I wonder about changes my students did (and did not) undergo during our "Rhetoric of Suffering" course. These changes often seem small—as they tend to be related to how students receive narratives and images that impact them. My students and I did not change major social structures, yet small thought changes can alter the affects and desires of people as well. If global media, economic, and cultural forces shape affective possibilities, then useful changes may come by receiving and using those forces in alternative ways. I begin this chapter by telling the story of Korea (South) and its interaction with

Compassion International. Compassion is a large, Christian-affiliated (no specific denomination) organization that runs a child-sponsorship program. Individuals in “developed” nations provide approximately thirty dollars per month to make education, sanitation, food, and other locally determined necessities available to one specific child. Letters go back and forth between the child and the sponsor, and the support is designed to continue until the child achieves the local equivalent of a high school diploma.

In this chapter I explore how representations of Korea in Compassion’s promotional materials were transformed—how Korea was changed from a recipient nation into a donor nation—and how the history of that change was told. Korea’s change is equivalent to moving from the recipient side of Oxfam’s map of the world (in the previous chapter) to the donor side. I then move to the second huge issue of AIDS in Africa (those three words seem like a single unit now), particularly why in the response to AIDS, AIDS has shifted from a “gay disease” to an “African disease” in popular parlance. In both cases—representations of Korea and narratives about AIDS in Africa—I emphasize the shift in feeling towards a place that comes with the change in rhetorical identity. I conclude by providing a brief counterpoint from my classroom, where students describe actual changes in their affective responses to various situations and places associated with humanitarian crisis or suffering. This chapter continues to establish the centrality of globally shaped affective responses to rhetoric in general and to very localized rhetorical experiences.

### **Korea Bound to Where?**

Nations and peoples are represented, categorized, and stereotyped through a plenitude of means. For example, as Edward Said in *Orientalism* has argued, the European imperial

powers of the nineteenth century constructed a monolith called the Orient that lumped together a wide variety of peoples (1-3). The Cold War era categories of the First, Second, and Third world are another way to link groups of nations together. One of the main ways that the world is now divided in the culture of U.S. media and organizations is based on whether a place is one of suffering or a base for humanitarian service. Nations are described in terms of their economic roles, and those roles are played out in personal aid work and suffering. A nation can be developed, underdeveloped, or developing. This manner of conceptually organizing the world need not be taken for granted, but someone cannot simply wish the terms away either. Instead, categories like “underdeveloped” or “donor nations” need to be elaborated in specific instances that emphasize connections and identities not based only on economic roles. The feelings and connections involved can emphasize histories and cultures in ways that move beyond looking only at suffering.

My real-life version of jumping beyond assorted borders focuses on the Republic of Korea in conjunction with Afghanistan, (almost) Romania, Africa mostly by absence, my mailbox in Pennsylvania, and the former British Empire. However, this story starts in Uzbekistan. Early in 1998 I went to the Central Asian country that was considered to be still developing as it worked through its escape from Russian imperialism. I taught English as a Second Language in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, and one January day I went out for a late lunch with a student and new friend to a Korean restaurant. While it can seem at times that U.S. citizens know other cultures only through the American versions of their foods, this food experience was somewhat displaced for me—to Uzbekistan. In the former Soviet Republic, north of Afghanistan and west of China, I was teaching English as a Second Language to engineering students, one of whom was Korean. He had come for the major job and business

opportunities that many in Korea saw around the capital city of Tashkent. He wanted to take me to lunch, both to chat about our backgrounds and to get a bit more English practice. (Daewoo, a Korean automobile manufacturer, had been the main business I'd noticed thus far in Tashkent. Every mini-van and every third car displayed the modern, pointy Daewoo label in silver on the back.) As we ate spicy duck and an egg-based soup, I learned that Uzbekistan had become one of the main options for regional, foreign investment for a growing Korean economy—something I had certainly never learned in the Korean restaurant in my Pennsylvania town.

Over the next several years, I heard only snatches of news reports and information about South Korea. Apparently the South Korean and North Korean governments were getting along better, and families that had been split up were allowed a few visits and exchanges. The South Korean president, Kim Dae Jung, won the Nobel Peace Prize in 2000 for human rights and reconciliation work in East Asia, the North and South Koreans fielded a unified team for the 2002 Winter Olympics—even coming up with a unified flag—and then South Korea became the rarely mentioned better half to the “evil” nuclear arms program in North Korea. The news ended up being a darkly comic version of the Cold War, with barriers seemingly broken down, and people reunited and learned to play together, until they became involved in a new take on the not-so-old nuclear theme, as Reagan’s “evil empire” shifted to Bush’s “axis of evil,” in a new variation on the linking theme. Looking at the literature of a western aid organization, as it shows the Republic of Korea in its changing connections to categories and other nations can show the value of complicating the easy groupings based on economic roles.

## **Blankets for the Cold War**

Early in 2003, I heard about the Republic of Korea again, and from a slightly different direction than through CNN or the president's press secretary. I walked in from my mailbox with a large, 16-page, glossy annual report from Compassion International, which is "a Christian child advocacy ministry that releases children from spiritual, economic, social and physical poverty" ("About Us"). Korea, where Compassion's international work with children and troops began in 1952, was the focus of the report. Compassion International is a non-governmental organization based in Colorado that identifies itself as a Christian organization that addresses the needs of children around the world. When I was a child, my family supported a child through Compassion through a monthly commitment that provided food, education, and clothing for him. We even became pen pals with the child until his family managed to send him to other relatives in Canada with its relatively friendly immigration policies. Since the child support program had officially been set up in the name of me and my brother years earlier, I received the annual reports, as did the individuals, families, and groups sponsoring the 391,930 children recorded as of mid-2002 in the annual review (Compassion 4). Given that church groups or families (of four in my case) often do the sponsoring, between half-a-million and a million people probably had easy access to the high-production-value report.

The article about South Korea, or, more properly, the Republic of Korea—its official name is an important point to those Koreans who say that the North seceded, leaving those in the South as Koreans, not South Koreans—struck me in its narrative of significant change. In the article, Korea (South) shifted from a recipient nation to a donor or "partner" nation that could now help others instead of needing help itself. Early in the article, Justin Suh, the

“newly appointed executive director of Compassion Korea,” is quoted as saying, “The majority of Koreans believe that now is the time to return all the blessings we’ve received, especially from the United States. [. . .] Now we need to be able to turn around and do the same for other needy people. This is a great opportunity for Koreans to experience that challenge” (Lees 16). Suh suggests that there is a level of obligation to give to other countries in the same way that his nation received donations. Suh also suggests that the change is not just in Korea’s international status as a donor nation, but also includes individual changes as people focus on the “challenge” of giving. The status of a nation as donor or recipient can have an impact on how citizens are encouraged to think of themselves and on how they should feel toward other nations.

U.S. media and organizations are rightly critiqued for creating and fixing reductive identities for different communities.<sup>14</sup> Fixing identities in terms of developing nations or the third world has an important history in the latter half of the twentieth century as well; however, the Republic of Korea in this report manages to break out of “developing” or “underdeveloped” nation status and crosses the binary-line to the side of the world that helps others. While this switch reinforces splits between donor and recipient nations more than it breaks them down, understanding the narrative that allows for movement in status (a status that is a rhetorical construct of media, government, and aid organizations) can provide greater understanding of the classification of communities in humanitarian and development terms. If western institutions understand nations in terms of these economic roles, what standard determines the status? And what factors that are not directly economic, at least in Korea’s case, can help change the status as well?

---

<sup>14</sup> Edward Said’s *Covering Islam* is one example of a study of U.S. and European media versions of Islam. He criticizes the monolithic, simplistic, and violent version of Islam that appears in western media and that replaces a broad spectrum of religious and culture practices of the world’s many Muslims.

One could make a case that since September of 2001 “those against terrorism” and “those supporting it,” as defined by the U.S. government, is the dominant binary for sorting the nations of the world into sections. But terrorism language also simply provides another way for thinking about development. The need to develop nations and provide relief is so that they don’t “breed” terrorists. Terrorism gets attached to underdeveloped or needy nations, while donor nations appear to be exempt from the possibility of that label, which is part of the contemporary context of connections to humanitarian culture that asks for further study.

As with many U.S.-centered narratives of the Korean peninsula, the originary point is an instance when the Cold War warmed up. According to the Compassion Annual Report’s article on South Korea, “In 1952, Chicago-based evangelist Everett Swanson traveled to South Korea. [ . . . ] And during his time there, Swanson was especially disturbed by the sight of homeless children shivering in doorways and hungry boys tugging at his coat” (Lees 16). The Korean War focused attention on basic needs in Korea, and Swanson returned to the United States and started raising funds for Korean orphans. Compassion’s narrative records the designation for the first donation he received, which puts one of the fundamental problems of writing and relief clearly. “The needy of Korea” (Lees 16) is all the narrative said, and beyond news reports on the war, was probably most of what the donor knew. “Korea” and “needy” are equated in a way that summarizes what one should know about that distant and foreign place, and the response to need is money. My goal is certainly not to denigrate donating to funds that provide food, clothing, and education for orphans. Far from it. I simply want to suggest that not only should a much wider relationship and historical understanding be established in donation situations (a somewhat obvious and idealistic goal),

but that the languages of need and service have an important history themselves as well. Without the history of British and European imperialism and the Cold War rivalry between the United States and Soviet Union, concern about paternal language or imposing cultural values would be entirely different.

Many humanitarian aid organizations like Compassion began their work during the Cold War. Amnesty International started in 1961 at the initiative of Peter Benenson, a lawyer in Britain who wrote an article about prisoners worldwide after he was moved by “The imprisonment of two Portuguese students who had raised their wine glasses in a toast to freedom” (*About AI* 1). Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) began in 1971, still as a move to “address any violations of basic human rights encountered by field teams, violations perpetrated or sustained by political actors” (“MSF role” 4). Oxfam began in 1942 to aid people ravaged by WWII, and then expanded rapidly in the emerging Cold War environment. Historian Akira Iriye argues, “International organizations and nongovernmental organizations, whether engaged in cultural exchange or in relief work, were demonstrating that there were other themes in international affairs than the Cold War, that geopolitics defined only one aspect of the postwar world, and that visions of global community had not disappeared” (52). While Iriye is correct, I would further point out that the foundings of these organizations were partially responses to the binary politics of the Cold War. The struggles between the United States and the Soviet Union created a map with the First, Second, and Third Worlds on it. While humanitarian aid organizations mostly worked with that Third World space, they often created small ruptures in the dominant map.



## **Children of the British Empire**

Shortly after my lunch with the Korean student in Uzbekistan, I was at an evening party with a number of long and short-term visitors to Uzbekistan, almost all of whom saw themselves as serving the people of Uzbekistan in some way. After a meal, lots of introductions, and chatting in close quarters, someone had the less-than-brilliant idea of breaking out Scrabble.

It was more of an argument than a game. I've fought over Scrabble words before, and reverted to the dictionary any number of times, but even if we'd had a dictionary other than the Uzbek-English one it wouldn't have mattered. I was one of two Americans playing; I was from the Pacific Northwest and Bob was from New England. We also had an Australian, a Briton, an Indian, a Canadian, and a Polish couple who had learned the English language mostly from American books and British tapes. "Zed" presented the first major problem, which predictably put the Americans against the Briton, the Indian, and the Australian. It's tough to find good opportunities to use "Z." Each person fighting over the Scrabble game had come to Uzbekistan with some notion of service—missionary work, investments that would help the Uzbek economy, teaching English, general development work. Each type of service involved developing Uzbekistan in different ways, and could be seen as a result of the uneven developments, even in language, of post-British rule.

Very few have accused the British Empire of being a place of fair and even development. After the era of colonialism and the Cold War with its three worlds, nations now have development terminology, much of which is based on how various nations have changed as they came out of colonial rule. As Edward Said has stated, the colonized world became synonymous with the Third world (*Reflections* 294). Now the world consists of

developed nations, underdeveloped nations, developing nations, and nations in various stages of development. Most of this development refers to perceived levels of a free market economy, western human rights standards, the amount of representative democracy, and general economic status. The rhetoric of these categories could use further attention, as the language here literally makes the world in economic (or bank-based) terms. The development metaphor is rather apt, as the developed international media shows pictures that help inform us of what counts as developed, who needs more time soaking in solution, and which places might have come out of the darkroom a bit too quickly.

The photo lab of colonialism, with one darkroom in Joseph Conrad's rendition of central Africa and its civilizing development work in the latter 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, has its own set of national, racial, and class-based categories, critiqued in Said's *Orientalism*. The U.S. media is far from moving past false generalities about Arabs, Islam, or Orientals, just to name a few. Even the use of first, second, and third worlds is not gone; one just sees the term "former" in front of the number sometimes. No one from Britain's former African colonies had made it to Uzbekistan to help and play Scrabble with us; their sphere and connections were apparently of a different "world."

Dominant categories for classifying nations have emerged based on help and aid to different parts of the world. Now the "donor" nations or groups stand in a supportive binary against "aid-recipient" or "developing" nations. The servers help the needy. That is not a bad thing, but as notions of what it means to serve or need solidify, and as nations are stuck in particular roles, new oppositions can grow between the servers and needy, or more bluntly, the rich and poor nations. Frantz Fanon in *The Wretched of the Earth* noted that the colonial country was in two parts, sides that related to each other through violence and counter-

violence (39-43). While violence is still real in many places, one could say that service and counter-service are how the two parts of the post-colonial city interact. Service, in terms of huge loans, technology, farming aid, and even arms, goes one direction; and support of international policies, favorable investment opportunities, and even the “appropriate” style of government function as counter-service. These economic contests can turn violent too. For Korea, this set of categories means retrospective connection with the colonized, the third world, and most of Africa according to the literature of western aid organizations.

