

THESIS

RHETORICS OF SONG: CRITIQUE, PERSUASION & EDUCATION IN WOODY
GUTHRIE & MARTIN HOFFMAN'S "DEPORTEES"

Submitted by

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ABSTRACT

RHETORICS OF SONG: CRITIQUE, PERSUASION & EDUCATION IN WOODY GUTHRIE & MARTIN HOFFMAN'S "DEPORTEES"

This thesis investigates the lyrical and musical elements of the song "Deportees," and considers the song's reinterpretation in two contemporary songs. Through autoethnographic writing and rhetorical analysis, I analyze the way all three texts respond to silences in popular media, and in doing so, shed light on the nationalistic ideologies embedded in that silence. I argue that the songs' preservation and circulation of marginalized histories and the performance practices through which they circulate suggest their rich rhetorical and pedagogical potential to inform scholarship in rhetoric and composition. I conclude that transnational feminist analysis and production of song texts and autoethnographic writing can support rhetoric and composition's commitment to social justice by offering guidelines for composing critical texts that respond to silences in the historical record, and allow students and scholars to "write themselves into" transnational events.

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DEDICATION

Dedicated to Martin Hoffman, fellow CSU English major, teacher, and musician.

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A NOTE TO THE READER

Throughout this text, you will find references to audio track numbers that correspond with three songs that I wrote and recorded for this project (“Detainee,” “A Different Battle,” and “Never Feel So Good Again”). Each of these songs is available on SoundCloud at the following URL:

<http://soundcloud.com/vani-kannan/sets/rhetorics-of-song-ma-thesis>

As you read this thesis, I encourage you to listen to the audio posted to the SoundCloud site. A thesis about music doesn’t quite function without, well, music.

Sincerely,

Vani Kannan

THE STORY & THE QUESTIONS

A folk song is what's wrong and how to fix it, or it could be who's hungry and where their mouth is or who's out of work and where the job is or who's broke and where the money is or who's carrying a gun and where the peace is. –Woody Guthrie

On January 28, 1948, a plane carrying 28 Mexican passengers who had come to the United States to do agricultural work were being deported by airplane. They had been hired to work in the Bracero program—a transnational agreement between the U.S. and Mexican governments that sought to fill the U.S. labor force, which had suffered from the military needs of World War II. Between 1942 and 1964, the program brought 4.5 million Mexican workers to the U.S. (Kanstrom 219). When they arrived in the U.S., they were sprayed with DDT, catalogued using often-Anglicized versions of their names, and sent off to live in barracks and work long hours; most of their pay—all but a dollar a day, in some cases—went to the Mexican government (King).

The plane carrying the passengers—along with four American crew members—caught fire and crashed in Los Gatos Canyon, near Fresno, California. When the *New York Times* reported on the crash, they gave the names of the four American crew members, but referred to the others as “deportees.” When folk singer Woody Guthrie read this article, he wrote a poem titled “Plane over Los Gatos,” assigning names to the dead in the second stanza:

Goodbye to my Juan, goodbye Rosalita

Adios mis amigos Jesus y Maria

You won't have your names when you ride the big airplane

All they will call you will be “deportees”

Guthrie sent out the poem to many people, including the president; he performed it publically as a chant, without a set melody (Hernandez). Ultimately, the written version of the poem landed in the hands of Martin Hoffman, a Colorado State University undergraduate English major, folk musician, and soon-to-be-teacher. Hoffman set the poem to music—a simple melody with only three chords—and chose Guthrie’s second verse (“Goodbye to my Juan, goodbye Rosalita . . .”) as the chorus. In 1957, the CSU Balladeers club, of which Hoffman was a member, met folk icon Pete Seeger when he came to Fort Collins to play a concert at a local middle school (which is now the Lincoln Center). After the show, the Balladeers took Seeger to a party, where he nearly fell asleep on someone’s couch. One of Hoffman’s friends said “Hey Marty, why don’t you play him that Guthrie poem you set to music?” (Hernandez).

The song woke up Seeger. He asked Hoffman to play it a second time, and he took down the chords on a pad of paper. A few months later, Hoffman received a letter in the mail from Harold Leventhal, Seeger’s agent, asking if Seeger could record the song and co-credit Hoffman and Guthrie; Hoffman agreed (Hernandez). Seeger’s version became “one of the staple songs of the civil rights movement, and inspired many people . . . to think of deportation as a civil (and human) rights matter” (Kanstrom 221). The song circulated widely, and was covered by stars including Dolly Parton, Toots and the Maytals, Woody’s son Arlo Guthrie, Emmylou Harris, and later Ani DiFranco.¹

Fast forward to 2012, at the Woody Guthrie Folk Festival in Okemah, OK, where I sat on a sweaty, overcrowded balcony in the Crystal Theater and watched Texan singer-songwriter Sam Baker perform his song “Migrants.” Baker’s song borrows imagery from “Deportees” and offers

¹ I encourage you to listen to it online; Arlo Guthrie and Emmylou Harris play a wonderful version that is available on YouTube. (For copyright reasons, I do not include recordings of other artists’ work on the SoundCloud page.)

a similar critique of media reporting on a more recent tragedy—where 14 people died crossing the Mexico/U.S. border, and were referred to in the paper solely as “migrants.”² There, in Guthrie’s hometown, on the 100th anniversary of his birth, Baker offered a modern interpretation of Guthrie’s words, weaving Guthrie’s chorus into his own lyrics:

They got twelve lines in a Midwestern paper
on the pages with the ads for shoes
Fourteen men got lost in the desert
they were migrants, they got twelve lines of news.

At the same time, poet and novelist Tim Z. Hernandez—who lives in Lafayette, Colorado—was in Fresno conducting archival research for his novel *Mañana Means Heaven*. He unearthed a newspaper clipping from 1948 describing a plane crash in which 28 Mexican workers and four American crew members had died. Immediately, he thought of Guthrie’s song, and realized that this was the same plane crash.

Hernandez found the cemetery where the “deportees” had been buried in a mass grave, under a gravestone that simply read: “28 Mexican Citizens Who Died In An Airplane Accident Near Coalinga, California On Jan. 28 1948 R.I.P.” He tried to find the names of the deceased passengers, but the cemetery record simply read *Mexican citizen*, for twenty-eight entries.

After months of research and work, Hernandez began to locate the real names of the deceased passengers, and worked with the cemetery director and the families of the “deportees”

² Live versions of this song are available on YouTube. I would also encourage you to listen to Baker’s studio album, “Say Grace,” on which the song appears.

to design a memorial headstone. On Labor Day 2013, the headstone was unveiled. At the ceremony, California musician Lance Canales and his band, the Flood, played a new version of Guthrie and Hoffman's song.³ Canales says that he rewrote the song within an entirely new set of musical conventions, from his own subject-position as the grandson of a migrant farmworker, and that he imagined he was descended from someone killed in the crash. During the performance, Tim Hernandez and another organizer read the names of the four American crew members and the 28 "deportees" in call-and-response style with the audience as Canales and the Flood played the rewritten version of the song.

The memorial itself is inscribed with 32 leaves and 32 names: the 28 Mexican passengers and the four American crew members. The leaf image is taken from the last two stanzas of Guthrie's poem:

The sky plane caught fire over Los Gatos canyon

A fireball of lightning that shook all our hills

Who are all these friends all scattered like dry leaves?

The radio says they are just deportees

Is this the best way we can grow our big orchards?

Is this the best way we can grow our good fruit?

To fall like dry leaves to rot on my topsoil

³ I recommend listening to the song on YouTube and watching Canales's music video.

And be known by no name except “deportees”?

This story forms the foundation for the study that follows. I was drawn to it because it is a rare example of a song that moved a marginalized history through time, ultimately leading to the material inscription of the event on the formal historical record.

As Guthrie, Baker, and Canales’s song lyrics indicate, a divide between citizens and noncitizens is reinforced in popular media through dehumanizing terms like “deportee” and “migrant.” Although organizations like the Applied Research Center are actively trying to fight this (and successfully: in 2013, Associated Press agreed to remove the term “illegal immigrant” from its reporting) the circulation of dehumanizing reporting on immigrants still continues, supporting an ideology that makes “noncitizens” invisible to “citizens,” and silences “noncitizen” histories.⁴ The violence that Guthrie responded to has been institutionalized in many ways as well—for example, deportation, indefinite detention, and denying undocumented immigrants access to basic social services. All around, a critique of rhetoric that dehumanizes “noncitizens” seems quite exigent in 2014, as does a rhetorical investigation of the song “Deportees”; as Will Kaufman writes in *Woody Guthrie: American Radical*, Guthrie’s songs “could have been sung anywhere from Camp Delta to Abu Ghraib to the death-row cells of the Polunsky Unit in Texas” (xvii).

Discourses of citizenship are important to the field of rhetoric and composition, which persistently links citizenship, literacy, and writing. As Amy J. Wan writes in “In the Name of Citizenship: The Writing Classroom and the Promise of Citizenship,” “the will to produce

⁴ Despite the enduring prejudices, there are also inspiring stories of resistance and activist rhetorical work (i.e., immigrant rights activists like the Dream 9; the Undocumented and Unafraid movement; activists who sneak into detention centers to document the human rights abuses inside; the popular slogan “no human being is illegal”).

citizenship through the teaching of writing is strong,” and there is a need to interrogate “the terms and boundaries we use to define citizenship” as well as “what gets invoked in the name of citizenship” (28, 29, 30). How can we counter discourse that silences or erases “noncitizens” in popular media? How do we hold ourselves accountable for these larger cultural silences within which we can so easily become complicit? What can “Deportees” and the texts influenced by it teach us about how to constructively disrupt rhetorics of silence in popular media today, creating critical texts that circulate widely? Can we do so in a way that attempts to “humanize” these casualties for U.S. audiences, collapse self/other binaries including (but not limited to) citizen/noncitizen, and simultaneously perform our complicity in these binaries? In what ways is the song genre both well-suited to this complex rhetorical work and also vulnerable to cooptation by dominant ideologies? In a field that privileges written argument, how can we learn from the rhetorics and critical literacies embedded in songs like “Deportees,” and the marginalized histories that they inscribe in public memory?

The field of rhetoric and composition can offer an analysis of these texts that centers on the rhetorical attributes and modes of circulation characterizing them. In doing so, we can offer a deeper understanding not only of how these texts are produced and circulated, but how they engage with and persuade audiences. We have theoretical and methodological tools to describe the Mobius-strip-relationship of ideology and discourse, and can use these tools to counter silenced histories. Furthermore, because the field is interdisciplinary, it leaves room for drawing in rhetorical theories of music and considering how song texts in particular respond to silences.

To specifically consider how we might bring the critical lessons of “Deportees” into our work as writers and educators, I frame this thesis around the following questions:

- What were the contexts in which Guthrie, Baker, and Canales composed their songs?
- How does each song lyrically navigate transnational subject matter?
- What are the musical features of each song, and how do these musical features work rhetorically with the lyrics and influence each song's circulation practices?
- What can these songs, their authors, and the process of composing autoethnographic writing teach us about the rhetorical work of composing transnational texts?

While the field has a lot to offer this analysis, it also has a lot to learn from song texts like “Deportees” that narrate silenced histories. With globalization and the technological revolution, the field has taken both “transnational” and “multimodal” turns in recent years, and there is a desire within the field to both engage in transnational analyses and to produce texts in a variety of genres. Furthermore, identifying and resisting the silencing effects of popular media rhetoric supports the field's commitment to social justice.

As a writer, composition instructor, and graduate student, I hope to be able to both analyze and produce texts that enact the enduring critical work of a song like “Deportees,” and I believe that analysis and production can mutually inform each other. Thus, in this thesis, you will find a mix of music composition, autoethnographic reflection, and critical analysis. I hope this combination will emphasize the importance of engaging multiple genres in circulating marginalized histories and supporting the rhetorical project of countering the citizen/noncitizen binary and discourses that maintain it. Ultimately I hope this analysis will deepen our understanding of transnational rhetoric as we work to counter nationalistic epistemologies in the historical record, in our classrooms, in our own writing, and on the street. Rhetoric shapes and is shaped by material reality; as scholars and teachers in the field of rhetoric and composition, we

are uniquely positioned to both engage in an analysis of this interplay, and create texts and pedagogies that attempt to shift hegemonic notions of citizenship towards a healthier, more progressive vision.

TRACK #1: "DETAINEE"

Detainee, you didn't do anything

Detainee, you didn't do anything

She came from Bangladesh, seeking amnesty

moved to Brooklyn, and she told me the story

How they dragged her off a greyhound bus

And locked her up way down south

Around the corner, he came from Mexico

Works twelve-hour days, seven days a week

Down Church Avenue, he talks about Jamaica

Shares a poem with his daughter, and he tells her why he came here

Out in Colorado, he came from Morocco

Drove west from Florida, playing songs on the street

Now he's locked up an hour away from here

Waiting on his deportation hearing

Detainee, you didn't do anything

Detainee, you didn't do anything

Detainee, you didn't do anything

Detainee, you didn't do anything

I moved to Colorado from Brooklyn with a sense of responsibility to immigrants—broadly. I had been volunteering as an adult literacy tutor at a public library in a neighborhood largely populated by immigrants from the Caribbean; the two students I worked closely with had both moved to the U.S. from Jamaica. Down the street, a woman named Maya owned a hair salon where I stopped in for a haircut every few months; one day she disclosed to me that she had been detained by the Bush administration for two years because her paperwork from Bangladesh wasn't through yet. I did child advocacy work with a Guyanese family navigating citizenship paperwork, whose daughter needed access to mental health care but couldn't get it because she wasn't documented. The employees of the neighborhood grocery store tried to unionize for a living wage and health care, and during the organizing effort, one of the employees died of cancer because he couldn't afford treatment. Every employee was an immigrant from Mexico, and the manager threatened to call ICE to stop the organizing. The community got involved, and along with the grocery store employees, decided to stage a boycott of the store.

One day, while I was handing out boycott fliers on the street, I approached two men to ask them for their support.

One smiled at his friend and then turned to face me. He crossed his arms. “Are they legal?”

“Excuse me?”

“Are they le-gal.”

“Sir, I’m not informed of everyone’s immigration status, but regardless, we believe people should be entitled to fair treatment on the job.”

The man shook his head at my reply, and the two of them walked away.

In interactions like this one, one simple word—legal—dictated whether or not these two men would support the employees of their local grocery store. Instead, they quite literally turned away from injustices affecting potential (not even confirmed!) “noncitizens” in their very neighborhood.⁵ Clearly, both the citizen/noncitizen binary and discourses that reinforce it have material repercussions.

I won’t recount every anecdote, but the hegemony of this binary was echoed when I moved to Colorado and began working with the Romero Theater Troupe, a social justice arts organization, on a play about custodial working conditions at Denver’s Auraria campus, where the custodians were predominantly of Mexican origin. It was echoed in letters I received from a

⁵ I think the reasons for this are complex, and relate to the metonymic relationship of phrases like “job-stealing” and “dangerous” with “illegal immigrant.”

man detained at the Aurora ICE facility, who had moved to the U.S. from Morocco and was living on an expired student visa.

While I have met several people who have been affected in horrendous ways by post-9/11 immigration and Homeland Security policies, I had never before thought of my family—half of which emigrated to the U.S. from India—as complicit in benefitting from an immigration system that actively oppresses other immigrants. These questions soon grew more personal: In December 2012, tragedy struck “close to home” when a Hindu Indian man in Queens, New York named Sunando Sen was pushed onto the subway tracks in front of an oncoming train by a woman who said she killed him in retaliation for 9/11. The murder was upsetting on several levels. On a personal level, it represented an unprecedented proximity of violence to my family post-9/11; Sen fits the profile of many of my male family members, and the murder occurred on a subway platform that I frequented when I lived in New York. On a political level, it shows that the institutional profiling and homeland security regimes that associate “Islam” with “terrorism” have succeeded in constructing the brown body as inherently suspect. But what troubled me even more was the media reporting on this attack: Sen received significantly more coverage than two Muslim men who were also attacked in post-9/11 hate crimes in Queens, New York during the same month. As I examined the New York Times in particular (the same paper that Guthrie allegedly responded to in writing his poem), I got the sense that reporters were rhetorically transforming Sen into a dutiful, entrepreneurial American “citizen”—someone who could have been any of “us”; someone whose death “we” should mourn. This was troubling when set alongside similar attacks that were not given equivalent media attention, much like the “deportees” or “migrants” of Guthrie and Baker’s songs (not to mention the largely invisible “detainees” of post-9/11 Homeland Security and immigration policy).

That being said, while Sen's murder was indeed "proximate" to my family in several ways, the fact remains that we have not been physically hurt by the wars, or by the U.S.'s increasingly strict immigration policy. This does not mean that we haven't felt anxiety around popular opposition to Islam and the militarization of the Mexico/U.S. border—last summer, my father asked me to remove an anti-racist bumper sticker from my car because "it's one thing for a white person to put a sticker like that on their car, but people might think you're Hispanic or Muslim and attack you" (two demographic categories that are, in his opinion, equally vulnerable to attack in 87%-white Colorado). But beyond comments like this, which occur within the confines of our home, post-9/11 anxiety has not inscribed itself on my body. This privilege—which has its roots in the fact that I was born in the U.S.—is one that I am highly uncomfortable with.

These experiences witnessing institutional and interpersonal discrimination against undocumented immigrants sit with me as I attempt to position myself within the field of rhetoric and composition. In each of the situations recounted here, I have navigated a complex sense of solidarity—one that, on one level, is simple, human, and uncomplicated; but on the other hand, risks erasing the structural violences inflicted against the "undocumented" and my family's relative privilege. A transnational rhetoric that seeks to speak across difference, I realized, must take into account power and complicity at the same time that it attempts to collapse borders and "epistemological nationalism," as Geraldine Pratt and colleagues term it in "Seeing Beyond the State: Towards Transnational Feminist Organizing" (66).

If "deportee" was the word of the day in 1948, we need to think about the largely invisible "detainees" of post-9/11 homeland security and immigration policy in 2014. A few weeks ago, Maya—the woman who was detained under the Bush administration as she waited

for her immigration paperwork to go through—called to tell me she was taking a leave of absence from work to write a book about her experience in detention. She plans to publish it anonymously, but wants others to know the story. Her text will narrate a silence in the historical record, from a very different subject position than Guthrie, Baker, Hernandez, and Canales—and from a subject position that is very different from mine. And yet, we all have to find a way to speak out about these injustices.

