APPROACHING THE CHORA: ENACTING (UN)PLACE IN THE COMPOSITION CLASSROOM

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Introduction

Happenings were all about blurring the boundaries between art and life. They underscored what Cage maintained, which was that "what we are doing is living and that we are not moving toward a goal, but are, so to speak, at the goal constantly and changing with it, and that art, if it is going to be anything useful, should open our eyes to this fact

Geoffery Sirc *English Composition as a Happening*

The Chora, first surfacing in Plato's *Timaeus*, has been a historically problematic concept. Jacques Derrida in his essay by the same name, "Khora," like many scholars, illustrates the challenge in understanding the Chora:

> Neither sensible nor intelligible, neither metaphor nor literal designation, neither this nor that, both this and that, participating and not participating in the two terms of a couple, the [C]hora—also called matrix or nurse—nonetheless resembles a singular proper name, a pre-name, that is both maternal and virginal, yet always elusive. (original emphasis 139)

As Derrida suggests, at the heart of choratic scholarship is the struggle to decipher the Chora, to develop a working-definition and designate its place within scholarly discourse; interpretations of the Chora, as Derrida writes, "consist always in giving form and thus determining it, that which however is only offered or promised in withdrawing itself from all determination" (45). Derrida emphasizes that the Chora is not a "being although it is a necessary condition for and inseparable from the emergence of beings" (47). What Derrida's essay suggests, crucially, is that definitions and associations used to describe the term, which are drawn heavily from the metaphors that Plato uses in the *Timaeus*, are often contradictory and the result is that, as Julia Kristeva

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describes it in her work *Revolution in Poetic Language,* "discourse— all discourse—

moves with and against the Chora in the sense that it simultaneously depends upon and

refuses it" (26).

Indeed, the task of understanding the Chora is not an easy one. That is, the

notion of the Chora cannot be fully or satisfactorily captured. But in an ironic twist, it

is that very elusiveness that has created an interesting, if not productive, tension within

choratic scholarship—as an oxymoron, it is a figure that is located between, "between

the visible and invisible, both visible and invisible," as Derrida writes (90). It is in this

peculiar quality of oscillation–visible-invisible, present-absent—that choratic

scholarship has centered itself.

It is this quality associated with the Chora—as between binaries—that has made

it, unsurprisingly, appealing and productive to post-modern scholarship, and, as such, it

is often categorized with similar post-modern concepts, such as "diffference" (Derrida),

"repetition" (Judith Butler), and "iteration" (Kristeva). Commonly, these designations

are terms aimed at disrupting cultural ideas concerning identity; ironically, while Plato

implicates the Chora in the Being and Becoming binary, (it is, in a sense, the glue that

holds the two together), these post-modern terms are meant to oppose binary structures

of rigid polar oppositions and are seen as imperative in disrupting established binaries.

Yet, as I will argue, the inbetween-ness to which the Chora has been implicated is

different—the Chora serves not only as a mere other as in Judith Butler's work, the

feminist or marginalized voice as in Julia Kristeva's work, or the space-in-the-making

of Derrida's work. But rather, Plato's approach to the Chora in his *Timaeus*—and the

scholarly trends which have followed suit—suggest that the Chora is more than an "is"
–that is, it is closer to a verb than a noun, closer to (en)action than place.

The major stakes in the choratic conversation then, have had to do with the
consequences of trying to "overcome," to use John Muckelbauer's word, the non-
determination of the Chora, of its having (in a very classical sense) no meaning. As a
non-determinate being, scholarship on the Chora has not been able to say what it is.
Building on the work of Julia Kristeva, Jacques Derrida, Gregory Ulmer, and Thomas
Rickert, the goal of this project is to investigate the ways in which we might remove the
Chora from the dialectical movement of negation through what Muckelbauer names an
"affirmative" style of engagement. Working through an affirmative discourse, I plan to
engage the Chora in a way that recognizes the concept's pragmatic possibilities, as
beyond mere designation. Thus, I will approach choratic scholarship from a meta-
standpoint, examining how the patterns and struggles in which choratic scholarship
engages might suggest more about the Chora than any attempt at meaning-making.

Springboarding off of current rhetorical theory, which has begun to emphasize terms
such as ecology, noise, and ambience over more traditionally static terms like audience
and rhetor, this project seeks to demonstrate how the Chora might serve as a productive
addition to the ever expanding and shifting rhetorical triangle, as a term which opens up
conceptions of "place" to a site of movement, connection and emergence.

I will first present "traces" of choratic manifestations throughout scholarship—in
other words, I will gather a set of common, though purposefully imprecise, terms used
to engage with the Chora throughout its history. In building up a loose constellation of

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terms, I will then demonstrate that scholarship thus far has primarily examined the bodily dimension of the Chora, or what John Sallis, in his work *Chorology*, calls "the replication of the Chora in the body" (22). That is to say, choratic scholars have been primarily concerned with grounding the Chora in the material, in the physical. In response, I will re-orient those key terms in order to recast choratic scholarship away from the body and more toward embodiment. This approach will rely on an affirmative engagement with choratic scholarship, where scholarship will not be discounted nor will any one scholar's work be given primacy; rather, scholarship will form a moving constellation. The aim of such an approach will be to show that the history of the Chora has invented and re-invented the Chora; it is like what scholars have said it is like. This project, then, attempts to look into the unstable ground of play between presence and absence in the Chora, without attempting, however, to affix the concept, because, as I hope to demonstrate, that elusiveness and movement are the very attributes which make the Chora a valuable concept to rhetorical invention.

The final section of this project will explore the ways in which the Chora can become an approach useful to rhetorical invention and pedagogy, especially within the composition classroom. Considering process, post-process and Victor Vitanza's otherwise pedagogy, my final section will ask: How do we invent a pedagogy? How do we come up with teaching material? And, of course, how do we teach students ways to invent? In lieu of traditional invention theories regarding topoi (using topoi to invent), I will argue that inventing through and with the Chora opens up the classroom space, allowing for a different type of engagement and thinking. If topoi, as spaces of

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pedagogy, are, as Ulmer argues, "fixed, static, unchanging, an actualization of the thesis concept as ideology" then my ultimate interest lies in how the Chora suggests that invention is not product, but rather invention is discovery (and as such, always progressing toward something else).

Certainly, this project, methodologically, will proceed through a different "singular rhythm" than traditional approaches used in choratic scholarship, and in doing so, I recognize that such an endeavor, acknowledges a loss of certainty, which as scholars and educators we naturally resist at all costs; however, that loss of certainty is not the same as nihilism. On the contrary, such a loss may well indicate a significant and promising shift in thinking in rhetorical theory and composition pedagogy. By moving away from designations, the Chora can be understood as initiating new possibilities, new ways of thinking about the space in which we invent. Thus, the Chora encompasses pragmatic possibilities, possibilities, however, that are only possible if we (radically) accept that the Chora is irreducible to questions of meaning.

Review of Scholarship

The new is not found in what is said, but in the event of its return.

Michel Foucault *The Order of Discourse*

I.

In "Remapping Rhetorical Territory" Cheryl Glenn argues that historiography works "as if the real and discourse were joined" (290). I think Glenn's approach to historiography provides a way of tracing the history of choratic scholarship without evaluating it for truth-value, or giving any one scholar's work primacy over another. Insisting that history is "not linear, but a series of angles, of placements" Glenn's argument acknowledges that the subjective should not be discounted; Glenn's suggestion of the real and the discourse as joined allows us to present chorartic scholarship as an ever-expanding collection of potential possibilities. In other words, such an approach makes it acceptable, even productive, to resist the assumption that any single "story" of the Chora, any single, scholarly reading, can be verified as correct or take precedence over another. Similarly, Gregory Ulmer, in his work *Heuretics: The Logic of Invention*, frames the Chora in terms of a story: "Since the Chora may not be observed directly in philosophical terms, it must be put into a story, "but a story going outside of story'" (149). If the history of choratic scholarship is inseparable from the Chora itself—it is what scholars say it is—then the way in which we piece together that history proves crucial to how the Chora might "look" once (re)invented. In this sense, approaching the Chora as a history unto itself is a way of "[talking] about the past as though it were really and still is 'there' while acknowledging that it never really can be"

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(290). Thus, in order to map the historiography of the Chora, which is essentially what a review of its scholarship is, it seems important to consider the history of scholarly work on the Chora as inseparable from the "identity" of the Chora itself.

What follows is a review of choratic scholarship that focuses primarily on exploring the connection between Plato's Chora and the conversations which have since taken up the subject of—and productively appropriated—the Chora. After describing each scholar's discourse on the Chora, I will explicitly draw out a set of key terms. These key terms will then appear throughout the rest of this project, explicitly yet un-explicated. In creating an imprecise constellation of provisional, mobile terms, I hope to shift the focus away from singular designations of the Chora and more toward what past designations have done to the elusive term and its (un)place in discourse. The primary aim then is to shift choratic discourse away from a meaning making endeavor—that which focuses on "is," such as what is the Chora—and instead gesture toward an approach more concerned with what the Chora does, has done, and has been used to do. Thus, the question of what the Chora might look like if enacted and embodied is grounded in and finds imperative the work of scholars such as Jacques Derrida, Gregory Ulmer, Thomas Rickert, John Sallis, and Julia Kristeva.

<div align="center">II. (Re)beginning(s)</div>

The Chora as a space complicates. The risk, as scholars such as Ulmer have identified it, is "to constantly assimilate Plato's Chora with Aristotle's topos" (11). Thus, I think it is important to begin where we are first introduced to the Chora: in the *Timaeus*. Providing context for the Chora,—talking about in terms of Plato's

purposes—can help us to "map" the trajectory of the Chora as it has been (re)imagined and resituated by scholars.

In an admittedly oversimplification, the *Timaeus* is about the creation of the universe and the creation of man, described as a dramatic process of transition from being to becoming (27d-28a). In this process, the Chora is instrumental, and it is referred to by Plato through various images: as a "nurse," the "matrix," the "womb" and the "receptacle" (Sallis 17). Plato writes that the Chora precedes creation and that it is fundamentally amorphous, and therefore invisible, but it is precisely because the Chora is "invisible and formless, all embracing" that it can receive the properties and determinations that first make the cosmos possible (51a-b).