In the Compassion document, Korea made it to the service side of the equation through the service/counter-service exchange. The article states, “Fifty years after its first outreach to children, Compassion is about to receive the ultimate return on investment. Late next year, South Korea will join Compassion as a Partner Country—our ministry partner offering Compassion’s sponsorship-based program for impoverished children” (Lees 16). Korea can be a partner of the U.S.-based Compassion, and the language in this move turns economic. While service-language is still important, the new dominant terms are “investment” and “return” (on investment). The act of giving and sponsorship through Compassion is predominantly an act of generosity and aid in the language Compassion uses, until the giving comes back. Then the situation is one of a good investment, invoking feelings of entrepreneurship for donors, who can make a wise investment and a socially conscious one at the same time in this image of Compassion. Korea now is an investor too, and implicitly is a descendent of imperial and Cold War language. Korea can also be more on the powerful side of World Bank issues. Now the connections to Cold War language are spoken of predominantly through economic need, but there is still a partial goal of winning “underdeveloped” countries for the West. In a sense, Korea was converted as a country to a

Partner Country—along with the individual conversions Compassion may have gained through the evangelistic aspects of their work. While no Scrabble players from Korea were at my game in Uzbekistan, Koreans were likely working in Uzbekistan to sponsor children through Compassion, and new participants in English Scrabble could come soon.

### **Coloring Maps of Asia**

Compassion's story about Korea takes a long jump from 1952 to the heading "1993: Mission Accomplished" (Compassion 16). After offering a few statistics about the number of countries Compassion was working with by the early 1990s and the 3500 children sponsored in the Republic of Korea, Chief Financial Officer Ed Anderson says, "We left South Korea because its economy and Christian church had grown to the point where they no longer needed us to help them in their progress" (Compassion 16). Readers hear one statistic about the strength of Korea's economy, but Anderson's comment leaves levels of responsibility ambiguous. Growth happened, and certainly this narrative credits the aid Compassion and like-minded organizations offered, but the progress does at least belong to Koreans. Whose progress is this though? In this story, Korea became more like the main donor nation in both economics and religion. It is a place of production and Christianity, and therefore is ready for a switch in roles. In a sense, Korea cannot be of service to others without becoming a Western (Christian in this case) nation in the eyes of the NGO. Korea and the United States could appear on the same side of a map now.

What these maps with two sides (like MSF's or Oxfam's) do not do is help to establish the basis for any connections, or give explanations about linkages between sites. Each country is portrayed as having isolated zones of suffering, rather than being presented

as connected to other countries through common histories or communication. Ultimately the international aid organization has the powerful role of rhetorically linking places together. Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri have described the isolation of contemporary revolts: “Perhaps precisely because all these struggles are incommunicable and thus blocked from traveling horizontally in the form of a cycle, they are forced instead to leap vertically and touch immediately on the global level” (55). In a similar way, the countries in lists of need-filled places impact the reader in a global way. The abstract category of spaces of suffering is a global issue that can be understood as a worldwide problem from any one example. Which country a web-surfer clicks on is often quite arbitrary; each article describes global suffering in its local space. The individual articles do have links to other pages, but those links are almost solely about that one country. You have to go to the master list to jump to Yemen or Iran. This format universalizes the suffering in a universe of those being served but only shows histories together in the abstract. With a few exceptions, like refugees moving from Afghanistan to Pakistan and back, even poignant stories only impact the reader on emotional and abstract levels. There is no sense of connected histories between places.

### **From Asian Orphan to Africa’s Parent**

The front page of Compassion International’s 2001-2002 annual report begins by stating, “Today, more than ever, the world’s children need champions—people who will not only speak up for them, but also take bold action to alleviate their suffering and give them hope. [ . . . ] In developing countries, one in three children is born into abject poverty and conditions of almost unimaginable suffering and need” (Compassion 1). One could analyze the language of this report for its divide between developing and developed nations or for the

way that western aid workers are the only actors—the only ones that can “speak up,” “take bold action,” “alleviate their suffering,” or “give hope.” The whole problem of representation, particularly for children who sometimes literally cannot speak yet, except in the language of cries and grasping hands, will not be solved here.

Beneath the introductory paragraph and dwarfed by an image of a child’s face, marked as other by his brown-colored skin and staring intently at the reader, is a listing of where every 100 children are born. According to these statistics “53 are born in Asia (19 in India, 15 in China),” “19 are born in sub-Saharan Africa,” and “7 are born in developed countries (Western Europe, United States, Canada, Israel, Japan, Australia, New Zealand)” (Compassion 1). The developed countries sound a bit like a list of the nations represented around my Scrabble game, although Japan is included, as is usual, meaning that Japanese children are probably not counted as part of those 53 born in Asia. The categories of developed versus developing nations take precedence in terms of identity categories over regional connection in this case. Japan counts like Western Europe, not like Thailand or China. The businessman from India who was beating me at Scrabble was bumped into the developing category, since what to do with a country like India is difficult. It’s big, it has around a billion people, it has areas of wealth and poverty, and it has areas that seem to match western rights values and portions that do not (of course all countries have significant variation as well). The classification of a nation as a whole presents its own problems, and allows human rights and poverty issues in places like the United States to be covered over when working in international terms. Poverty and lack of representation in Washington D.C. is only an internal or national issue (as is ironically noted in the “Taxation Without

Representation” license plates in D.C.), not one for international concern since the U.S. is a privileged, developed country.

The developed/developing split is not stated in exactly those terms, but it is very clear in the Compassion document, and the children I saw in Uzbekistan do count in the Asian 53, regardless of the economic status of the parents. The Compassion document goes on to talk about health conditions, child labor, and food availability in further lists of “Out of every 100 children” (Compassion 1). I wonder how many of every 100 children contribute to reports about them, and yet perhaps you and I ought to be trying to directly aid children in poverty too.

Korea does not show up explicitly on any of the lists of “Out of every 100 children.” Perhaps it was a special case in terms of development. One child I met in Uzbekistan had one ethnically Uzbek and one ethnically Korean parent. (She managed to stay up longer than I did on New Year’s Eve and was developing quite well as a child in her education and social skills.) No Koreans were involved in my Scrabble game, but that is about the only time I was not in contact with something Korean in Uzbekistan. Korean industry was big, and Daewoo had a large plant in Uzbekistan. South Korea seemed to serve as an image of quality economic growth for many I spoke to in Uzbekistan, and the Korean student I had lunch with saw Uzbekistan as a place for investment of time and money. Korea’s economic growth had made it at least an investor country, even if its development was not complete yet.

The feature article in the Compassion International 2001-2002 annual report that I have continually referred to covers the entire back page and includes two glossy photos: one of an American man from 1960, with a bow tie and smile, holding a Korean child with an equally toothy grin; the other of a young Korean man in a shirt and tie in 2002. The latter is

clearly the informed one in the photo as he talks and gestures in front of a map of sorts (Lees 16). The article's title is "South Korea Partners as Advocate for Children: Compassion's Ministry Comes Full Circle" (Lees16). South Korea had started in 1952 as a needy, developing nation, but its identity had now changed. It was to become a "Partner Country" in 2003. The narrative describes Compassion's work to help needy children in South Korea, how by 1993 South Korea had developed enough that the "sponsorship program was no longer needed there," and that now the job is one of "Building a Partner Country From the Ground Up" (Lees 16). The effectiveness or accuracy of this process and narrative is not the direct issue here. What the Republic of Korea shows is the possibility of moving at least from a needy or developing country to a partner country in the view of at least one U.S.-based aid organization. Identities as needy or donor are not fully fixed, but the shift still does not allow many third options. South Korea becomes a partner, another donor nation, apparently moving from somewhere below an economic dividing line to somewhere above it. However, the western agency's role is now to build a partner, just like it was building infrastructure, hope, or better conditions for children before. Even in the language of equality and the transformation to a new status, hierarchies remain. Some are more equal partners than others.

The narrative concludes with an explanation that now they are putting together a staff of eight and office infrastructure for starting the Korean office in the near future (Lees 16). Acts of service reproduce themselves in powerful ways. Thousands of children have been fed by Compassion, and those acts have inspired further aid, but service cannot be removed from its history and form. The method of service is being reproduced in Korea as well, and perhaps someday Compassion will send out a new history telling about the Korea office's



work to help Sudan become a donor nation. But can the form apply as it moves across boundaries and cultures?

### **Not Romania**

In 1997, education student Matt Hilditch traveled to the Republic of Korea to work at an orphanage there. One of the most surprising comments he initially made was that he was not supposed to go. He was planning on going to Romania for similar work, but the contact there fell through, so the next place on the list was Korea. The move from Romanian to Korean children seems somewhere between random and egalitarian, but again displays a world categorized by economic role, without the specifics or histories of those economies always coming into play. Hilditch's description of what he had been led to expect was much like Everett Swanson's story of 1952, but what he saw reflected 1952 in a different way.

“It still was nicer than what you'd imagine. They [the children] all had plenty of blankets and stuff, clothes they kept in dressers and closets. They had bathrooms, not all the same facilities, but the same stuff, it flushed,” he laughed. His comments continued, “You can live with all this stuff. The kids were all much more educated than we had thought. They all went to school. It wasn't nearly as bad as you thought it was going to be” (Hilditch).

Instead of a huge need for aid, he saw a physical and ever-present history. “What was really interesting was how big of an impact that war really had. I knew about the Korean War and stuff, but it was not hugely important in the USA-centric history curriculum. We went on this hike one day, took us 10 minutes and we were on this ridge of bunkers that were open, and they were open, and we were literally where people had been fighting this war.”

Even the children were constantly impacted by the legacy of war and aid. “The kids all knew. They all know. Obviously none were alive during the Korean War, it’s still a big thing. It reminds me of how we deal with 9/11, all this how we’ll never forget and have security warnings, but even all that stuff doesn’t affect us. You can go through the whole day without thinking about it, but not there. You can’t get away” (Hilditch). The U.S. had come to the aid of Korea with troops and clothes in the 1950s. The legacies of both are intertwined, as the bunkers remain, and many orphanages are improved, but now the children play in the bunkers too.

Hilditch’s is only one version of a contemporary stint at service in a “needy” place, and Korea could still be seen as needy to some degree in 1997, or the trip would not have been possible. Ultimately, his descriptions of even the orphanage did not center on suffering, need, or development though. I wondered what was most representative of his experience with the children, and the answer was H.O.T.—one of the original Korean boy bands.

“They were way ahead of us for boy bands. They had all the boy bands going already. ‘N Sync and the Backstreet Boys were still in elementary school, but they (Korean bands) took it to a new level; they had the matching costumes. When they got on TV, there was one little TV in the orphanage, and they would pack all the kids in there” (Hilditch). Boy bands may not have entirely been an export from Korea to the United States, but Hilditch’s narrative provides points of departure to put Korea in a primary position, to see a culture as more than suffering, and to situate donations and aid within a muddled history of intervention. Even in the transition to a “partner” nation, the long story of the construction of the partnership ought not be erased. In this narrative, affective responses to Korea shifted

away from a sense of compassion toward a combination of self-congratulatory happiness and feelings of obligation to serve.

### **Emoting Africa**

Much of Korea's direction for service turned (with compassion) toward Africa—leading to a second major example of an affective shift. This affective shift includes changes in the rhetoric about a place and situation, but the feelings and the words are in a loop where neither feelings nor language can be considered the primary force. This loop is an example of how affect is not just a tool of rhetoric, but is fundamental to rhetoric. In this case, AIDS is currently a major concern in debates about the economic, social, and physical health of numerous nations within Africa. Cultural studies critics have often argued that AIDS in many forms is a much more complex representational issue than how it is portrayed in mainstream media and that it is really a spectrum of connected societal struggles. Paula Treichler, for example, has argued that AIDS in the Third World still signifies “a scientifically understood infectious disease that, without our help, will devastate whole countries, whose passive citizens struggle against it in vain” (99). She is correct in this assessment, but the increasing emphasis on AIDS and the economy in African nations is adding a complexity to AIDS as a cultural concept that leads to adjusted ways of understanding Africa from the west. As I write this in 2006, AIDS has been growing to stand more and more for Africa and holds a rubric of other issues under it. AIDS often implies Africa in many western media, service, and cultural circles. AIDS in Africa at the moment is certainly still connected to sexuality and otherness, but in western texts it has been linked more and more to economic concerns, age-based identities, and national security concerns.

Again, this is a case where work in World Bank Rhetoric is valuable, allowing the scholar to connect disparate economic, cultural, and linguistic factors on a global scale that impacts very local feelings.

After briefly looking at important previous work on AIDS as a constructed and representational force, I will use the literature of a few western humanitarian aid organizations and the U.S. government to explore these newer connections for AIDS and western views of Africa. New maps are needed to understand the shifting identity of AIDS in Africa, and to better grasp the affective responses (which impact material responses) to that humanitarian concern. Humanitarian aid organizations have grown greatly in number and influence in the last two decades, and are symbolic of these changes in AIDS-related issues because they did not always emphasize AIDS relief in their work. Aid organizations are also a good site for exploring the relationship between cultural criticism and activism, and ultimately between the analyst and suffering. Contemporary versions of AIDS in culture will help show that the relationships between economics and culture and between cultural analysis and activist work are not fixed. Social conditions blur and change those boundaries, requiring cultural workers to continually re-theorize their roles and the connections between material and cultural conditions.

### **Too Many Metaphors**

If AIDS and Africa can sometimes stand in for each other in metaphorical senses, then one also runs into the differences that the term “Africa” covers up. Understanding Africa as one big location and understanding that AIDS is a singular issue throughout Africa: this is one of the problems with how AIDS functions in a U.S. imaginary. AIDS has to be

addressed in a variety of ways based on different geographies and cultures. I will still refer to “AIDS in Africa” at times when the organizations I talk about do so. President George W. Bush’s 2004 proposal for additional funding to work against AIDS in Africa specifies fourteen different nations that will be the focus of the funding, and there is some sense of working uniquely in each nation. Theoretically, efforts to fight AIDS will be adjusted in each nation based on specific local needs. However, political actors run into a converse problem of ignoring other nations where AIDS-related funding is less, and those fourteen nations can be linked as problem places in opposition to the rest of Africa.

Whether in reference to Africa, to homosexuality, or even to the art world, AIDS has become, according to Treichler, “an *epidemic of signification*” (1, emphasis in original). She claims that the continual multiplication of metaphors and meanings for AIDS requires “careful examination of language and culture that enables us [. . .] to think carefully about ideas in the midst of a crisis” (1). The extensive research and analysis that AIDS has received medically, culturally, and historically have extended its connections and made policies, material help, and medical help all tied closely to how AIDS is understood at a particular cultural moment.