I'm asking myself some difficult questions as I look forward at a future engaged in writing and literacy pedagogy, likely in the U.S., and almost certainly in the English language—a line of work that is deeply tied to discourses of citizenship. How do I take a lead from Guthrie and learn to narrate in a way that challenges nationalistic epistemologies, while speaking from my position as a documented American citizen from an assimilated diaspora? How do I learn not to reproduce nationalistic discourses and ideologies? And, more broadly, how do I/we live in and benefit from a globalized world without forgetting that while national boundaries and the exchange of knowledge are in some ways increasingly porous, the rise of transnational capitalism has also sought to strictly regulate the movement of some humans across borders (e.g., “illegal aliens”), regulated and detained others (e.g., post-9/11 “suspected terrorists”), expelled others from national borders (given that the Obama administration has deported more people than any other presidency to date), and quite literally built walls like the one on the U.S./Mexico border? How do we acknowledge that with globalization comes a global moral imperative—one that takes into account transnational exploitation within which we are all connected, and some of us (read: documented U.S. citizens) are more complicit than others?

I don't know how to reconcile these questions, but I found myself working them out via this song. There is what feels like an irreconcilable gulf in this thesis between theory and story; between a review of literature and Maya's body in a federal penitentiary.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

To lay the foundation for the research questions shared in the introduction, I begin by grounding this study in poststructuralist theories of silence, then survey rhetorical theories of silence, music, and transnational feminism. I offer an overview of the folk song genre, paying particular attention to rhetorical attributes and performance practices of folk music. Finally, I describe autoethnographic self-reflexivity, an interdisciplinary theory and methodology that supports my project of constructing a hybrid thesis text blending analysis, narrative, and music composition. This sequencing represents the way I see the song “Deportees” and the texts influenced by it working rhetorically: at the moment of invention, each responds to silences in the historical record; each song then emerges into and circulates within a music tradition with various performance practices; and each song enacts transnational work by narrating a transnational history.

The field of rhetoric and composition has taken three “turns” in recent years: the public turn, the multimodal turn, and the transnational turn. Although I ground this thesis specifically in the transnational turn, I want to note that this research supports the analysis and production of song texts in writing and literacy education; it also supports the field’s commitment to analyzing and producing texts that circulate across diverse publics. While I do not take up multimodality or public rhetorics by name in this thesis, in the future I hope to more deeply explore the tie between songs and these two movements within the field.

POSTSTRUCTURALIST STANCE

Before undertaking an analysis of how “Deportees” responded to media reporting on the Los Gatos plane crash, I want to ground this question in poststructuralist theory because it is

concerned with deconstructing the hierarchical binaries that underlie our thought, discourse, and social structures. The binary I am most concerned with in this thesis is citizen/noncitizen, but as I explore in this chapter, other binaries underlie our rhetorical understanding of music, including performer/audience and language/music. In poststructuralist theorist Jacques Derrida's work, Western thought is understood to be constructed in these types of hierarchies, which "establish a binary relation based on negation" (Kent 165). For example, the population of a nation-state is often categorized into citizens and noncitizens, where "citizen" is typically privileged over "noncitizen," and "citizen" becomes a "neutral," "unmarked" term against which the "noncitizen" (and its more popular synonyms, the "illegal alien" or "undocumented") is defined. The same, as we will see, is true for performer/audience and language/music, where performers are privileged over audiences in meaning-making through music; language, too, has historically been privileged over music by rhetorical theorists.

The act of deconstructing these binaries typically involves "two rhetorical moves: First, deconstructionists isolate the hierarchical binary oppositions within a text that give a text its stability or presence, and second, they destabilize or deconstruct these oppositions by seeking out the aporias that these oppositions suppress" (Kent 166). By dismantling these hierarchical binaries, Kent continues, the deconstructionist reveals what is concealed in the text and is able to "reinscribe the text within a different order or meaning" (167). In the chapters that follow, I consider the extent to which "Deportees" and the texts influenced by it "reveal what is concealed" in the historical-record texts, and explore whether they work to deconstruct the citizen/noncitizen binary as a way of reinscribing the Los Gatos plane crash in the historical record.

The poststructuralist stance allows for this reinscription in part because it assumes that the rhetorical process “creates what will then appear as knowledge,” as opposed to the view that it “conveys knowledge that exists outside of and prior to the rhetorical process” (Neel 549). In other words, the theory supports a project of countering the formal historical record and critiquing the rhetorical process by which that historical record is framed as knowledge or truth; it also necessitates that we situate texts within contexts; in a poststructuralist framework, “rhetoric becomes crucially important because ‘being persuaded’ is the closest one can come to truth” (Neel 550). The texts I examine, then, cannot be framed as “truth” any more so than the popular media reporting, but by examining the way the songwriters respond to and destabilize terms like “deportee” and “migrant,” we gain a clearer picture of the binaristic rhetoric at play in the popular media reporting.

The theory itself is dense (and is explored here only in very surface-level terms), but its application to the Los Gatos plane crash is useful, and helps me extend the analysis I do in this thesis to the pedagogical concerns of rhetoric and composition, including my own classroom experiences. Later on, I share a classroom situation in which I unwittingly reinforced the citizen/noncitizen binary while attempting to counter the white/non-white binary. I turn to texts like “Deportees” because they do a better job than I did at countering the privileging of “citizens” over “noncitizens.” One of the pedagogical values of these song texts, as I see it, lies in their public navigation of this binary.

THEORIES OF SILENCE

Silence plays a crucial role in poststructuralist theory, which is concerned as much with what is *missing* from a text as it is with what is *present* in a text. Silences in the historical record

can work to maintain the citizen/noncitizen binary and privilege “citizens” over “noncitizens.” As Foucault explains, silence does not always take the form of *absence*; discourse itself can produce silences: “There is no binary division to be made between what one says and what one does not say; we must try to determine the different ways of not saying such things. . . . There is not one but many silences, and they are an integral part of the strategies that underlie and permeate discourses” (quoted in Sedgwick 246). For example, Guthrie’s line “you won’t have your names when you ride the big airplane / all they will call you will be ‘deportee’” draws attention to the fact that the word “deportee,” by standing in metonymically for the 28 Mexican passengers who died in the crash, represents a silencing of their names. Here, silence can be pinpointed *within* discourse—specifically, in the word “deportee.”

By identifying silence as a “strategy” and locating it in discourse, Foucault suggests that silence is rhetorical, occurring within a specific context to fulfill a purpose governed by particular ideologies. Not surprisingly, the field of rhetoric and composition has taken up the notion of silence in various ways, and offers taxonomies of silence that help categorize the various ways that silence can work rhetorically. For example, Thomas Huckin offers an observation on discursive silence that is quite compatible with Foucault’s: “communication involves more than just the linguistic markers used to encode it—that often what is not said or written can be as important, if not more so, than what is” (“Textual Silence” 348). Huckin categorizes textual silence into five categories, each of which he identifies as serving specific rhetorical functions: “speech-act, presuppositional, discreet, genre-based, and manipulative” (quoted in Sweeney 148).

Although the particular silences that the songs respond to—where terms like “deportee” and “migrant” stand in metonymically for the deceased—are politically fraught and maintain the

citizen/noncitizen binary, not all silences are problematic. According to Huckin, *speech-act silences* can carry “illocutionary force” (e.g., a “pregnant pause,” “silent treatment,” or “moment of silence”). Similarly, *presuppositional silences* “serve communicative efficacy by not stating what the speaker/writer apparently assumes to be common knowledge” (e.g., saying that someone was arrested but omitting that it was the police who did the arresting), *discreet silences* “avoid stating sensitive information” (e.g., confidentiality), and *genre-based silences* are “governed by genre conventions” (e.g., omitting negative opinions about a person from his or her obituary) (“Textual Silence,” 348-352). Feminist rhetoric and composition scholars, too, have taken up silence as an effective rhetorical tool that is necessary for social justice efforts. In *Unspoken: A Rhetoric of Silence*, Cheryl Glenn identifies silence as rhetorically powerful if used strategically, musing that it “may well be the most undervalued and *under-understood* traditionally feminine site and concomitant rhetorical art” (2). In *Rhetorical Listening: Identification, Gender, Whiteness*, Krista Ratcliffe explores the constructive role of silence in cross-cultural understanding via a practice that she terms “rhetorical listening,” wherein listeners “hear people’s intersecting identifications with gender and race (including whiteness), the purpose being to negotiate troubled identifications” (17). In “Listening Rhetorically to Textual Silence” Meghan Sweeney extends Ratcliffe’s scholarship on silence and rhetorical listening to establish the need for “accountability logic,” wherein “the critical reader identifies silence by listening to the text . . . in a way that acknowledges that all individuals involved—reader, writer, subject (perpetrator and victim)—have a stake in the discourse” (148).

For the purposes of this analysis, where silence is understood as an oppressive rather than liberatory force, I will elaborate on Huckin’s concept of *manipulative silences*, which “deliberately conceal relevant information from the reader/listener” (e.g., omitting the

transnational context in which the “deportees” or “migrants” died) (“Textual Silence,” 348-50), and Ratcliffe/Sweeney’s “accountability,” which takes into account both commonality and difference and seeks to establish a shared stake in discourse (e.g., songs that navigate the citizen/noncitizen binary and articulate complicity). Huckin argues that manipulative silences in particular are “commonplace in print media” and that because they are “the least linguistically constrained,” they are also the most challenging to “identify and analyze” (“Textual Silence,” 348). Songs like “Deportees” and “Migrants,” thus, become valuable sites of identifying and analyzing manipulative textual silences in popular media.

Literary theories of silence suggest that Huckin’s “manipulative” silences might also be classified as *ideological* silences. As poet and literary critic James Scully writes in *Line Break: Poetry as Social Practice*, silence “may be projected as speech, writing, data or news. . . . [it] may be called law, poetry, torture or tolerance.” (69). As Scully suggests by linking silence to “speech, writing, data or news” as well as poetry, ideological silence extends to a variety of genres. Like Foucault, he locates silence *in* discourse, rather than outside of it: “Language generates a more reverberant, spellbinding, insidious silence than ‘silence itself’ does” (Scully 69). Poststructuralist literary theorist Pierre Macherey similarly links silence and ideology in *A Theory of Literary Production*: “an ideology is made up of what it does not mention; it exists because there are things which must not be spoken of” (147). Within this logic, a word like “deportee” or “migrant” comes to carry ideological weight—by standing in metonymically for the deceased, it maintains a transnational capitalist ideology that obscures the humanity of these people, constructing them not as individuals with names but rather as a group that is less-than-human. This silence can be understood to reinforce an ideology privileging “citizens” over “noncitizens,” particularly in the case of the reporting on the Los Gatos plane crash, where the

four American-citizen crew members were named but the “deportees” were not. To combat these silences, Ratcliffe’s theories of silence suggest, we can create texts that establish “accountability logic.” As she explains in an interview on the podcast “This Rhetorical Life,” the concept of accountability is a “*stance* of listening” wherein people understand themselves as part of systems of oppression, rather than denying commonality out of fear of erasing difference (Syracuse University). In putting forth the idea of accountability, Ratcliffe suggests that there is a way to articulate solidarity in which difference is not erased, but rather mobilized for critical purposes.

These theories of silence have implications for our role as writers, rhetoricians, and educators. In *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History*, Michel Rolph-Trouillot writes that “Human beings participate in history both as actors and as narrators” (2); as narrators of history (writers) we have agency in making sure we carry stories forward more ethically than those texts that leave the conspicuous silences that these songs responded to. By re-narrating historical events and countering dehumanizing terms like “deportee” and “migrant,” each song engages in the reinscription that is called for by poststructuralist theory; these songs also blur the actor/narrator divide set up by Rolph-Trouillot and suggest that narration is also action. *How* to reinscribe historical events and ethically engage audiences in them—particularly around transnational events like the Los Gatos plane crash—thus becomes a crucial question, and a question that led me to investigate *how* each writer positions himself as both a narrator of and actor in transnational events.

Because I focus on song texts in this thesis, I next survey rhetorical theories of music, particularly the folk song genre, to specifically consider how music can respond to silences in the historical record to narrate transnational histories and enact accountability in listeners. Within the framework of music and rhetoric, I specifically consider how song texts respond to silences in

the historical record. As the theories that follow demonstrate, music has unique potential to engage the minds and bodies of participants, and folk songs have further potential in that they often engage audiences in the active co-construction of song texts through call-and-response and group singing.

MUSIC AS CONTESTED TERRITORY IN RHETORICAL STUDIES

The recent emergence of a rhetorical focus on the “sonic” is notable, as rhetorical perspectives on music have historically reflected the tendency in Western philosophy to privilege language over other forms of communication.⁶ As Steven B. Katz writes in *The Epistemic Music of Rhetoric*, music positions us within a debate about “the relationship between oral and literate modes of reasoning, between phonocentric and logocentric discourse” (2). This debate has its roots in classical rhetorical theory, where music was traditionally viewed as affectively powerful, and thus dangerous and potentially manipulative. In “Language’s Duality and the Rhetorical Problem of Music,” Thomas Rickert sums up the perspectives of Plato, Aristotle, and St. Augustine as follows: “[o]verwhelmingly, the intellectual tradition has considered music suspicious if not dangerous” (157). This suspicion, Rickert argues, was due in part to the undeniable power of music, which was seen as “more affectively powerful” than language, “but

⁶ Here, my cultural positionality influences my reading of western rhetorical traditions, which differ significantly from nonwestern philosophies of music. For example, Vedic and Sufi philosophies position sound as the foundation of ontological meaning and do not subscribe to Enlightenment philosophies of language. In Vedic philosophy, specifically as it connects to the Sanskrit language, syllabic sounds are imbued with their own meanings. In part, I am sensitive to the privileging of words over music because my name, *Vani*, is a Sanskrit word signifying the interrelated concepts of “sound” and “voice.” Each syllable of a Sanskrit word (e.g., “vah”/“nee”) has a particular sonic resonance that signifies a particular meaning. I think these nonwestern philosophies, and the theory of the “unstruck sound” in particular, have much to offer classical rhetorical scholarship in terms of challenging our language-centric theories of meaning.

indeterminately so, which opens the door, it is argued, for all manner of impropriety, decadence, and ill-virtue” (157).

The “indeterminate” nature of music’s affective power was seen as dangerous because it threatened rational thought; furthermore, its sonic character threatened language-centric epistemologies: “Our literal minds find it hard to grasp ‘that anything can be known which cannot be named’” (Vickers 43-44). Although classical rhetoricians did not dispute the power of music, they argued that it should be subordinated to language: Plato necessitated that “words always be given priority over melody”; Aristotle argued that musical education was necessary to “mollify music’s affective potency,” and St. Augustine “remained anxious that the words always take precedence over the melody”—a view reinforced by the Catholic church in the Council of Trent’s “pronouncement concerning the necessity of maintaining the intelligibility of vocals over the affective forces of the music” (Rickert 158).⁷

In “Figures of rhetoric/Figures of music?” Brian Vickers explains that it was Quintillian who “first proposed the affinity between music and rhetoric,” although he still subordinated music to language (quoted in Rickert 159). Indeed, “several different influences converged to establish a validation of the word over—and in some cases almost against—the music, resulting in an undervaluing of the specifically musical resources of music, its subordination to a literary text” (Vickers 15). The difficulty of “translating” music into language is an ongoing conflict in discussions of music and rhetoric, and although Vickers shares the work of theorists who tried to construct a vocabulary for music drawn from classical rhetoric, he problematizes this effort: “Since music has two ‘planes,’ horizontal (melodic, rhythmic) and vertical (harmonic) it has a

⁷ One wonders what, exactly, they thought would happen if the “affective forces of music” reached a church audience. Would the service transform into a Bacchic frenzy?

dimension beyond the reach of language” (30). Because of this “translation” difficulty, music is not easily analyzed using rhetorical vocabulary—a struggle that continues to this day (and indeed, into this study) in the search for ways to describe and analyze musical texts.

This difficulty has led contemporary theorists to try to find ways to describe both the experience of listening to music and music's persuasive character through both autoethnographic writing and rhetorical analysis that takes musical elements into account. These methods allow scholars to try to contend with the “inexpressible” nature of music, and offer a poststructuralist analysis of music that suggests its ability to blur performer/audience and language/music divides. For example, in “Affect and Embodied Understanding in Musical Experience,” D. Robert DeChaine argues that a listener’s body plays a role constructing a musical text: “The body offers itself up *in collaboration* with sound in the production of the musical text. In this way, it functions as both performer and instrument” (83). DeChaine identifies this collaborative relationship between performer and audience as potentially critical, arguing that through music people can be “conscript[ed] . . . in the service of social consciousness, harnessing their productive energies on a massive scale to trouble the self/other dichotomy” (93). Here, we see classical rhetorical theory’s concern with music’s affective potency turned on its head, as DeChaine suggests that the affective affordances of music can serve a positive social function. He also suggests that when analyzing music, we should consider not only the musical and lyrical texts, but also the role of listeners in co-constructing a song’s meaning. The idea of co-construction is compatible with rhetoric and composition’s focus on the highly contextual nature of meaning-making through discourse. It also suggests that even if a song is not performed through group- or call-and-response singing, listeners’ bodies are still implicated in its co-construction. As Byron Hawk and Thomas Rickert write in the introduction to the special issue

of *Enculturation* on music, “to confront music is to address the issue of being composed.” Listeners are thus conscripted into song text in a way that differs from alphabetic texts that do not engage with the sonic.

In addition to confronting the performer/audience divide, scholars have identified the critical potential of songs in their challenge to the language/music divide, arguing that the persuasive power of songs is located in the intertextual interplay of language and music. This scholarship has important rhetorical implications; for example, Deanna Sellnow argues that by embedding critiques in song lyrics and then setting the lyrics to music, “the rhetor can extend a complex and, perhaps, controversial message” to diverse audiences, reaching “nonmembers” chiefly through the “emotional message” of the music text (rather than the lyrics) (68). Sellnow holds that a song's ability to persuade resides in the combination of “nondiscursive emotional message” and “discursive lyrical message,” which “simultaneously reinforce an ideology for members while attempting incrementally to recruit nonmembers” (72); furthermore, she argues that a “nondiscursive musical message can cushion an oppositional discursive argument” (80).