As never fixed, the Chora has a status that seems untenable and yet is necessary to Plato's concept of creation. It is a space that cannot be aptly expressed in language because there is "nothing" to describe there. The Chora's resistance to designation, however, allows Plato to invent through metaphors and (re)beginnings. That is to say, Plato's reliance on metaphor to describe the Chora does not diminish the importance of the concept, but rather sets up a space of non-determinacy, and in doing so allows for the concept to be (re)invented.

Thus, the key term that I am extracting from Plato's dialogue and which will, in turn, become a concept in constant play throughout this project, is "(re)beginning(s)"— for, as Socrates says three times in the dialogue, "We must begin again" (48b). This resistance to a singular beginning generates a productive uncertainty which makes the story of creation, creation itself, necessarily non-linear, implicating invention into a

perpetual forward and back again movement, Thus, (re)beginning(s) exhibit in themselves a primary characteristic of, and perhaps even a clue into, how the Chora might be approached, where invention is always emergent and emerging. Cultivating this terminology, this project will seek to show how (re)beginnings constitute an essential quality of choratic scholarship and linking those (re)beginning(s) together suggests a procedure for invention.

III. Imprecision

As I have intimated, beginning with Plato's insistence on its "formlessness" (6a), the Chora has been primarily addressed through metaphors, specifically images grounded in the body: Plato describes it in *Timaeus* as a "wet nurse" (12b) and "mother-figure" (10a); Derrida indicts it as a "third gender" (147) who is "virgin," (148) and Kristeva interprets the Chora as the site where "breast becomes place" (241). Moreover, Plato's metaphors, as predominately female/feminine, have been used to ground and shape these theorists' readings of the Chora. Specifically, Kristeva uses these terms to ground a feminist reading of the Chora, while Derrida uses these terms to deconstruct the Chora and suggest the ways in which the feminine referents complicate its designation.

Derrida takes issue with Plato's comparison of the Chora to "a mother or a nurse" (97). At risk here, he argues, is "anthropomorphism" or rather the reduction of the Chora to a human (in this case, the feminine) form. In Derrida's view, the qualifiers "mother" or "nurse" serve only as a proximal referents that tell us nothing about the "essence-without-essence" of the Chora (92). Derrida especially emphasizes the fluidity

of the Chora and sees it as a schizophrenic destabilizing concept that is constantly on the move. Since Derrida's Chora is basically nothing more than the intermediary between being and becoming, intelligibility /sensibility, it has no qualities of its own and as a result it cannot be gender specific or feminine. The Chora is "a neutral space of place without a place, a place where everything is marked which would be 'in itself' unmarked" (98).

Yet, ironically, Derrida cannot negate the body trap. Derrida's argument relies on these female images to assess the Chora. Taking advantage of the double connotations of the pronoun "elle" in French, Derrida refers to the Chora in the feminine: "She does not belong to the 'race of women'" (124). The turning of femininity into the privileged metaphor –even if it is a metaphor under erasure, as Kristeva argues—continues to inscribe a physical form onto the Chora. In other words, there is a curious tension that arises in Derrida's work. Derrida unavoidably, it seems, designates the undesignatable Chora as a "she," while at the same time he insists that the Chora, this "something" that is not "some thing," has no meaning (123).

Recognizing and engaging with this tension, Derrida maintains that proceeding in this "double-ness" (this "imprecision, as I have termed it) is legitimate, even necessary (92). Derrida untiringly reminds us that the figures that "describe" the Chora are, of necessity, inadequate, false: the "receptacle," "mother," "nurse," or "imprint bearer" (89-92). In Derrida's articulation of the Chora, he writes that it "is the spacing which is the condition for everything to take place, for everything to be inscribed" (88). This undoing and redoing of his thesis illustrates the Chora as a concept that is

something that receives discourses, translations, and determinations but, in offering

itself in this way, already withdraws and in this sense is beyond sense and

determination. Additionally, such a reading supports a more historical understanding of

our "knowledge" as a series of incomplete stories. Derrida brings out not only this

particular alternative, but also that fact there are alternative or competing accounts of

the tradition from its inception.

It is Derrida's indignation at the Chora's imprecision—its indiscriminate

acceptance/(active)receiving of everything and its simultaneous refusal to hold on to

any one characteristic—that will serve as a key term throughout my project. This notion

of shifting identities, on the one hand, is not all that different from Plato's concept

since it "has not for its own even that substance for which it came into being, but fleets

as a phantom of something else—to come into existence in some other thing" (12b). It

is this quality, for Derrida, which constitutes the Chora's multiplicity. Since the Chora

has no origin substance for which it came into being—since it lacks a body to call its

own—it is and always refers (/defers) to some other thing. This quality of

referring/deferring, of imprecise pointing, will appear throughout my project, where the

differences between interpretations and designations of the Chora will create generative

spaces of productive imprecision. (Scholars are, as I have suggested, inventing the

Chora as they describe it).

IV. Ambient Movement

Plato's use of maternal metaphors and Derrida's re-inscription of the feminine

onto the Chora has been adopted and cultivated by contemporary feminist theorists,

such as Julia Kristeva.   It is because the Chora becomes feminine, that Julia Kristeva's appropriation of this space is limited by (and ultimately strengthens) what remains for her, what critic Elizabeth Grosz in her work *Time Space and Perversion*, calls Kristeva's "phallic fantasy" (115-16).

Although the Platonic Chora is described as a formless matrix, Kristeva articulates a maternal Chora that must have a place of receptacle, the maternal body (87). For Kristeva, the Chora becomes the focus of the semiotic as the pre-symbolic. The Chora is not only biologically-linked but always shaped by social and cultural forces; it is the place from which the semiotic receives its motivation to "rupture the sequential logic of the symbolic" (16-17). Kristeva thus inscribes the body within the signification process. The Chora, for Kristeva, may be pre-linguistic, but the becoming of the sign system is "always-already in progress" (19).

Just as Derrida acknowledges the Chora as a site of productive tension, for Kristeva the Chora is always a site of crisis, "a crisis of signification" (129). She argues that while the Chora is semiotic, at the same time, it is a generative space where a new modality of the signifying process is produced (121-2). For Kristeva, "semiotic" is used to denote signification based on "traces and marks", rather than signs (117).

Moreover, Kristeva describes the Chora as mobile/motile, using maternal language to assign it as such, comparing it to contractions. For Kristeva, the Chora is at once the maternal part of giving birth and the birth itself. Referring to the qualities of the Chora's kinetic rhythm, Kristeva says the Chora is a "modality of significance in which the linguistic sign is not yet articulated as the absence of an object and as the

distinction between real and symbolic" (26). Thus she identifies the Chora as the

process of signification, the space between the sign and the signified, and stresses that

the Chora is "an essentially mobile and extremely provisional articulation constituted by

movements and their ephemeral stases" (25). Like Derrida who says that the Chora can

only be apprehended referentially, Kristeva insists that the Chora is accessible only

indirectly through its traces—through "the traces of traces" (68).

For Kristeva the Chora is thus formed by the 'marks" of drives, by "the

rhythmic alternation of their movement" (66). The Chora is therefore not a self-

sustaining entity; it is not merely composed of drives or of energy, or anything of its

own substance. Rather, for Kristeva, the Chora is a rhythm of articulations, formed by

the difference   ("tensions") between charges and states, by the repeated interruption of

drives. Therefore, the Chora's identity is a differential one. These "traces and marks"

are a way of referencing the Chora without necessarily trying to take hold of it; they are

the language of gesturing towards, rather than arriving at.

While Kristeva's argument is oftentimes politically driven and her language,

psychoanalytical, the broader implication of her work is that she demonstrates the way

in which the Chora is a type of semiotic pointing; in other words, she situates the Chora

within moments when it is able to "erupt" in practices such as avant-garde art, religion,

esoterism, or other "fragmentary phenomena"—as she calls them (13-16). "Under what

conditions," she asks, do these eruptions "correspond to socio-economic change and,

ultimately, even to revolution?" (16).

If we resituate Kristeva's argument in rhetorical theory, as Thomas Rickert does in his work "Toward the Chora: Derrida, Ulmer and Kristeva on Emplaced Invention," terms such as "revolution" and "eruption" become interesting ways of describing invention; they invoke a type of invention that is kairotic and even violent, which hinges on movement, both physical and affective (i.e. "to be moved"). For Kristeva, invention takes place in both material and affective situations. Thus, Kristeva's sense of invention challenges the tradition of topoi, arguing that ideas are only part of the place for invention; the other part is the Chora—moods, feelings, etc—and as such must be factored into a beginning; it is not a part of a "systematized inventional method" but rather a product of affect, or "rupture" (16).

Through combining Kristeva's sense of movement as affective and physical, as violent and productive, the key term which my project will cultivate is "ambience." Specifically, there is a way in which Kristeva's description of the Chora's movement as physical and affective can be examined in terms of Rickert's concept of ambient environments. That is, Rickert offers "ambience" as something that "connotes distribution, co-adaptation, and emergence, but it adds an emphasis to the constitutive role of the overall affective environment" (177). Similiarly, Kristeva's choratic ruptures are not linear movements from point A to point B, but rather imprecise movements which produce and receive, and are never entirely locatable. It is in this way that I will seek to cultivate Kristeva's "always-already in process" Chora through the current rhetorical conversation. In this sense, Kristeva's description of how the Chora moves provides a way of (re)placing the concept in terms of "doing." That is, using the

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term "ambience" is a way of imagining the Chora in terms of what choratic movement might look like in the post-human space.

V. Paradigm

While Derrida and Kristeva conclude that the Chora is foremost something that is resistant to singular designation, Ulmer and Rickert use that common conclusion to begin to move choratic scholarship away from meaning-making and instead toward doing . While still using certain historical associations with the Chora, Ulmer attempts to create a heuristic, while Rickert explores the way in which the term's properties might inform post-human rhetorical theory.

Ulmer's work, too, begins at the site of the body. He draws heavily on the intimate relation between two related Greek concepts of Chora and Choros, translated as "space" and "choral dance" respectively, and Ulmer reminds us that these terms are both deeply rooted in the paradigm of Greek thinking and imagination (39). As Ulmer points out, his method, chorography, is close to choreography—and thus lends itself to notions of movement, rhythm, and performance (12). Additionally, Ulmer's chorography is a term that already exists in the discipline of geography; as such, Ulmer argues, the term seems appropriate for a rhetoric of invention concerned with "place" in relation to movement (27). Within geography "chorological analysis" produces a sense of place that is similar to the sense of time that comes from the subject of history," trying to capture a more subjective dimension of spatiality in specific rather than in generic terms. (39) Chorography, then, allows Ulmer to re-conceive the relations between the writer and his "specific position in time and space of culture" (38).