Another approach to this “epidemic of signification” comes from Susan Sontag’s work in *AIDS and Its Metaphors*. While Treichler seems to use the term “epidemic” to refer more to the spread and variety of what AIDS signifies than necessarily to the negative effects of its meanings, Sontag emphasizes the suffering that some of these metaphors can cause. Sontag works at a more semantic level, rather than one of broader cultural connections. She says, “AIDS has a dual metaphoric genealogy. As a microprocess, it is described as cancer is: an invasion. When the focus is on transmission of the disease, an older metaphor,

reminiscent of syphilis is invoked: pollution” (Sontag 105). Treichler and Sontag both note the centrality of war language in reference to AIDS, and Sontag even points out in 1988 that “Not only is the so-called AIDS virus the quintessential invader from the Third World. It can stand for any mythological menace” (150). While she goes on to say that “AIDS has so far evoked less pointedly racist reactions [in the United States] than in Europe, including the Soviet Union, where the African origin of the disease is stressed” (150), we will see that fear of terrorist-like invasion from the so-called Third World, particularly sub-Saharan Africa, has grown and evolved in new directions in this country.

A third cultural theorist of AIDS to bring into our constellation is Douglas Crimp. Most of his work on AIDS has been in reference to the United States. He too argues for the centrality of cultural work on AIDS:

AIDS does not exist apart from the practices that conceptualize it, represent it, and respond to it. [. . .] This assertion does not contest the existence of viruses, antibodies, infections, or transmission routes. Least of all does it contest the reality of illness, suffering, and death. What it *does* contest is the notion that there is an underlying reality of AIDS, upon which are constructed the representations, or the culture, or the politics of AIDS. (“Cultural Analysis” 3, emphasis in original)

It is not uncommon for writing about AIDS to have a strong divide between a base and superstructure, but not necessarily in traditional Marxist terms. The medical and biological facts are the base. The viruses and how they are transmitted produce the disease with the help of the medical profession and its diagnostic practices. Economic forces, particularly around research funds for AIDS and for AZT and other drugs, are a second (and

superstructural) level, followed by all those other cultural factors about AIDS. Crimp questions this biological base, saying it is never separate from the cultural level. I want to examine the relationship between biological, economic, and cultural practices in relation to AIDS in parts of Africa now, since the practices and metaphors have changed significantly in the U.S. context even since Treichler's relatively recent work.

Crimp, for example, only mentions Africa in relation to AIDS once in the work he edited and contributed to in 1988, saying that "AIDS has never been restricted to gay men in Central Africa, where the syndrome is a problem of apocalyptic dimensions, but to this day receives almost no attention in the U.S." ("How to Have" 249-50). I certainly do not fault him for this limited mention; his focus was on the gay community in the article, and he does recognize the failure to respond to a growing crisis in Africa. The point is rather that this sort of limited mention of Africa and AIDS would be nearly impossible now in such a discussion. The dominant connection for many in writing about AIDS in a western context is no longer gay men (not to say that this connection is gone by any stretch of the imagination), but rather sub-Saharan Africa.

I add an update to Treichler's and others' analyses of AIDS in Africa. She has pointed to a wide spectrum of issues that could be addressed, including the simplicity with which AIDS in the third world is seen by the first world (99), common and imperial ethnographic elements of westerners writing about AIDS (102-3), the ways statistics are used to simplify and control understandings of AIDS in Africa (112), attitudes about sex and exotic others (117-8), alternate views from African media (121, 206), debates over whether to educate or study about AIDS in Africa (220), and AIDS as a cultural and linguistic epidemic (223). I specifically focus on the language of humanitarian aid organizations and

the new ways they articulate AIDS, which further brings a medical/economic base in mutual influence with the cultural ramifications of AIDS as Crimp suggested. These connections, another case of world, bank, and rhetoric meeting in powerful ways, create a new set of affective responses to Africa from the distant West as well—and will even lead back to the classroom.

### **In and Out of Histories**

The increasing centrality of Africa to narratives about AIDS can be seen through the histories of AIDS that service organizations tell. Those histories are often guided both by their own work and by how AIDS appears in the media and in government language. The AEGIS organization, which is a non-governmental organization (NGO) focusing almost solely on AIDS-related relief, has a chronology of AIDS on its website. The history starts in 1926 with a version of the AIDS origin story. In this one, HIV moves from monkeys to humans somehow in Africa and establishes itself. The next entry also implicates Africa, with a man dying in the Congo “in what researchers now say was the first proven AIDS death” (*Timeline*). Africa disappears from the narrative for the most part until the mid- to late-1990s, when statistics start showing up again about the epidemic in Africa. Similarly, AVERT, another organization responding to AIDS issues internationally, has its own history of AIDS on its Web site. This narrative starts in the mid-1970s and says that “Neither do we know, and we probably never will know, where the AIDS virus HIV originated” (“History of AIDS Up to 1986”). African nations and infections are mentioned in 1983, but do not appear as a key part of this more detailed narrative until at least 1993 when it notes that the “World Bank reviewed it [sic] activities against AIDS in Africa, and decided that AIDS should not



dominate its agenda on population, health and nutrition issues. The World Bank believed that AIDS would have little demographic effect but recognized that it was a serious threat to health and economic development” (“History of AIDS 1993-1997”). Even then, AIDS was not a central issue to the World Bank, and time has shown a strong demographic effect.

In the mid- to late-1990s AVERT’s narrative turns to South Africa as the main focus of international AIDS issues. South Africa has had a very high infection rate, and has received more funding for AIDS-related relief and development than other African nations. Not only does South Africa, with its unique political struggles, stand in for much of the rest of Africa in stories about AIDS, but we can see a relatively consistent narrative that moves Africa to a central position starting in the latter half of the 1990s. Africa does not really become a primary focus until the late 1990s and early in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This change seems to happen because of the sense of greater control over AIDS in the United States and Western Europe, where people could live with AIDS rather than just die of it. Scholars should not overlook the importance of getting statistics from Africa about AIDS. Slightly increased interest in parts of Africa for other political reasons, particularly around terrorist activities and U.S. military activities, is also important. However, I want to focus not strictly on how this change to Africa was made, but what changes in the constellation of connections around AIDS have come with it.

### **Just Us Kids**

In the narratives about AIDS in Africa, children have become a powerful symbol for the disease. The children are shown as the innocent and pure victims of AIDS, acquired from mother-to-child infection. They also are the hurt orphans or heads of households as parents

die from AIDS. Through both the emphasis on children and the spotlight put on AIDS as it affects the healthiest, wage-earning age groups in Africa, age is gaining a place in the spotlight of key demographic and identity issues, joining gender and sexuality.

SOS Children's Village is a concept designed to provide a substitute family support structure when African children lose parents to AIDS. SOS also works with families where some members have been diagnosed with AIDS, and they use the story of Sindi, a child, to describe the AIDS crisis in Africa. "Sindi was orphaned when she was just four year of age, after her mother died of AIDS. That was seven years ago. Like so many other AIDS orphans in Southern Africa, Sindi and her five siblings found a new home with their grandmother (or 'Gogo')" ("Spotlight Africa"). The ages of orphaned children are mentioned continually, along with the idea that a generation of parents is being lost.

Focusing on children makes it easier for a range of issues, from poverty to education, from medical care to drought, to be brought together more easily. Organizations that were already working with some of these other concerns in Africa often had programs that emphasized the well-being of children, so centering AIDS on children's needs fit into the structure of a great deal of relief work already taking place. An AIDS foundation based in San Francisco called Pangaea lists eight key statistics about AIDS globally. One of those statistics is that 13 million children have become orphans due to HIV/AIDS; a second is that "In some African countries, high HIV death rates have claimed 20-50% of the teachers" ("Challenging"). Children are also specifically listed as the only sub-group in total numbers of deaths from HIV/AIDS. Children are dying, being orphaned, and losing chances for educations. Currently children make for good symbols, especially when many of an organization's publications are at least in part ways to raise funding. They also take the

emphasis off of sexual practices, which might be seen as something scaring away potential donors. Children can even bring in more of the religious community, many of whom stayed away from AIDS-related issues, with religiously-affiliated organizations like World Vision speaking of “an urgent need to mobilize the Christian community and the general public around the global HIV/AIDS crisis” (“A Generation to Save”). Children suffering can make sexually taboo issues no longer off limits.

Children can be victims whose own practices do not seem to come into play in the transmission of AIDS, and therefore can inspire more sympathy from potential donors. Not only do children fit into the more complex understanding of AIDS in Africa, they clean it up for some audiences. African parents often can catch the blame instead, which pits innocent African children against their supposedly out-of-control parents in some versions of this age dichotomy. The parents are implicit deserters who leave the children in charge of the family as they go to find work or die because of sexual irresponsibility. The split between good young people and bad older people becomes even more pronounced when gender enters the picture. Adult men are shown as sexual predators towards young girls in a way that condemns some Africans as people who do not take care of their children.

Cultural analysis of AIDS has rightly spent a great deal of time looking at sex, gender, and sexuality in relation to how AIDS works in a culture, but age needs to be included more in these analyses. Beyond my initial sketch, what does it mean for children to be the focus of AIDS relief in Africa? Do age-specific responses to AIDS in a region leave out important needs or ignore issues related to AIDS for other groups? Just like gender or sexuality, using age as a key node of identity restricts and expands the kind of analysis that can be done.

## **The Ugandan Example**

A similar combination of restricted and expanded opportunities takes place when one example takes over a discourse. This predominance of referring to one major response to AIDS has started to happen in the case of Uganda. When aid organizations and the U.S. government talk about AIDS in Africa, in general children, economics, and even security are central to the conversation in the often-limited depictions of Africans. However, when an organization wants to bring out a positive example of how to respond to AIDS in Africa, Uganda is at the top of everyone's list. The Academic Alliance for AIDS Care and Prevention in Africa, which was formed by a group of U.S. doctors and scientists, lists in its top five funding priorities "a program to disseminate and study the lessons learned from the 'Ugandan Experience' in reducing HIV transmission to other regions" ("Fact Sheet"). Uganda is the model to use for other African nations.

Uganda has reportedly reduced its HIV infections by over 15% in the last 15 years, and many give credit to the nation's ABC program. The alphabet agenda calls for promoting Abstinence, Being faithful to one sexual partner, and using Condoms. The program is depicted as a way to bring people together who would respond to AIDS from a variety of perspectives—particularly those who focus solely on abstinence or condoms. However, this is a Ugandan program, made possible by strong work from the Ugandan government and by the constant emphasis on and discussion of AIDS by Uganda's president. It may or may not bring groups closer to cooperation in the United States. Uganda appears as a great example because of statistics that show reduced infection rates, but also because its plan fits into a conversation already occurring in the United States. Having a successful example is a

powerful tool, particularly when that success is based mainly on work by Ugandans, but the early benefits lead some groups (particularly the U.S. government) close to a one-size-fits-all approach—as long as the one size has some variety to it.

Uganda's status as the key example for western aid organizations and African nations to look at brings out the ignored issue of relationships between African nations. I briefly addressed the problem of referring to Africa as a whole, but that concern goes beyond stereotyping and lumping disparate cultures together. It prevents the analysis of relationships between economies and cultures within Africa, which is needed as much as analysis of relationships between particular African regions and major donor nations like the United States. In western documents, Uganda's example should be carefully connected to other African countries, not just to off-and-on debates in the U.S. about responding to AIDS. Uganda can still be a powerful example, though, particularly for allowing nations to develop their own programs and putting fewer limitations on funding. Again, the cultural analyst can be vital to material changes by providing studies that show what is missing from reports on AIDS.

### **All About Money Again**

Metaphors, images of children, and the role of Uganda as an example: all are key discursive aspects of AIDS issues. But more direct economic concerns come in as well. Celebrities and economic concerns go hand-in-hand now. Warren Buffet donated close to \$40 million to Bill Gates' foundation in mid-2006. The Gates Foundation does major work on medical issues in Africa—particularly on reducing malaria and AIDS. The \$40 million frees up the already huge foundation to work as it sees fit, rather than having to seek

government grants as much as many organizations must. Aid and World Bank Rhetoric come together again as the (perhaps) monopolistic practices of Microsoft and the often-rebuked business practices of Wal-Mart lead to billions of dollars for educational and medical needs. Is this humanitarianism, hurting people to make the money to help people, or something else entirely? The band U2's lead singer Bono is a well-known face in aid work as well. His interest in bringing attention to AIDS in Africa appears through the organization he started, called DATA. DATA stands for Debt, AIDS, and Trade in Africa: simply through the name we have a set of issues that were not strongly present in AIDS-related conversations in the 1980s. Treichler notes a 1988 analysis by Miller and Rockwell of studies of AIDS in an African context where the two scholars "spelled out the demographic, economic, and medical consequences of the epidemic" (112). It is one of very few studies mentioned that connect AIDS and the economy in a very serious way. This kind of economic analysis did not frequently reach the western imaginary until much more recently, but is now nearly inescapable in some contexts. What does AIDS have to do with debt relief or trade practices anyway?

DATA's own publications start to answer that question, continually pointing to the ways money is distributed within and between nations. DATA's executive director, Jamie Drummond, encourages support of government "bilateral initiatives on AIDS and poverty" ("President Bush's 2005"). "AIDS and poverty" work together as one phrase throughout the DATA website. Many of the organization's calls for people to act involve having people write to congressional representatives about budgeting money to fight AIDS in Africa, while the information DATA releases is about trade practices as much as anything else. On a page entitled "The President's Budget Request For FY2005," the most important proposals to this

group are put together. The top one-third of the page tells about smaller-than-hoped-for increases in the Millennium Challenge money, which was initiated in 2002 “for countries taking strides to fight corruption and focus on their peoples’ needs” (“The President’s Budget”). Right below that chart is information on increases and decreases in money earmarked to fight “Global HIV/AIDS, TB and Malaria,” particularly noting a huge drop in U.S. contributions to the Global Fund to fight AIDS, TB, and Malaria. Below that chart is a list of key increases and decreases, which treats “Debt Forgiveness,” the “Complex Crises Fund,” and the “Child Survival and Health account” all as connected to each other and to AIDS (“The President’s Budget”). Public relations people for DATA and organizations like it are already working as cultural critics who try to show the connections between a variety of issues and who know that these connections can influence national policies.