By Sellnow's logic, the interaction of music and language in a song like “Deportees” or “Migrants” has the potential to persuade skeptical or resistant audiences to “buy in” to a critique of these dehumanizing terms, while these audiences might be less sympathetic to a purely written argument; furthermore, her argument suggests that the same song can simultaneously reinforce the perspective of audience members who already share the song's critique. In her rhetorical analysis of songs, Sellnow further argues that music's rhetorical power rests on the belief that rhetors attempting to speak about social justice struggles can “employ modes of communication other than the conventional discursive language system, which tends to perpetuate the hegemonic worldview held by the dominant culture” (67-68). Songs like “Deportees” and “Migrants”

openly critique conventional discursive language systems like popular media reporting; within their lyrics, the intertextual interaction between popular media texts and song texts suggests the rich rhetorical potential of songs, and their ability to critique dominant ideologies circulating through popular texts. However, Sellnow also sets up a binary division between lyrics/music, where lyrics are privileged as the site of meaning and music is associated solely with the “emotional.” It is helpful to consider her take on the rhetoric of music alongside DeChaine’s, as DeChaine argues that in performance, the language/music divide is blurred.

In recent years, scholars in rhetoric and composition have argued that we should prioritize sound as an important rhetorical tool and compositional material, marking an important shift within rhetoric and composition not only in terms of the types of texts that are analyzed, but also the types of texts that we encourage our students to produce in the classroom, and the kinds of non-alphabetic literacies that we foster in composition pedagogy. In “Voice in the Cultural Soundscape: Sonic Literacy in Composition Studies,” Comstock and Hocks echo DeChaine’s embodied understanding of music, offering further justification for centering sound in a theory of embodied rhetoric: “Indeed, because sound is composed of atoms and matter, we often hear with our whole bodies . . . as periodic waves, sounds dissolve into nothing in a way that images and writing do not.” The authors also offer a useful introduction to the concept of *sonic literacy*, a critical literacy practice that has received attention in recent years in special issues of rhetoric and composition journals like *Harlot* and *Enculturation*. Sonic literacy offers a framework for understanding both the persuasive power of songs and the danger when that persuasive character is used for less-critical purposes. For example, Comstock and Hocks argue that writing instructors can foster sonic literacy in their classrooms by encouraging students to produce sonic texts and learning to distinguish between “uncritical” and “critical” songs (n.p.). The authors

argue that by developing sonic literacy, we can “produce better texts with more awareness of the emotional impact of tone and style” and “develop a stronger, more embodied sense of audience.” Sonic literacy differs from “listening,” which they describe as involuntary and passive; it demands a critical engagement with sonic texts.

This link between analysis and production complements the intent of this thesis; furthermore, it serves as one answer to Sellnow’s call to continue “the search toward understanding the implications of music as a rhetorical form” (81)—finally, because they identify the “ongoing dissolution” of sonic texts (e.g., the temporary nature of performed music), they provide a useful segue for considering folk songs, which carry a set of genre conventions supporting the ongoing recreation of sound, and by extension, an ongoing recreation of songs that enact varying degrees of critique. In the next section, I consider the specific implications of participatory traditions for circulating critical messages and engaging the minds and bodies of participants/audiences. This helps set up for a rhetorical analysis of “Deportees” as well as Baker’s “Migrants” and Canales’s rewritten version of “Deportees,” which circulate via different performance practices.

FOLK MUSIC & PARTICIPATORY PERFORMANCE PRACTICES

“Deportees” emerged into a U.S.-based folk music movement that has been termed the “folk revival.” Although this particular folk idiom is rooted in the United States—indeed, Guthrie had “little interest in or enthusiasm for songs that wandered too far from rural American traditional music patterns” (Reuss 191)—folk songs can still counter nationalism, as we will see in the analysis that follows. Although Baker’s “Migrants” and Canales’s rewritten version of “Deportees” may not be characterized as folk songs, I want to consider them within this folk

music history, because both songs are currently performed at folk festivals and in folk music venues (such as the Woody Guthrie Folk Festival). Within the folk idiom, I focus specifically on the tradition of songs “of persuasion or protest,” a definition that characterizes all three songs analyzed in this study and emphasizes each song’s response to hegemonic ideologies reflected in popular media (Sellnow 69-70).

Broadly, folk music is understood as “musical expression or storytelling of common people,” and the word *folk* derives from the German term *volk*, which translates as “the people” (Lovorn 32). The genre is typically shared in participatory contexts: “[w]ithin the folk idiom, high value has traditionally been placed on participatory, communitarian, and non-commercial (if not anti-commercial) music, through which any spiritual or physical distance between ‘artist’ and ‘audience’ is minimized” (Garofalo via Berger 64). Furthermore, folk songs typically have very simple musical arrangements that are easy to play and sing along with. “Deportees,” for example, has only three chords: G, C, and D. These three chords correspond to the I, IV, and V (or root, subdominant, and dominant) chords in the key of G—simple chords that can be played easily on a variety of stringed instruments such as the banjo and guitar, and which form the foundation of many popular songs. Participatory traditions like those in folk music thus become a powerful way to maintain a song’s place in the public imagination. They become an important site, too, to enact Ratcliffe’s “accountability” for social injustices. When audiences are asked to co-construct a critical message, they are being asked to physically enact a discourse of accountability.

As professor of social science education Michael Lovorn explains in “Voices of the People: Teaching Empathy through Folk and Blues Lyrics,” folk music has historically served as a “platform” from which to “address issues, policies, experiences, and perspectives important to

common people that the mainstream media could or would not cover. What emerged was a brand of underground contemporary, raw and often controversial social commentary and advocacy,” employing metaphor and “empathic imagination” to reach audiences (32). Lovorn describes how educators have drawn from the persuasive power of folk songs to bring a critique of “false consciousness” and injustice into their classrooms (32). He writes that “employing carefully selected compositions of folk and blues music that capture the relevant, emotional, and intimate experiences of common people, past and present” can help teachers foster empathy in students”; he further argues that this can support students’ democratic participation, noting that “the most significant obstruction of students’ social and civic development may be th[e] inability to empathize with people” (31). As a teacher, he uses music to educate his students in histories that are not represented in textbooks, and describes folk music as useful in understanding multiple sides to stories, particularly underrepresented, non-scholarly perspectives (34). He specifically advocates using Woody Guthrie’s songs as teaching tools, again emphasizing the ability of these songs to foster empathy in their audiences. Professor of social work Lawrence Berger, too, supports the pedagogical value of “Deportees,” arguing that it can be used to “identify and create group solidarity” around immigration (71).

Although these two writers are not situated within the field of rhetoric and composition, their pedagogical applications of folk music are quite compatible with the critical pedagogical work within our field. Indeed, in the U.S., folk music is situated in a tradition of critical pedagogy and community organizing work; here, the circulation practices of folk songs supported social justice efforts. In “Folk Schools, Popular Education, and a Pedagogy of Community Action,” cultural sustainability instructor William Westerman explains how the dual influence of Danish folk schools and Paulo Freire’s literacy work in Brazil led to critical

pedagogical practices in the U.S. via Myles Horton, who created the Highlander Folk School in Tennessee to train civil rights and labor organizers. Horton used folk music to support the Highlander School's organizing work (Berger 65), in part because songs could move easily outside the bounds of organizing spaces: "A speech is heard only once, while songs are learned and repeated indefinitely. Thus, they can perpetually promote and reinforce the ideals and actions that an organization employs" (Berger 69). Additionally, the song genre provides a useful vehicle for distilling an organization's ideologies: "[e]ducators and organizers alike can use such songs to simplify or concretize their abstract ideals" (Berger 69). Songs like "Deportees" or "Migrants" might serve a concurrent purpose of troubling abstract ideals that may reflect hegemonic ideologies, such as terms that privilege "citizens" over "noncitizens."

Within contexts like the Highlander School, songs circulated via participatory performances employing call-and-response and group sing-a-longs, which "encourage[d] the listener to become physically and emotionally involved in the song" (Berger 61) and also promoted "an emotionally charged atmosphere in which interpersonal 'bonding' can occur around those topics that are both important to the people involved and are addressed by their music" (Berger 69). Dissolving the performer/audience divide via participatory folk music practices, folk songs can affirm participants in their political commitments; furthermore, protest songs have the ability to move beyond the social movements in which they are rooted and become "rhetorical vehicles in themselves" (Kosokoff & Carmichael 302). Scholars of music have argued that via these circulation practices, folk songs can influence audiences in two distinct ways (which are similar to those identified by Sellnow): persuading them of something new, or reinforcing their preexisting beliefs. In "The Emotional and Intellectual Aspects of Protest Music" Berger draws from Robert Denisoff's research on popular music (see, for

example, *Sing a Song of Social Significance*) to argue that “[p]rotest songs, through their rhetoric-lyrical content and structure, which both condemn and propose solutions to social injustice—attempt to either convince or to reinforce for the listener that their topical material is, or should be, of significant importance to him/her” (59). Berger goes on to describe the rhetoric of protest songs as serving “a revivalist function,” arguing that “[i]ts lyrics intend to bring about or reinforce an awakening or increased state of consciousness/awareness” that ultimately leads to social action (59). Additionally, he argues that these songs are meant to reinforce ideology and solidarity within a social group, both “express[ing] outrage at blatant injustice and/or empathiz[ing] with the victims of such injustice” (60) and “eradicating the ‘false consciousness’ of the public” (63). This rhetorical work—and its circulation—is enabled in large part by collaborative performance practices; as Berger puts it, “the protest song’s medium is heavily interconnected with its message” (64).

By this logic, the story of the Los Gatos plane crash and its reinscription via the song “Deportees” is testament to the power of the folk “medium” to preserve the song and engage the bodies of participants in its ongoing recreation and dissemination. Because “Deportees” is situated in a music tradition that values audience participation and call-and-response singing, this co-construction must be understood not solely in terms of the physical act of *listening to* a song, but also in terms of active *participation* in and co-construction of a song. Professor of English Craig Werner writes in “Democratic Visions, Democratic Voices: Woody as Writer” that the complexity of musical performance “derives more from the context of performance and the shared energies of the group than from the text itself” (71). Ethnomusicology scholars have emphasized the need to understand songs within specific performance contexts, cautioning against the “separation of contextual from textual matters” in the analysis of song texts

(Shepherd & Wicke 8, 9). Furthermore, this understanding of performance is quite compatible with the context-driven foundations of rhetoric and composition, where textual meaning is understood to be "situated." A song like "Deportees," and the texts influenced by it, must be understood within the (often participatory) contexts in which they are shared.

FOLK SONG CO-OPTATION: WHY WE CAN'T GENERALIZE ABOUT FOLK AS A CRITICAL GENRE

While it is tempting to move into the claim that folk songs are *inherently* critical, the emphasis on context necessitates that we acknowledge the vulnerability of folk songs to cooptation. A "basic tool of the propagandist," songs "can serve a variety of purposes, all of which can benefit the student of propaganda," including patriotism, romanticism, or escapism (Cull 254). For example, the Nazi party transformed folk songs into nationalistic pieces that "verified Nazi truths" (Berger 74). Although many protest songs were also born out of "coopted" folk melodies (Cull 255), we can understand protest songs as serving a critical function, while nationalistic songs reaffirm dominant ideologies and reinforce the citizen/noncitizen binary. One way to distinguish between the two types of songs is to follow Sellnow, Comstock, and Hocks's calls for sonic literacy. As Sellnow argues, rhetorical analysis that takes into account musical as well as lyrical persuasion helps us become more "critical consumers" of less-"ethical" messages conveyed through song (81).

This critical work, unfortunately, must be understood alongside songs that have been co-opted in the service of nationalistic ideologies that work in opposition to Guthrie's critique of the citizen/noncitizen binary in popular media. Ironically, even Guthrie's work has been appropriated for that purpose—the classic example being his most popular song, "This Land is

Your Land.” Guthrie wrote the song in direct response to Irving Berlin’s “God Bless America” and originally intended for it to be a “workers’ national anthem” (Berger 67). However, the version of the song that American schoolchildren typically learn does not include Guthrie’s three most subversive and critical verses (Seeger & Reiser via Berger 67):

In the squares of the city, by the shadow of the steeple,

By the relief office, I saw my people,

As they stood there hungry, I stood there whistling:

“This land was made for you and me.”

Was a great high wall there that tried to stop me;

Was a great big sign there sa[id] “Private Prop’ty,”

But on the other side it didn’t say nothin’-

That side was made for you and me.

Nobody living can ever stop me,

As I go walking that freedom highway

Nobody living can make me turn back.

This land was made for you and me.

As Berger notes, “the deletion of these three verses gave the song an entirely new meaning and social significance” (68). Without the verses that draw attention to social inequality and critique the idea of private property, the phrase “this land was made for you and me” signifies an uncritical nationalistic unity. In this case, the difference between a nationalistic song and a critical song is a matter of three simple lyrical verses; the music texts are identical.

However, in a brilliant “re-cooptation” of “This Land is Your Land,” Pete Seeger and Bruce Springsteen performed it—complete with the missing verses—at the 2008 presidential inauguration (a performance that I highly recommend watching on YouTube). This “coup” reflects the fact that historically, musical cooptation has been a two-way street: folk music has also coopted mainstream or “pro-capitalist” songs and changed the lyrics to “criticize the very system the original song supported”—for example, musician and labor organizer Joe Hill’s pro-union take on the song “Casey Jones” (Berger 67).

This example brings up questions about the rhetorical work of music. What kind of damage is done by the nationalistic version of the song, and what sort of action (if any) is encouraged by the “re-cooptation”? In *Reds, Whites, and Blues: Social Movements, Folk Music, and Race in the United States*, William G. Roy credits Seeger and Springsteen’s performance at the inauguration with the “impressive persistence” of Guthrie’s song, but questions “how much grassroots activism was sparked” by the performance (124, 125). While the effects of music on an audience can be difficult to quantify, this particular performance does throw into sharp relief the distinction between texts that uphold dominant discourses to attempt to “recruit” people into an uncritical nationalistic ideology, and texts that critique dominant discourses to affirm and/or foster critical literacies in their audiences. Although this song alone is likely not “enough” to persuade an audience to critique nationalistic ideologies, it does affirm the political commitments

of those who do critique nationalism, and because the performance was at the presidential inauguration, it circulates this critique on an international scale. I understand this performance as part of a larger project of working towards a complex solidarity that interrogates the borders of nation-state—a project that is historically-grounded and transmittable through song. This is also the context in which I situate “Deportees” and the texts influenced by it—songs that likely are not “enough” on their own to enact significant structural change, but which do serve as vehicles for circulating critique, persuasion, and education.

Neither Guthrie nor Seeger was shy about his radical politics, and both understood music as “a weapon in ‘social revolution’”; indeed, the inscription on Woody Guthrie’s guitar read “This Machine Kills Fascists” and Pete Seeger’s banjo was inscribed “This Machine Surrounds Hate and Forces It to Surrender” (Berger 66). This is the tradition in which “Deportees” first found an audience—one that imbues music with transformative political power. Seeger’s inscription in particular provides an important piece of visual rhetoric for contexts in which the song was first publically performed, as it situates the song within a larger politics of countering—indeed, defeating—hateful discourse and action. In addition to blurring language/music and performer/audience binaries, can we ascribe additional political meaning to folk songs that embed a critique of self/other dichotomies in their lyrics, as “Deportees” does? To further narrow the lens of analysis and begin to pose this question, I turn now to transnational feminist rhetorical theories, which offer both theoretical and methodological guidelines for countering ideological silences in the historical record and composing critical texts that engage audiences in transnational events.

TRANSNATIONAL FEMINIST RHETORICAL THEORY & TRANSNATIONAL LITERACY: CHALLENGING NATIONALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGIES

Transnational feminist rhetorical theory supports a focus on the citizen/noncitizen binary, as it asks us to re-think and re-theorize the nation-state, ultimately working towards what Chandra Talpade Mohanty terms “transborder democratic citizenship” (248). Within the framework of this theory, we can specifically consider the citizen/noncitizen binary as it is navigated in songs like “Deportees” and “Migrants.” This theory helps us understand the particular nature of the ideological silence that Guthrie responded to in 1948, and the transnational power dynamics and ideologies embedded within it. In the introduction to *Critical Transnational Feminist Praxis*, Amanda Lock Swarr and Richa Nagar propose a “working definition” of transnational feminisms as “an intersectional set of understandings, tools, and practices” that focus on “racialized, classed, masculinized, and heteronormative logics and practices of globalization and capitalist patriarchies, and the multiple ways in which they (re)structure colonial and neocolonial relations of domination and subordination” (5). While this definition emphasizes the critical work of transnational theory, the word “transnational” is not inherently critical. In “Teaching for the Times,” Gayatri Spivak offers an analysis of the various applications of the word “transnational,” indicating that it is not always used with a critical intention, and situating “transnational literacy” as the practice necessitated by the rise of transnational capitalism.

I want to highlight Spivak’s distinction because terms like “transnational,” “globalized,” and “multicultural” can all be used to maintain the status quo and reinforce the citizen/noncitizen binary, while “critical transnational literacy” seeks to challenge the status quo and deconstruct this binary. The word “transnational,” for example, can be linked with capitalism as easily as it

can be linked with feminism. The terms “global” and “multicultural” are particularly guilty of this, as Banerjee and Linstead explore in “Globalization, Multiculturalism and Other Fictions.” They identify the term *globalization* as one that is primarily used for describing economic processes (685) that are “constructed by relationships of power, domination and subordination” (689), and emphasize the need to consider key questions about the impact of globalized commerce: “if ‘we’ live in a global world, exactly who constitutes this ‘us’? Who is being written into this globalization discourse, and by whom? . . . what are the costs and benefits of globalization and how are these distributed across different countries, regions, and peoples?” (684). While the term “globalization” does not necessarily engage with these political questions, critical transnational literacy does, necessitating that rhetors see themselves as embedded in transnational power dynamics, with the attendant power disparities and violences.