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Overall, Ulmer's work seems to respond directly to Derrida's conclusion that the "[C]hora receives everything or gives place to everything...thus an impossible surface-it is not even a surface because it has no depth" (Derrida as cited in Ulmer, 65). The problem with Derrida's foreclosure, Ulmer argues, is that the choral strategy of writing "with the paradigm" brings such a space that Derrida is quick to dismiss as "impossible" into existence (16). Ulmer is able to point out that hypertext is the solution to Derrida's conundrum. Thus, Ulmer, in an attempt to further open up the Chora to collectivities and pluralities, demonstrates through technology how Derrida's "problem" is a non-issue—that digital media allows for such an "impossible surface," for a post-human body (17-18). In this way, Ulmer's work begins to imagine the post human body in that the Chora is the active receptacle is the interface between us and technology.

Ulmer, however, under the guidance of Derrida's deconstruction of the Chora, does not claim that the Chora is either eternally fixed, as Plato does, or as culturally determined as Kristeva and Derrida do. Rather, Ulmer imagines chorography as a movement across "systems" or "sets" (140). Specifically, he emphasizes the element of chance or serendipity. As Ulmer writes, "Chorography/…/is a method of chance," and as such does not confine itself to topoi found in closed fields (10). Choral places are "paradigms" rather than concepts of loosely gathered associations derived from coincidence of two or more "premises" what Ulmer refers to as a "diegesis/…/an imaginary space and time (48).

Ulmer suggests that the new space of writing will be a hypermedia Chora: a place of contradiction, association (free and not so free) and negotiation (110). Opposed

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to the semiotic in Kristeva's work, Ulmer sees inventive writing as "the result of an interference between these two orders of signification" (175) an interruption of the symbolic order's tendency to "arrange the semiotic" (66). Ulmer proposes that the unconscious is like the Chora, because it precedes discursive articulation but is nevertheless ordered; it is "a pattern or rhythm turned into matter turned to the material and bodily conditions on the gendered figuring of the Chora" (173-4).

VI. Commingling

If Ulmer's work begins to gesture toward (em)placing the Chora in post-human rhetoric, Rickert, in his essay "Toward the Chora" expands and develops that idea, using post-human rhetoric to imagine the Chora. Rickert traces the work of Kristeva, Ulmer, and Derrida on the Chora, concluding that "[the] Chora transforms our senses of beginnings, creations, and inventions" (252). His article endeavors to respond to the shift towards understanding the mind as "commingling" with the body as it is implicated in complex and shifting systems that are both social and technological. Rickert works to theorize concerns of how bodies in spaces make sense of and produce information by turning to the concept of the Chora. Rickert traces the conceptual development of choratic scholarship, arguing that troubling concepts like rhetorical space and invention—that is, unsettling what seem to be familiar, knowable concepts— can actually open up new possibilities for invention and rhetorical production.

The key concept that will guide my research then, will be Rickert's understanding of "commingling" which suggests a back and forth productive engagement wherein no single scholar's work will hold primacy. Focusing on where

choratic scholars' works overlap, Rickert argues that all these Choras "struggle against reducing invention to ideas" (201). Rickert's position that the Chora exhibits "no clear 'in here' and 'out there'" strongly echoes cognitive scientist Andy Clark's natural-born cyborg model and extended mind theory (199). In this way, "commingling" offers a way of talking about the Chora in terms of immersion, where body and environment— the body of scholarship on the Chora and the Chora's "(un)being"—are constantly joined and re-joining. Additionally, commingling, as a term, also suggestions something social (to mingle, to interact with); to engage with the Chora in terms of interactions between scholars and scholarship, commingling implies a moving constellation of connections between and among Choras. That is, commingling is a way of moving and engaging in an immersive environment.

VII. Intuition

Keeping the Chora in the body but primarily cultivating its noetic association in Plato's work, philosopher John Sallis, in his work *Chorology*, takes an important turn in choratic scholarship by suggesting the possibility of the Chora's noetic manifestation. Challenging scholarship's claim that the Chora is an "an impossible presence," an idea advocated by Derrida, Sallis argues that the Chora can be grounded exactly in the manner in which the Chora is apprehended; that is, the Chora exists in the dream, described in *Timaeus* (52a-d). He points out that Socrates' proposal that the Chora can only been seen as if in a "dream" is crucial because it fails to distinguish between the image and the original, between physical experience and inner experience. In short, dreaming confuses, but also discloses, that of which one dreams. Like Kristeva, then,

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Sallis insists that the Chora can appear only in "traces" (23). Thus, he concludes that the Chora must be spoken of in terms of movement, because "the trace of the Chora is an impermanent trace," just as dreams are fleeting (55).

A key term which resurfaces throughout Ulmer, Kristeva, and Derrida's scholarship in its various manifestations is "intuition." (Kristeva names it *jouissance*, Ulmer calls it "eureka" and Derrida calls it by the same name, "intuition.") If we are to (imprecisely) inscribe Sallis' sense of the Chora's noetic quality onto these scholars' sense of the Chora as intuitive, then I think there is a way of talking about the Chora as a concept which is approached by scholars, intuitively, as if in a dream; in other words, we can approach the Chora as a term which begs scholars to imagine what it is and what it can be. Walter Ong tells us that the noetic – the rhetorical characteristics of feeling, sensation, and intuition – stem from the oral tradition. In particular, Ong notes that "oral memory works effectively with 'heavy' characters, persons whose deeds are monumental, memorable, and commonly public" (132). Sallis' discussion of *Timaeus*' multiple (re)beginnings of his story of creation echoes Ong's sense of how the noetic nature of the Chora generates figures "to organize experience in some sort of permanently memorable form" (139). These figures, in the case of the *Timaeus*, are metaphors. Similarly to Ong, Sallis emphasizes how the noetic might allow for an understanding of the Chora as a way to create and invent, where the Chora suggests creation takes place through feeling, sensation, and intuition.

VIII.

Scholarship on the Chora, then, performs the impossibility of such articulation within the discursive system that has produced it. The question of articulating the Chora in language is posed as a question of the very possibilities and impossibilities of intelligibility itself. Thus this thinking of the Chora gives rise to a different thinking. The challenge then is to show that the tension between binary oppositions creates the potential for emergent, productive possibilities. A constellation of key terms, then is a starting point for imagining how we might move beyond and through the Chora. Moreover, scholars' framing of the Chora in terms of the body, allows my own argument to productively recast choratic scholarship, where the conversation can move from the physical body toward embodiment. Thus, the multiple texts of investigation and the common language their scholarship rests upon have provided my own investigation with a set of terms to help unravel and further complicate the Chora; ultimately, this project is only able to embody the Chora because of what previous scholarship has done with the Chora in terms of the body. While Kristeva Derrida, and Sallis's readings reside, at least in part, in the body, I suggest, alternatively, that these bodily images are meant to instruct us on a particular style of engagement and less on how to understand what the Chora is or is not. In other words, by describing the Chora through the body, I am suggesting that Plato and the scholars who have followed suit, are instructing us on how to embody the Chora.

Choratic (Re)Enactment

How can we tell the dancer from the dance?

<div align="right">William Butler Yeats *Among School Children*</div>

<div align="center">I.</div>

The purpose of this project is not to challenge previous scholarship on the

Chora, to deem it (as it often times acknowledges itself as being) inadequate, but rather

to vex the styles of engagement through which such discourses have emerged in the first

place. That is, this project seeks to examine the dialectical negation that has persisted

throughout the Chora's history in order to re-situate choratic scholarship a new (and

old) way. Rather than privileging one scholar's work over another, this project points

to, as it did in the previous section, the importance of attending to the movement (or

"making") of the Chora throughout its discourse. In other words, I am looking less at

the Chora itself (as a primary text) and more at the scholarship on it; that is to say that

this project will continually seek to demonstrate that the genealogy of the Chora is

inseparable—not different—from the Chora itself. Thus, by approaching scholarship on

the Chora as my primary text(s) of investigation, this section productively engages with

choratic scholarship in order to ultimately enact and embody it.

Using John Muckelbauer's inventional process, and working with Ulmer's

chorography, this work opens rhetorical space by moving choratic scholarship toward

mobile and generative possibilities. In short, choratic scholarship itself helps us

understand that rhetorical concepts like "beginning," "invention," and "rhetorical

space" are not in fact clear, and that, far form this being only a philosophical-theoretical

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concern, such unintelligibility can itself lead to innovative inventional practices. What I seek to do is not to continue Ulmer's work, but, rather to apply his paradigm to the very concept through which his paradigm is constructed. That is, I use chorography as an affirmative approach to engage with choratic scholarship. Certainly, to accomplish this, I work with the Chora in relation to theories of rhetorical invention, but I do so in a wider sense—as a step back—to potentially open a new approach in choratic scholarship. Additionally, my experiment "uses the method that I am inventing while I am inventing it" (17).To do so, this project "replaces the logic governing argumentative writing with associational networks" (18). Working meta-rhetorically—essentially considering secondary texts about the Chora as my primary text(s)—and collecting a set of key terms, my method of enactment allows me to approach and ultimately embody the Chora "by considering all possible terms" (22). Accordingly, the procedure of this project does not unfold arguments put forth by choratic scholars, nor does it take a counter-position to their work. Rather, this project proceeds through emergence, emerging alongside choratic scholarship, as it attempts to work toward a generative potential.