AIDS, in these documents, becomes part of a broader health constellation, one that includes TB and malaria. Both of these latter diseases are usually connected with Africa or “underdeveloped” countries, setting AIDS more firmly in a slightly more complex, but non-western context. DATA provides a sense that a healthy economy is what can help most in struggling against an AIDS epidemic. Improved trade relations allow farmers to thrive more, in turn allowing their children to attend school and learn how to avoid AIDS. More directly, a strong national economy can provide anti-retroviral drugs for those with HIV and can better distribute condoms and educational materials. Conversely, when the main laborers in families die of AIDS, that loss has a wide range of economic ramifications for the family and community, including questions of what happens to their children.

Community and cultural impacts of AIDS come forth in a 2001 cover piece for *Time* magazine. The story used the dark title “Death Stalks a Continent” to begin talking about

AIDS in Africa. It fits in with past articles that talk about AIDS as something simply too huge for Africans to overcome initially. According to the article, AIDS in Africa “is a story about what happens when a disease leaps the confines of medicine to invade the body politic, infecting not just individuals but an entire society. As AIDS migrated to man [sic] in Africa, it mutated into a complex plague with confounding economic and political mechanics” (McGeary 2). While the image of infecting the “body politic” presents a horrific view of Africans as disease-ridden throughout, even in social and political relations, regardless of disease, it does start to recognize in a general way the complexity of AIDS socially.

The series in *Time* initially makes the connection between AIDS and economics by looking at truckers in Botswana. Their movement along a “highway that is Botswana’s economic lifeline and its curse” (McGeary 4) is portrayed as a pipeline for AIDS to travel along. The poverty of women with whom these truckers pay to have sex appears as the economic cause for further spread of AIDS. McGeary tells the story of Thandiwe, a woman whose husband is shot in South Africa, leaving her with two children. She ends up struggling to feed her children when his family does not help out. McGeary quotes Thandiwe as saying, “‘I couldn’t let my babies starve.’ One day she met a friend from school. ‘She told me she was a sex worker. She said, ‘Why you suffer? Let’s go to a place where we can get quick bucks.’” Thandiwe hangs her head. ‘I went. I was afraid. But now I go every night’” (5). Economics are the driving force behind AIDS in this presentation of one individual story. The *Time* series is somewhat obsessed with African sex, listing all sorts of reasons and relationships in which sex takes place (McGeary 4). Emphasizing prostitutes in the spread of AIDS and seeing sexual practices in parts of Africa as odd, unrestrained, or constant is nothing new in the AIDS discussions. What is new is the positive side of the



story. Instead of discussing a program that focuses on sex education (which is still important as was seen in the case of Uganda), the hope and possibility section is about microlending. AIDS and sex again become all about money.

The hopeful section on microlending is entitled “A Lending Tree.” The miniature economic cycle used as an example in this article by Simon Robinson tells of a father who gets infected by a prostitute. He then infects his wife, and the HIV-positive parents get sick and need help with work. They “pull their kids out of school. They can’t afford the fees and end up selling their few possessions to their family. When they die, their kids are left with nothing” (Robinson 1). In stories like this, the children are portrayed as the ones most impacted by AIDS. The focus on children can leave people with a sense of giving up on those living with AIDS, precisely because it costs so much to have the drugs that help one live with AIDS. The economic community bears the brunt of AIDS, and in this article, microloans to help pay for medical bills, for extra labor, or for strengthening a small business are part of an economic answer. Robinson states, “Though not directly targeted at people with AIDS, microcredit schemes go some way toward fixing that problem” (1). There is a danger here of making AIDS solely about the economic well-being of those who do not have HIV/AIDS but are around people with AIDS. This danger is a far cry from seeing AIDS as solely an overwhelming medical issue. Economic concerns even move back towards replacing biology as the “base” that all other AIDS-related concerns come back to. What *Time* does not address is how economic conditions can influence what becomes stigmatized and what can alter communities’ moral systems. The cultural or rhetorical analyst can be put in the position here of constantly arguing against ideas of what the “real issue” is. Even as AIDS becomes more complex in its significations, organizations and governments tend to

replace one basic issue (biology, sex, economics) with another, leaving the critic to constantly argue for that complicating element which is left out.

Scholars could argue that this change toward the economic in understanding AIDS in parts of Africa is an appropriate eye-opening, where western organizations are finally beginning to see the real economic basis for the spread of the disease, even if they do not recognize or change major systemic and trade practices that might need to be changed in relation to global AIDS. Conversely, one could say that adding in an economic level simply makes AIDS that much more impossible to deal with in Africa, and that it leads to a perhaps racist, and at the least ethnocentric, sense of African societies (lumped together of course) as diseased on every level. While there are elements of truth to both of these critiques, it may be more useful to argue that the connections between economics, medicine, and culture suggest that in a scenario of international funding, powerful western media, and humanitarian relief organizations, scholars cannot simply look at one culture and its forms of economic production.

AIDS in Africa as a broad construction is produced by the connections between ideas about disease in Botswana, money from the UN, and the ways *Time* magazine explains AIDS in Africa to wealthy and poor Americans. Rhetorical and cultural studies scholars need ways to analyze AIDS that are not dependent on old debates about the relationship between an economic base and cultural superstructure, but rather analyses that can relate different local economic and cultural forces to each other across the globe. In this scenario, the forms of economic production in Africa, coffee farming to take specific example, can be seen as part of a culture to preserve for some western organizations. In another trajectory, AIDS and African cultures can be seen as having a profound effect on economic production in the U.S.,

particularly when AIDS becomes a basis for security issues in the United States, and therefore influence government funding and even control of how the economy is regulated. World Bank Rhetoric is a start at exploring those alternate forms of analysis for vital concerns like AIDS.

### **Illness and Instability**

Discourses about AIDS in Africa have shifted away from those people actually infected with HIV towards those people impacted by broader ramifications of AIDS. Similarly, conversations about AIDS in the United States have partially moved away from those who are HIV-positive towards people who might be affected by the economic and terrorist fallout of AIDS. AIDS has often been seen as a threat, not only to the health or personal security of individuals but also to the physical health of a society.

However, it has also moved towards being a security threat in larger ways. To further examine the idea of security and mutual influence between cultural sites, let me mention a Bush administration proposal to fight AIDS in Africa. In April of 2000, the Clinton administration argued for AIDS as a security concern. According to CNN, “Jim Kennedy, the White House Deputy Spokesman, said the administration now believes AIDS is ‘more than a legitimate ongoing health threat, but also has the potential to destabilize governments such as African or Asian nations, which makes it an international security issue’” (“Clinton Declares”). This security issue means including the Department of Defense, which currently has a program to work with AIDS prevention in African militaries. The events of September 11, 2001, brought more fear about the dangers of “unstable” nations and their possibilities for being a home to terrorists. Because of the widespread connections now between AIDS and a

sense of failing development and economies, AIDS is depicted as a national security issue for the United States.

Even the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) states that “The U.S. government has made the fight against HIV/AIDS a top priority, not only for humanitarian reasons, but because the HIV/AIDS crisis threatens the prosperity, stability, and development of nations around the world” (“Overview”). President Bush in his 2003 State of the Union Address announced a proposal for \$15 billion in emergency funding (some but not all of which is new money) for “treating at least two million HIV-infected persons with anti-retroviral therapy, caring for 10 million persons infected with or affected by HIV, including orphans and vulnerable children, and preventing seven million new infections in 14 countries in Africa and the Caribbean” (“Overview”). Neither the exact number of people helped, nor the number of countries aided are the issue here. What is interesting about the proposal is its relatively recent emphasis on treating both those who are already infected with HIV and helping those affected by AIDS. The proposal is not sheerly medical in nature, and it goes beyond AIDS prevention. Providing drugs to those who are already HIV-infected means trying to preserve the lives of some of the central age group in different countries. The highest infection rates are usually of people in their twenties through their forties, and providing assistance to this key group is an attempt to preserve stability. Caring for children affected by AIDS in their families or communities means a new interest in the future of nations, and perhaps a fear of what those futures could mean for the United States.

What will the government of Mozambique be like if AIDS affects even more people there? How will economic struggles in Namibia influence the U.S. economy and potential further costs for relief? Where will there be pressure for the U.S. military to step in? These

are the kinds of questions asked in relation to AIDS in Africa. Cultural analysis of the ramifications of AIDS is something vital to the U.S. government because of the ways it may be called on to respond. One problem is the kind of relationship these questions set up. Africa may be complex, but Africa is still depicted as the problem that needs more assistance from the United States. The relationships between economy and culture in Kenya (for example) may influence both economy and culture in the United States, and vice versa, but the cause of intervention is always shown as the African nation. The need for food, medicine, or sanitation in a specific African country is a partial cause of intervention of course, but putting the emphasis entirely on the need is too simplistic when one considers how many needs are not acted upon. Even when aid organizations critique the practices of the World Trade Organization (WTO) or International Monetary Fund (IMF), the cause of action is a Third World or African problem, even if it is worsened by the WTO. Eventually a person can see analyses of how economic practices and production in the west influence African economies, but those analyses need to consider multiple places as starting points. One nation's need is not the cause of humanitarian intervention (with goods or a military force). Analyses of economics and culture need to be intertwined narratives that affect each other all along the way. Then citizens might be able to better understand the role that AIDS plays in African security or that cultural values in the U.S. play in determining when to intervene (to give two of many examples).

### **Fighting Metaphoric Battles**

At the beginning of the AIDS section of this chapter, I mentioned Paula Treichler's argument that AIDS in the Third World, and particularly in Africa, had been depicted as

overly simple and all-consuming. In the years since her argument, I believe that AIDS has been constructed as a much more complex issue with effects throughout different African nations. However, there is a danger in this complexity. Rather than AIDS being a big problem that Africa has, it becomes so pervasive in western writing about it that AIDS seems to infect the whole society. In a sense, AIDS is a negative metaphor for all of Africa. The new simplicity is in the ease of equating AIDS with Africa and Africa with AIDS. The complexities then get hidden behind this linguistic construction, and the details of particular nations, regions, families, and connections get hidden behind the main connection between a disease and a continent.

For rhetorical analysts and cultural theorists, it is important to take hold of the complexities and connections with economics, in particular, that recent depictions of AIDS in Africa provide. The difficulty is to provide analyses of the ramifications of AIDS in its many connections without losing all distinctions. The loss of distinctions is what can make simple equations like that between AIDS and Africa possible. The economic, medical, and cultural aspects of issues which come with AIDS in a particular place need to continue to be cordoned off at times. It is vital to think about how AIDS orphans are affected by their position in a society, but they cannot be the only new poster children for a disease that they do not have. The goal in analysis should be to make connections without compressing everything into one broad notion of culture that misses striations and fractures.

AIDS is still a powerful and changing metaphor. Rhetorical scholars can influence the view of Africa and Africans, even moving away from those categories, which could be part of reshaping the way money is allocated and how AIDS is seen. International humanitarian aid organizations are growing players in discourse about AIDS, and developing

economies, security, orphans, and age are just a few of the current emphases in contemporary views of AIDS. Treichler's "epidemic" of metaphors related to AIDS may be the disease that cultural analysts should fight against. While adding metaphors can add new complexities and perspectives to AIDS issues, they also can further the aspects of cultures that are subsumed under AIDS. If orphans in Africa signify AIDS, if any skin disease signifies AIDS, if a weak economy signifies AIDS, then AIDS can become all-consuming. Other issues may be ignored, and AIDS may then become the catch-all for writing or speaking about people in a wide series of situations. Cultural work to detach some issues from AIDS, or to connect them to other issues, can bring a focus to parallel issues in Africa or elsewhere. When the success of the economy in Kenya is shown as dependent on a struggle against AIDS, then we rightly see broader ramifications of AIDS. But in the process, scholars may lose track of some of the other dependencies and factors impacting the Kenyan economy. The inescapable linkages between globalization, economic concerns, and linguistically created relationships suggest the value of World Bank Rhetoric work that both functions on the level of public issue analysis and considers pedagogical concerns as students receive messages in the popular media about both AIDS and Africa.

### **Classroom Identities**

In both of the above cases, an exploration of economic issues and rhetoric about aid for each place helps create an image of feelings towards those places. In the case of Korea, affective responses shifted from sorrow and pity to joy and pride. These differences in feelings toward a place drive future decisions and language (for Compassion International in this case). The variety of rhetorical connections to AIDS provides a map of the changing

feelings toward the disease and those who are directly impacted by it. With Africa, feelings of mastery and distance from Westerners that go along with a simple notion of AIDS as solely a physiological issue change to feelings of futility and distance as AIDS shifted to become a complex cultural, economic, political, and medical issue.

One of my “Rhetoric of Suffering” students wrote about AIDS in Africa, claiming in a letter to the Bush administration, “I believe our policy on fighting AIDS in Africa should indeed be altered for several reasons: our current policy overlooks the plight of women, is too tied into the values of our own society, and even causes invasion of privacy issues that affect women and girls in Africa” (Lisa 1-2). Lisa’s concerns are tied to gender roles, personal freedoms, and cultural invasiveness. She has moved far beyond a simply medical understanding of AIDS. Changes in cultural depictions of AIDS have certainly pushed her towards the diversity of connections she writes about. Lisa’s analysis recognizes that her own feelings about this case of distant suffering are tied to political positions, value systems implied in AIDS policies, varied gender expectations, and even definitions of privacy. A next step would be to compose work that attempts to work on factors that create affective possibilities. Perhaps a student could compose an imaginative piece about the people a Ugandan laborer with AIDS is connected to. Or perhaps someone could create a different style of news reporting for an AIDS-related story. However, Lisa’s work is a start at World Bank Rhetoric in the composition classroom. Lisa’s World Bank Rhetoric work implies that rhetorical studies can really use the global, economic, and theoretical concerns of cultural studies, while adding a valuable focus on language analysis and strategies to cultural analyses. This sort of analysis moves beyond relying on feelings of compassion to lead to aid for others and makes room for other motives—such as the treatment of women or



intercultural relationships in Lisa's paper—to be alternative bases not only for humanitarian action, but also for humanitarian aid rhetoric and stories of suffering.

Lisa's paper and the notion of change in my students leads to the concluding chapter—which maps together the three locales of affective rhetoric, humanitarian aid issues, and World Bank Rhetoric by working through a series of student responses to my course on “The Rhetoric of Suffering.” I also examine a few additional student papers in leading to conclusions not only about World Bank Rhetoric work, but also about implications for the rhetoric and composition classroom.