A transnationally literate analytic method also requires that we consider the social and cultural effects of globalization, and the knowledge that is produced via globalization, rather than solely the economic shifts (Banerjee & Linstead 690). For example, within an investigation of “Deportees” and texts influenced by it, we cannot simply historicize the song as being written during the Bracero program, but must consider how the Bracero program constituted an important part of the cultural and economic context that led to the term “deportee” circulating in popular media. Finally, Banerjee and Linstead offer a useful critique of the term *multiculturalism*, defining it as a “reductionist view of diversity” (702) that “celebrate[s] ‘ethnic’ identities” (703) while “perpetuat[ing] hegemonic modes of relations in a global context” and failing to “acknowledge, let alone challenge, existing material inequalities of opportunity and access” (703). Multiculturalism fails to destabilize whiteness and the west as dominant categories of analysis; transnational feminist theory, in contrast, centers on a discussion of

material inequalities and seeks to deconstruct and work to change hegemonic discourses and social relations.

The term *transnational literacy*, too, must be defined in critical terms. In “Globalization, Pedagogical Imagination, and Transnational Literacy,” Lee builds on Spivak’s idea of “interruptive praxis” (4), arguing that “transnational literacy can promote connections between a literary and textual engagement, and a social engagement” founded in “ethical and political responsibility” and grappling with the “boundary between aesthetics and politics”—a boundary that is quite important when considering political arts like protest songs (5). Lee makes use of the term “critical transnationalism” (7), which is useful in distinguishing transnationalism from the uncritical rhetoric of “globalization” and “multiculturalism” that Spivak, Mohanty and others caution against. As alluded to earlier, a transnational feminist rhetorical approach to analyzing “Deportees” and the texts influenced by it requires that we historicize the Los Gatos plane crash within transnational capitalism—specifically, the racist, gendered logics underlying the Bracero program.⁸ In terms of the song texts, Spivak’s call for transnational literacy asks us to attend to symptoms of transnational capitalism, specifically the tendency to understand difference “sympathetically but superficially,” with “The Anglo relat[ing] benevolently to everything, ‘knowing about other cultures’ in a relativist glow” (7). This question is important to a discussion of how songs communicate a transnational history, because it asks us as evaluators to consider how each text asks its audience to relate to the history it tells, how each author positions himself in relation to the story he is telling, and to what extent each text encourages transnational literacy in his audiences.

⁸ These songs, and the words “deportee” and “migrant,” could be further historicized within the long, fraught history of Mexico/U.S. relations, dating back to annexation and earlier, which is beyond the purview of this thesis.

This distinction between critical and uncritical transnationalism is particularly important to songs, which have the ability to circulate transnational messages to wide audiences, with all the affective musical power that rhetorical theorists have historically asked us to be wary of. To be sure, the critical distinctions between transnational feminism and multiculturalism play out in song texts. For example, when I was a kid I sang with a group called the World Children’s Choir, which frequently participated in peace-oriented events. One of the songs we sang, titled “If I Could Change the World,” attempted to articulate a politics of nonviolence, but in doing so erased complicity of the U.S. in global power dynamics. The chorus of the song was as follows:

If I could change the world

The missiles would not fly

All people hand in hand

Dear God, please grant my wish for peace

In order to make a more substantive declaration of peace, I think we needed to engage with the fact that everyone in the choir was a documented U.S. citizen, and that as such, our antiwar message was spoken from a privileged and imperial vantage point. We also lacked a specific audience—a vague rhetoric of peace does not necessarily serve a critical or persuasive function. Furthermore, this song does not encourage Ratcliffe’s accountability in audiences; instead, it seems commonality while erasing power dynamics and difference. Far from a transnational feminist rhetorical act, this song plays into uncritical multicultural rhetoric, where all people are “hand in hand” and are presumed to be equal, despite the hugely unequal power dynamics of war.

On a more hopeful note, literary and cultural texts that achieve a more substantive transnational critique can assist in the development of “a critical literacy for our age of postcolonial globalizations,” and the “transnational imaginaries” contained in these texts “can facilitate our transcendence from bounded thinking” (Lee 7, 10). This connection between literary/textual engagement and social engagement—and between aesthetics and politics—has implications for understanding the rhetorical work of songs that narrate transnational histories, suggesting that these texts have the potential to critique the “bounded thinking” of the citizen/noncitizen binary that is maintained by terms like “deportee” and “migrant.” This question of transnationally literate critique is at the heart of my interest in these songs—furthermore, because each singer is a documented U.S. citizen, their authorial vantage points provide an interesting glimpse into how people in privileged positions can articulate a critique and transnational solidarity that remains accountable to transnational power dynamics.

In recent years, the field of rhetoric and composition has taken up this aesthetic and political project as well, drawing from postcolonial literary scholars and extending/adapting their theories of transnationalism. In the introduction to the special issue of *College English* on feminism and transnationalism, rhetoric and composition scholars Wendy Hesford and Eileen Schell call for the field to critique its alignment with U.S. imperialism and incorporate critical transnational rhetorical practices and methodologies (463) to question “normative understandings of nation, nationalism, and citizenship” (466). Hesford and Schell draw from postcolonial theorists including Homi Bhabha, Inderpal Grewal, and Deepiki Bahri to define a “transnational rhetorical perspective” as one that addresses “how rhetorical concepts are shaped by cultural, social, and economic connectivities and interrelations, and cross-border and cross-cultural mobilizations of power, language, resources, and people” (465). Additionally, they echo

Spivak's cautioning against uncritical uses of the term "transnational," describing how "transnationalism" has been employed in rhetoric and composition in dangerous ways, e.g., privileging individual writers like *mestiza* rhetorician and writer Gloria Anzaldua to "diversify" the field (461-2), "uncritical cosmo-politanisms," voyeurism, and privileging the nation-state and Western rhetorical traditions (463-4) while failing to critically theorize the nation (466). By asking us to work towards theorizing the nation and citizenship, Schell and Hesford encourage a consideration of how songs like "Deportees" and "Migrants" ask us to rethink the citizen/noncitizen binary, and critique nationalistic epistemologies in popular media.

The analysis called for by these rhetoricians necessitates that we look at the gendered political dynamics and effects of transnational agreements like the Bracero program; i.e., the gendered, imperial dynamic that was set up between the U.S. and Mexico, where Mexican labor was imported to support the U.S. agricultural economy. Transnational feminist rhetorical theory also asks us to consider the historical and current relationships between the U.S. and Mexico, including the history of indentured servitude and slavery in the U.S. and the exploitation of undocumented immigrants that continues today in the U.S. labor force. Furthermore, a transnational feminist rhetorical analytic asks us to look at the gendered effects of this program in Mexico. In "Breaking the Silence: Mexican Children and Women's Confrontation of *Bracero* Family Separation, 1942-64," Ana Elizabeth Rosas notes a conspicuous silence in the historical record concerning the "consequences of the gendered and transnational configuration of the Bracero Program" (384), specifically its effects on the families of the men who were recruited to work in the U.S. Rosas explores how the Mexican and U.S. governments "intercepted letters that described the dangers of the Bracero program," and emphasize the gendered transnational violence that was inflicted by this program: "women and children did not have to migrate to the

United States to experience and respond to dangerous forms of alienation from their families . . . an estimated 385,000 Mexican men were separated from their families and an uncalculated number of Mexican women were transformed into married yet single mothers” (383).

It is important to note that not one of the texts analyzed in this thesis—Guthrie/Hoffman’s “Deportees,” Baker’s “Migrants,” and Canales’s rewritten version of “Deportees”—directly engages with these on-the-ground effects in Mexico.⁹ As texts that were written in the U.S., responding to U.S. media, they necessarily engage with silences perpetuated by U.S. media regarding casualties in the U.S. However, as we consider how to write in response to transnational violences like the Los Gatos plane crash, it is important to both take lessons from the work of Guthrie, Baker, and Canales, and also to extend our critiques and analyses to the on-the-ground effects of transnational agreements like the Bracero program and the gendered violences that they perpetuate outside the U.S. The assumption that women would accept “the emotional and financial hardships of family separation” was implicit in the Bracero agreement, and “decisive in sustaining men’s participation in the program” (Rosas 385). Thus, my analysis of Guthrie, Baker, and Canales’s texts begins with the understanding that they are incomplete; while they respond to media silences in the U.S., they do not attempt to counter the silence around the gendered effects of immigration policy in Mexico. However, each text does respond to the gendered power dynamic between the U.S. and Mexico, and because they do counter the citizen/noncitizen binary set forth in media reporting, and attempt to lay bare discourses that hide structural violence, they are compatible with transnational feminist rhetorical theory.

⁹ Tim Hernandez has traveled to Mexico to interview the families of the “deportees,” and thus his nonfiction book and documentary film may engage with these gendered dynamics.

Because this theoretical framework also asks us to engage in methodological projects of interweaving “critiques, actions, and self-reflexivity” (Nagar & Swarr 5), next I elaborate on autoethnography, which I use as a method of interweaving the personal and the academic in this thesis. Scholarship on autoethnography, too, offers vocabulary for describing how the songwriters position themselves alongside (and as part of) transnational capitalism, and how they position themselves as authors narrating transnational events.

AUTOETHNOGRAPHIC SELF-REFLEXIVITY

Throughout this thesis, I draw from my own experience considering the rhetorical lessons of the song “Deportees.” I also narrate my experiences composing songs that attempt to respond to and engage with transnational issues. By creating a hybrid thesis text, I hope to “enact” the lessons of the songs I am analyzing, work towards my own understanding of what it means to deconstruct the citizen/noncitizen binary in both pedagogy and writing, and share lessons from my own practice of songwriting. Furthermore, by sharing music in this thesis, I hope to attend to Rickert’s call that we seek out “new ways of understanding, theorizing, and working with rhetoric as both an affective and musical art”—in other words, understanding language not as a stand-alone mode of communication but as one that exists in conjunction with the sonic (162). Finally, I want to honor the act of music composition as “an alternative means of knowledge creation which [is] distinct from the more typical analytic and interpretive approaches” (Carless & Douglas 23). Given the deeply persuasive character of music, I think that we in rhetoric and composition should take it seriously as a “means of knowledge creation.” Theories of autoethnography support this approach, and give me a way to define what I am attempting in this thesis text. These theories also help us to understand how each author analyzed in this thesis articulates his positionality to compose a transnational text.

As Brydie-Leigh Bartleet and Carolyn Ellis write in *Music Autoethnographies*, “[a]utoethnography is an autobiographical genre that connects the personal to the cultural, social, and political” (7). Elaborating on the connection between music and autoethnography, they draw attention to the rhetorical nature of both:

At the heart of both is the desire to communicate engaging and personal tales through music and words, which inspire audiences to react, reflect, and in many cases, reciprocate . . . these experiences are always dynamic, relational, embodied and highly subjective . . . Viewing their lives autoethnographically, musicians and other creative artists are concerned about what their work awakens/evokes in audiences. (8, 9)

Bartleet and Ellis’s orientation towards “evocative” autoethnography stands at odds with more “analytic” understandings of autoethnography championed by scholars like Leon Anderson. Anderson defines analytic autoethnography as an approach to research in which the researcher fits three categories: (1) a “full member” of the social context under study, (2) “visible as such a member” in the written text, and (3) “committed to developing theoretical understandings of broader social phenomena” (373). I meet Anderson’s criteria, in that I am a musician and student/teacher of rhetoric and composition who writes music and is committed to challenging nationalistic epistemologies; I am also a second-generation immigrant, which is in part why I am drawn to stories like the Los Gatos plane crash, which concern immigration. These “positionalities” are visible in this thesis text to the extent that they help me to analyze the song “Deportees” and its influence on other texts. Corresponding with Anderson’s final point, I am committed to deepening theoretical work in music, rhetoric, and transnationalism, specifically the extent to which the three songs I am analyzing critique the citizen/noncitizen binary. Although Anderson and Bartleet/Ellis represent the poles of “analytic” and “evocative”

autoethnography, these categories are not distinct and can be blended. By sharing music composition and self-reflexive personal narrative as well as analyzing song texts, I hope to demonstrate how “evocative” genres can attempt to enact (and also inform) critical transnational “analytic” and theoretical work.

While my three positionalities suggest “complete member researcher” status, they also represent my limitations as a researcher. As a musician, I am prone to valorizing the song genre, which can make it difficult to critique its limitations. Additionally, because I admire the creative work of Woody Guthrie, Tim Hernandez, Sam Baker, and Lance Canales, my connection to the material being researched here is personal—often too close for critical distance. As an instructor of rhetoric and composition, and a student in the field as well, I am particularly oriented towards *how the authors position themselves as writers*; this is born out of my desire to help my students position themselves in their written work, and also because I am trying to ground myself as a writer who engages with transnational subject matter and attempts to narrate silenced histories. Because of this, I am curious about authorial intent—a curiosity that makes it difficult to focus on the *rhetorical work* of the songs as they circulate into contexts where the author’s intent is not necessarily articulated. Additionally, because my formal teaching experience is quite limited (four semesters total), any conclusions I draw about the pedagogical value of these songs may inadvertently reiterate the work of existing scholarship in writing pedagogy that I am not yet aware of. As a second-generation immigrant from an assimilated diaspora, I am drawn to issues of immigration although I have not experienced immigration firsthand; thus, I am not only separated from the story I am researching, but also separated from the stories that I share in autoethnographic writing (such as the written piece that accompanied the song “Detainee” earlier in this thesis). Furthermore, the second-generation immigrant positionality as I have experienced

it in a bicultural family can be limiting in that I assume a transnational positionality without always grounding my analysis locally—something that Chandra Mohanty frequently cautions against in *Feminism without Borders*. These three constraints--as well as others that I am likely unaware of--complicate my “complete member researcher” status considerably; in the analysis that follows, I do my best to remain mindful of them and to be critical of the conclusions that they inform.

While these theories of autoethnography offer a way of describing the text I am composing, and help me position myself as a writer, Mary Louise Pratt’s notion of “contact zones” offers a way of describing the plane crash itself as a moment that is well-suited to autoethnographic writing. Pratt defines contact zones as “social spaces where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power, such as colonialism, slavery, or their aftermaths as they are lived out in many parts of the world today” (34). One of the reasons I chose the case study of the Los Gatos plane crash for this thesis is that previous research on post-9/11 vigilante violence revealed to me that the death of immigrants, and the texts that emerge following these deaths, shed light on cultural ideologies. The texts that emerged in the aftermath of the Los Gatos plane crash respond to these ideologies, and thus help us identify and describe them. The notion of “contact zones” is also useful to extend my positionality into this particular historical moment: The second-generation immigrant positionality gives me a glimpse into these events from the “dominant” perspective while also making me attuned to the “subordinate” perspective; my status as a student/teacher of rhetoric and composition makes me sensitive to the texts and rhetorics that emerge following these events; and because I am a musician, I can offer an analysis of song texts as well as compose them. However, there are constraints here as well, both in my positionality and in the

songwriters'. Each of us writes outside the bounds of the event itself; Guthrie, the only one of us who was alive when the crash occurred, was living across the country in New York City. This story does not “belong” to any one of us; indeed, writing about it could be understood as appropriating it for our own gain. And yet, if we return to the transnational feminist theories surveyed earlier, we must complicate notions of “us/them” to understand that as U.S. citizens, we are all implicated in transnational violences; furthermore, if we return to the final verse of “Deportees” (“Is this the best way we can grow our green orchards? Is this the best way we can grow our good fruit?”), we must acknowledge that we are all complicit in the exploitation of migrant labor if we purchase fruit harvested by them—or even if we inhabit the country that exploits them. Each of these songwriters (including me) inhabits a liminal space—at once separate from the crash and complicit in the transnational power dynamics that are embedded in its history.

Pratt’s theory is also useful in considering how we might pedagogically employ the lessons from the texts that emerge in the wake of “contact zone” moments like the Los Gatos plane crash. She describes the “pedagogical arts of the contact zone” as including “ways for people to engage with suppressed aspects of history (including their own histories)” (40). Through analyzing these texts, I make direct connections to the writing and pedagogical work of rhetoric and composition, by considering how “suppressed” or silenced histories like the Los Gatos plane crash and the texts that respond to it might inform our own writing about other such histories. For example we might engage with “suppressed aspects” of our own histories by “writing ourselves into” transnational histories like the Los Gatos plane crash, something that I explore further in the discussion chapter.

SUMMARY

The theories surveyed here—poststructuralist theories of silence, rhetorical theories of music and the folk song genre, and transnational feminist theory—lay the groundwork for a consideration of the song “Deportees,” its rhetorical work, and its influence on other texts today. To briefly recap before moving on to describing my rhetorical analytic method: The poststructuralist project of looking not just at texts, but at what is *absent* in texts, helps us identify and analyze rhetorics of silence in the historical record. By analyzing texts like “Deportees” that counter silences, we can better understand the ideologies at play in historical silences. Transnational feminist theory provides rhetorical analytic tools to use when examining texts like “Deportees” that respond to transnational events, and encourages an accountability logic that allows researchers to self-reflexively orient themselves towards these events. Finally, autoethnographic writing allows us as writers to attempt to enact transnational literacies as we analyze them.

One major question remains for me: *How do we avoid a totalizing definition of “nationalism” as we critique it?* My sense going into this research was that the nationalism that accompanies postcolonial struggle, one that reflects the desire for self-determination, cultural identity, and resistance to oppression is of a different sort than the nationalism perpetuated by terms like “deportee” and “migrant.” For example, I used to play music with a Puerto Rican/American bass player who was part of a band called Ricanstruction, which was allied with the political project of Puerto Rican independence from the U.S.—this liberatory nationalism feels quite different from the nationalistic epistemology that reinforces phrases like “illegal alien” in U.S. media. I want to end this review of literature by clarifying that the nationalism I am resistant to is a nationalism that is complicit in silence about transnational power dynamics

and injustices—e.g., the nationalism at play in the texts that Guthrie responded to when he wrote the words “Who are all these friends all scattered like dry leaves? The radio says they are just deportees,” or the nationalism that made those two men turn away from me on the street in Brooklyn because they did not support “illegals.” Nationalism that is part of an anti-imperial project is more difficult for me to critique without seriously checking my privileged vantage point.