II. Affirmative Chora(s)

In his re-imagining of what Edward Schiappa refers to as the "Post-Modern Challenge" John Muckelbauer in his work *The Future of Invention* writes:

What is at stake in this post-modern challenge is the pragmatic possibility of somehow responding "differently" in any particular encounter. In short what is

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at stake is the possibility of inventing a style of engagement that is irreducible to

the dialectical movement of negation. (5)

Indeed, Muckelbauer begins with the argument that, even in post modernity, our notion

of change is still bound to a modernist, Hegelian dialectic insofar as "change is always

and everywhere the effect of overcoming and negation" (x). This is a point he returns to

in Chapter 1, writing that, despite the attempts of post modern theory to overcome

dialectical binaries, there is nevertheless a fundamental binary to which post modern

theory remains committed:

While most contemporary critiques are directed toward realizing some particular

change–whether in social dynamics, institutional structures, or even just in

intellectual landscapes–most also fail to attend to the implications of the

movement of change that drives such work. Another way of saying this is that

despite the incessant and justifiable concern for problematizing a whole series of

binary operations throughout the social field, the one binary that has remained

firmly intact is that between "the same" and "the different." (3)

His project involves engaging the question of change and the problems which surround

it, but, as Muckelbauer emphasizes, "engaging these questions has less to do with

simply accepting or rejecting the content of any particular proposition and more to do

with altering the style through which we engage in the everyday practices of reading,

writing, and responding" (x-xi).

   Muckelbauer classifies three primary styles of engagement within the discourse of

invention: "Advocacy," "Critique," and "Synthesis" (7). What these styles have in

common is that each tries to create new power dynamics in order to challenge the platonic system of binary oppositions; however, as Muckelbauer points out, each one ultimately fails and succumbs/returns to "a system of negation" (6). Advocacy and Critique work through either an emphasis on the traditionally privileged concept or an emphasis against that hegemony by "privileging the underdog," respectively (6-7). The issue with these two types of engagement, as Muckelbauer discusses, is that both approaches ultimately respond in the same way—they both repeat the oppositional, dialectical structure.

The third style of engagement which Muckelbauer cites is Synthesis, which he describes as attempting "to overcome the oppositional movement itself by synthesizing these opposing poles" (8). While the "contact zones or boundaries" that are produced as a result are certainly helpful, these boundaries, paradoxically, "produce oppositional dynamics," where any effort toward disrupting or disorienting the repetition of dialectical change still originate from an oriented position (9). Primarily using terminology that Muckelbauer categorizes as Synthesis—in particular "'hybridity'/.../ networks' and 'ecologies'"—Derrida, Kristeva, Ulmer, and Rickert have made considerable progress in recognizing and defining the Chora as the Other, as occupying a curious place in relation to the dialectic (9). For instance, Ulmer writes that "all invention, of course, is the creation of a network" (33). The network, though, is formed through the exploration of details which, in turn, shape a pattern. Thus, negation still persists.

The obstacle, as I have so far identified it, that choratic scholars face is that scholarship on the Chora seems to "bump up" against itself; each scholar ultimately is concerned with how to talk about something that cannot be contained, held still, something that is constantly in motion and never definitive. Muckelbauer argues that the result is that such styles of engagement create "freeze-frame images of particular encounters, schematic diagrams of what are, in practice, active engagements and enacted responses that may move our understanding toward potentially neglected possibilities" (4). In order to "unfreeze" such possibilities, Muckelbauer argues that we need to carefully attend, in each particular case, to the moment (kairos?) and movement of transformation itself, to pay attention to and problematize particular styles of engagement that specific depictions represent. Ultimately, as Muckelbauer observes, what is at stake is not the specific content of any particular evaluation or proposition but the pragmatic "possibility of somehow responding differently in our actual encounters with the world," instead of being trapped in the same limited range of options for response and action (13).

My primary task, then, is to re-situate, indeed to "unfreeze," choratic discourse using Muckelbauer's style of affirmative engagement. To accomplish this, I must foremost, as Muckelbauer suggests, change the terms of the debate and approach the Chora as "affirmative change" (11). In doing so, my task is to take scholarship on the Chora all ready in place and place it into a moving constellation of connections and interactions. This move is similar to Jennifer Edbauer's approach in her essay "Unframing Models of Public Distribution: From Rhetorical Situations to Rhetorical

Ecologies," where she argues that we must treat a text as a process instead of a static event, an approach she calls "rhetorical ecologies" (22-3). That is, while choratic scholarship so far has engaged in a practice of invention that aims at discovery and overcoming conceptual gaps—i.e. what is the Chora —I will proceed through a style of assent, not dismissing common designations that appear throughout choratic discourse, but rather piecing them together in different ways, while always moving toward enactment and embodiment. In this sense, I will be developing "an ecological, or affective, rhetorical model," which as Edbauer explains "is one that reads rhetoric both as a process of distributed emergence and as an ongoing circulation process" (13).Conceptualizing choratic scholarship as a process allows for a better understanding of how meaning changes as context changes. Edbauer writes: "A given rhetoric is not contained by the elements that comprise its rhetorical situation/…/[rather] a rhetoric emerges already infected by the viral intensities that are circulating in the social field" (14). This concept of rhetorical ecologies where "the elements of rhetorical situations bleed" guides my overall approach (15). Arranging this project around a set of key terms not only calls attention to the hurdles that arise in talking about the Chora, but also embodies a way of engaging affirmatively and productively with it. In this sense, these key terms organize my project as well as perform its argument.

III. Collecting Choras or (Re)Making the Paradigm

To affirmatively engage with the Chora, to resist dialectical negation, requires a specific type of writing—one which does not fall back onto designations and (en)closures. In *Heuretics,* Ulmer explores the possibilities of "a different kind of

writing (without representation)" and attempts to devise "a 'discourse of method' for

that which . . . is the other of method": i.e. the Chora (66). In contrast to traditional

argumentative writing, which works specifically to prove a singular truth (i.e. a thesis

statement), Ulmer proposes a generative process of discovery where one draws on and

produces "a database . . . the full paradigm of possibilities through which a multitude of

paths may be traced" (38). Under Ulmer's method, through acknowledging the multiple

meanings of key concepts, the researcher becomes a collector and arranger of data that

is "unified by a pattern of repetition, rather than by a concept . . . more like discovery

than proof" (56). Ulmer argues that the realizations that stem from such a collection,

which can be (re)arranged by both the writer and reader of the text, forces those who

engage it to become "active" (62). Ulmer names this method chorography, which,

evokes the body spaces, or as Ulmer refers to them, "positionalities," of those who

engage and produce a text:

As a generative theory of writing that is less interested in arguments than

working through paradigms, Chorography will be the primary method used in

approaching choratic scholarship. I am interested in using Ulmer's meta-rhetorical

method to begin to associatively intuit the linkages among choratic discourse(s), but

crucially not to project a singular paradigm onto these linkages. These linkages, to quote

Victor Vitanza who in turn calls upon Lyotard, do "not mean/…/that they are to be

codified; instead, another game of dislinkaging is to be played" (192). In other words,

common terminology collected and appearing as needed throughout this project will

work toward opening up the Chora, to keep it from ever settling or stabilizing. Thus,

the goal of this approach is to speculate, to experiment, "to learn as I am going where I am going" as Ulmer puts it (15). In other words, the goal, as Ulmer notes, "is not 'navigate' but 'negotiate'" (239). By "negotiate," he means to succeed in moving through as well as "to transfer, confer, bargain" (245).

By (re)imagining the Chora in terms of what it might do rather than what it might be, this project will do more than describe and analyze the "inventions" of others, but rather, in an almost Frankenstein-like fashion, it will seek to invent something "new" from those already-inventions. Thus, through an integration and juxtaposition of multiple forms of choratic discourse—from femininist, to deconstructionist, to philosophical, and so on—this method will allow for a "heuretic" approach to research. That is, the method I use throughout the remainder project is designed to generate sudden flashes of insight or illumination – "eureka experiences" as Ulmer calls them– more so than produce interpretations of scholarship that one defends in light of some predetermined aim (142). If Roland Barthes was correct that "an inventive culture requires the broadest possible criterion of what is relevant" then I argue that the Chora, and the practice of it, chorography, makes it possible for us to open up the space of investigation (105).

A principle of Chora research is, as Ulmer writes, "to collect what I find into a set, unified by a pattern of repetitions [key terms] rather than by a concept, where learning is more like discovery than a proof" (56). If I am to make any "new" or generative headway into the Chora, then I must, as Ulmer proposes, "try out" and "consider as experiments in representation" other discourses. This I what each new "key

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term" or designation will do—it will work, choratically, making progress and the receding. Kristeva will undo Derrida who will in turn undo Kirsteva's designation of the Chora. Crucially, this method will be less a "starting from scratch" than an affirmative engagement with past scholarship in order to create something both new and old.

This is similar to Geoffery Sirc's approach in *English Composition as a Happening* where he calls his approach both "disruptive and restorative" (12). Using the metaphor of the "happening" he writes: "The happening artists' basic rule was indeterminacy: nothing is previously determined, neither form nor material content; everything is under erasure. The only given, a kind of non-axiom, is the one stated by Rauschenberg, who cared not all about control or intention, only change: "What's existing is that we don't know. There is no anticipated rule, but we will be changed" (10). The method of my investigation, then, is a sort of un-method. I will be engaging in an experiment, an effort toward discovering by not working out the Chora—designating what it means, "solving it"—but instead working through and around it. Inventing and using it as I go.

IV. Approaching the Soft Chora

Furthermore, I am applying the terminology that Rickert uses in his article "Toward the Chora: Kristeva, Derrida, and Ulmer on Emplaced Invention" that seems most in line with an affirmative style of engagement. Derrida, Kristeva, and Ulmer discuss the Chora in terms of understanding (Kristeva attempts to access it through Freud (283); Ulmer concludes that "Chora/…/is another name for/…/differance" (73); and Derrida states that "we shall be content with indicating and situation it," meaning that it can be

pointed/gestured at (92). However, Rickert, acknowledges that any investigation of the

Chora can only be a movement "toward" it, and as such cautiously describes his

methodology an "approaching of" or "movement toward" the Chora (251).

"Approaching" the Chora implicitly acknowledges its elusiveness, while engaging with

it in the affirmative. I am aligning myself with Muckelbauer and Rickert in asserting

that it is only when we purge choratic discourse of features that predispose us to think

of it in terms of the dialectical that it is possible to use it. Thus my exploration of the

Chora is predicated on acknowledging, and more importantly, making necessary, an

understanding that the Chora remain undesignated and indeterminable.

Furthermore, in order to approach the Chora, current trends in post-human

scholarship must inform my methodology. Particularly, the image of the cyborg

provides possible insight into how to go about engaging with the Chora. While there are

various approaches to the cyborg in and around rhetoric (e.g., Covino and Ballif in

rhetoric, Harraway in science and technology studies, etc), for the purposes of this

project, I will use Andy Clark's "natural-born" cyborg and Katherine Hayles post

human, which embody an affirmative approach.