## Chapter 6: Conclusion: Critical Feeling and Further Steps in Affective Rhetoric

In her final weekly response in the “Rhetoric of Suffering” class, Beth described an interaction with another student about what writing classes they were in. Beth maintains a sense of humor here:

From a typical first-month-of-college conversation:

“What’s your English class about?”

“Animals, animal rights. Yours?”

“Suffering.”

(awkward silence) “Seriously?”

or . . .

“What’s the topic for your English 30 class?”

“Love, work, and values. What about you?”

“Suffering.”

(laughter) “You’re just asking for depression, aren’t you?”

Luckily, I haven’t become depressed because of the subject of this English class. [. . .] In actuality, more than grateful, this class has made me ashamed and embarrassed to a certain degree for having been ignorant about events that happened in my lifetime. [. . .]

Overall, taking this class has made me a more informed person. (“Journal”)

I am certainly grateful that the class did not make Beth depressed. I am not so sure about the shame and embarrassment however. Past the laughter about the notion of a class about suffering, feelings were central to the course. I attempted to keep my students’ feelings in

mind regularly, not intentionally inducing guilt and attempting to be respectful of the pain of others without keeping everything dark and despairing. However, shame at their lack of knowledge was a common response from students. They have a sensation of needing to know about inequalities around the globe implied by work in World Bank Rhetoric. This shame is not a response that most students have in a physics class. Not knowing things is expected. My students also did not seem to feel shame about composition issues or skills that they did not know about—and these were at least as important to the course as the suffering-related topics we studied.

It is not uncommon for teachers to hope that students in their courses will undergo some sort of positive change during a semester, so I wonder what changes my students underwent. What affective responses, attitudes, and critical (feeling) abilities did they end up with by the end of the course? How might these changes affect their identities (and their writing practices) in some way? As for me, I am still left wondering how to change my pedagogical strategies in relation to affect, suffering, and composition. In the introduction to this dissertation I ask how I can better respond to my students in terms of issues of distant suffering. In this final section I provide ideas about how to work in the composition classroom as narratives and images of suffering, often with significant affective power, shape both my students and me.

One answer is to focus on critical feeling rather than just critical thinking. Even the change in terminology is a start at working with students on understanding how language impacts them in immediate, felt ways (even changing brain chemistry as anger, fear, or other emotions are felt). Critical feeling provides a different starting point than critical thinking for studying various influences on student values. Critical feeling also emphasizes the

overdetermined, highly contextual, and felt nature of influence and argument. Work on critical feeling should not work to eliminate feelings in some way, but instead can interrupt them, sometimes reducing overly extreme responses—and sometimes increasing the power of felt responses. In a basic way, critical feeling is thinking about feeling, but it does so to make explicit the affective training that goes on in a class. Instead of asking what a text means or how a student feels about a text, critical feeling considers what factors create felt responses and what can and should be done to alter those felt responses.

One final exploration of student responses will provide further possible answers to the issue of working on critical feeling with my classes and making affective mapping a pedagogical tool. I asked my students about their own identities and changes in their affective responses to distant suffering—often focusing on a specific case like the Rwandan genocide, apartheid in South Africa, or Hurricane Katrina. Along with a greater feeling of privilege, they portray themselves with the identity and feelings of failed helpers—sometimes through their own fault and sometimes not. Some also took to playing roles in papers (like the role of a specific East African woman or that of a Bosnian boy), creating their own complex affective maps that depict others in terms that go beyond simply being sufferers. These acts of role-playing were sometimes problematic as students put themselves in the position of people whose cultures and pain they could not know well. However, by playing roles the students escaped some of the guilt and futility felt by the others, and seemed more prepared to act in ways beyond just analyzing their own complex responses. Here, I quote some fairly large chunks from a number of student responses or papers in order to suggest their changes in affect or thoughtful lack thereof.

## **From the Classroom**

Doug describes his position and the difficulty it causes him to have strong feelings about distant suffering. He describes a need for a personal connection or personal experience that fits with the situations being described:

In our position as, on average, middle-class college students, much of the suffering that we come into contact with is very much removed from our position in life. There are undoubtedly some exceptions, but the vast majority of us cannot associate with starving, having no place to live, disease, war, or widespread discrimination. We can hear about these atrocities all day long, and as much ‘stuff’ as we may know about them, we cannot become closely, emotionally involved with the situation. It’s not that some of us wouldn’t want to, it’s just that it’s almost impossible to be empathetic, when we have no relationship with those ideas. (“Journal 10”)

Doug suggests that identity and economic position is an almost unsurpassable boundary. He presents a close emotional involvement as an implied goal or form of connection. What he does not address is the possibility of imaginative connections that do not involve empathy and compassion so much. He goes on to say,

In every book that we have read this year, one of the main tasks of the authors whose works were more poignant seemed to be trying to bring these issues to a level where the average human being can begin to associate with the feelings and thoughts of those actually involved. Beginning with Gourevitch, these authors would use a method of zooming in from the huge overarching

perspective of a situation to specific cases of individual persons. This was done because it is much easier to understand the suffering of one rather than the suffering of millions. (“Journal 10”)

Doug focuses on the individual connection, but notices the variety of scopes used to depict distant suffering. He specifies the two poles of an “overarching perspective” and “specific cases” while continuing to emphasize understanding as a goal. Students are trained to attempt to understand what they read, but understanding in cases of suffering may not be the best goal—and at the least its limitations have to be made clear. Doug’s analysis of two poles is a start at critical feeling, and as he applies his observations to how and why the poles impact people in particular ways, he moves into more detailed critical feeling work. When this work moves to a scale that involves global forces, in-class analyses can be work in the affective aspects of World Bank Rhetoric.

Heather reports a changed sense of understanding how the media shapes her feelings and responses. Her work is on self-understanding. She presents a slightly different sense of futility than Doug does. She takes a bit more personal responsibility for her lack of actions, while beginning to understand other forces shaping her feelings. Heather confesses,

I hate to admit it but the media does indeed play an enormous part in my life. Simply because the media does not report on certain topics, I know little to nothing about them. By media I suppose I mean the popular means of obtaining news: television, widespread newspapers, famous magazines. [. . .]

Having said all this, I think the lack of media coverage on distant suffering is partially to blame on why I don’t know much about far away tragedies. However, I am certainly mostly to blame because if I wanted to be

a globally knowledgeable citizen, I would have the means to do it. [. . .]

Perhaps I am being lazy or have a very negative view of the world, but I believe suffering will always take place. It's easy for me to say that and hardly be affected because I'm not suffering and I'm not in a place where civil war or being tortured could occur. Certainly, if I was suffering I would have to believe that it could be stopped because if I didn't what would there be to live for? [. . .]

I have great ambitions of going to foreign countries and helping people who are suffering. However, I feel like if I can't practice what I preach now—when I am in a comfortable surrounding with nothing to lose if I try to help right at home—then how am I going to fare once I am thrown into the boiling pot of suffering. (“Journal”)

For Heather, being informed is one of the best things she can do right now. Again, the notion that she should let the suffering of others impact and shape her own identity is the privileged act, rather than the act of donating money or identifying directly with others as Doug suggests. She does not find the suffering of someone in a civil war even conceivable. It could not happen to her (unlike the fear from “it could happen to me” that is behind some pity). So for Heather, being concerned about suffering in a distant civil war involves a focus on significant otherness. It cannot impact her as something that might happen to her soon. At the same time, she emphasizes the future. Because she “can't practice what I preach now,” the act of being informed is preparation for future practice. Yet it does not feel like enough. She suggests that it should be easier to aid others while she is comfortable, which remains at odds with the implications from other students that it is precisely their current

comfort that makes it hard to think of the suffering of others. Throughout, a notion of discomfort seems necessary for action—whether the discomfort is in a person’s immediate context or due to the knowledge a person allows to shape him or her.

Lisa describes a change in how she thinks of suffering. It may seem basic to think that there are a wide variety of responses, but this new understanding can lead to a much more critical analysis of feelings and their creation. She says, “Before taking English 30 this year, I never looked very closely at all the different ways that people respond to distant suffering. What I’ve noticed, however, from taking this course, is that there truly *are* many different ways in which people will respond. Before I had always had the impression that it was mostly the same for everyone, but I’ve come to realize that it’s not.” Lisa goes on to list several responses, including watching television and disregarding what one sees, being shocked by those who see terrible things but remain numb, and finally feeling that she is one of those who must act “at all costs.” She says, “I think I find myself most in the first one. It is not that worldwide suffering has no impact on me; it’s just that I often am unable to see my place in fixing it. Regardless, after taking this course I find myself wanting to be more like those in the third category I described. In fact, I’m now even considering a career in law, perhaps defending the human rights of those who *are* suffering around the world” (“Journal,” emphasis in original). Lisa is critical of her own feelings and analyzes how those feelings have changed. She expresses a wider understanding of the possible felt reactions to distant suffering in her list of responses she noticed.

The point here is not to make human rights activists out of all of my students, nor is it to congratulate myself on changing the thought process of a few students. There are plenty in the class who hopefully got a few rhetorical principles and writing skills out of it and did



not really feel personally impacted at all. The issue is that what some students may get out of a course like this Rhetoric of Suffering and Service class is a change in their approach to affective responses, a new ability to do some critical feeling.

Devin describes a sense of apathy and vague discomfort while describing his economic position in relation to distant suffering:

I have led an extremely privileged existence. Everything that I have ever wanted has been given to me. I grew up in a nice house in a wealthy town in the second wealthiest county in America. I know what it is to be comfortable. It is very easy for me to fall back on that and pretend that the horrible things that happen in the world both manmade and otherwise don't exist. If I don't like what the news is telling me I can flip the channel. Hell, there are six hundred others I could be watching instead. [. . .] I don't want to be apathetic but I feel like society almost demands it of me. ("Journal #9")

In Devin's very honest answer, I sense again a strong assumption that sympathy and compassion are the answer. Devin implies that one must feel connected and emotionally attached to the suffering of others. This need for emotional attachment can make it easy to evade looking for other versions of connection that can lead to ethical assistance for others. The creative involvement that comes with NikeID in an earlier chapter is one version of a different sort of connection.

The assumptions that personal emotional attachment and some sort of compassion are key to humanitarian work fit well with liberal humanism. Those assumptions are present in most literature about humanitarian aid as well. The approach I have sought with World Bank Rhetoric requires paying attention to individual feelings, responses, and words, but refuses to

separate those individual moments from the cultural and economic forces that lead to compassion in one instance and not in another. Given the manipulation of compassion that can happen, a critique of compassion is a valuable step. Other ways to value or motivate action, while taking account of the global forces shaping all sorts of motivations, are a potential next step for World Bank Rhetoric work on humanitarianism. Taking Nike's (or others') tactics and revamping them to build productive international relationships between small groups is just one general direction to consider.

In contrast to the assumptions that compassion is the goal of humanitarian rhetoric, Hannah Arendt provides a powerful critique of compassion. She claims that it makes people too close to each other, destroying important space between individuals, making action determined rather than free. She also says that a focus on compassion implies that pain has to be felt as our own in order to act for the good of others, which is a sad state of affairs for people (although perhaps true all too often). Arendt goes on to critique compassion because "talkative and argumentative interest in the world is entirely alien to compassion" (86). She asserts that

compassion speaks only to the extent that it has to reply directly to the sheer expressionist sound and gestures through which suffering becomes audible and visible in the world. As a rule, it is not compassion which sets out to change worldly conditions in order to ease human suffering, but if it does, it will shun the drawn-out wearisome processes of persuasion, negotiation, and compromise, which are the processes of law and politics, and lend its voice to the suffering itself, which must claim for swift and direct action, that is, for action with the means of violence. (86-87)

Compassion destroys political speech, according to Arendt; it leads to violent and passionate action that is based on a feeling of what is missing rather than on a desire for something good—such as freedom. She certainly makes clear the power of affect and affective responses. It is her legitimate critique of compassion as a feeling that points out most clearly the need to find ways to feel critically—not just jettisoning passions (in my view), but mapping them and using them, and including them in processes of negotiation and compromise. This focus on using and charting passions is where I tried to direct some of our class discussions—and the students remained divided (with valid reasons) between focusing on compassion as a virtue, wanting to do away with emotional aspects of aid appeals and to look for new ways to use affective appeals ethically.

I believe that Arendt is basically correct: instead of only focusing on changing affective responses from apathy to compassion, organizations and individuals should consider other types of feelings and relationships to connect people in these situations of disparate economic status and distant suffering. Arendt's critique of compassion explains the feeling from many of my students that knowing about suffering necessitates some sort of active response. When combined with the difficulty of ever responding in a way that is fully appropriate for the suffering someone experiences, compassion leads to feelings of impotence and frustration. Instead of increasing how closely a person identifies with the suffering of others, Arendt allows me to suggest that alternate goals can create appropriate responses to suffering. When you seek certain kinds of relationships with others, working to alleviate suffering can be a subsidiary of that relationship—instead of driving actions and reducing freedom. Ultimately, compassion could make all actions done out of obligation to another—seeking an impossible equality. While obligations to others are important, useful,

and actual, a better direction to take aid work may be in what I consider a secular notion of grace. To follow Arendt's practice of using theological terms for political purposes, I point to one definition of grace in Christian theology as "the free and unmerited favor or beneficence of God" (Princeton Wordnet). This definition of grace is useful precisely because it works "beyond measure." In this case, the principle of grace is on a strictly human level, and is specifically about creating an attitude or even an affect towards others. Rather than strictly focusing on ethical obligations, aid organizations should consider the impossibility of "appropriate" responses to severe suffering. This is not to limit the value of political work such as famine contracts or rights language. However, in appeals to donors, aid organizations can work on creating attitudes of giving that realize they cannot fully solve problems, cannot fully take responsibility for fixing things, and cannot fully match the suffering of another person. This keeps a valuable level of separation (allowing room for political work) between people. Obligations may be a better area for official governmental work to happen in. Arendt suggests having continual work for freedom—a higher goal that in the best situations can bring other goods with it. In a similar way, working towards goals for relationship with others that move beyond the alleviation of suffering can provide some hope, make others thought of less in terms of sufferers, and provide freedom (with action) for those attempting to aid others. Perhaps this sounds touchy-feely (as only a project on affect can). However, with grace, an attitude towards others as complex humans is required, and meeting important physical needs becomes a necessary aspect of a move toward joy.