But, as Partha Chatterjee reminds us in *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World*, the binary I just set forth, essentially between “western” and “nonwestern” nationalism, is also dangerous, and although nationalistic ideology can represent an “attempt to actualize in political terms the universal urge for liberty and progress,” he clarifies that even this type of nationalism can “give rise to mindless chauvinism and xenophobia and serve as the justification for organized violence and tyranny . . . nationalism and liberty could often be quite irreconcilably opposed” (2-3). And so, there is a political project of critiquing nationalism that I want to enter into with this thesis, but it is very difficult to do without glossing over the complexity and heterogeneous understandings of the term “nationalism” and without unwittingly introducing new binaries like “western”/“nonwestern” nationalism. As poststructuralist theory tells us, these binaries structure our ways of thinking, indicating that the project of “decolonizing” writing is quite difficult and requires rigorous self-critique and self-reflexivity—processes that make autoethnography an essential component of this thesis. Nationalistic ideologies have been engrained into my way of thinking from a young age; for example, my sense of cultural identity (an Indian-American) relies entirely on national identifications. My hope is that I will be able to identify and deconstruct these ideologies as I encounter them via self-reflexivity.

Altogether, I believe that these intersecting theories and approaches can ultimately help us as writers understand how to create texts that respond to silences, rewriting or re-narrating history as a form of action that supports the transnational feminist rhetorical project of countering nationalistic epistemologies, while simultaneously “enacting” accountability and performing complicity in these epistemologies. Investigating the influence of a folk song is only one small way to undertake this project of countering nationalistic silences and re-narrating history. We in rhetoric and composition are well-placed to find new ways of re-narrating history that take into account—and attempt to collapse—the citizen/noncitizen binary, and I hope that this thesis will serve as a call to action for more students and scholars in the field to take up this ongoing project.

METHODOLOGY

To analyze “Deportees” and its influence on contemporary texts, I use case study to bound this rhetorical analysis, draw from the rhetorical theories of music and transnational feminism set forth in my review of literature to analyze song lyrics and interview transcripts, and employ autoethnographic self-reflexive writing. Autoethnography also serves as an overarching methodological approach that is compatible with transnational feminist self-reflexivity. Before elaborating, I now reiterate my research questions:

- What were the contexts in which Guthrie, Baker, and Canales composed their songs?
- How does each song lyrically navigate transnational subject matter?
- What are the musical features of each song, and how do these musical features work rhetorically with the lyrics and influence each song’s circulation practices?
- What can these songs, their authors, and the process of composing autoethnographic writing teach us about the rhetorical work of composing transnational texts?

Examining “Deportees” and two texts influenced by it as a case study in music and rhetoric allows for an in-depth analysis of the complex rhetorical dynamics of the songs (Creswell 101). The goal of the analysis that follows is, thus, not to generalize about folk music and its potential to engage transnational issues, but rather to explore in-depth the rhetorical work of three interlinked songs, with the goal of opening up larger questions about the lessons we in rhetoric and composition can learn from this case study. While there is limited external generalizability in this analysis, this theoretical framing and methodology is applicable to other songs that also engage with transnational issues.

SAMPLE SELECTION

In the chapters that follow, I analyze three song texts:

- “Deportees” itself (Woody Guthrie’s poem and Martin Hoffman’s musical arrangement);
- Sam Baker’s “Migrants” (a song about Mexico/U.S. border-crossing deaths that borrows imagery from “Deportees”); and
- Lance Canales & the Flood’s rewritten version of “Deportees,” which was performed at the memorial unveiling in September 2013.

To supplement the analysis of these three texts, I employed IRB-approved semi-structured interview with three participants: Tim Hernandez, Sam Baker, and Lance Canales. I interviewed Tim Hernandez in person for about an hour and a half; spoke to Sam Baker on the phone for about forty-five minutes; and talked with Lance Canales on the phone for about an hour. A semi-structured interview is a qualitative method of gathering data that facilitates a “flexible and fluid structure, unlike structured interviews, which contain a structured sequence of questions to be asked in the same way of all interviewees,” and emphasizes “topics, themes, or areas to be covered” rather than a strict interview script (Mason, n.p.). I entered each interview with a prewritten list of questions, but allowed the conversation to evolve naturally, touching base with the questions to focus the discussion but allowing the interviewee to largely dictate the terms of the interview. I chose this interview style because of the flexibility facilitated by it, and so that both my interests and the interviewees’ could co-construct the interview. I chose these three participants because each of them has a connection to “Deportees” and has been influenced by it in a different way. While Tim Hernandez and Lance Canales were friends (Tim suggested

that I interview Lance), neither was aware of Sam Baker's work; similarly, Sam Baker was not aware of their work. These three writers have very different positionalities, each of which I explore at length in the second analysis chapter.

Tim Hernandez is a writer and teacher living in Lafayette, Colorado, who unearthed the names of the nameless "deportees" in Guthrie's song, and worked to create a new headstone for the mass grave in California where the "deportees" are buried. He is currently working on a book and documentary, both titled *All They Will Call You*—both are nonfiction accounts of the plane crash that Guthrie describes in his song, and include interviews with families of the crash victims and the family of Martin Hoffman, the CSU who set Guthrie's poem to music. Because he is currently conducting research on this very case study, trying to piece together the history of the crash and the people affected by it, Hernandez provides a glimpse into how "Deportees" influences writing in a variety of genres—where "writing" is interpreted broadly to incorporate historical re-inscription of the crash encompassing a memorial headstone, nonfiction book, and documentary film. More specific to the focus on music in this thesis, Hernandez offers insight into the story of how the song came to be. At Hernandez's suggestion, I began doing archival research at the CSU Morgan Library, where I uncovered photographs and newspaper articles about Martin Hoffman and Pete Seeger, who played a concert in Fort Collins in 1958, learned Hoffman's arrangement of the poem, and subsequently recorded it and made it a well-known song. By sending him these archival texts as I found them, I was able to enact reciprocity for the interview, supplementing his research as he supplemented mine.

Sam Baker is a critically-acclaimed, professional songwriter who wrote a song that borrows imagery from Guthrie's "Deportees" to describe a contemporary immigration tragedy and offers a similar critique of popular media reporting. Interviewing Baker helped me

understand the influence of Guthrie’s poem-turned-song on modern-day songwriters. It also allowed me to ask critical questions about composing transnational texts, particularly the rhetorical considerations of this process. Because I have seen Baker perform and know that he reaches huge U.S.-citizen audiences, I was particularly curious about how he sees his music affecting audiences, and how he understands the power of a song to support social justice efforts like countering the citizen/noncitizen binary in popular media. Finally, because he performed at the Woody Guthrie Folk Festival and interweaves “Deportees” with his song, he provides insight into how Guthrie’s music in particular continues to reach large U.S.-citizen audiences. To enact reciprocity for this interview, at his request I typed up a brief summary of the history of the song “Deportees,” which Baker said he would incorporate into his performances of the song; I also put him into email contact with Tim Hernandez.

Lance Canales is a California-based songwriter who wrote and recorded a version of the song “Deportees” that was performed at the memorial unveiling for the crash victims. He also recorded the song with his band, The Flood. This version of the song includes the names of the twenty-eight deceased “deportees” whispered in the background. Interviewing Canales offers a glimpse into how “Deportees” was reimagined through the “deportee” subject position (as he describes it). Furthermore, because Canales grew up in the area where the plane crash occurred, he is familiar with the community surrounding the site; additionally, because of his family ties to the Bracero program, and Mexican-Native American background, he offers an important critique of the racial dynamics at play in both Mexico/U.S. immigration history, the history of Mexican immigration to the U.S., and the ideologies at play in media reporting that uses words like “deportees” and “migrants.” At Canales’s request, I shared his music video for “Deportees” via

social networks and in my MA thesis presentation to other rhetoric and composition students and scholars; in doing so, I was able to enact reciprocity for this interview as well.

VALUES CODING

After transcribing the song lyrics and interviews, I analyzed them using Creswell's steps for interpreting data into codes and themes: reading and memoing, describing, classifying, interpreting, and then representing and visualizing the data (182-87). For the memoing and describing, I broke the song lyrics and interviews into "small categories of information" (184) and developed codes to describe them. The unit of analysis was a "meaning unit" which in some cases was a single word, in other cases a phrase, and still others a single sentence or more. Coding involved selection of a "word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data" (Saldaña 3). While coding is closer to an "interpretive act" than a "precise science," it is also a useful way for qualitatively organizing data, provided that codes work to summarize or condense (rather than reduce) data (Saldaña 4). I categorized the list of codes into themes, and interpreted the data by assigning each code with a word that attempts to encapsulate the work of these lyrical elements. After coding the data and organizing it into these thematic groups, I interpreted the data, which in qualitative research involves "abstracting out beyond the codes and themes to the larger meaning of the data" wherein the research is linked to and contextualized within existing literature (Creswell 187). At this stage of interpretation, I was essentially creating a narrative, an explanatory story that was as true to my analysis of the participants' insights as I could make it.

After developing these descriptive codes, I classified the codes into themes, or “broad units of information aggregated to form a common idea” (Creswell 186). Creswell explains that codes can be used to “describe information and develop themes,” representing three things: information that researchers expect to find before the study; surprising information that researchers did not expect to find; and information that is conceptually interesting or unusual to researchers (and potentially participants and audiences) (186). While I expected to find language that navigated the citizen/noncitizen binary (as this is what drew me to these songs in the first place), I did not expect to find the points of tension that emerged and as discussed in the analysis chapters.

My coding and interpretation approach, because it is contextualized within transnational feminist theory, can be characterized as Values Coding, wherein my orientation towards language that negotiates the citizen/noncitizen binary serves as a lens of analysis (Saldaña 7). This theoretical framework allowed me to narrow the scope of my lyrical analysis to look specifically at the extent to which each song navigates/deconstructs the citizen/noncitizen binary and sheds light on the nationalistic epistemologies that are at play in the silences each text responds to. For example, each song blurs English and Spanish; I coded this as “translingualism” and interpreted it as “critique of linguistic borders” (an interpretation that was supported by my interview data). This interpretation was also supported by transnational feminist theory’s blurring of the borders of nation-state and destabilizing of the nation as a unit of analysis.

Furthermore, Creswell draws from the work of Czarniawska and Martin to suggest several specific approaches to analyzing data that are compatible with a poststructuralist approach to research, which include dismantling dichotomies and attending to disruptions and contradictions (186-87). As I organized the codes into themes and interpreted them, several

difficult-to-classify codes emerged (particularly around the authors' conceptions of rhetorical purpose and audience), which were categorized as "points of tension" and explored in the analysis chapters.

RHETORICALLY ANALYZING THE CODED TEXTS & INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTS

To interpret the coded data, and combine it with an analysis of the song texts, I used Deanna Sellnow's musical rhetorical analysis as demonstrated in "Music as Persuasion: Refuting Hegemonic Masculinity in 'He Thinks He'll Keep Her.'" In this article, Sellnow "examines the rhetorical strategies" that Carpenter uses to "attempt to persuade listeners to reject hegemonic masculinity through song," and explores how the song persuades through both "discursive verbal content and nondiscursive emotional content" (66). Her analysis relies on the argument that music is a unique communicative and persuasive tool not only because of its dual musical and lyrical persuasive features, but also because of its ability to impact wide-ranging audiences, simultaneously "reinforcing" beliefs for some audiences and "recruiting new members" who may not already be "sympathetic to the cause" (66-67).

Methodologically, Sellnow looks briefly at Carpenter's place in the history of music, the historical context in which the song was written, and the motivation to write the song (a 1970s-era Geritol commercial in which a man "thinks he'll keep" his wife because she "lives for her husband, does everything for him, and still looks great") (69). Lyrically, Sellnow considers the extent to which a feminist message is communicated in Carpenter's musical response to this commercial. This is useful for a consideration of the three song texts under investigation in this thesis, each of which respond to preexisting texts to enact critique. The themes drawn from the interview texts are explored in the second analysis chapter and tied to the rhetorical analysis of

the song texts. In other words, the interview transcripts were treated as texts that scaffold the rhetorical analysis set forth here, particularly in terms of developing an understanding of the personal background each author brought to the song text; the context in which each text was composed; and the authors' understandings and articulations of rhetorical purpose and audience.

Musically, I borrowed Sellnow's focus on rhythmic structure, melodic structure, harmonic structure, and instrumentation (71), as these musical attributes differ significantly among the three song texts. Sellnow's method offers a useful starting point for discussing the rhetorical work of the song texts, and considering how music and lyrics mutually reinforce and even contradict each other to reach audiences (72). While I would like to do a more thorough analysis of the song texts, an in-depth analysis of melodic, harmonic, and rhythmic "texts" as well as style and instrumentation would require developing a new coding system, which is beyond the scope of this thesis. Rather than break down the songs, I consider the extent to which the melodic, harmonic, and rhythmic elements of the songs supported the lyrical work that I categorized via coding.

MUSIC AUTOETHNOGRAPHIES

I take an autoethnographic approach by reflecting throughout on my subject position as a second-generation immigrant, student of rhetoric and composition, and musician, discussing how I have interpreted these songs and applied their "lessons" to my own writing practices. To operationalize my autoethnographic method, I wrote and recorded music throughout my thesis-writing process, and then composed reflective pieces to accompany each song, which were drawn from a blog that I kept throughout my early research process. Autoethnographic self-

reflexivity is incorporated into these music autoethnographies from the three distinct “positionalities” that I bring to this research:

- As a second-generation immigrant, I consider the ways in which silences in the historical record are constructed through nationalistic ideologies that privilege “citizens” over “noncitizens,” and construct certain “noncitizens” (i.e., Indian diasporas) as “more American” than others (e.g., the nameless “deportees”);
- As a musician, I offer my own experiences with the texts I am analyzing, share three songs I’ve written, and specifically consider how the songs have led me to re-think my songwriting practice; and
- As a student and teacher of rhetoric and composition, I reflect on the ways that I consider applying the rhetorical work of “Deportees” in the classroom and in academic writing practices.

Autoethnographic self-reflexivity supports a transnational feminist lens; Nagar and Swarr suggest that feminist scholars “enact accountability” through “engagement with positionality and reflexivity,” thereby blurring the line between conventional “academic” knowledge production and “nonconventional” writing (7-8). To “operationalize” this self-reflexivity, I draw from these three positionalities to correspond with Leon Anderson’s analytic autoethnography: being a “full member” of the social context under study, “visible as such a member” in the written text, and “committed to developing theoretical understandings of broader social phenomena” (373). Additionally, I share song texts that I have written which engage with transnational issues, drawing from Bartleet and Ellis in *Music Autoethnographies* to support self-reflexive exploration of the music composition process.

In three places in the thesis, I offer autoethnographic reflection with an accompanying song. These sections allow me to “write myself into” the story of the Los Gatos plane crash and immigration more broadly; something I hope to one day facilitate among students in a writing class. By composing and recording song texts, I attempt to demonstrate the potential of songs texts to engage with exigent transnational issues like immigration, and analyze what I see as the shortcomings of these songs to show how analysis of creative texts can support transnational literacy-building in writing pedagogy.

LIMITATIONS

As with all research projects, this inquiry was constrained by time, geography, access, and resources. My project was limited to analyzing three song texts and interviewing three people, all of whom were male, U.S.-documented citizens, a sample that certainly is not representative. Furthermore, I was only able to complete one interview with each interview subject. Additionally, I am specifically oriented to language that works to break down the citizen/noncitizen binary, and evaluate the data through this particular lens. This almost certainly crowds out other worthy critiques of the texts under question. I also want to note that subjecting the story of the plane crash to academic analysis is a questionable endeavor in the first place, as it risks moving too far away from the loss of life in the crash itself. As Hernandez said in our interview, even a word like “immigration” dehumanizes the people it represents. Finally, because I am investigating the Los Gatos plane crash as someone who was not directly implicated in it, I risk stripping the life out of the story itself, and also risk speaking “for” “the other” through an analysis of texts that were composed on “this side” of the border. Throughout the project, I was abundantly aware of these limitations of my research and look forward to extensions of this work in ways that were not possible within the time constraints of this thesis.

To keep these limitations in the foreground as I conducted the analysis that follows, I returned to the transnational feminist theoretical framework used throughout this project, which centers on a critique of discourses that obscure and dehumanize “noncitizens.” In the analysis I read and listened to these texts closely, examined the ways in which they have influenced each other, and attempted to reflect back the stories told in each text with the goal of learning rhetorical lessons from these songs. I assumed that any readers of this thesis share my desire to work for social justice on both large and small scales, via direct action and also on the level of language, and given this imagined audience, there are undoubtedly points of concern that I do not address for others. In particular, given the academic nature of a thesis, I assumed among my academic audience people who produce academic, popular, activist, and creative texts—and work with students as they produce these texts. Given this audience, I hoped to convey that we have a lot to learn from these three song texts, and also a lot to offer vernacular writing practices like songwriting.

SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY

When it comes to transnational power relations, I think we need to be “working on all fronts,” and by extension in many genres (cultural work like songwriting or theatre, academic work like this thesis, popular nonfiction/documentary like Tim Hernandez’s work, media critique, etc.). Ultimately, I hope this analysis will generate conclusions that can inform pedagogical, scholarly, creative, and activist work (each of which I think is equally important) that is committed to interrogating the citizen/noncitizen (and other) binaries.

In this chapters that follow, I consider how Guthrie and Hoffman’s “Deportees,” Baker’s “Migrants,” and Canales’s rewritten version of “Deportees” shed light on ideological silences

and nationalistic epistemologies in the historical record; the extent to which the lyrics work to deconstruct the citizen/noncitizen binary; the ways music and language work together rhetorically in the songs; and how musical genre conventions support and/or limit each song's rhetorical work. I also consider how Hernandez, Baker, and Canales describe their work and the influence of Guthrie's song in order to focus more specifically on the composing practices of artists writing texts that engage with transnational issues.

TRACK #2: "A DIFFERENT BATTLE"

He's got sweet gentle eyes and fighting words

And he's gonna turn the words into commands

And turn those commands into killing

Who am I to say that he can't?

Just 18 years old he's barely living

And he wants to make the terror disappear

How do I look in a child's eyes

And tell him he's the future that I fear?