In *Natural-Born Cyborgs: Minds, Technologies, and the Future of Human

Intelligence*, Clark's cyborgs are "human-technology symbionts: thinking and reasoning

systems whose minds and selves are spread across biological brain and non-biological

circuitry" (12). Indeed, Clark's image of the cyborg is one that constantly works within

and without set boundaries of interior and exterior and as such echoes Rickert's

description of the Chora as having no clear "in here, out there" distinctions (88).

In order to, as Muckelbauer uses the phrase, "move beyond" designation, this project will work through the post-human, cyborg model in order to focus on embodiment rather than designation. That is, just as Clark argues that our cognitive processes are not contained within the mind but rather are integrated into, and indistinguishable from, our environments, I will approach the Chora as indistinguishable from the discourse that surrounds it—in fact, the Chora is whatever scholarship says it is (255).

As Nathaniel Rivers in his dissertation "Cultivating Rhetorics" argues, "Embodiment is not a priori and unalterable/.../If embodiment is not fixed and thus needs be cultivated, then embodiment is linked with activity and practice more than a state (or expression) of being (6). Approaching the Chora through embodiment and enactment, instead of attempting to define or designate it, then, transforms the concept from troubling and theoretical, to productive and practical. In other words, it allows the semiotic Chora to escape from the symbolic impulse of scholars, while still productively engaging with it.

This effort of directing choratic scholarship away from designations is an effort toward making the Chora "soft." By "soft" I am referring to Andy Clark's discussion of "soft selves" (92). As Rivers explains:

> Clark's notion of the "soft self" (one can't resist the Burkean jingle dog with sophist) and Derksen's "self-cultivation" challenge us to reconsider, for instance, ethos as stable, as self-authored, and as a sole product of the individual rhetor. Clark's notion of the self is one of incredible seepage (a strikingly un-Platonic

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notion). It is a self open to constant change. It is a self that annexes more and

more external elements in coalitional processes of control-sharing. (92-3)

If a "soft" term is open to, even invites, a decentralized approach, then approaching

scholarship around the Chora as soft will allow me to engage with and embody it

without giving primacy to any one text. In turn, connecting the Chora to Clark's "soft

self" places the Chora into the post-human conversation and in doing so, gives place to

a term that has thus far proved elusive. Like the soft self, as "active receptacle" the

Chora is constantly receiving but also producing, and therefore need not inhabit an

"either or" designation.

This project, then, draws on theories of embodiment which seeks to blur distinctions

between the place of the physical body and the environment. Hayles writes that,

"embodiment differs from the concept of the body in that the body is always normative

relative to some set of criteria" (196). In other words, the body is an object of discourse,

just as the Chora has so far been an object of scholarly investigation. Embodiment, on

the other hand, is the practice of the body, the articulation of discourse at specific

kairotic moments; this is what embodying the Chora gestures towards. Just as in Hayle's

construction of the post-human the resultant creature is "an amalgam, a collection of

heterogenous components, a material-informational entity whose boundaries undergo

continuous construction and reconstruction," the Chora's history is one of continuous

construction and reconstruction (3); this project, then, will proceed not by participating

in that construction, but rather by working alongside and through it in order to show

how previous constructions, when taken together, might inform a particular type of rhetorical invention more interesting in doing and creating than being and designating.

Clark's cyborg and the post-human rhetoric which surrounds it makes possible a new investigation into the Chora, as a model for how one moves simultaneously toward and away from the dialectic—in other words, how one engages affirmatively; Thus, I am proposing that the cyborg, as an ambient being, is less an example of the Chora and more a means for imagining how we might go about using it.

In terms of embodiment, I will also be cultivating Rickert's concept of "ambience" as described in his essay "In the House of Doing." Specifically, Rickert's use of the word ambience gets at this idea of immersion. Whereas scholarship has approached the Chora as grounded in the body—approaching it from a culture, outside perspective, Rickert's notion of ambiance lends itself to the proposition that we approach the Chora in terms of embodiment—from the inside out—in order to see how it might be enacted. It is not surprising that Rickert's notions of ambiance unintentionally can be connected to his understanding of the Chora. In fact, the two, indirectly, seem to work together; "Toward the Chora" theorizes what is enacted in "The House of Doing." As Rickert argues, "the characteristics of intelligence and control that we tend to assign to a creator-object are better considered ambient—that is, they reside in the Houses of Being and Doing" (918). Rickert, taking a cue from Heidegger, provides a way of thinking about language as a type of enaction and in this way his discussion of ambient environments allows for a recasting of what "being" means. If choratic scholarship has

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so far been interested in Being, than Rickert demonstrates the way in which being and doing are inseparable.

<div align="center">V.</div>

By bringing together choratic scholarship from different fields, this project seeks to develop a discourse that works with the Chora's elusiveness, one that focuses on embodiment, enactment and emergence; a discourse, then, that does not try to "solve" the Chora, but rather demonstrates how we might see the scholarship which has developed around it as active, evolving ecologies.   Thus, post-modern/post-human rhetoric provides an invaluable set of new tools for how one talks about and gestures toward the Chora, where the Chora and its scholarship is never a static, solitary being, but rather an ecological, ambient process of doing.

Chora's Productive Impreciseness

Each venture is a new beginning/A raid on the inarticulate with shabby equipment/
Always deteriorating in the general mess of imprecision/Of feeling.

T.S. Eliot *East Coker*

I.

What is the use of (re)tracing the frustrated scholarship on Plato's Chora? What

is the value of acknowledging scholarship as fiction and yet insisting on performing that

fiction? I propose is that what is at issue here is not the truth value of choratic

scholarship, but the difference it makes in how we approach it and how we make it

useful. It is no wonder, in this light, that in his discussion of the *Timaeus* Sallis points

out the links between the "exercise in remembrance" that he traces in the dialogue and

the significance of the act of retelling (13). Perhaps then, the *Timaeus* teaches us the

value of misremembering, of imprecision; that to consider all possibilities of what the

Chora is, to engage in chorography, is a method for invention.

Turning to Muckelbauer's theories of imprecision and affirmative engagement

as a guiding inventional strategies, this section attempts to re-envision choratic

scholarship as a (non)cohesive whole; a series of what Muckelbauer calls "moving

constellations" that work together to inform the way in which we approach the Chora

(29). Thus, rather than seeking out the Chora's definition, we must acknowledge that a

definition is closer to a metaphor than to any exacting truth. In other words, the Chora is

what it is like. As such, my aim here is to resituate the conversation away from the level

of "is" (what is the Chora) and move it toward contingency, enactment and kairos (what

does the Chora look like now and why does it look like that?) Thus, I must draw

attention to another layer of value that is undergirding this: It is not what the choratic argument is, but rather it is what is built into the argument itself that matters.

To begin my choratic retelling, I describe choratic scholarship as a series of movements, never stable, between the key terms I have laid out in the previous section. These key terms are sites of potential interaction between different strands of choratic scholarship, so far discussed. To engage with Muckelbauer's affirmative sense of invention, then, we must look more at the movement between same and different, traditional and innovative. This requires looking not at two fixed points, or any number of fixed points, but at the constellation of movements between and amongst these articulations. In anticipation of this project's ultimate pedagogical aim, this section resituates these terms within rhetorical theory; that is, these key terms will serve as temporary signposts, demonstrating how one might extract and link meaning(s) in order to invent, and in this case, invent in the classroom. Therefore, this section gestures toward the possibility of odd but intriguing pairings, of establishing relationship and connections by drawing choratic scholarship together, rather than pulling it apart. Ultimately, this section makes productive a very deliberate act of inventive imprecision.

II. (Re)Beginning(s)

In the *Timaeus*, "incoherence is especially obvious in the way the natural sequence in which a narrative would usually unfold is interrupted by regressions, corrections, repetitions, and abrupt new beginnings" (Sallis 160). Terms like "regressions" "corrections" and "repetitions" describe subversive movements. Crucially, these movements create meaning—meaning which hinges on not settling on any one

conclusion. As Sallis writes, "There are constant beginnings in the *Timaeus*, beginning several times, always differently" (24). Indeed, Timaeus declares that each new beginning marks the other beginnings: "Thus we begin the discourse anew" (48e). As such, it is a matter of compounding—or undoing—that distinction which even the first discourse, as it began, left suspended in question.

Chorography, as an experiment, suggests the possibility of a method that is never practiced the same way twice and thus must always begin, again. Like Plato's metaphors for the Chora, Ulmer suggests that chorography is a number of things: (1) "learning how to write an intuition [...] or is reasoning as intuition" (37); (2) the "generative potential of specific geography"(45); (3) encountering "unexpected and different factors and associations" affecting the character of a place (38); (4) a "field," or "premises" where the logical grounds of reason or the propositions from which a conclusion is induced (40). For Ulmer, like Derrida, the Chora has to be approached "indirectly, by extended analogies," so it is inherently ambiguous; it is neither in the order of the sensible nor of the intelligible "but in the order of making, of generating" (67).

In keeping his method open, imprecise, Ulmer suggests a particular type of inventing. His *making* of his method is the *doing* of his method. Ulmer is considering all possibilities, keeping them in constant suspension in order to work through and around them; moreover, his insistence that chorography is a method never to be practiced in the same way twice—the principle that has guided my own engagement with choratic scholarship—seems to have important implications for teaching.

Particularly in this way, chorography seems to recall Geoffery Sirc's sense of the English classroom as a "happening" (*English Composition as a Happening* 2).

Sirc, calling his project a "historical review," works from figure to figure, both from composition in the late twentieth century and also from the avant-garde to give a "re-reading of the field [of composition]" (13). But what Sirc's main argument centers on is how writing must be less concerned with product and more concerned with experimentation:

> The Happenings lesson/…/is (life-) process-oriented. His process fascinates not in order to discover how to paint like Jackson (reproducing forms, reinstituting rhetorics) but to empathize with him, to re-enter the compositional scene as Kaprow could, to consider how he solved problems (what he even saw as problems), how he met limits, considered materials, tried to make a direct statement in an interesting way--to think about what Jackson felt in the moments of composition. (82)

Thus, my rendering of chorography, following Ulmer's and cultivating Sirc's implicitly, asks that students and teachers learn to not exclude possibilities but rather "write" by bringing to bear the entirety of the choral range. Chorography, as Ulmer suggests, gives the writer literally infinite extension of choice and, just as Sirc argues, "must be affective" (89). To enact chorography in the classroom, then, requires a classroom space that is both open and generative, one which is willing to change, to begin again.