I do not think pain should be forgotten or ignored. David continues to focus on the issue of needing to feel the pain in one's self, the same issue Arendt is concerned about: claiming, "Things look horrible in pictures, but we really don't take pictures too seriously

because they don't tell the whole story. [. . .] It is hard to take my mind off of my own stresses for two seconds to deal with someone else's. I think that it may be unhealthy to try and help others in order to cope with one's own problems" ("Journal"). He makes a good observation about a tendency for some to help others to feel good about themselves, but continues the assumption that the main affective response to seek involves feeling the pain of others. David implies that a person's own feelings can get too intertwined with images of distant suffering, and that this can lead to poor responses to others and can be unhealthy for that very person.

Some students took the notion of identifying with the pain of others even further. They wrote documents in which they played the roles of a Bosnian boy in a war zone or women in Africa. These role-playing texts created characters who were not just defined by their suffering. These texts also allowed new affective responses to the characters as readers could connect in ways other than just through somehow feeling their suffering. However, these papers still are still exercises in feeling the position (and to some degree the pain) of a distant other. Jessie titles her piece "Ajdin's Story: The Account of a Young Bosnian Boy in the Midst of War." In it she writes a series of letters from a young boy in Bosnia during the fighting there in the 1990s. She did prepare for it by interviewing a friend who had lived through that situation, and wrote with an interest in how war molds a child ("Ajdin's"). Hers is a more complex attempt to identify with someone else than most attempts to evoke compassion or feel the suffering of another, but continues to make changing into someone who identifies with others as the goal.

Christi's document was entitled "Education in Africa: A Call for Help from African Children." Her role was that of several different women. In a cover letter to her paper she explained,

I decided to write my paper through the perspectives of five different women, some African, some American. I chose women because traditionally, they are a very important part of African culture. But today, many African women are abused and violated for absolutely no reason. I thought it would be empowering to present African females as intelligent, self-respecting women. [. . .] The stories of the five women are revealed through fictional documents, such as journal entries, letters, and personal monologues, in order to [help me to] truly tap into the emotions of these women. ("Education")

While Christi's paper brings up major concerns about being able to "truly tap into the emotions of these women," she is trying to present an affectively complex document. Christi's paper seeks to associate numerous affective responses with the characters she creates. In claiming that the document "would be empowering" she may be empowering herself more than anyone (which is not necessarily bad). However, the concern to be broad in the presentation of others is valuable as well.

Distant suffering is experienced by many of my students (seemingly including Christi) as something to consume. Yet it is not really the suffering of others that is the object of consumption. Rather, the object of consumption is an experience. The feelings, knowledge, and changes that go along with reading or hearing a narrative about a refugee crisis thousands of miles away are the things taken in. There are certainly dangers of aid organizations and individuals treating suffering as a commodity—especially when suffering

is used to gain donations—however good the cause may be. At the same time, consumption is not bad. Rather, when students (for example) are consuming an experience or a narrative connected to distant suffering, the way they consume is vital. Consuming with concern, to change their notions of the world and to aid others, does matter. My students are concerned about the way suffering is presented, are concerned with not being manipulated as consumers, and are concerned with how to (literally) buy in or not. Here, consumption is also (at the same time) production. Students produce new identities for themselves, produce new relationships with distant others, and may produce new actions towards others.

I want to conclude with one of the most compelling responses I received towards the end of the “Rhetoric of Suffering” class. Doug wrote a document called “Is It Just Apathy?” In his cover letter to that document he explained, “I have decided to write an essay discussing why I feel that I, and many others in our society, have a difficulty forming a connection with and an understanding about many of the horrible things that take place in our world.” He here assumes the societal value of an emotive connection with the suffering of others, but questions this value later. He starts by describing some family conversations after September 11:

My response, more or less, went like this: ‘Well, I mean, it’s a horrible thing to have happened, but I’m not really shedding tears about it. I dunno, it kind of doesn’t really matter that much to me.’

‘Do you care about what happened at all, Doug?’ were most likely my mother’s next words.

‘I’ll help out and all when we do stuff at school mom, but it just can’t matter all that much to me; it didn’t affect me at all.’

This was then always followed by a somewhat heated discussion where I was told that 9-11 would in fact affect me and that I was just selfish, which I challenged by suggesting that I simply have a cold heart and am entirely apathetic. [. . .]

As heartless as it may seem, this is how I feel towards many things that are in the same category as the World Trade Center attacks. That probably isn't very hard to figure out about me, seeing that something as close as New York City didn't even have any great effect on me. Take something as recent as New Orleans, for example. Is it horrible what happened there due to Hurricane Katrina? Sure it is. Do they need lots of help and rebuilding down there? Yes. Does it affect me much more than that? Sorry, but no, it doesn't. The sad thing is not that I have a problem caring, the truly sad part is that I suspect—correction—I *know* that I am not the only person who feels the same way. In fact, I would feel confident saying that I am only one of many.

(“Apathy” 1-4, emphasis in original)

I will not pretend to be able to psychoanalyze Doug, but what is remarkable here is a conflict in the writing between *thinking* his feelings of apathy (with a willingness to help) are fine, and the *feeling* that it is sad or even wrong to not feel care towards those in New Orleans, for example. The images of suffering in New Orleans that Doug might see on the news are designed to evoke sympathy—and he knows it. They imply an ought to what he feels—yet when he feels apathetic he senses more honesty in himself. He also suggests that action to aid others is possible without strong feelings of sympathy—even though those feelings can make the activity more personally fulfilling. Doug goes on to talk about a situation with



some homeless people where he does feel empathy and does care, and suggests that because he was involved he had those feelings. In this case, the actions come before the feelings, rather than feelings of compassion coming before (and causing) other actions. In any case, Doug has learned to provide a fairly thorough analysis of his affective responses to situations of suffering, and has started looking at some of the various causes in what could be his own affective map.

He concludes by asserting that we need people to “begin getting involved for the sake of helping and not because you truly care.” Finding motivations and actions before feelings of compassion can then give a connection, and lead to compassion—which he seems to think should happen eventually as a moral good. Perhaps the desired change is not so much to feel compassion towards others, or even to shift your view of a place from recipient to donor (as in the case of Compassion International and Korea), but rather to find bases for connection and aid that do not rely on compassion for or identification with others. The affective change needed is in the kinds of affective responses sought. When feelings towards a place or people involve joy in creativity or hope, without hiding the suffering in a place (not an easy thing to do, I realize), then more potent and even more equal connections between people can develop. I hope that some acts of affective mapping can provide ideas not only for how affective responses are globally shaped, but also ideas for new affective responses to use to connect with others.

These last three responses all came from the final assignment I gave students. I called it a “Creative Research Essay.” I described it in chapter four:

[You] will select a specific public case of suffering and/or service and write your own response to it. You are encouraged to think about the types of

responses we have read in this class, and to draw writing strategies from some or all of them. [. . .] You are required to research your topic and include sources in your paper. You also must be arguing a point of some sort (this time your own view, or something you present as your view at least). However, the way you argue it may be through fiction, through an academic essay, through an analysis of a specific cultural artifact, or through a dialogue—to name just a few. The genre of the paper is up to you—but be creative—and at the same time, consider what sort of audience you are writing to and creating. Also consider how to ethically write about the topic you have chosen. (Newcomb)

Students had freedom to pick a topic they felt interest in or connection with, and were given the freedom to pick a genre or mode of writing they thought would be appropriate. The assignment tried to combine concerns about audience with considerations of what responses to distant suffering were appropriate. At the same time, I tried to invite the idea of creative action into the situation, allowing students to find their own version of connection that could be based on something other than having to feel compassion first and foremost. I believe further creative assignments can be valuable in building connections with suffering others on bases other than just seeing a distant person as a sufferer.

An earlier assignment required students to pick a topic in groups of four; each student would explore the different viewpoints around one aspect of that topic. For example, one group chose Hurricane Katrina: one person focused on the debates over who was to blame for the lack of preparation, one focused on issues of race in rebuilding New Orleans, and one wrote about different perspectives for colleges and towns on taking in refugees. After the

assignment, I had students write about their own feelings and views in relation to the topic as a whole. This reflective piece was an attempt to connect critical research work with students' own feelings, and even to have the groups' combined projects function as maps of an issue. They could then analyze the maps of the issues in terms of affective responses to them. In the future I might include the creation of actual maps of a situation or, better, of an affective response to a situation or event. The maps could include various discourses, locations, images, and other items—and the students would then have to describe the connections between the locations on the map and explain arrangement and selection of items for the map.

In a 2005 issue of *Politics and Culture*, all the articles are devoted to responses to the south Asian tsunami of December 2004. The first section consists of academic articles about economic or cultural ramifications of the tsunami and responses to it. The second part consists entirely of responses from undergraduate students. All those students were in the same class on the topic of Hollywood depictions of culture versus other versions of what the world is like. They were asked to write a response to the tsunami for this class.<sup>15</sup> The section in which the undergraduate articles appear, titled “The Cynicism of the American Undergraduate,” includes a variety of responses. What is perhaps most notable is the variety of connections and references students make, to Hiroshima, to Disney, to Bill Gates, to Ikea, to Jet Li, to 9/11, to the Holocaust, to *The Day After Tomorrow*, and to many other cultural objects. These students use the variety of references to describe their own feelings about the tsunami and end up providing their own affective maps. These acts of critical feeling can make new feelings and actions possible.

---

<sup>15</sup> The articles for this issue of *Politics and Culture* can be viewed at <http://aspen.conncoll.edu/politicsandculture/arts.cfm?id+57>.

One student, Avi Nocella, in “Indian Ocean,” asks why we have to be “deeply affected by every ounce of human suffering, or every dewdrop of joy for that matter? Our emotional responses to tragedy and suffering and celebration are our own. Morality enters in perhaps only when it comes to our outward responses—those that affect others.” Nocella attempts to go beyond the need for feeling with others, and asks for action based on other motivations. On the other hand, Kandace Bowens argues that (unfortunately) it is Hollywood celebrities that really impact our feelings and pocketbooks. “What helps us to pour out our hearts and wallets is when the news hollywoodizes a disaster by telling us all the famous people that were involved or hurt in some way. For the recent tsunami it was model Petra Nemcova, photographer Simon Atlee, and actor Jet Li.” Assignments like this one provide students the opportunity to approach composition in the broad, powerful terms of World Bank Rhetoric, and provide chances to teach skills of critical feeling that are important in a world where affective labor has become more and more powerful. Students can better learn to analyze what shapes their own feelings, and can think of creative alternatives for finding new affective connections to others, particularly those in need.

### **New Directions, New Motives**

What broader conclusions can rhetoricians draw from this study of (and argument for) World Bank Rhetoric? In relation to distant suffering, impotence is a powerful feeling among my students, and the responsibility to simply know what is going on sometimes fills (at least in part) the felt need to respond to others. Knowledge—or shaping oneself through exposure to the needs of others—is felt as an ethical move. Affect is important enough, and media shapes my students internally enough, that an explicit decision to let the suffering of

distant others shape them is considered an important step in ethical action. My students also understand themselves, oftentimes, as consumers or customers of aid organizations. Those organizations present vivid brand images in their focus on relating to potential donors/investors/customers. Valuable further work on the various relationships between donors, recipients, aid organizations, and governments can be done. There are many ways that people transcend those donor/recipient categories, and there are many ways to vary feelings and actions in those relationships. Affective mapping can be a useful tool for identifying the what sort of suffering is valued in a broad cultural moment, for exploring changes in felt responses to a location, and for moving back from written responses to approximations of reactions, feelings, and intuitions that influenced those linguistic responses. Affective mapping also serves as a reminder that feelings are not just located in people or in single interactions with documents. Feelings towards the suffering of others (and what counts as suffering) come from a wide variety of rhetorical locations. Aid organizations and others interested in humanitarian issues need to think more broadly than just a singular situation where help is needed. They do this to some degree when they try to build relationships with donors, but that model is still based on a series of individual relationships. The way in which humanitarian aid rhetoric impacts the whole rhetorical environment, which sets up possibilities for affective responses by many people, is a complex but vital consideration for language about humanitarian crises.

Further work in World Bank Rhetoric is needed to make composition instruction more relevant and adaptable to the world of globalization. Affective mapping is one useful way to approach this sort of rhetoric, and affective mapping is a way to build the critical feeling skills that students need to go along with the critical thinking skills that are popular to

talk about in writing courses. I hope for more examples of affective mapping and more exploratory work on what it means to do World Bank Rhetoric, whether that work is about the vital areas of humanitarian rhetoric and the rhetoric of suffering, or about other areas that create powerful affective responses.

As I write this conclusion there is still civil unrest in Darfur, another earthquake has impacted Indonesia, and hurricane season is beginning in the Atlantic. These factors can all be on the same affective map, but the next step is not just to understand moments of (potential) suffering as they shape feelings and responses, but to reshape those feelings and responses. What do you, do I, do our students want to feel and what should we feel when in contact with images of distant suffering? I hope that my students and I can work through those questions further—thinking about shaping our own feelings in a context of global forces—the next time I teach about the “Rhetoric of Suffering and Service.”

## Works Cited

- 9/11. Dir. Gedeon Naudet, Jules Naudet, and James Hanlon. Documentary. CBS. 11 March 2002.
- Abbas, Asma. "Damages Inc.: Making the Sublime Matter." *Politics and Culture*. Issue 2, 2005. Eds. Amitava Kumar and Michael Ryan. <[http://aspen.conncoll.edu/politicsandculture/printer\\_page.cfm?key+373](http://aspen.conncoll.edu/politicsandculture/printer_page.cfm?key+373)>.
- About AI – Amnesty International Timeline – 1961-1969*. 2001. Amnesty International. 9 October 2002. <<http://web.amnesty.org/web/aboutai.nsf/webview/19639cb6a3e22ad080256a570059f08d?OpenDocument>>.
- "About Us." 2002. Compassion International. 1 June 2006. <<http://www.compassion.com/about/aboutus>>.
- Abunimah, Ali. *Electronic Intifadah*. 12 September 2001. Responses to September 11. 16 March 2002 <<http://electronicintifada.net/features/articles/20010912ali.html>>.
- Action Alert: Details on Plan to Interview 5000 Men*. 24 Nov. 2001. American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee. 14 March 2002 <<http://www.adc.org/action/2001/24november2001.htm>>.
- Adia. "Journal 9." English 30 course. Pennsylvania State University. 2 Dec. 2005.
- . "Journal 10." English 30 course. Pennsylvania State University. 9 Dec. 2005.
- . "Journal Entry." English 30. Pennsylvania State University. 25 November 2005.
- "Afghanistan." 10 May 2005. Médecins Sans Frontières. 21 April 2006. <<http://www.msf.org/msfinternational/countries/asia/afghanistan/index.cfm>>.
- Ahmad, Eqbal. *Confronting Empire*. Interviewer David Barsimian. Cambridge, MA: South End Press, 2000.