When I'm standing at the window and I'm crying

When I'm running from the sunrise in my sleep

When going through the motions feels like dying

When I look back in anger at the east

Let's fight a different battle in the street

Let's fight a different battle in the street

Let's fight a different battle in the street

Let's fight a different battle in the street

There's a side that you can't see

If your military family

Would you see it if the paper could scream?

Would that tear away the diplomatic screen?

Would you see it if emotion could bleed?

Would you change your mind if a soldier tortured me?

Would that make you unenlist from the Marines?

Would that make you join the cry for peace?

We're standing at the window and we're crying

We're running from the sunrise in our sleep

And going through the motions feels like dying

But we won't look back in anger at the east

Let's fight a different battle in the street

Let's fight a different battle in the street

Let's fight a different battle in the street

Let's fight a different battle in the street

In my work as a Graduate Teaching Assistant at CSU, I have come face to face with the fact that although I am critical of nationalistic rhetorics that privilege “citizens” over “noncitizens” via words like “deportee” or “migrant,” I also unconsciously reproduce these rhetorics. I came up against both internal and external walls of nationalistic ideology during my first semester teaching as a GTA, when I dealt with two notable instances of post-9/11 Islamophobia. In one case, a student made racist comments about Muslim students on campus (specifically: “you can tell who the foreign ones are; they should dress like us and stop talking in heavy accents—they’re in America now!”), and in another case, a student in ROTC wrote a paper in defense of drone warfare, equating all Muslim casualties with “terrorists.”

As I tried to intervene in both situations, I noticed a troubling pattern in myself: I invoked rhetorics of citizenship to try to get the students to think more critically about what they were saying, inadvertently instituting a citizen/noncitizen binary as I attempted to intervene in the

white/nonwhite (or more accurately, white/Muslim “other”) binary. Specifically, I said to the first student that we’re all immigrants, really, unless we’re Native American, and there isn’t one “right” way to be an “American.” To the second student, I talked about how drones have killed U.S. citizens abroad—specifically Anwar Al-Awlaki (who, incidentally, did his undergraduate work at CSU) and his son Abdulrahman, who had grown up in Denver and was only sixteen years old when he was killed.

In both cases, students seemed to be persuaded of my point. The first student was quite surprised that drones had killed U.S. citizens, and ultimately re-titled his paper “The Good and Bad of Drone Warfare.” The second student and I had an engaged conversation and I left feeling that I had done my duty as a composition instructor and challenged her exclusive notions of what it means to be an “American.” However, I wrestled with both of these interventions because neither of them successfully broke down the students’ orientations towards the “other”; rather, I had effectively transformed the “other” into a citizen, and played into uncritical multicultural rhetoric that fails to destabilize whiteness as a dominant category.

By invoking rhetorics of citizenship, was I supporting an ideology that might lead both of these students to turn away from injustices facing “noncitizens,” if it happened to be one of them who walked by me on the street in Brooklyn the day I was handing out flyers? Would they notice if a newspaper printed the word “migrant” or “deportee”? Did I inadvertently suggest that if drones were killing non-U.S. citizen casualties, that it was okay? In the interaction with the other student, did I suggest that her assimilationist attitude would be okay if it were applied to a student who was not a documented American citizen? As I engaged with transnational feminist theory and began to analyze Guthrie’s song, I thought more about how rhetorics of citizenship

maintain “citizen” as a dominant category, and fail to critique terms like “deportees” or “migrants,”—terms which obscure and dehumanize the humans they signify.

I try to ask these questions in the song “A Different Battle.” I have really struggled with this song, though—specifically, I struggled to disclose my complicity in reproducing nationalistic ideologies, which I felt was an important part of the experience. As I reflected more and more on the interaction with the ROTC student in particular, I realized that the biggest lesson I learned was that to him was that drone warfare represented safety for his family members, many of whom were in the military, and who he imagined would be spared from combat if drones were used instead. In this case, my resistance to nationalistic ideology and the wall I have up about the nationalist function of the U.S. military had made it difficult for me to see the student’s side of the story—a deeply human side, to be sure.

Furthermore, after this student and I had several difficult conversations about drone warfare, he asked me to write him a recommendation for his officer training program. After consulting with a faculty mentor, I told him I couldn’t. I justified this choice to him by explaining that drone warfare is affecting regions of the world close to where my family lives (North India), and also told him that because of this “bias” I likely wouldn’t write him a strong recommendation, which he deserved. This explanation felt like a copout. What I really wanted to do was have a frank conversation with him about his goals for the future and options besides the military, and explain that writing him a recommendation felt too close to an endorsement of the ongoing wars, particularly given his support of drone warfare. This decision was fraught with

tension and challenged my desire to support him in his goals and ambitions (something I had, until that moment, taken as a given).¹⁰

In the song, I struggle with the fact that the student couldn't see the horrors of war on civilians overseas. However, as I considered Guthrie's performance of complicity in "Deportees," I realized that the song I wrote falls prey to the same fallacy that I accused my student of: failing to consider the sides of an issue that are most "alien" to you or difficult for you to consider. Although I felt it was my duty as an educator to ask him to "consider other stakeholders" in the issue of drone warfare, my song lyrics revealed that I was not entirely doing that work myself. Guthrie's words ("is this the best way we can grow our green orchards?") demanded that I find a way to perform my complicity. I didn't grow up in a military family or community, which some consider a privilege, given the "economic draft." I have benefitted from policies that have profiled, detained, and killed other immigrants and their children, while living "life as normal" as an assimilated U.S. citizen at a time of war, within a diaspora that has been characterized as a "model minority."

As my first year as a GTA ended and I sat with the idea of Guthrie's rhetoric of complicity, I considered the participatory, co-constructed nature of a folk song like "Deportees," and realized that there was important critical work happening in that song in large part because it circulates in a music tradition that privileges group singing; one in which the audience is invited to interact with and physically co-construct the text. This, as I see it, is Martin Hoffman's great contribution to the history of the Los Gatos plane crash: setting the poem to music so the story of the crash could take flight. At a gathering for the Romero Theater

¹⁰ I have worked with other ROTC students and have been supportive of their goals—in this particular case, my reluctance to sign the form was tied to the student's nationalistic rhetoric round drone warfare, and my sense that signing the form condoned this type of warfare.

Troupe this past fall, another one of the Troupe members passed out a small songbook for audience sing-alongs; one of the songs in the book was Guthrie/Hoffman's "Deportees." I decided to play "A Different Battle" as well as co-leading "Deportees" with another Troupe member. To make the song I wrote more collaborative, and to fit the context of the event, I decided to repeat the line "let's fight a different battle in the street" three more times than I normally did, to make it a sing-along line that the audience could participate in (this is how it now appears in the recording). This choice arose out of my familiarity with the anti-war politics of the Troupe members—some of whom have been to war and many of whom have not—and confidence that people in the room would take up the call to join in singing.

One of the Troupe members, a woman named Lora, had moved to the U.S. from Guatemala as a teenager, and was facing deportation proceedings. That night, her children spoke to the audience, telling us their wishes—"I wish that Obama would stop deporting people. I wish that my mother could stay with us." When the room sang the song "Deportees," it felt like a collective acknowledgment of our complicity in Lora's deportation struggle—one that solidified our desire to, as a group, support her as she fought the decision. This support was real—the members of the Troupe organized solidarity rallies for her court hearings, and one of the members is in the process of attempting to transform a local Unitarian church into a "safe haven," where undocumented immigrants can stay and be safe from ICE. At the theater performances, Lora had the opportunity to share her story with larger supportive publics, who donated money to legal support services for undocumented immigrants.

After I sang "A Different Battle," the troupe founder, Jim Walsh, came up to me, and said, "One of my students is here—he's a student veteran, and the other day in class he told us that when he was overseas, he watched two Americans torturing an Iraqi soldier, and was too

scared to step in and stop them. I'm glad you sang that song, because I think it's important that he heard it." At the time, I understood this comment to be a vote of confidence in the song—that it articulated a way of positioning ourselves in opposition to violence that was not exclusionary, and could encompass both people who had been to war and people who had not; thus, I was glad I had altered the song so that what I understood to be the most inclusive line of it became a group sing-along, a co-constructed text. Later, though, I had to consider the "solidarity" that I assumed would emerge from co-constructing this text. There was no way to tell whether this rhetorical move was invitational or alienating; no way of knowing whether group singing supported solidarity-building or coercively engaged reluctant audience members, or neither, or both.

I want to rewrite the song so that it reflects the lesson I learned about my student's vantage point, and concern for his military family members. This is in large part inspired by the rhetoric of complicity that Guthrie articulates in his song, and the experience of singing "Deportees" as a group with the Romero Troupe, seeing a room full of mostly-documented-U.S.-citizens collectively articulating their complicity in the exploitation of migrant labor, and in doing so, affirming their commitment to work for social justice. What would it sound like to sing our complicity in war even as we try to position ourselves in opposition to it; to simultaneously articulate that we benefit in ways we will never know as civilians?¹¹

This tension—and the transnational lessons embedded in it—are things that I want to be able to translate into pedagogy. And yet, it took Guthrie seeing his own people subject to the same treatment as the Mexican migrant workers for him to shift his racist attitudes. What would

¹¹ However, at this point, the only line I can come up with is "no one in my family is stationed overseas," which feels not-entirely-true, as half my family lives overseas in South Asia even if no one is "stationed" there as a soldier.

it take for my students to shift theirs—in one case, that Muslim students should assimilate and “be like us,” and in the other case that thousands of civilian casualties are worth the possibility of killing a “suspected terrorist?” These questions are at the heart of that song. It took a deep engagement with Guthrie’s work for me to see that I had composed a song that did not acknowledge the biggest lesson I learned from the interaction with the student writing his paper on drones—that my privilege in not having been deployed, and not having a family member who has been deployed in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, limited my perspective. The transnational rhetoric I had wanted him to adopt was one that I needed to learn.

*One of the difficult lessons that I’m left with from these experiences—a lesson that can perhaps serve a pedagogical function—is that as much as I want to ask my students to engage in autoethnographic writing about their family immigration histories so that they can understand their connection to songs like “Deportees,” it seems equally important to engage in autoethnographic writing about our connections to the U.S. military, particularly given that we are currently at war. My grandfather was able to build a middle-class life for my grandfather’s generation in large part because of the education provided to him by the U.S. military. These uncomfortable truths are an important feature of autoethnographic writing that I want my students to become comfortable with, and which—by extension—I must first become comfortable with. As Dethier writes in *From Dylan to Donne: Bridging English & Music*, our musical choices and texts “reflect some part of us,” and “[s]ometimes when we interrogate them, what we discover can be alarming” (2).*

*In moments like this I feel like underneath this thesis is a slow unraveling—or, to paraphrase June Jordan in *Civil Wars*, an increasing revelation of the intimate face—of my own hypocrisy. To be a U.S. citizen civilian at a time of war is to find myself wrapped in layers of*

previously-invisible privilege, complicit in ways that I do not know how to identify, let alone deconstruct. Perhaps the most important positionality that I bring to this research is that I am a documented U.S. citizen—something I share with each of the men I interviewed, and something I share with Guthrie. In the end, maybe I looked to these songwriters to try to figure out how to speak out about these transnational injustices from a position of privilege without erasing that privilege.

I know that one of the greatest dangers of autoethnography is drawing general conclusions from an “n of 1,” but I am going to try: if we live in the U.S., and we seek to engage with transnational issues, it’s likely that we are both complicit in the oppression of others and subject to oppression ourselves; there is space, therefore, for both speaking and asking audiences to engage in rhetorical listening; and engaging in rhetorical listening ourselves to enact accountability.

RHETORICS OF SONG

In this chapter, I offer an analysis of the three song texts and the rhetorical contexts in which they were composed and circulated. In the second analysis chapter, I specifically consider the lessons we can learn from each songwriter about composing texts that engage with transnational events.

WHAT WERE THE CONTEXTS IN WHICH GUTHRIE, BAKER & CANALES COMPOSED THEIR SONGS?

Examining these three moments of invention sheds light on the impulses that can lead to composing texts that engage with transnational events. “Deportees,” “Migrants,” and the rewritten version of “Deportees” were each composed in a moment where each songwriter responded to an existing text. Additionally, research and the coded interviews indicate that each author felt a connection to his upbringing, work, and geographical location when he composed the song.

WOODY GUTHRIE’S POEM “PLANE OVER LOS GATOS”

Woody Guthrie’s son Arlo recalls the series of events that led his father to compose the poem “Plane over Los Gatos” in 1948:

[The poem was] based on a true incident where I think my dad was looking in a newspaper and read about a planeload of migratory workers who were being shipped back to Mexico . . . The plane crashed and they all died and the radio report said something like ‘well, it was just a planeload of deportees.’ (Guthrie & Harris).

The newspaper/radio reporting made an impression on Guthrie, who was “incensed that the article didn’t even include the names of the dead workers” when it had included the names of the four American crew members (Partridge 162). His lyrics—once set to music by Hoffman—became a “biting song of social protest” (Aldin 10), and one of his “best-known songs dealing with race”—specifically, “Southwestern anti-Mexican racism” (Marsh 174).

From what we know about Guthrie’s life, we can deduce that his sensitivity to the silence in the media was born in part out of his experience as an “Okie” during the Dust Bowl. He grew up in Okemah, Oklahoma and left to find work during the Dust Bowl; songs of his like “Do Re Mi” document the plight of the “Okies” as they headed west and faced discrimination. The racism recounted in “Plane over Los Gatos” has been interpreted as “a function of the overall oppression of migrant farmworkers, a job that Woody himself once held” (Marsh 174), suggesting that Guthrie’s response to the media reporting was tied to his sense of identification with the deceased Mexican passengers. Although there is evidence that ten years prior to the plane crash Guthrie expressed negative sentiments about people from Mexico, in the years that followed he developed an “empathic connection” with Mexican migrants born out of the “similar experiences Okie and Mexican workers had in California” (Jackson 130).

Although the Bracero program, a transnational labor agreement, is not directly comparable to the drought-based migration of the Okies west towards California, the desperate nature of the move towards the west for agricultural work is indeed comparable; similarly, while the race-based nature of discrimination faced by Mexican workers is not directly comparable to that faced by the “Okies,” both were positioned in a similar class location. In *Deportation Nation*, professor of law and human rights Daniel Kanstroom writes that the Bracero program had a “subtle and pernicious effect of legitimizing a particularly instrumentalist view of Mexican

immigrant workers . . . to be Mexican was to be presumed legally tenuous” (219), which suggests a direct correlation between the transnational agreement and the dehumanizing rhetoric that Guthrie responded to. Furthermore, Kanstroom notes that the Bracero program negatively impacted wages and working conditions throughout the Southwest, thereby affecting non-Mexican workers as well (222). In our interviews, both Lance Canales and Sam Baker referenced the story of Guthrie’s composition of “Deportees”; Canales commented on how “upset” Guthrie was when he wrote the song, and Baker linked Guthrie’s experiences as an “Okie” to his sense of connection to the Mexican migrant workers:

I think once he got out of Okemah and started really traveling around the world, and began to spend time with people who were different from him, in the work camps, the migrants out of Oklahoma, see back then . . . the migrants were from Okemah, Oklahoma city, Okfuskee and Weatherford, and Texas, Amarillo, all these migrants—migrants are migrants, they’re people, the very name *migrant* means people that are in transition, they’re transitory, and you know, I think Woody found out that a migrant is a migrant, and a deportee is the same thing as those people from Oklahoma were; they were getting shipped out . . . I think that empathy thing came so naturally to him.

Baker’s words suggest that labor status and the experience of traveling for work blurs the boundaries of nation-state because the experiences are so similar. By noting that Woody’s song was born out of empathy for the Mexican migrant workers, he further suggests that the moment of invention was imbued with an emotional sense of connection to the people who died; that this sense of proximity influenced Guthrie’s composition of the text.

SAM BAKER'S SONG "MIGRANTS"

In an introduction to "Migrants" at a recent performance in Holland, Baker explains why he composed the song, tying it to Guthrie's "Deportees":

I was in the Midwest many years ago, going to work, and there was a newspaper article, on the back pages of the paper, a little biddy article, and it said 14 guys were crossing the desert in Arizona, crossing interstate 80 so they could work at a chicken plant, they ran out of water, and they got *12 lines* and the last line was "they were migrants" – and I thought . . . any time you label somebody it's cause you don't wanna get into it, and that's what Woody was talking about.

Like Guthrie, Baker used "Migrants" as a chance to respond to the dehumanizing rhetoric of popular media reporting. Although he did not specify the exact year that he wrote "Migrants," I was able to locate the event that I believe inspired his song, based on his lyrics: In 2001, 14 people died of dehydration crossing the border in southern Arizona in an area known as "the Devil's Highway" (Urrea, quoted in Anderson 6). This period of time, the early 2000s, was one in which immigration policy changed and the U.S./Mexico border was increasingly militarized. According to "Death at the Border," a report by the National Foundation for American Policy, this "increased enforcement at the border and immigrant deaths appear to be closely connected," as this has led people to cross the border in "more dangerous terrain" (Anderson 4). For example, "a Clinton administration policy, Operation Gatekeeper, had led to such deaths by pushing the illegal border crossers to more and more remote areas" (Sterngold); additionally, the 1996 Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act (IIRIRA) "gave immigration officials much more power in enforcing immigration law and ultimately deporting people" (Vicens).

Furthermore, during this time, the North American Free Trade Agreement was increasing wage disparity between the U.S. and Mexico, decimating the livelihood of Mexican farmers and increasing immigration to the U.S. (Robbins). Within this context, we can understand the use of the word “migrant” in media reporting as reflecting the effects of transnational capitalism and immigration policies that have increasingly militarized the U.S./Mexico border, leading to dangerous border crossings like the one chronicled in the song. Furthermore, we can understand Baker’s response to it as a critique of the rhetorical effects of transnational capitalism and the devastating consequences of Mexico/U.S. immigration policies.

Like Guthrie, Baker’s sensitivity to this language can be attributed in part to his upbringing and work experiences. During our interview, he cited his childhood in Texas working alongside Mexican migrant workers on farms; he also talked about working with immigrants from all over the world on construction sites when he was older. He cited the relationship between “empathy” and “proximity,” suggesting that these experiences led him to develop sensitivity towards dehumanizing language: “looking back, I think probably, it became instinctive to assume a role that helps take the inhumanity out of that phrasing.” Thus, both Guthrie and Baker’s moments of invention are closely linked to their emotional response to the media reporting and sense of proximity to the deceased; indeed, Baker further described the moment of invention for this song and others as an “emotional flash” or “envelope.”