III. Imprecision

Never saying what chorography is directly, Ulmer's procedure suggests that it is something he comes at associatively. Such a procedure echoes Derrida, Kristeva, Rickert and others' understanding of the Chora as an instability, an unfixable entity (if entity at all), the place between being and becoming. That is to say, the Chora is what it is, because choratic scholarship, with its narratives, has made it so. In this sense, I would like to briefly work backwards; that is, I have so far been working toward establishing the the Chora is what scholars make it.. Moreover, just as the Chora is always-in-process, so too is its scholarship. In this sense, choratic scholarship is an act, a process, an occurrence, a flow. In scholarship, the Chora is forever changing, and not, because choratic scholarship continues to produce and reproduce (to remember and misremember) within that space of change. And that is where the possibility of invention really begins to present itself.

I find Kenneth Burke useful here because his theory of terministic screens is a way of thinking about choratic scholarship as a productive series of imprecise turns. Burke's essay "Terministic Screens" examines the way we frame a discourse on a given subject. Burke uses the word "terministic" to refer to the language choices we make when framing an argument and the word "screen" may be taken to refer to a process of selection, a way of framing, or limiting, language to a particular set of related meanings. As Burke describes it:

> When I speak of "terministic screens," I have particularly in mind some
> photographs I once saw. They were different photographs of the same objects,
> the difference being that they were made with different color filters. Here

something so "factual" as a photograph revealed notable distinctions in texture, and even in form, depending upon which color filter was used for the documentary description of the event being recorded. (*Language as Symbolic Action* 45)

Burke's theory is a way of looking at choratic scholarship as a series of different photographs of the same object; that is to look at choratic scholarship we must acknowledge that when we examine one thing we will be ignoring another. If, as Burke proposes, language should be viewed, "not directly in terms of a word-thing relationship, but roundabout, by thinking of speech as the "entitling" of complex nonverbal situations" then rotating between screens, or in this case, choratic scholarship, is a way of recognizing one's screen is as generative as it is limiting

It is in this way that Plato's multiple images for the Chora and scholarship's re-imaginings of the Chora, each new beginning, are not accidental, or shortcomings or an inadequacy of the concept or the research itself. Instead, they are indicative of some essential quality of invention: a way of rotating screens, a way of affirmatively engaging with scholarship. That is, these multiple images Plato, Derrida, Rickert, Ulmer and others put forth are rhetorical—the elusiveness of the "is" is of critical importance.

Cultivating Burke's suggestion that we must "rotate" between screens and taking together these scholars' multiple designations for the Chora—their constant re-beginnings—it seems that choratic scholarship productively inhabits a type of perpetual movement, producing in the movement between rotations. As such, a choratic screen is one which we inhabit and move through constantly, never choosing any one screen

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terminally. Just as Plato offers a series of metaphors for the Chora which contradict each other, and in doing so creates a discourse that disrupts the potential for settling. In turn, choratic scholarship enacts this movement by presenting different "versions" of the Chora, where its elusive nature prevents us from settling on any one frame. Thus discourse on the Chora foremost centers on the same age old issue of whether knowledge can be grounded either on some universal theory or rhetorically on consensus theory—it is essentially a question of kairos, where choratic invention hinges on whatever is demanded at that moment; the Chora eludes, but it also accommodates and in doing so, produces.

IV. Ambient Commingling

An image, an analogy for movement really, that comes up again and again throughout the *Timaeus*, which Sallis notes as particularly instructive, is "winnowing," where one shakes, vigorously, and in that shaking it sorts things out. For Plato, the Chora is that which is between being and becoming and his metaphor of the winnowing-basket suggests that the Chora is linked to a machine, a sorting machine, which puts that-which-is-becoming into place(s). As Sallis writes, "The result of the shaking [of the winnowing basket] is not chaotic motion, but the orderly separation of phenomena according to kinds" (122). This act of "orderly separation," is an exclusionary practice—to sort is to sort out, both to resolve and to remove (155).

The point here is that order is generated out of chaos, where elements get closer or further following the principle of similarity, not because they are identical; thus the implication is that accuracy in designating the thing itself is less important than the

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relationships between things, on drawing connections through uncertainty—in other words, that moment of shaking is vital to production.

Pedagogically, thinking about the Chora as an immersive shaking allows us to re-imagine ways of knowing, experiencing and being. In writing and rhetorical theory, such a "shaking" has appeared in many forms; primarily I have in mind compositionist Ann Berthoff's application of a productive chaos, rhetorician Vitanza's theory (-otherwise) of a paralogic pedagogy, and, again, Rickert's theory of ambience. Just as winnowing forces similar—yet non-identical—parts together in an imprecise, chaotic sorting, much rhetorical theory still works out of the separatist mind/body/environment paradigm. The demarcation between mind and body, and body and environment, along with a valuation of method, idea, and logic are typical of the older paradigm. If we, however, resituate Plato's image of the winnow in relationship to post-human rhetoric, specifically Rickert's ambient commingling, there is a way in which that blurring allows us to see invention as, to quote Ann Berthoff "not creating out of a void, but out of chaos" (45). Berthoff's chaos echoes this same type ambient shaking, this same type of generative blurring (45). In terms of theory, Plato's Chora, Rickert's ambience, Ulmer's theory of a technology matrix, and Kristeva's Freudian linking of body with place, suggest that such imprecise boundaries are crucial to invention, that choratic scholarship's implication that the Chora is a productive, paradoxical amalgamation of body, ambient environ, emotion and rationality, creates a chaos which keeps, to quote Berthoff, "the dialectic open to manipulation," always shaking and always sorting (49).

V. Paradigm

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Ulmer's chorography advocates a non-linear procedure for writing. He calls this "writing the paradigm," which unlike argumentative writing is more interested in discovering connections/linkages. Ulmer is conscious, in this way, to never develop a set of heuristics for chorography directly. Since Ulmer himself asserts that "one of the features of the method [chorography] is that it does not lend itself to direct communication, at least not yet," a summary outline of its features is difficult (45). Numerous statements on what chorography is like, what it is not like, what it performs, how it functions, and what it seeks to achieve, are scattered throughout the book in an attempt to work toward an understanding of the method through contrast, inference and analogy.

Ulmer's chorographic paradigm can be expanded to provide a rhetorical inventive method for presenting a maximum of possible practical options in a given case and for arguing that a given set of options is truly comprehensive. The non-linearity of Ulmer's paradigmatic method allows for the opening up of rhetorical space, where a paradigm suggests that invention is more concerned with linking disparate parts and less concerned with working toward a pre-determined argument. In this sense, the paradigm constitutes a strong defense of rhetorical invention, where invention is creative and always productive (i.e. affirmative and relevant). In this sense invention occurs through linking within the paradigm; that is, the paradigm allows for different ways of identifying, organizing, and employing scholarly work on the same subject which can lead to mutually exclusive conclusions, solutions or inventions.

Moreover, a paradigmatic model for writing would be more interested in establishing criteria to resolve a concrete problem, than in the principles, methods, or interpretations used in statements of the problem (i.e. the all ready determined). A choratic paradigm, in particular, as one "always-already in progress" allows for inventive procedures to be less interested in using or establishing *Heuristics* and more interested in creating a common understanding that principles are divergent, kairotic, and never fixed. Just as I affirmatively gathered choratic scholarship from across fields to produce pedagogical practices, a choratic paradigm gathers together possibilities—in and out of whatever field the writer chooses—and seeks to extract and link disparate parts, always aiming at producing a "not-yet-known" instead of an all-ready established.

This sense of the paradigm is similar to post-process theory in that it marks a shift away from linear, process (and therefore product) oriented writing. Like Ulmer's chorographical model, post-process theorists recognize the social nature of writing, specifically claiming that writing is a public, interpretive, and situated process (Kent 1). Because writing is social, however, these theorists also claim that it "cannot be reduced to a generalizable process" (Kent 5). To see writing in terms of post-process assumptions . . . encourages us to think of writing as an indeterminate activity rather than a body of knowledge to be mastered. Invention then flows from the source of ambiguities and other primary conflicts to help us produce and organize relevant questions to ask and solutions to evaluate.

A choratic paradigm then shows us that we must be more concerned with producing connections between contrasting/contradictory terminologies or screens, than

seeing those contradictions as something that must be overcome in order to reach (and fail to reach) a universal "understanding" of an elusive term. Instead the Chora functions as a meta-paradigm for invention, where scholarship on the Chora does not indicate a gap or an inadequacy at all, but may simply index an inventive movement that is not particularly concerned with understanding or with "overcoming of gaps," to use Muckelbauer's words (54). Essentially, a paradigm allows for productive ambiguities which may lead to ambiguous products; that is, plurally usable products not limited to the all-ready known but rather constantly open to what can be learned. Commingling

VI. Intuition

So far I have begun to cultivate a set of purposefully imprecise key terms, in order to demonstrate how patterns throughout choratic scholarship might inform a specific type of writing. In this last section, appropriately on intuition, I would like to draw more explicit attention to how those key term produce affectively.

Muckelbauer's theory of invention allows for a way of piecing together various manifestations of "intuition" throughout choratic scholarship in a way that focuses on imprecise production. While naming several types of inventive movements, Muckelbauer names one type of imitation which yields invention "differences and repetition," which he subtitles "inspiration" (29). This movement focuses on how inspiration changes the model as the model transmits inspiration; that is, we become entranced by the inspiration being transmitted from the model which serves as the impetus for our own creation. Muckelbauer's theory of imitation and repetition, and

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specifically his use of inspiration, while not drawing on the Chora specifically, crucially implicates affective and imprecise ways of knowing with invention/production—that is, it asks (and answers): How can we make and remake connections affectively and how does "repetition with differences" allow for production? (54).

Muckelbauer's theory of inspiration as a generative model of affective imprecision appears implicitly throughout choratic scholarship. Kristeva and Ulmer both contend that the Chora is semiotically connected to intuition, which draws heavily from Plato's assertion in the *Timaeus* that we must approach the Chora noetically, "as if in a dream" (8b). While Ulmer refers to this as a "eureka" moment (20), Kristeva applies it to the French concept of jouissance and Freudian dream theory (166). Derrida, too, in his essay Khora, characterizes the Chora as instinctive, associating it with a "silent intuition" of God (56).