- Amy. "Journal Entry." English 30. Pennsylvania State University. 25 November 2005.
- Anderson, Mary. *Do No Harm: How Aid Can Support Peace—Or War*. New York: Lynn Rienner Publishers, 1999.
- Anzaldúa, Gloria. *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. San Francisco: Spinsters/Aunt Lute Book Co., 1987.
- Arendt, Hannah. *The Human Condition*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. Chicago: U Chicago P, 1998.
- . *On Revolution*. Rev. ed. New York: Viking Press, 1967.
- Ashcroft, John. "Responsible Cooperators Program." 29 November 2001. Department of Justice. Attorney General's Office. 25 March 2002 <[http://www.usdoj.gov/ag/speeches/2001/agcrisisremarks11\\_29.htm](http://www.usdoj.gov/ag/speeches/2001/agcrisisremarks11_29.htm)>.
- Berkeley, Bill. "Road to a Genocide." *The New Killing Fields*. Eds. Nicolaus Mills and Kira Brunner. New York: Basic Books, 2002. 103-116.
- Bernard-Donals, Michael. "Literacy, Affect, and Ethics." *College Composition and Communication*. 57.1 (Sept. 2005): 169-180.
- Beth. "Journal." English 30. Pennsylvania State University. 6 Dec. 2005.
- . "Journal Statement." English 30 course. Pennsylvania State University. 23 Sept. 2005.
- Beyond Borders*. Dir. Martin Campbell. Perf. Angelina Jolie and Clive Owen. Paramount Pictures and MP Film Management, 2003.
- Beyond Borders. Official Website. 2003. Paramount Pictures and MP Film Management. 12 Dec. 2003. <<http://www.beyondbordersmovie.com/>>.
- Bitzer, Lloyd. "The Rhetorical Situation." *Philosophy and Rhetoric*. 1.1 (1968). 1-14.
- Blank, Ed. "Lack of explanation bogs down 'Beyond Borders.'" *Pittsburgh Tribune-*



- Review 24 Oct. 2003. 1 Nov. 2003. <[http://www.pittsburghlive.com/x/tribune-review/entertainment/s\\_161526.html](http://www.pittsburghlive.com/x/tribune-review/entertainment/s_161526.html)>.
- Boltanski, Luc. *Distant Suffering: Morality, Media and Politics*. Transl. Graham Burchell. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge UP, 1999.
- Bowens, Kandace. "The Hardest Hit" *Politics and Culture*. Issue 2, (2005). Eds. Amitava Kumar and Michael Ryan. <<http://aspen.conncoll.edu/politicsandculture/page.cfm?key=400>>.
- Buck-Morss, Susan. *The Origin of Negative Dialectics*. New York: The Free Press, 1977.
- Burke, Kenneth. *A Rhetoric of Motives*. Berkeley: U California P, 1969.
- Butalia, Urvashi. *The Other Side of Silence*. Durham, NC: Duke UP, 2000.
- "Challenging the Global AIDS Crisis." January 2004. Pangaea Global AIDS Foundation. 1 March 2004 <<http://www.pgaf.org/challenging.html>>.
- Christi. "Education in Africa: A Call for Help from African Children." For English 30. 7 Dec. 2005. Pennsylvania State University. University Park, PA.
- Clifford, James. *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 2000.
- "Clinton Administration Declares AIDS a Security Threat." 30 April 2000. CNN U.S. News. 1 March 2004 <<http://www.cnn.com/2000/US/04/30/aids.threat.03/>>.
- Compassion 2001-2002 Annual Report*. Compassion International. Colorado Springs: Compassion, 2003.
- Cobain, Kurt. "Smells Like Teen Spirit." *Nevermind*. Geffen Records. Prod. Butch Vig. Van Nuys, CA: 1991.
- Crawford, Ilene. "Building a Theory of Affect in Cultural Studies Composition Pedagogy."

- JAC 22.2 (Sum/Fall 2002): 678-683.
- Crawford, Neta C. *Argument and Change in World Politics : Ethics, Decolonization, and Humanitarian Intervention*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2002.
- Crimp, Douglas. "AIDS: Cultural Analysis/Cultural Activism." *AIDS: Cultural Analysis/Cultural Activism*. Ed. Douglas Crimp. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1988. 3-16.
- Crimp, Douglas. "How to Have Promiscuity in an Epidemic." *AIDS: Cultural Analysis/Cultural Activism*. Ed. Douglas Crimp. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1988. 237-271.
- David. "Journal." English 30. Pennsylvania State University. 8 Dec. 2005.
- Derek. "Journal Response #3." English 30 course. Pennsylvania State University. 21 Sept. 2005.
- Derrida, Jacques. *Memoirs of the Blind*. Trans. Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael Naas. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993.
- Devin. "Journal #9 for the Week of November 28th." English 30. Pennsylvania State University. 28 Nov. 2005.
- . "Journal #10 for the Week of December 5<sup>th</sup>." English 30 course. Pennsylvania State University. 10 Dec. 2005.
- . "Journal for the week of September 19<sup>th</sup>." English 30 course. Pennsylvania State University. 23 Sept. 2005.
- De Waal, Alexander. *Famine Crimes : Politics & the Disaster Relief Industry in Africa*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana UP, 1997.
- Diawara, Manthia. "Toward a Regional Imaginary in Africa." *World Bank Literature*. Ed.

- Amitava Kumar. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003. 64-81.
- Doug. "Is It Just Apathy?" for English 30. 5 Dec. 2005. Pennsylvania State University. University Park, PA.
- . "Journal 10." English 30. Pennsylvania State University. 10 Dec. 2005.
- . "Journal Statement 3." English 30 course. Pennsylvania State University. 22 Sept. 2005.
- Douzinas, Costas. *The End of Human Rights: Critical Legal Thought at the Turn of the Century*. Portland, OR: Hart Publishing, 2000.
- Edbauer, Jennifer. "(Meta)Physical Graffiti: 'Getting Up' as Affective Writing Model." *JAC* 25.1 (2005): 131-59.
- "Fact Sheet." Academic Alliance for AIDS Care and Prevention in Africa. 28 February 2004 <<http://www.aaacp.org/factsheet.html>>.
- Fanon, Frantz. *The Wretched of the Earth*. 1965. Trans. Richard Philcox. Berkeley, CA: Grove Press, 2004.
- Gelbspan, Thea. "Narcisa Nuis Mashienta Jimbiti Helps Plan the Future in Ecuador." October 2002. Oxfam America. 28 October 2002 <<http://www.oxfamamerica.org/global/art3649.html>>.
- "A Generation to Save." Hope Homepage. 2003. World Vision. 5 March 2004 <[http://www.worldvision.org/worldvision/appeals.nsf/stable/hope\\_home](http://www.worldvision.org/worldvision/appeals.nsf/stable/hope_home)>.
- Germain, David. "Romance 'Borders' on Insignificant." *Florida Today*. Oct. 2003. Associated Press review. 10 Nov. 2005. <<http://ccs.flatoday.com/fe/Movies/reviews/beyondborders.asp>>.
- Gibson, William. *Pattern Recognition*. New York: Berkley Books, 2003.

- Gilyard, Keith. "Composition and the Critical Moment." *Composition Studies in the New Millenium: Rereading the Past, Rewriting the Future*. Eds. Lynn Z. Bloom, Donald A. Daiker, and Edward M. White. Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois UP, 2003. 227-36.
- Gourevitch, Philip. *We Wish to Inform You that Tomorrow We Will Be Killed with Our Families*. New York: Picador, 1998.
- Hardt, Michael and Antonio Negri. *Empire*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 2000.
- . *Multitude*. New York: Penguin, 2004.
- Hart, David Bentley. *The Beauty of the Infinite*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2004.
- Heather. "Journal." English 30. Pennsylvania State University. 2 Dec. 2005.
- . "Journal Entry." English 30. Pennsylvania State University. 25 November 2005.
- . "September 30<sup>th</sup> Journal." English 30 course. Pennsylvania State University. 30 Sept. 2005.
- Hilditch, Matt. Telephone Interview. 23 October 2003.
- "The History of AIDS from 1993 to 1997." 2000. AVERT: an International HIV and AIDS Charity. 16 February 2004 <[http://www.avert.org/his93\\_97.htm](http://www.avert.org/his93_97.htm)>.
- "The History of AIDS Up to 1986." 2000. AVERT: an International HIV and AIDS Charity. 16 February 2004 <[http://www.avert.org/his81\\_86.htm](http://www.avert.org/his81_86.htm)>.
- Hitchcock, Peter. *Oscillate Wildly*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999.
- Hochschild, Adam. *King Leopold's Ghost*. New York: Mariner Books, 1998.
- "Homepage." April 2006. Médecins Sans Frontières. 18 April 2006. <<http://www.msf.org>>.
- "Hoping." photo by Lori Grinker. *Time Annual* 2002: 33.

*Hotel Rwanda*. Dir. Terry George. Perf. Don Cheadle, Sophie Okonedo, and Nick Nolte.

United Artists and Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 2004.

Ignatieff, Michael. "State Failure and Nation Building." *Humanitarian Intervention: Ethical,*

*Legal, and Political Dilemmas*. Eds. J.L. Holzgrefe and Robert O. Keohane.

Cambridge, UK: Cambridge UP, 2003. 299-321.

Iriye, Akira. *Global Community : The Role of International Organizations in the Making of*

*The Contemporary World*. Berkeley: U California Press, 2002.

Irr, Caren. "All Published Literature is World Bank Literature; or; the Zapatista's

Storybook." *World Bank Literature*. Ed. Amitava Kumar. Minneapolis: University of

Minnesota Press, 2003. 237-52.

Iwasaki, John. "Unannounced FBI Interviews Rattle Iraqi Immigrants." *Seattle*

*Post-Intelligencer*. 26 March 2003. <[http://seattlepi.nwsource.com/local/](http://seattlepi.nwsource.com/local/114253_wquestions26.shtml)

114253\_wquestions26.shtml>.

Jameson, Fredric. *Postmodernism, Or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*. Durham, NC:

Duke UP, 1991.

Janise. "Journal Entry." English 30 course. Pennsylvania State University. 28 Oct. 2005.

---. "Statement of Understanding #4." English 30 course. Pennsylvania State

University. 30 Sept. 2005.

Jessie. "Ajdin's Story: The Account of a Young Bosnian Boy in the Midst of War." For

English 30. 7 Dec. 2005. Pennsylvania State University. University Park, PA.

Kapiteni, Rwamuningi. Blog Entry. 30 Sept. 2005. *Camera Rwanda*. 17 October 2005.

<[http://www.bloglines.com/blog/CameraRwanda/2005\\_9](http://www.bloglines.com/blog/CameraRwanda/2005_9)>.

Katz, Steven. *The Epistemic Music of Rhetoric: Toward the Temporal Dimension of Affect*

- in Reader Response and Writing*. Carbondale and Edwardsville, IL: Southern Illinois UP, 1996.
- Klein, Naomi. *No Logo*. New York: Picador, 2000.
- Kleinfeld, N.R. "A City of Quiet: Nothing is Same One Day After." *New York Times* 13 September 2001: A1.
- Krog, Antjie. *Country of My Skull*. New York: Three Rivers Press, 1998.
- Kumar, Amitava. *Husband of a Fanatic*. New York: The New Press, 2005.
- . "Introduction." *World Bank Literature*. Ed. Amitava Kumar. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 2003. xvii-xxxiii.
- . *Passport Photos*. Berkeley, CA: U of California P, 2000.
- Kumar, Amitava and Michael Ryan. Eds. *Politics and Culture*. Issue 2, (2005)  
< <http://aspen.conncoll.edu/politicsandculture/arts.cfm?id=57>>.
- Langstraat, Lisa. "The Point Is There Is No Point: Miasmatic Cynicism and Cultural Studies Composition." *JAC* 22.1. (Win./Spr. 2002): 293-325.
- Lees, Jeremy. "South Korea Partners as Advocate for Children." *Compassion 2001-2002 Annual Report*. Compassion International. Colorado Springs: Compassion, 2003. 16.
- "Lifesaving Aid for Rwanda." Editorial. *New York Times*. July 30, 1994. p. A18.
- Lindquist, Julie. "Class Affects, Classroom Affectations: Working through the Paradoxes of Strategic Empathy." *College English*. 57.2 (Nov. 2004): 187-209.
- Lisa. "AIDS in Africa." Paper for English 30. Pennsylvania State University. 6 Dec. 2005.
- . "Journal." English 30. Pennsylvania State University. 2 Dec. 2005.
- . "Journal Statement." English 30 course. Pennsylvania State University. 23 Sept. 2005.

- Madison, Richard. *The Immigration Home Page*. 28 February 2002. Changes in Immigration Law and Procedures. 15 March 2002 <<http://www.lawcom.com/immigration/chngs.shtml>>.
- Malinowitz, Harriet. "The Uses of Literacy in a Globalized, Post-September 11 World." *Composition Studies in the New Millenium: Rereading the Past, Rewriting the Future*. Eds. Lynn Z. Bloom, Donald A. Daiker, and Edward M. White. Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois P, 2003. 237-251.
- Marilee. "Journal Entry." English 30 course. Pennsylvania State University. 23 Sept. 2005.
- The Matrix*. Dir. Andy Wachowski and Larry Wachowski. Perf. Keanu Reeves, Laurence Fishburne, and Carrie-Anne Moss. Village Roadshow Pictures and Warner Brothers, 1999.
- Matt. "Suffering Abroad." English 30 course. Pennsylvania State University. 2 Dec. 2005.
- McGeary, Johanna. "Death Stalks a Continent." *Time*. 4 February 2001. 1 March 2004 <<http://www.time.com/time/2001/aidsinafrica/cover2.html>>.
- Miller, Richard. "Teaching after September 11." *Composition Studies in the New Millenium: Rereading the Past, Rewriting the Future*. Eds. Lynn Z. Bloom, Donald A. Daiker, and Edward M. White. Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois P, 2003. 252-55.
- "MSF Activity in Asia." April 2006. Médecins Sans Frontières. 18 April 2006. <<http://www.msf.org/msfinternational/countries/asia/index.cfm>>.
- "MSF prepares for possible refugee flows from Ivory Coast." 16 October 2002. Médecins Sans Frontières. 24 October 2002. <<http://www.msf.org/countries/page.cfm?articleid=BF550CD1-02F3-4CFB-9E5D57B645F7BE34>>.