LANCE CANALES’S INTERPRETATION OF “DEPORTEES”

Canales rewrote the song to be performed at the unveiling of the memorial to the crash victims on Labor Day 2013. Contextually, Canales rewrote “Deportee” during the Obama administration, during which close to two million people have been deported, more than any

other administration to date; also, currently, 11 million undocumented immigrants live in the U.S. (Vicens). The Obama administration, and the post-9/11 era generally, also represents an increased militarization of the U.S./Mexico border; in 2010, a \$600 million bill “deployed some 1,500 new Border Patrol agents and law enforcement officials” along the Mexico/U.S. border in a “rare display of bipartisanship” (“Obama Signs \$600M Bill”). More recently, thousands of Border Patrol agents have been deployed to the southern border of Arizona, “a state known for its controversial crackdown on immigrants” (“Caught in the Crossfire”). For these reasons and others, border-crossings have become increasingly dangerous.

The text that Canales responded to in rewriting “Deportees” was, in fact, popular arrangements of the song itself, and interpretations by other artists. In our interview Canales cited several versions of it that he loved, including those by Bob Dylan, Joan Baez, Bruce Springsteen, Sweet Honey and the Rock, and Arlo Guthrie. However, he reported feeling frustrated by their arrangements of the song, which he found “a little bit happy go lucky” (although he noted that he excepts Joan Baez from this critique, as she is a person of color who sings the song in Spanish). As he described rewriting the song, he emphasized the need to ground it in the present reality of the marginalization of immigrants in the U.S. and the horrors faced by people from Mexico when they try to cross the border. He felt that the old version of the song suggested that the tragedy of the plane crash—and by extension, immigration tragedies—were histories rather than present realities; as he put it, like a “fable” that was no longer real.

Canales attributed his consciousness of this struggle to his ethnic background, upbringing, and current life in central California—specifically, he connected the fact that he is half Mexican, half Native American to his troubled feelings over the older arrangements of “Deportees,” noting that he often hears “Native peoples, Indigenous peoples” referred to “in the

past tense” and clarifying that many of the people who cross the Mexico/U.S. border are indigenous. He specifically connected this ethnic background to his racial identification as brown, and linked that racial identification to his rewriting of the song and his target audience: “how do I turn it into a song that’s going to be empowering for another person of color to listen to and to stand behind? I’m a person of color; I’m a Mexican, I’m an Indian, I’m whatever – you know I’m *brown*.” Canales’s understanding of the shared ancestry of Mexican- and Native American populations is in the backdrop when considering his desire to rewrite the song specifically for audiences of color; in our interview, he did not distinguish between the ethnic backgrounds of audiences of color, but rather focused on the commonalities in terms of traveling to find work.

Because Canales grew up in a farming community in California close to where the plane crash occurred, he also has a sense of geographic connection to the crash, and historical understanding of the racism in the area; he cited his dad saying “we were second-class citizens; we weren’t even considered to be American.” He currently lives near Fresno, which he refers to as “ground zero for farm and agriculture,” and elaborated on the struggles faced by people in his community, using these struggles to contextualize his rewriting of the song:

Lots of people migrate to it when they cross over . . . they pretty much starve themselves, they go days without water, they walk and they find themselves here, by the time they got here, they’ve got to actually go to work after that, so coming from this area, I think our version of it kindof reflects the hardship and the reality of it maybe?

His interpretation of the song thus draws from his ethnic, racial, and geographic identifications, adapting the song with the specific, stated purpose of making it relevant to other

people of color and capturing the ongoing struggles of immigrants in the U.S. Citing Guthrie's "putting himself in the shoes" of the Mexican migrant workers, Canales noted that he did the same thing, drawing on his family history and thinking of his ancestors who had crossed the Rio Grande to come to the U.S. and the discrimination that they faced upon their arrival:

When I approached the song, I approached it like it had happened to me – all the stories my grandfather/father told me when I grew up, how there were signs in the storefronts, in restaurants, saying "no blacks no Mexicans," that was a big deal for me, so when we were writing the song, I was trying to come at it through their eyes, from the 40s, and that was my thing.

From this vantage point, and out of the desire to create a song that was "empowering for a person of color," Canales reinterpreted "Deportees" for a contemporary context. Each songwriter thus navigated a set of uncomfortable emotions and deep identifications as they composed each text.

HOW DOES EACH SONG LYRICALLY NAVIGATE TRANSNATIONAL SUBJECT MATTER?

As I described in the methodology chapter, I addressed this question by applying a transnational feminist theoretical lens to the lyrics, and using Values Coding to analyze them. As the analysis of song lyrics shows, there are four major points of connection in these songs: a critique of transnational capitalism, critique of media silence, blurring of the citizen/noncitizen binary, and an articulation of accountability and complicity. Here, I focus specifically on the interrelationship of lyrics, but this analysis should be understood in the rhetorical context that I

explored earlier with each author’s experiences and the historical moment in which he was writing in mind.

In the analysis that follows, I elaborate on these four points of connection, as well as a point of tension that emerged in the data analysis: the shifting subjectivity within the songs, and the difficult-to-pinpoint distinction between speaking *for* “the other” and speaking *as* “the other” in composing texts that respond to transnational violences.¹²

TABLE 1: VISUTALIZING THE THEMES/CODES IN THE SONG LYRICS

Theme	Codes	Examples	Interpretation
Critique of Transnational Capitalism	Objective correlative	Peaches, oranges, rot, shoes	Exploitation
	Simile	Outlaws, rustlers, thieves, dry leaves	Naturalization
Critique of Media Silence	Metonymy	Deportees, migrants, twelve lines in a Midwestern paper	Dehumanization
	Naming	Juan, Rosalita, Jesus, Maria	Humanization
Blurring Citizen/Noncitizen Binary	Geographic proximity	600 miles; it’s not that far	Critique of geographic borders
	Translingualism	Chorus of each song	Critique of linguistic borders
	Shifting subjectivity	Speaking as/with; “us”/“we”; triangulating subject-position	Challenging transnational power dynamics; critique of U.S. audience interpellation; positioning narrator/audience as complicit/accountable

¹² I want to note that I undertook this “dismemberment” of the songs out of a desire to learn from them, but acknowledge that the two-dimensional, silent version of the songs presented in this table is grossly inadequate. I would recommend listening to the recordings of all three songs—“Deportees,” “Migrants,” and Canales’s “Deportees”—before reading on in this chapter.

CRITIQUE OF TRANSNATIONAL CAPITALISM

Although focusing on objective correlative and simile is more in line with literary analysis than rhetorical analysis, I want to take some time to explore these two literary devices because they originated in Guthrie's text and were picked up by Baker, Hernandez, and Canales and incorporated into their work. Both of these literary devices link the Mexican migrant workers with the produce they were brought to the U.S. to harvest, and both can be interpreted as a critique of transnational capitalism. This parallel is set up in the first two lines of Guthrie's poem:

The crops are all in and the peaches are rotting

The oranges are piled in their creosote dumps

continues in the next-to-last verse:

Who are all these friends all scattered like dry leaves?

The radio says they are just deportees

and culminates in the final verse:

Is this the best way we can grow our green orchards?

Is this the best way we can grow our good fruit?

To fall like dry leaves and rot on my topsoil

and be known by no name except "deportees"?

Via this metaphor, Guthrie links the media silence with the fact that the twenty-eight “deportees” were brought to the U.S. solely for their labor. He also reveals the waste inherent in the Bracero program, beginning with the image of the piles of rotting fruit. This is a reference to the fact that during the Dust Bowl, fruit was burned or left to rot to keep prices low; an image that many will recognize from John Steinbeck’s *The Grapes of Wrath*, which also captured the tragedies of the Dust Bowl.

By likening the “deportees” with “dry leaves” that “rot” on the topsoil, Guthrie further builds this metaphor. “Dry leaves” bring to mind organic material that has been leached of all its life, in this case, for the sake of the U.S. agricultural system. By juxtaposing the image of the “dry leaves” with topsoil, Guthrie directly correlates the exploitation of the “deportees” with the growth of the U.S. agricultural system. When we consider these two things—death and growth—alongside the image of piles of rotting fruit, the violence of transnational capitalism is laid bare: we exploit the labor of “deportees,” leaching the life from the people who do this agricultural work, and ultimately, it all supports a wasteful economy. In the last verse, Guthrie directly links the exploitative agricultural work with the image of the dry leaves and the word “deportees,” thus closely linking transnational capitalism, agriculture, the death of migrant workers, and dehumanizing rhetoric. Dehumanizing rhetoric, he suggests, both reflects and reinforces the dehumanizing labor conditions that are constructed through transnational capitalism.

In “Migrants,” Baker borrows the same image of the “dry leaves,” but elaborates by using objective correlative in the chorus to his song. Objective correlative, a literary device wherein an object serves an evocative function, functions by placing the migrants in proximity to advertisements for shoes in the newspaper:

They got twelve lines in a Midwestern paper

On the pages with the ads for shoes

By juxtaposing an indictment of media with commentary on the proximity of the “migrants” to shoes, the lyrics link a critique of discourse with a critique of an economic system that uses human labor like shoes—something to be walked on/in, functional but not human. Furthermore, in the last rendition of the bridge of the song (where this line appears), Baker hits the highest vocal note in the entire song, coinciding with the word “shoes,” suggesting his incredulous response to both the media reporting and the proximity of the article to the advertisement. Furthermore, his intertextual incorporation of the “dry leaves” image historicizes this issue, putting it into conversation with the time period when Guthrie wrote the song, and suggesting that not much has changed since the 1948 plane crash with regard to how “migrants” are portrayed in popular media; the dehumanizing effects of transnational capitalism continue today.

A second lyrical element that suggests a critique of transnational capitalism is simile, occurring in both Guthrie’s “Deportees” and Canales’s rewritten version of the song. Through simile, both Guthrie and Canales juxtapose the “deportees” work contract with the way they are constructed as “other” in the U.S. Canales’s rewrites appear in parentheses after Guthrie’s:

Some of us are illegal, and some are not wanted (Said most are illegal and most are not wanted)

Our work contract's out and we have to move on

Six hundred miles to that Mexican border,

They chase us like outlaws, like rustlers (animals), like thieves.

Although the labor camps in California were only six hundred miles from Mexico, the “deportees” are constructed as “outlaws,” “rustlers,” and “thieves,” indicating the racial prejudice that accompanied the Bracero program. By contrasting these prejudices with the work contract and the question of legality, Guthrie notes that although the Braceros were needed in the economy, they were still “othered,” constructed as a racialized underclass. Here, the borders of nation-state are rigid and unbending; those from the “other side” of the border cannot hope to be seen as equals. Canales’s rewrites emphasize this “othering,” drawing particular attention to the illegality and extending the “othering” simile to animals, emphasizing the dehumanizing effects of the Bracero program. Indeed, in our interview, he noted that he changed the word “rustler” because he saw it as more human than it should be: “a rustler is looked upon as a human being, you know, they’re stealing animals, and that’s not the case, we’re the animals that they’re trying to rustle up, you know?” In both cases, Guthrie and Canales draw attention to characteristics that become naturalized as a result of transnational capitalism: migrant workers become seen as inherently criminal and inhuman.

CRITIQUE OF MEDIA SILENCE

Both Guthrie and Baker directly critique media silence (“all they will call you will be deportee” / “they got twelve lines in a Midwestern paper”) and thereby indict the metonymic stand-in of words like “deportee” and “migrant” for the humans they signify. Baker elaborated on this in our interview, explaining how words like “deportees” and “migrants” function in public discourse:

It’s a language that lets people hide behind the label, they can say ‘oh this person is an X,’ therefore the implication is that they *deserve* . . . they’re *deportees*, therefore they

deserve to be flown, they're *migrants*, therefore they all run out of water, that's what migrants do . . . it's an appalling use of language. It's an *effective* use of language, but it's *appalling*.

The word “migrants”—like “deportees”—serves a silencing function, keeping readers from “get[ting] into it,” as Baker put it. The citizen/noncitizen binary is maintained in this silence; U.S.-citizen readers are not invited to see the people who died as human; by extension, readers are not invited to critique the effects of transnational capitalism. Later in our interview, Baker returned to the question of language, locating an “excuse” in terms like “deportee” and “migrant”: “There’s something that excuses society as a whole for what I would call an unacceptable position. No matter what you believe about immigration, it is *inhuman*, and we will be judged harshly for letting people die out in the desert.”

In both Guthrie and Baker’s lyrics, this “excuse” is deconstructed and audiences are lyrically and sonically implicated in the plight of the “deportees” and “migrants.” Perhaps the most explicit way that Guthrie’s words link his critique of silence and the metonymic stand-in of these terms is via naming in the following stanza of his poem, which became the chorus of the song when Martin Hoffman set the poem to music:

Goodbye to my Juan, Goodbye Rosalita

Adios mis amigos Jesus y Maria

You won't have your names when you ride the big airplane

All they will call you will be “deportees”

By assigning names to the dead, and also quoting the radio/newspaper reporting, Guthrie draws attention to the fact that *naming* plays a major role in breaking silences, and that conversely, withholding names/personal identifying details is one way in which discourses can reinforce silences. Specifically, the word “deportees” (like “migrants” in Baker’s song) serves a silencing function by standing in metonymically for the 28 people who died. In his rewritten version of “Deportees,” Canales takes Guthrie’s naming one step further by whispering the names of the deceased “Deportees” in the background of the song between its verses. Furthermore, he repeats the chorus six times over the course of his recording, thus repeating it more than other artists who covered “Deportees” and emphasizing the media silence.

This act of naming was very important to Guthrie, and one that infused his other folk songs. During our interview, Tim Hernandez specifically cited his songs “I Just Want to Sing Your Name,” which refers to the trial and execution of Sacco and Vanzetti, and “The Sinking of the Reuben James,” which recounts a U.S. navy ship that sunk during World War I. Each song repeated the names of the dead. Woody’s daughter, Nora, writes that “Woody always believed in the power of invoking people’s names; he wrote many songs using names . . . Sometimes, songs leave behind questions which ultimately can, and will, be answered by someone whose heart is pulled into the mystery” (Wollan). Here, Guthrie’s naming of the “deportees” is connected to the ongoing rhetorical work of the song, engaging audiences and inviting them to be “pulled into,” and considering Hernandez’s work, even ultimately solve, the mystery of the crash victims’ names.

Although Guthrie assigned names to the Mexican passengers, he did not name the four American crew members. By assigning names only to the Mexican passengers, he draws attention to the silence surrounding their names and links it to the exploitative labor conditions

that he sets forth in the other song lyrics. In Canales's recorded version, the names of the four American crew members are not included, suggesting that his song is a tribute to the silenced voices in the crash—the people who were not memorialized and were instead buried in a mass grave; however, when he performed it live at the memorial unveiling, the four American crew-member names were included. Here, a tension emerges around naming: the fact that the American crew members were named on both the memorial and in this performance suggests that the Bracero program, though it favored U.S. interests, still hurts people on “both sides of the river,” as Guthrie puts it. However, including all 32 names risks drawing attention away from the silencing effects of popular media. As Hernandez said in our interview, there was tension around whether to include all 32 names on the memorial, because the four American crew members already had headstones with their names on it (in New York and California). Ultimately the decision was made to include their four names as well—something Hernandez located as the most “political” choice on the memorial headstone. The fact that Canales's recorded version of the song does not include the four names reflects this tension around naming and memorialization; inclusivity risks erasing the power imbalance between the U.S. and Mexico inherent in the Bracero program, while exclusivity may sacrifice drawing attention to the transnational character and violence of the plane crash—and by extension, the transnational capitalist Bracero program.

BLURRING THE CITIZEN/NONCITIZEN BINARY

Each of these three songs shifts both language and subject-position several times, which suggests a blurring between self/other and narrator/subject. While, as Linda Alcoff reminds us in “The Problem of Speaking for Others,” there is danger in presuming to speak “for” the “other,” the complex navigation of subject-position in each of these songs, set alongside the critique of

transnational capitalism and media silence, suggests a complex sense of speaking *as* or *in solidarity with*, rather than “for.” Furthermore, in each song, the narrator is “triangulated” against media depictions of the “deportees”/“migrants,” suggesting that the authors offer two distinct ways to inhabit the U.S. citizen subject-position: those who subscribe to the media portrayals and those who do not. The solidarity articulated through “speaking-as” thus does not erase power relations or neglect to acknowledge complicity in the dehumanizing media.

In “Deportees: Woody Guthrie’s Unfinished Business,” Dave Marsh writes, “great as he was, Woody Guthrie, like any other artist, worked within his own limitations. One of these was that he spoke most often, and certainly most comfortably and adeptly, in his own voice. . . . there are characters in his songs, but the narrator is always the singer himself” (176). “Deportees” challenges these limitations by shifting the narrator’s subject position several times, and in doing so, blurs the “us/them” dichotomy that was set up by the newspaper reporting. Furthermore, because the song circulates in participatory contexts, the narrator shifts as the song moves into different contexts and is sung by different people. Baker’s song does the same; Canales’s rewritten version of the song realigns the song’s subject-position with the “migrant/deportee.”

This subject-position navigation is most visible in the shifting subjectivity within each song. Interestingly, the version of the lyrics that we attribute to Guthrie might instead reflect Martin Hoffman’s alterations to the song. In our interview, Canales described visiting the Woody Guthrie Archives in Tulsa, OK, and looking at another version of Guthrie’s lyrics, which were written in the first person, as if the event had happened to Guthrie himself (i.e., “my crops are all in and my peaches are rotting”). Canales’s rewriting of the song may then reflect Guthrie’s original lyrics, which he wrote “in the first person as if a person from the airplane crash was singing it . . . because most, not all of the people who covered ‘deportee’ aren’t of Mexican

descent.” This suggests that when Martin Hoffman set Guthrie’s poem to music, he may have changed the lyrics so that he felt comfortable singing it (according to Canales), and so that he did not sing in first person about something he had not experienced. For the purposes of this study, I analyzed the version of the lyrics that has become popular—the version attributed to Guthrie and Hoffman. This is limited, as it does not take into account the other variations of the song that circulated; however, it does allow for a deep understanding of the version of the song that first circulated.