Such characterizations, even if imprecise, are consistently presented throughout choratic scholarship; If we become less concerned with precision, it is possible to see the ways in which Ulmer, Kristeva and Derrida's scholarship is generative. They each invent out of the Chora and in doing so create a term useful for their own scholarship—Derrida's reading of Chora in terms of intuitive provides him with a way of talking about, and thus creating, his Negative Theology theory; Kristeva's reading of the term as jouissance plays a crucial role in her theory of the abject, which has since become vital to the field of feminist theory; and "eureka" (which he combines with the word "heuristic*s*" to create the title of his book) allows Ulmer to consider new ways of inventing through affect.

My project has engaged with and cultivated choratic intuition(s) in two primary ways. 1) I have used intuition as an approach, instead of a designation, so that to approach the Chora is to do so through intuitive linking, extracting and combining key terms as I go; and 2) I am applying a noetic understanding of space, as my next section on pedagogy will show, in order to imagine a classroom space that would be based on non-instrumental modes of writing, based on feeling, sensation, intuition.

V.

The Chora emphasizes immersion, experimentation, imprecision, and most importantly, *doing*. As such, re-orienting choratic scholarship from a meaning-seeking endeavor toward an embodied one has pragmatic implications, where repetition of an acknowledged always-imperfect paradigm encourages invention, and where the ambiguity surrounding the Chora and how to embody it informs how we are to invent out of it. It is in this way that each time we remember something we re-make it, so that remembering is also making, doing. Thus, imprecision is not a shortcoming of choratic scholarship, but rather an active rhetorical process of invention, where imprecision is not about missing the mark, but rather it is about creating a new mark altogether.

Embodying the Chora in the Classroom

It is no longer clear what role the University plays in society. The structure of the contemporary University is changing rapidly, and we have yet to understand what precisely these changes will mean. Is a new age dawning for the University, the renaissance of higher education under way? Or is the University in the twilight of its social function, the demise of higher education fast approaching?

<div align="right">

Bill Readings *The University in Ruins*

</div>

The teacher is ahead of his students in this alone, that he has still far more to learn than they — he has to learn to let them learn.

<div align="right">

Martin Heidegger *Being and Time*

</div>

<div align="center">

I.

</div>

In terms of assimilating or constructing understanding, this section proposes that

big picture thinking processes such as reflection, multiple-perspectives, and critical

thinking are ways of considering not only the content of the information, but its

relationship to other knowledge. In terms of participating in dialog and group problem

solving, choratic pedagogy focuses on how students' and scholars' contributions relate

to other contributions (i.e. "meta-dialog"). Just as Gregory Ulmer argues that in

chorography "we construct an information environment" through which the user will

choose a path and then "change his path again and again," this section does not seek to

construct an argument but rather to provide multiple ways of proceeding through, with,

and around the Chora in the classroom (112). So, the question now is how might the

Chora look in the classroom? I would start with Lynn Worsham:

> Writing is a [to be] understood in its original sense of "a bringing forth" and it
>
> brings forth how, not what, things are and how things might be. More subtly, it

> brings forth allusions to what is conceivable but unrepresentable: the impossible,
>
> the other. (246)

Worsham's sense of invention, as that which concerns itself with product and less with process, describes what I have sought to demonstrate in this project: the way in which the Chora is a bringing forth--not by concerning myself with what it is, but rather, what it has become within the constellation of the scholarship around it. In the same way, this section will vex how that same method I have been using, chorography, might be applied to, and enacted within, writing pedagogy.

It seems easy to draw connections between the tensions within choratic scholarship and writing theory. Whereas scholarship on the Chora seems centered on the question of how do we talk about something that has no singular designation no definitive attributes, no static form, it seems that the field(s) of rhetoric (and) composition has traditionally asked this same question. Echoing post-process theorists from the last decade or so, writing cannot be defined according to procedures that work the same for everyone and in every situation: "How do you get an A on your paper? How do I write a thesis statement? What is good writing?" I think that the connection between the Chora and writing pedagogy can be made productive. In doing so, writing becomes, in a sense, like the Chora, that which occupies—no, no that must occupy—an unplace.

Having examined the constellation of scholarship, this section cultivates those terms in order to show how the Chora might look in the classroom. That is, this section concerns itself with the cultivation of an enact-able pedagogy. In sketching out a unique

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type of post-human pedagogy, one more concerned with drawing connections or linkages than constructing linear arguments, this section interrogates models of writing, arguing that composition should move toward a pedagogy centered on emergent processes. While I have been developing and enacting a theory of choratic engagement and pedagogy throughout this project—gathering together texts and engaging affirmatively with them—I have not yet shown how the Chora might be done in the classroom. That is to say, this section primarily concerns itself with how certain key terms might manifest themselves in writing assignments. In this sense, I move the Chora into the "house of doing," into the realm of pedagogical and practical enactment.

Ultimately, this section shows that explaining and demonstrating the Chora are not really so distinct. That is, the practices of explanation are no less performative or demonstrative than a performance or a demonstration. The pedagogy section of my argument, then, is the demonstrative part, but my project has been demonstrating a particular style of learning all along. The pedagogies I discuss attempt to demonstrate an innovative way of engaging with students in the classroom. What follows are suggestions for a set of practices that constantly invent and may be repeated, but never in quite the same way.

II. (Re)beginning(s)

Ultimately, choratic pedagogy creates space(s) for (rhetorical) emergence (like those associated with Ulmer and Vitanza). In other words, chorography is a pedagogical stance that might be considered an "unlearning," as in to unlearn particular behaviors or strictures established by restrictive spaces, such as traditional classroom spaces. This

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"unlearning" or (re)beginning focuses on helping students vary assumptions, open possibilities, and push the boundaries of thought.

If, as I have argued, an affirmative reading of choratic scholarship is to acknowledge that these texts are not competing frames, where one reading must "win" out over another, then in the classroom, students must be challenged to approach their readings as a series of rotating frames, never to be settled on completely, but rather engaged with and produced through. That is, the choratic teacher must actively rotate screens within a classroom by assigning—juxtaposing—diverse readings and allow those readings to be connected by students through class discussion.

The way in which I have engaged with choratic scholarship, affirmatively, provides a way in to demonstrating what I mean here in terms of diverse readings and classroom idea (re)construction. Just as my re-casting of choratic scholarship demonstrated that communicative interaction takes place largely through public constructions, that is what a text is, or a text means, is based only on how we use/enact/embody it in relation to other texts,—and not any essential quality by itself— in the classroom, we no longer need to think of the production and the reception of discourse in terms of "meaning-making" as Ann Berthoff refers to it, but instead as meaning-(re)making.

I have in mind here Muckelbauer's sense of invention as an ambiguous mix of creation and discovery. Muckelbauer articulates a mode of affirmative invention that cannot be proceduralized, a mode that does not rely on the dialectical movement of negation. In this same sense, a choratic writing pedagogy is one which seeks to combat

writers bringing their humanistic assumptions about learning to learn in the university—

in particular, the idea that learning will be passively received and mimicked in return.

In this sense, a defining procedural practice in the choratic classroom is to unsettle,

to keep meaning-(re)making, as the term implies, something that is always in process

and not definitely produced from the traditional teacher-student relationship. As

students engage with texts and one another and begin to reach certain conclusions, to

settle—to sort through the chaos—it is the teacher's role to provide a new reading

which unsettles that sorting. What matters in such a procedure that constantly diversifies

the tools that students have access to is the various overlapping, a nonsequential

building and re-building, where one does not choose among, but composes with

simultaneously. Such a procedure forces students to (re-)begin again, and therefore

produce a more active, more affirmative, critical practice.

III. Commingling

A choratic pedagogy resituates the role of the teacher and the student. The

pedagogical procedure for which I am arguing opposes David Bartholomae's claim that

students must approximate the specialized discourse of the academy, or invent the

university, "by assembling and mimicking its language while finding some compromise

between idiosyncrasy . . . and the requirements of convention, the history of a

discipline" (624). Whereas pedagogically, Bartholomae claims that teachers must define

or identify academic discourse conventions so they can be "written out, 'demystified'

and taught in our classrooms," a choratic pedagogy argues that the traditional classroom

does not effectively help students to become members of knowledge communities

because it is hierarchical (linearly distributed) and not collaborative. Instead of passive, linear knowledge banking, where information is sent from teacher to student, the active, choratic learner would be actively receiving and producing knowledge in a collaborative space.

In the classroom this suggests that a post-human space for learning is essential to a choratic pedagogy, where the instructor continues to recede as technology opens up the classroom beyond four walls, a lined white page. That is to say, technology allows for a paradigm that is, to use Rickert's phrase, "open to leakage" (182).

I have in mind two particular revisions to common classroom practices which enact choratic commingling in the collaborative classroom: 1) student blog spaces and 2) peer revision. There has been much research done on the advantages of using online student blogs, where classmates respond to one another, without having the teacher's voice explicitly present. Such a space allows for open exchange and interaction, not focused on reaching conclusions or precise arguments, but rather focused on interaction and engagement.

Within the choratic classroom, such a blog space invites students to proceed chorographically—posting through typed responses, links to other sites, images, and other mixed media. But a choratic blog space does not hinge on explication of a certain text, but rather on exploration. Specifically, student invention occurs in responses to blog posts, not in the posts themselves. In a choratic blog space, students are not required to explicate their choices of external media in their posts; in fact, they are encouraged to post hyperlinks without explanation. Student response, in turn, would

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provide its own kind of linking or connection-making, through intuitive assumptions of how disparate media relate to the subject at hand. An embedded hyperlink without explanation begs the question of connection, and in doing so, creates a new space for student invention. In such a space, students produce as much as they receive; they become active receptacles. We must embody the Chora in our pedagogy and in how we invent learning possibilities.

I am not, however, suggesting that the teacher is completely absent from the online space. Like Socrates in the *Timaeus*, who begins through questions and then recedes as the dialogue persists and evolves, the teacher can set up the rules for the online blog space, for the playing field so to speak, but what occurs on that field should remain unpredictable and motiveless. The blog in the choratic classroom, must remain a space of experiment; it must always be an experiment, a relinquishment of control.