“MSF reinforces team in Cote d’Ivoire and starts to deliver aid to Bouake.” 7 October 2002. Médecins Sans Frontières. 24 October 2002. <<http://www.msf.org/countries/page.cfm?articleid=81E01A8A-7259-4D2F-908E2BA2454B6D0C>>.

“MSF role in emergency medical aid.” Médecins Sans Frontières. 29 October 2002. <<http://www.msf.org/about/index.cfm>>.

Nawa, Fariba. Altnet.org. 12 September 2001. from *Pacific News Service*. 14 March 2002 <<http://www.altnet.org/story.html?StoryID=11482>>.

Newcomb, Matthew. “Course Description.” English 30 *The Rhetoric of Suffering and Service*. Pennsylvania State University. Fall 2005.

Newcomb, Matthew. “Creative Research Essay.” Assignment sheet for English 30 course. October 2005. State College, PA.

“NikeID.” 2006. Nike. 23 April 2006. <[http://nikeid.nike.com/nikeid/index.jhtml;nisessionid=FDURGSRHOFB0CCQFTBDCF3Y?\\_requestid=6285877#home](http://nikeid.nike.com/nikeid/index.jhtml;nisessionid=FDURGSRHOFB0CCQFTBDCF3Y?_requestid=6285877#home)>.

Nikita. “Journal Statement.” English 30 course. Pennsylvania State University. 22 Sept. 2005.

Nocella, Avi. “Indian Ocean.” *Politics and Culture*. Issue 2, (2005). Eds. Amitava Kumar and Michael Ryan. <<http://aspen.conncoll.edu/politicsandculture/page.cfm?key=397>>.

Nystrand, Martin and John Duffy. “Introduction: The Sociocultural Context for the New Discourse about Writing.” *Towards a Rhetoric of Everyday Life*. Eds. Martin Nystrand and John Duffy. Madison, WI: U of Wisconsin P, 2003. xv-xxxiv.

Office of the Deputy Attorney General. *Guidelines for the Interviews Regarding*



- International Terrorism*. Memorandum. 9 Nov. 2001. in Detroit Free Press Gallery. 27 February 2002. <<http://www.detroitfreepress.com/gallery/2001/interviews/index.htm>>.
- . *Guidelines for the Interviews Regarding International Terrorism*. Memorandum. 9 Nov. 2001. Department of Justice. 15 May 2006. <<http://www.usdoj.gov/dag/readingroom/terrorism2.htm>>.
- “Overview.” Health HIV/AIDS page. 8 January 2004. United States Agency for International Development (USAID). 5 March 2004. <[http://www.usaid.gov/our\\_work/global\\_health/aids/](http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/global_health/aids/)>.
- “Oxfam donor Nations working in the Horn of Africa.” 2006. Oxfam International. 19 April 2006. <<http://www.oxfam.org/en/programs/development/hafrica/>>.
- “Oxfam Programs” 2006. Oxfam International. 19 April 2006. <http://www.oxfam.org/en/programs/>>.
- Oxfam sites*. 2002. Oxfam International. 1 November 2002 <[http://www.oxfam.org/eng/osfam\\_sites.htm](http://www.oxfam.org/eng/osfam_sites.htm)>.
- Pratt, Mary Louise. *Imperial Eyes*. New York: Routledge, 1992.
- Premnath, Gautam. “The Weak Sovereignty of the Postcolonial Nation-State.” *World Bank Literature*. Ed. Amitava Kumar. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003. 253-64.
- “The President’s Budget Request for FY2005.” 2 February 2004. DATA (Debt, AIDS, Trade, Africa). 27 February 2004 <<http://www.data.org/archives/PresReqRxnfinal.pdf>>.
- “President’s Bush’s 2005 Budget Request Released.” 2 February 2004. DATA (Debt,

- AIDS, Trade, Africa). 27 February 2004 <<http://www.data.org/archives/000343.php>>.
- Public Service Announcement. Tom Ridge. *Homeland Security*. United States Government. 11 March 2002.
- Rashid, Ahmed. *Taliban*. New Haven and London: Yale UP, 2001.
- Rick. Personal Interview. 31 Oct. 2005.
- Rieff, David. *A Bed for the Night: Humanitarianism in Crisis*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 2002.
- Robbins, Bruce. "Afterword." *World Bank Literature*. Ed. Amitava Kumar. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003. 297-303.
- Robinson, Kim Stanley. *Red Mars*. New York: Bantam Books, 1993.
- Robinson, Simon. "A Lending Tree." *Time*. 4 February 2001. 1 March 2004 <<http://www.time.com/time/2001/aidsinafrica.tree.html>>.
- Roy, Arundhati. "The Algebra of Infinite Justice." *The Guardian*. 29 September 2001. <<http://www.guardian.co.uk/Archive/Article/0,4273,4266289,00.html>>.
- "Rwanda's Descent into Hell." Editorial. *Chicago Tribune*. April 24, 1994. p. 42.
- Said, Edward. *Covering Islam: How the Media and the Experts determine How We See the Rest of the World*. Revised edition. New York: Vintage Books, 1996.
- . "Criticism between Culture and System." *The World, the Text, and the Critic*. Edward Said. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1983. 178-225.
- . *Orientalism*. New York: Vintage Books, 1979.
- . *Representations of the Intellectual*. New York: Vintage Books, 1996.
- Saldívar-Hull, Sonia. "Introduction." *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. By

- Gloria Anzaldúa. San Francisco: Spinsters/Aunt Lute Book Co., 1987. 1-15.
- Samuels, Robert D. "The Rhetoric of Trauma: Teaching about the Holocaust and Postmodern Affect in an Advanced Composition Course." *JAC* 24.2 (2004): 447-65.
- Scroggins, Deborah. *Emma's War: Humanitarian Aid, Oil, a Warlord, etc.* New York: Pantheon, 2002.
- Segal, Naomi. "Female terrorist forces Israel to rethink profiling." *Jewish Bulletin News*, 01 February 2002. <<http://www.jewishsf.com/bk020201/i45.shtml>>.
- Seth. "Genocide, what Genocide?" English 30 course. Pennsylvania State University. 23 Sept. 2005.
- Shue, Henry. "Limiting Sovereignty." *Humanitarian Intervention and International Relations*. Ed. Jennifer M. Welsh. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2004. 11-28.
- Sontag, Susan. *Illness as Metaphor and AIDS and Its Metaphors*. New York: Picador, 1989.
- . *Regarding the Pain of Others*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2003.
- "Southern Africa Food Crisis Update." 30 September 2002. Oxfam America. 24 October 2002 <<http://www.oxfamamerica.org/emergency/art3587.html>>.
- Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. "Can the Subaltern Speak." *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*. Eds. Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1988.
- . "Scattered Speculations on the Question of Value." *In other worlds: essays in cultural politics*. Gayatri Spivak. New York: Routledge, 1988. 154-175.
- "Spotlight Africa." February 2004. SOS-Kinderdorf International. 1 March 2004. <<http://www.sos-childrensvillages.org/cgi-bin/sos/jsp/>>

- retrieve.do?BV\_SessionID=@ @ @ @0955468715.1077650612@ @ @ @  
&BV\_EngineID=cccfadckkjdhfifngcfkmdfkdfnj.0&lang=  
en&site=ZZ&nav=5.3&ed=30034>.
- “Starving Children of Biafra War.” *Life*. (12 July 1968). 20-29.
- Suggs, Ernie. “Q&A / Paul Kagame, President of Rwanda: War-Torn Nation Works to Rebuild Image.” *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*. September 21, 2005. F3.
- Swift, Jonathan. “Gulliver’s Travels.” *Gulliver’s Travels and Other Writings*. Riverside Edition. Ed. Louis A. Landa. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1960.
- Taussig, Michael. *Nervous System*. New York: Routledge, 1992.
- Terry, Fiona. *Condemned to Repeat: The Paradox of Humanitarian Action*. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 2002.
- Tim. “Journal Entry.” English 30 course. Pennsylvania State University. 22 Sept. 2005.
- Timeline: A Brief History of AIDS/HIV*. 2001. AEGIS. 16 February 2004.  
<<http://www.aegis.com/topics/timeline/default.asp>>.
- Tony. “Journal #10.” English 30 course. Pennsylvania State University. 9 Dec. 2005.
- . “Journal Statement.” English 30 course. Pennsylvania State University. 23 Sept. 2005.
- Tony (no last name given). *Stories from September 11*. mystory.net. 26 February 2002  
<<http://mystory.inter.net/browse.php>>.
- Treichler, Paula. *How to Have Theory in An Epidemic*. Durham, NC: Duke UP, 1999.
- Tyler. “Journal.” English 30 course. Pennsylvania State University. 9 Dec. 2005.
- Ulmer, Gregory. *Teleteory*. New York: Routledge, 1989.

- United Nations. "Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide." Resolution 260 (III) A. UN General Assembly. 9 Dec. 1948.
- USA Crisis Detainees*. 6 December 2001. Amnesty International. 25 March 2002. <[http://www.amnesty-usa.org/usacrisis/detainees\\_12062001.pdf](http://www.amnesty-usa.org/usacrisis/detainees_12062001.pdf)>.
- Van Halsema, Diderik. "Afghanistan at one year." 7 October 2002. Médecins Sans Frontières. 24 October 2002. <<http://www.msf.org/countries/page.cfm?articleid=B479E6CC-B021-4DCD-9337BCF11E235CB3>>.
- Vatz, Richard. "The Myth of the Rhetorical Situation." *Rhetoric and Philosophy*. 461-467.
- Vitanza, Victor. "Taking A-Count of a (Future-Anterior) History of Rhetoric." *Writing Histories of Rhetoric*. Ed. Victor Vitanza. Carbondale and Edwardsville, IL: Southern Illinois UP, 1994. 180-216.
- Warnock, John. "Weaving a Way Home: Composing a Personal Geography." *Beyond Postprocess and Postmodernism*. Eds. Theresa Enos and Keith D. Miller. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2003. 235-250.
- Watkins, Evan. *Everyday Exchanges*. Palo Alto: Stanford UP, 1998.
- Wegner, Phillip E. "Soldierboys for Peace." *World Bank Literature*. Ed. Amitava Kumar. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 2003. 280-296.
- Welsh, Jennifer M. Ed. *Humanitarian Intervention and International Relations*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2004.
- Wheeler, Nicholas. *Saving Strangers: Humanitarian Intervention in International Society*. Oxford : Oxford UP, 2003.
- Wordnet. "Grace." Princeton Wordnet. December 1, 2006. <<http://www.wordnet.princeton.edu/perl/webwn>>.

Worsham, Lynn. "Going Postal: Pedagogic Violence and the Schooling of Emotion." *JAC*  
18 (1998): 213-45.

## Vita - Matthew J. Newcomb

### Education:

*Ph.D. in English with specialization in Rhetoric and Composition*, **Pennsylvania State University**; University Park, PA; May 2007.

*M.A. in English*, **Pennsylvania State University**; University Park, Pennsylvania; May 2003.

*M.A. in Philosophy*, **Gonzaga University**; Spokane, Washington; June 2000.

*B.A. in English Literature and English Education*, **Whitworth College**; Spokane, Washington; December 1997.

### Publications:

- "Taking Attendance: Absent Writing and the Value of Suffering." *JAC* 24.3 (2004): 755-84.
- "Adopting People, Places, and Pain." *Politics and Culture*. Ed. Amitava Kumar and Michael Ryan. Issue. 1, 2004. <<http://aspen.conncoll.edu/politicsandculture/page.cfm?key=309>>.
- "Sites of Suffering." *Politics and Culture*. Ed. Amitava Kumar and Michael Ryan. Issue 4, 2002. <<http://aspen.conncoll.edu/politicsandculture/page.cfm?key=187>>.
- Web Content for "Student Resources" portion of the online companion to Lester Faigley and Jack Selzer's *Good Reasons with Contemporary Arguments*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. New York: Pearson Longman, 2007. see <[http://wps.ablongman.com/long\\_faigley\\_grca\\_3/0,11516,2834949-,00.html](http://wps.ablongman.com/long_faigley_grca_3/0,11516,2834949-,00.html)>.
- *Instructor's Manual* for Lester Faigley and Jack Selzer's *Good Reasons with Contemporary Arguments*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. New York: Pearson Longman, 2007. (with Iris Ralph.)

### Conference Presentations:

- "Charles Sanders Peirce's 'Neglected' Theory of Argument." Conference on College Composition and Communication. New York, March 2007.
- "Don't Leave It to Beaver: The Emerging Church Movement as Dialogic Counterpublic." Conference on Rhetoric and Christian Tradition. DePaul University. Chicago, IL. May 22, 2005.

### Research Assistantships:

- *Research Assistant* for Dr. Jack Selzer. Penn State, January 2005-August 2006.
- *Research Assistant* for Dr. Keith Gilyard. Penn State, September 2002-May 2003.
- *Research Assistant* for Dr. Amitava Kumar. Penn State, September 2003-December 2004.

### Teaching Experience: 15 total sections

*Graduate Teaching Assistant*: Pennsylvania State University, University Park, PA, Aug. 2001-present.

- Advanced Expository Writing (Engl 421).
- Rhetoric and Composition, 4 sections (Engl 15).
- Honors Rhetoric and Composition (Engl 30).
- Technical Writing, 4 sections (Engl 202C).
- Writing in the Humanities, 2 sections (202B).
- Business Writing, 3 sections (202D)

*Graduate Writing Center Tutor*: Pennsylvania State University, University Park, PA, Fall 2006.

*ESL Teacher*: Tashkent, Uzbekistan, December 1997-January 1998.