Anne Wysocki *Writing New Media: Theory and Applications for Expanding the Teaching of Composition*

Chapters 4-6

Clarifying questions:

Can we parse out Kant’s and Wysocki’s conceptualization of form? I’m not sure I understand the form that Kant is discussing in relation to Wysocki’s overall argument.

Discussion questions:

1. In Johnson-Eilola’s chapter he brings up a variety of digital texts that are created through fragmentation, modification, re-contextualization etc. One of which that stood out to me was his discussion of Blogs because he says “they are so easy to produce and modify as to seem nearly disposable (but never really disappearing…” (215). While I can see these texts as collaborative (i.e. the author(s) of the blog is getting resources from other sites on the Internet, there are comment boxes that function as forums, and even re-contextualizing resources and materials from one blog to another), I can also see these texts as ephemeral because the blog itself organizes its materials and texts in reverse-chronological order. Therefore, the texts on a blog are only visible (or perhaps intended to be visible) for a limited amount of time because it will be pushed toward the figurative bottom of the pile. Yet, blogs are permanently recorded as data and archived. Can web texts be ephemeral? Are some web texts inherently ephemeral?
2. Sirc’s chapter reminded me a bit of Adam Bank’s 4C’s speech this past April because both—to a degree—are discussing the obsolescence of outright teaching essay prose. I feel this is a sentiment we can all agree with, however, I’m not sure I’m fully on board with what Sirc is suggesting. His box-logic seems tenable; however, he really seems to center his pedagogical approach(es) on getting his students to show their true voice and insights. While I appreciate and admire such a sentiment, I am just left wondering if this type of approach is—to some degree—a disservice to his students. I fear I’m reducing his argument, quite a lot, but it seems to amalgamate an Expressivist approach with a New Media approach. Am I off base here?

Reading Response:

In Johnson-Eilola’s chapter, I really fixated on his notions of commodifying ideas, texts, information, and learning. Perhaps I’m getting caught up on the wrong point of theory in this text, but the conflation of monetary gain and communication seems to be a common theme contemporary rhet/comp theory. On page 210, Johnson-Eilola quotes James Love, “[t]he new property right would lie outside (and on top) of the copyright laws, and create an entirely new and untested form of regulation that would radically change the public’s current rights to use and disseminate facts and statistics.” I really grabbed onto this notion because it seems to me that the commodification of information is—in my opinion—a Neoliberal attempt to further gate-keep the universitythrough hoarding data, information, new ideas etc. I am really interested to investigate how Neoliberal ideologies are seeping into database companies because this ideology is an ugly truth that most college campuses face out of financial necessity. Now it seems as though that same ugly truth is suffusing into information sites, which I fear has negative extracurricular ramifications as well, insofar as, those who habitually seek out knowledge outside of the classroom are also being intellectually restricted. Johnson-Eilola’s chapter, for me, raised more questions then it answered because I’m interested in investigating the pedagogical effects—how does the limiting of information and data affect the assignments that we give our students? How do these information limitations affect the resources we have available? How does it affect the salience of our composition classrooms; I’m also interested in investigating how this affects composition spaces—i.e. blogs, websites, Wikipedia, forums, and more generally digital writing spaces?