The second classroom procedure I have in mind, concerning the production of formal writing assignments, is peer tutoring. Peer tutoring is traditionally used as a way of producing a collaborative learning environment where knowledgeable peers work together to produce polished drafts. Ideally peer tutoring creates a place where members participate and contribute equally; that is, the classroom, its students, and its teacher would all become "active receptacles."

While the goal of traditional peer tutoring focuses on helping students create cohesive, focused writing—forming a thesis is usually the first step in a writing assignment—a choratic pedagogical approach sees the thesis and clarity as the last step in the process; by shifting focus away from the argument, writing becomes less about

proving a pre-determined claim, than gathering together like terms, ideas, and arguments and generating something from them. That is, collaborative writing and peer tutoring as a collaborate dialogue that questions students' directions, choices, and linking, changes the emphasis on student writing from linear production to generative and collaborative discovery and experimentation.

In choratic peer review, each meeting, to use Debra Hawhee's phrase, constitutes "invention-in-the middle" (108). That is, peer review is always a "kairotic encounter," a response to the forces at work in a particular coming together at a particular moment (18). Each draft represents one cycle in an experiential learning cycle where continuous inquiry and linking leads to learning and improved performance in the experiment (i.e. the writing). In this way, student writing is subject to review via collaborative reflection, thus generating new realizations to guide the next try in the experiment. In the choratic model, peer tutoring does not follow a check list/rubric and does not proceed linearly, but rather it serves as a starting point for the further unsettling of ideas, content, and new directions, rather than mechanics and grammar.

IV. Ambience

Thus far, I have shown that the Chora in the classroom stands for "ecology and immersion," in which students gain a greater understanding of their rhetorical presence as multivalent, existing from moment to moment, and in connection with other bodies and technologies. Choratic emphasis on ecology and immersion promises to counter-act such ossification as Muckelbauer describes it, moving beyond the dialectical.

To expand the choratic pedagogical paradigm further, I find Andy Clark's theory of "cognitive hybridization," which likens pre-noetic, involuntary muscle movement with an extended mind that offloads information into the environment, "freeing conscious thought for higher-order purposes" (22). He writes:

> The body, by being the immediate locus of willed action, is also the gateway to intelligent offloading. The body is the primary tool for the intelligent use of environmental structure and acts as the mobile bridge that allows us to use the external world in ways that simplify and transform internal problem-solving.
>
> (23)

In extended embodiment, as Clark writes, "we should not care whether, in some extended computational process, a certain operation occurs inside or outside some particular membrane or metabolic boundary" (17). What matters then, is not what happens within the confines of our physical body, but in the larger cognitive network in which we are embedded.

So, how might the teacher embody the Chora? How might the teacher become an ambient body? Rickert says that Socrates, in *Timaeus*, is the Chora— he is an active receptacle both present and receding. Socrates reiterates that his three hosts have agreed that in exchange for his speech of yesterday—his recapitulation—they are to offer him a "feast" He says "here I am, all prepared. Here I am all dressed up and most eager to receive" (35).

Hawk writes that "a productive silence/…/sets the ecological context and avoids prescription from the teacher as well as other students" (230). In other words, the space

between the question and the answer is, as Hawk puts it, "filled with possibility" (231). This suggest then that teachers must, to quote Hawk, "let whatever arises out of the moment" emerge (235). Silence operates intuitively and purposively. Perhaps, I would suggest, that along with the idea of silence, Hawk is also suggesting a type of "intensive listening" as a space where our own speaking and invention emerge. Listening to the ecology, then, means intuitively linking ourselves to the lines of flight that are emerging and being a good rhetor or teacher means letting this movement inform our decision to stay silent or speak. Overall, the choratic teacher is one who cultivates and embodies movement toward responsiveness and connectivity.

In the classroom this also means that teaching objectives must be open to change (are constantly changing), and that the goal of a course can never be explicitly determined, only reflected on after the experiment is completed. If the classroom is a social space of "active receiving," then the Chora provides a way of thinking about pedagogical practice as an ambient commingling—a back and forth reception or exchange of knowledge and discovery. Choratic pedagogy seeks out and promotes digression—those expressions that "amplify the conflict of powers at sites of convergence and allow for the invention of alternatives," notably recalling Sallis' observations of the *Timaeus* as a series of regressions and misremembering (145). Like Vitanza's "pedagogy otherwise" a choratic pedagogy is "discontinuous, catastrophic, nonrectifiable, and paradoxical" (147).. Thus a choratic pedagogy would be one that allows for (seeks out?) writing that considers a series of conversations, but does not do this necessarily to reach consensus (165).

V. Paradigm

If the Chora and the practice of chorography gesture toward movement within a paradigm, then Peter Elbow's essay Ranking, Evaluating, and Liking might provide a way of productive experimentation in the classroom. Elbow focuses on how evaluation discourages and encourages student writers' entry into the revision process and concurrently supports them in learning to understand themselves as writers—what he calls "authority-conscious pedagogy" (109). He proposes that using portfolios creates an "evaluation-free zone" (114). What portfolios allow for is "experimentation," where the emphasis is on "the evolution of the writing piece, not on the end product" (115). Additionally, portfolio writing changes the role of the teacher—where the teacher is an authority, who "tell[s] students not what to write, but to write" (original emphasis 113). That is, the evaluation free zone is not just a risky and upside-down place, it is also a place where students are compelled to write, and thus, inevitably, a place of "resistance" (118).

A choratic portfolio would look slightly different than what Elbow describes. Applying Elbow's associations of the portfolio with experimentation and non-evaluation, a choratic portfolio would be composed of more than writing assignments. The idea here being that the portfolio, like chorography, would encompass all possible materials for invention. Instead of containing drafts and a final product, student portfolios would contain a series of relevantly linked mediums for exploration. For instance, while learning about A Streetcar Named Desire, students would create portfolio projects that contain essays on music, southern culture, old or recent news

clippings from newspapers which they find relevant, etc. Moreover, these portfolio materials would be placed online. Embedded hyperlinks would allow students to link their works, key words, or graphics to others' pages—to other students, institutions, websites, etc. Embedded videos, music, and other media would enhance their projects, opening up the space for further linking. Additionally, a comment function would allow for student-to-student interaction. Students would continue to add to their collection of media(s) even when progressing to the next novel or unit. The idea here is that the portfolio is like Ulmer's notion of the "writing the paradigm" where arguments are not linear but rather, paradoxically, contained within a space and yet open to receiving all possibilities.

<div align="center">V.</div>

This way of enacting choratic scholarship in the classroom promises important implications for the practice of pedagogy. I have demonstrated, throughout this project, a way of reading without giving any one text total primacy over another, but, rather, considering these texts as ever-shifting, moving, and in that way productive and informative. I think it is here where we can begin to see a certain type of pedagogical procedure take place. How might we allow students to forget about determining who is "correct" yearning for knowing what "is" and instead help students to think through and around texts? How might making connections be more important than, to quote John Muckelbauer, "overcoming gaps?" (29). In other words, thinking about the Chora in this way leads to ways of thinking about learning and teaching in an affirmative, generative way as well.

<div align="center">59</div>

The beginning is the most important part of the work.

<div align="right">Plato *The Republic*</div>

In my beginning is my end./In succession/Houses rise and fall, crumble, are extended,/Are removed, destroyed, restored, or in their place/Is an open field.

<div align="right">T.S. Eliot *East Coker*</div>

Conclusion

At the end of this project, I (appropriately) find myself back at the beginning. This project has sought to show that choratic scholarship, when affirmatively engaged, opens up a new paradigm(s) for multiple approaches, exchanges, and happenings The Chora's descriptions —nurse, receptacle, womb, mother, et cetera—and the discourse that proceeded out of them—(re)beginning(s), imprecision, ambience, commingling, intuition—are rich and productive ambiguities because they beg us to imagine. Each image has created and continues to create new spaces for scholars to explore and invent in. Scholarship's inconclusiveness on what the Chora is and Plato's multiple definitions of the Chora continues to create a springboard for multiple critical interpretations, and as such, that space, that Chora, is constantly opening and opening and opening.

Within the writing classroom, invention is often seen as the end product—what a student produces as a final draft—or   it is sequestered into the writing process—how a student procedes to produce that final draft. Reflection similarly is conceived similiarly as a post-writing activity to ask students to think about what they learned, review what they have done, or question what they believe. In this respect, I have sought to undo, or at least temporarily suspend, the traditional chronology of invention and reflection in student writing by conceiving of those terms as merged and merging, where invention

and reflection are simultaneous, immersive enactments. I have put forth that choratic scholarship is a way of thinking about the Chora and in turn, writing as always-already in process, and that one of the most significant and constant concerns inventional inquiry is transformation, change, flux, a perpetual unsettling and shifting of frames. Choratic scholarship then is the analogy I have been using to enact my method. In doing so I have sought to show that one invents and is invented as one writes and is written. Chorography suggests a broader view of invention within the writing process, which affirmatively hinges on extracting key terms and clustering them around the word "and," rather than dismantling them and assigning primacy to any one term or piece of scholarship. By holding key terms in an imprecise tension, I have created a place out of which I can invent and reinvent, depending on which term I have rotated towards.

In all phases of my research, I have attempted to learn to invent, reflect and re-invent out of the materials and associations that arise in the process of imagining the Chora, as well as the applications and implications that accompany its production. By gathering together a set of key terms, I have sought to re-imagine those terms and produce something different from them with each new section. Through repetition, but crucially, through Muckelbauer's theory of "repetition through difference" my project has sought to mimic (and thus invent out of) the very method that Plato uses to describe the Chora—through constant (re)beginnings.

In a sense, this argument has engaged with and produced (through) a paradox. Using the discourse and designations generated by the Chora's ambiguity, this project has demonstrated the ways in which singular designations can be, paradoxically, both

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limiting and productive. Thus Plato's very telling of the story about the Chora as a site of genesis enacts and becomes an allegory of its own procedure. In turn, Plato's multiple designations of the Chora and scholarships' multiple interpretations and enactments of particular moves toward designation, demonstrates a way of inventing based on experiment and imagining—invention through repetitions that are different with each appearance. That is, the multiplicity of the Chora produces a rhetoric that allows for new ways of thinking about invention and styles of engagement.

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