At the beginning of this version of Guthrie’s “Deportees,” the singer is triangulated between two “theys”: the “deportees,” and the U.S. immigration officials who are deporting them. Canales’s rewritten version (in parentheses below), claims the song from the “deportee” perspective, speaking *to* a U.S. audience:

They’re flying them (me) back to the Mexican border

To pay all their (my) money to wade back again

In Guthrie’s version, the narrator is situated in a position that does not condone the deportation; in Canales’s version, the narrator asks the audience to listen to a violence that has been inflicted on him. In the next verse, the subjectivity shifts again, this time positioning the narrator as someone who has been exploited similarly to the “deportees”—this verse remains the same in both Guthrie and Canales’s versions:

My father’s own father he waded that river

They took all the money he made in his life

My brothers and sisters go working the fruit trees

And they rode the trucks 'til they took down and died

Here, the lyrics show their first hint in transnational solidarity, by indicating that exploitation in agricultural work happens on both sides of the border. Indeed, in a later verse, he writes: “both sides of the river, we died just the same.” Out of the “triangulated” position established in the first verse, the narrator is thus developed as someone who has suffered the same exploitation as the “deportees.”

In the stanza that became the chorus, the narrator is triangulated once again, this time between the “deportees” and the radio:

Goodbye to my Juan, goodbye, Rosalita,

Adios mis amigos, Jesus y Maria;

You won't have your names when you ride the big airplane,

All they will call you will be "deportees"

Here, Guthrie distinguishes the narrator from the radio reporting as he did with the immigration officials, by labeling them “they.” Thus, the narrator is positioned in opposition to the radio and in solidarity with the “deportees,” while still inhabiting the land that exploits the “deportees.” In doing so, the narrator is able to articulate a complex solidarity; one that does not erase transnational complicity, but also does not condone transnational violence. The switch in between English and Spanish in the chorus, too, destabilizes the us/them binary that is established in the media reporting. In “Migrants,” Sam Baker, too, blends English and Spanish and sets up a “triangulation” of the narrator, the “migrants,” and the media reporting. From Canales’s perspective in the rewritten version of the song, this verse suggests that generations of exploitation followed the Bracero program, particularly in his revision of the last line of the

chorus to: “the radio calls us all ‘just deportees.’” Within the participatory performance conventions of the folk tradition, audience members might thus find themselves singing along with all these shifts in subject position.

In “Deportees” as Guthrie wrote it, any allegations of “speaking *for*” are complicated by the fact that the narrator is positioned as part of a group of U.S. citizens who have also been exploited. Thus, speaking “for” may actually be closer to speaking “as,” “with,” or “in solidarity.” By writing himself and the struggles of his people into the story, and expanding the “contact zone” of the crash to include exploited labor in the U.S., Guthrie engages in what could be understood as autoethnographic writing, using the larger cultural and economic trends of transnational capitalism to articulate his connection to the crash. In our interview, Hernandez noted this as a strength of Guthrie as a songwriter, connecting it to his popularity among other musicians:

What makes him stand out from others who might do that, who might be singing a song and really kind of leaving themselves, is that he doesn’t exempt himself, he’s a part of that system, he knows that, and this is also why you have a lot of even Latin American, or much more socialist, revolutionary musicians out in the world that really look to Woody Guthrie who are from other cultures and communities, because they understand that he is a part of the system that he’s talking about.

The rhetorical construction of the mutually oppressive force—transnational capitalism—does not obfuscate the responsibility of those of us on “this side” of the border, who consume the fruit harvested by the exploited “deportees.” In Baker’s song, too, the Spanish chorus (*Oh my dear ones, we are lost*) appears to switch focus between the “migrants” and the people in the

U.S. reading the Midwestern paper, indicating that we are complicit in the “migrants” deaths, and indicating that with transnational capitalism and violence comes both connection and complicity. The citizen/noncitizen binary is thus blurred in a complex way, without risking erasing power difference, in line with Krista Ratcliffe’s notion of accountability. With the following powerful closing questions, and re-positioning of the narrator as a complicit “we,” Guthrie’s words similarly ask U.S. audiences to be accountable to transnational exploitation. In Canales’s rewritten version of the song, this verse does not appear, suggesting that when sung from the “deportee” perspective, there is not a need to articulate complicity in quite the same way that there is from a U.S. citizen perspective:

Is this the best way we can grow our big orchards?

Is this the best way we can grow our good fruit?

To fall like dry leaves to rot on my topsoil

and be called by no name except “deportees”?

Baker does the same thing in the chorus of his song: *oh my dear ones / we are lost*. The first time we hear this, we have the sense that it is the *migrant* speaking; the second time, it appears to be the U.S.-situated narrator, reading the paper with the 12 lines of news and realizing how complicit we are in the exploitation of the migrant workers.

This shifting subjectivity plays a role in constructing a transnational rhetoric that acknowledges the narrator’s simultaneous complicity in the exploitation of the migrant workers and connection to them. When the poem becomes a song in a participatory folk tradition where audience members are encouraged to sing along and thereby “co-construct” the song text, this

simultaneous complicity and connection is extended to a documented-U.S.-citizen audience. This allows the narrator—whomever that might be in a given performance context—to perform that simultaneous complicity and solidarity and facilitate the same for audiences that sing along to the song.

This analysis suggests that in responding to popular media rhetoric, the authors also engage in a critique of transnational capitalism and blurring of the citizen/noncitizen binary, further suggesting that words like “migrants” and “deportees” reflect transnational capitalist ideologies and uphold the citizen/noncitizen binary. Each of these songs thus responds to what could be considered an “ideological silence” in popular texts, reflecting dominant ideologies—grounded in transnational economic agreements—of each historical moment.

WHAT ARE THE MUSICAL FEATURES OF EACH SONG? HOW DO THESE MUSICAL FEATURES WORK RHETORICALLY WITH THE LYRICS & INFLUENCE EACH SONG’S CIRCULATION PRACTICES?

Now, I want to consider how the lyrical work analyzed here (responding to media silence, simile/metaphor, naming, and complicity/solidarity) interacts with the musical texts of “Deportees,” “Migrants,” and Canales’s rewritten version of “Deportees.” I analyze each song text with special attention to the song’s harmonic, melodic, and rhythmic movement as they support the textual elements described earlier. I also consider the degree to which the folk song genre—particularly its performance and circulation practices—supports and/or limits the critical work of the lyrics.

Martin Hoffman’s musical arrangement of “Deportees” is vital to the circulation of the song; without it, Guthrie’s poem would have circulated on the page, but not necessarily on the

airwaves and not in participatory contexts like folk music and activist circles. It would not necessarily have been covered by dozens of famous artists and thus might not have reached the large audiences that it did. As Tim Hernandez said in our interview, “I’m glad you asked about Martin Hoffman, because to me, he is really one of the passengers also”—a hidden voice in the history of the Los Gatos plane crash. His is the invisible labor of the song “Deportees”—the music that made Guthrie’s words public. As I consider the influence of “Deportees” on Baker’s song “Migrants,” and Canales’s rewritten version of the song, I want to make it clear that “Deportees” refers to the combination of musical and lyric texts in a folk song—a text that was co-constructed by Guthrie and Hoffman. Particularly given the historical privileging of language over music in rhetorical studies, it is important to emphasize the significance of the song text in circulating the story of the plane crash and keeping it alive in public memory.

Martin Hoffman’s musical arrangement of “Deportees,” which emerged in the late 1950s, on the cusp of the folk revival, uses a popular folk chord progression comprised of only three chords: G, C, and D, or the I, IV, and V chords in the G-major scale. The I, IV, and V chords form the foundation of popular music in the U.S., including blues, folk, and rock. Because it relies on a simple and well-known chord progression, Hoffman’s arrangement of the song is quite easy to pick up on the guitar or other harmonic instrument. Furthermore, because it is in moderate, 6/8 tempo, the lyrics are audible to audience-members (unlike a fast, driving rhythm where the lyrics are rapid and difficult to make out).

By choosing G-major as the key for this song—as opposed to another mode like minor, dorian, or mixolydian—Hoffman also sets up a juxtaposition between Guthrie’s tragic lyrics and music in a mode that is considered “happier.” That being said, when this song is played on the guitar (as it is most often during live performances), there is a “falling” sensation to both the

chords and the melody, which meet in low “G” in the melody and low “G” chord in the harmony. Harmonically, only the G and C chords are used during the verses, while D—the dominant chord, a chord used for dramatic tension in musical lines—is employed only once during the chorus, during the line “Adios, mis amigos.” The relatively simple harmonic setting of the song—particularly the use of only the G and C chords during the verses, serves as a counterpoint to Guthrie’s poem, rather than distracting the musician or audience’s attention via complex chord progressions. This simple harmonic structure is characteristic of the folk idiom. Considered in light of the participatory performance practices of the folk song tradition, it serves a “democratic” function, as the arrangement is both easy to learn and easy to facilitate in sing-alongs. Furthermore, this arrangement reflects Sellnow’s assertion that “music may offer an oppositional reading of hegemony lyrically, but do so within the musical framework deemed conventional by dominant culture,” thus allowing critical songs like “Deportees” to circulate widely (68).

In the chorus of “Deportees,” as we saw during the lyrical analysis, Guthrie manipulates subjectivity. Thus, the lines that an audience is most likely to sing along with accomplish the rhetorical “triangulation,” where singers are positioned as separate from both the “deportees” and the radio reporting (as the line says “all *they* will call you”). The chorus thus carves out a critical positionality for the audience—one that critiques mainstream media and its dehumanization of the 28 Mexican migrant workers via the term “deportees.” Given that the audience is encouraged to participate in folk song performance, the song thus constitutes/interpolates the audience as a critical audience—specifically, an audience with critical transnational literacy. Even if an audience member might simply like the *sound* of the song, without paying much attention to the lyrics, Sellnow’s theory of “incremental” persuasion, suggests that the song may still be

accomplishing critical work by gradually working to persuade the listener/participant of the song's lyrical content as the chorus of the song repeats several times when the song is performed. In an activist context, the repeated lines may also serve to "concretize" the "abstract ideals" (Berger 69) of the people in the room, thus serving as a community-building tool.

When considering Baker's and Canales's songs, this theory of incremental persuasion is still relevant, but it is slightly different because the performance conventions of both of these songs are not as participatory as the conventions for "Deportees." Although Sam Baker interweaves "Deportees" with his song in performance—which, in my experience seeing him play, audiences sing along to—"Migrants" itself is not quite as easy to sing along to. Baker sings in an off-tempo, meandering style that mimics a conversation. This suggests that audiences are asked to engage in rhetorical listening more so than active participation in the song, but are invited to sing along when he quotes from Guthrie's lyrics. The musical arrangement of Baker's song blends U.S. and Mexican conventions (combining an acoustic guitar with mariachi-style accordion), along with the English and Spanish languages. Because Baker chooses a simple musical accompaniment for his lyrics, the lyrics are foregrounded; the music consists mostly of gently plucked guitar chords, with the added embellishment of the accordion during the chorus and a musical break. His conversational, speech-like lyrical style, too, asks you to pay attention to the words over the music, as if he were having a conversation with you. Melodically, the highest note of the song is in the word "shoes" during the last repetition of the bridge: "They got twelve lines in a Midwestern paper / on the pages with the ads for shoes." This suggests Baker's incredulity about the juxtaposition of human beings who died in the desert with shoe advertisements; it also emphasizes the objective correlative of humans with shoes (which are utilitarian, worn-down, dispensable). The interweaving instruments—acoustic guitar and

accordion—suggest interweaving voices from the U.S. and Mexico, complementing the blended English and Spanish in the lyrics.

If Guthrie/Hoffman’s “Deportees” is co-constructed, and Baker’s is half-co-constructed and half-performed (co-constructed when he interweaves Guthrie’s song); Canales’s version of the song most asks audiences to engage in Ratcliffe’s rhetorical listening. It is a tough, driving, fast-paced version that asks you to listen to the “deportee” side of the story and to be accountable to it. Like Guthrie/Hoffman’s “Deportees,” it is in 6/8 time (six beats per measure), but it is more rapid than Hoffman’s musical arrangement—to the point where it sounds like it’s in 2 time (i.e., where the six beats per measure are subdivided into two sets of three). Additionally, it is the only song (out of the three analyzed) that has a full band orchestration; while Hoffman’s arrangement was solely for acoustic guitar, and Baker’s included sparse accordion instrumentation, Canales’s employs drums and bass, lending a more grounded quality to the song and also (particularly through the rhythm of the drums) suggesting forward motion. The slide guitar embellishments on top of the vocals add a sense of spiraling out of control; the driving rhythm and Canales’s gravelly vocals (which stand in stark contrast to folk versions of “Deportees” and Baker’s gentle melodic lines in “Migrants”) lend a sense of anger and urgency to the song. Furthermore, the whispers in the background suggests a multiplicity of voices—both Canales’s and the deceased “deportees”; thus, the arrangement itself suggests a collective voice more so than either of the other two songs. Because the “deportee” names are whispered in the background of the song, there is also a sonic element of “whispers of the past” that suggests a connection to the historical silences surrounding the crash. Like Guthrie/Hoffman and Baker, there are only three chords in Canales’s arrangement; however, this is not the type of song that is easy to learn (as “Deportees” is) because the instrumentation (drums, bass, slide guitar) would be more difficult to reproduce.

Alongside Canales's philosophy of his song is the visual rhetoric of his performance. In my interview with Tim Hernandez, he noted that Canales's visual presentation also complements the purpose of the song: "he dresses in 1930s attire – wears his great grandfather's shoes when he performs – because he's always been in the mindset of 'my family back then had to go through the back door . . . obviously there was so much racism and all that; he wears that to honor that spirit." In the music video for Canales's "Deportees," too, we see people from his community, many of whom have immigrated to central California for work, with visual rhetorical "nods" to the Zapatistas. This is one more way that Canales's philosophy is reflected in his music, and how that philosophy is then communicated to both digital and live audiences.

By assigning an entirely new set of musical conventions to the song, Canales reveals the anger and injustice on the "deportee" side of the story. During our interview, he directly linked this re-working of the musical text to his desire to "empower people of color," and also to elicit difficult emotions in his audiences. He also directly linked these musical conventions to the desire to incite his audiences to action:

I think that's the difference between . . . don't mean to toot my own whistle . . . my version of the song and the others . . . mine seems to be a little more current and it's not a sing-a-long song . . . it's kindof like put your head down, grit your teeth if you're angry, your fists if you're angry, cry if you feel like crying. . . and then the song is over and we start trying to do something about the situation that we're in, you know?

Additionally, Canales suggests that—as Sellnow's theory notes—his song works differently on different audiences, perhaps even persuading audiences who disagree with his message. However, his description is a bit at odds with her "incremental persuasion"; rather than

looking at persuasion as gradual, he locates this persuasive power in the discomfort he imagines these audiences feel when they hear his musical arrangement: “people who don’t agree with the politics of labor, of immigration, they’re all about trying to get Mexicans out of here, this and that they are *not* going to like that song. And that’s *perfect* because I want them to get stirred up, I want them to feel uncomfortable.” While he noted that it can be thrilling to see audiences singing along to his songs, and said he would be excited if that happened when he was performing “Deportees,” he emphasized the need to “know what you’re singing about,” and the quotations shared earlier reveal that he locates persuasive and transformative power in the act of listening and being accountable to the reality of the situation. Speaking back to an absent history from a marginalized position, Canales’s song suggests, can require speaking *loudly* and in a way that is not necessarily inclusive/participatory, and does not rely on incremental persuasion, but instead asks audiences to *listen*, learn, and act in response to an urgent, ongoing social injustice.

TRANSNATIONAL WRITING PROCESSES & LITERACY PRACTICES

Considering the rhetorical analysis of music and lyrics offered in the previous chapter, I want to move on in this chapter to explore the lessons these songs and their writers can teach us about composing transnational texts and building transnational literacy. These two areas of focus emerged from an analysis of the interview transcripts using the same Values Coding method that was applied to the song lyrics; the two themes that emerged were *writing process and purpose* and *transnational literacy*. Within these two frameworks, each artist expressed ways of understanding the writing process and the relationship between writing and transnational literacy that have the potential to inform our work in rhetoric and composition, and our understanding of the relationship between storytelling, sound, and literacy-building.

In the analysis that follows, I describe each artist's perspectives on the two themes, and begin to tease out commonalities and contradictions, considering how we might apply these perspectives to our writing pedagogies and rhetorical practices. Tim Hernandez is included as an artist for the purposes of this discussion; although he did not write a song, his work in other genres extends our understanding of the song's influence on contemporary texts and writing processes. Additionally, Woody Guthrie and Martin Hoffman are not included, as I limited my investigation of writing process to the three artists I was able to interview.

WRITING PROCESS & PURPOSE

Within the theme of "writing process and purpose," there were several important sub-themes that I will take some time to explore here: the link between emotion and invention, and the "rhetoric of art," with a specific focus on the writing process and audience awareness. Both of these sub-themes are of particular interest to those in rhetoric and composition who may be

interested in writing processes as they are navigated in sonic texts, and authors' perceptions of the rhetorical work of those texts.

Sam Baker described his writing process as highly individual and deeply tied to emotional experience. He characterized his songwriting as an “emotional flash, “a channel” and “a flow” that has “flown through” him, where he is positioned as a “conduit.” He tied this emotional process to his understanding of the rhetorical work of songs—or more specifically, his strong feeling that artists must distance themselves from questions of audience and purpose as they write:

The second we become a proponent over an artist . . . then that's a different kind of art, it's not emotional – and I'm just talking for me, not for Pete or Woody or anybody else – I've got to stay pretty clearly within the envelope of that emotional impulse . . . and if it resonates, I have no control over that . . . all I can do is try to stay emotionally consistent with what the situation demands . . . And I've just gotta stay clean especially of things like outcomes. And expectations. I really have to just stay as clean as I can especially in the writing and let outcomes be whatever outcome is.

Later in our interview, however, Baker suggested that he does have a desired outcome for his songs, but that that outcome is contextual:

I mean, now that you mention it, and me today, on a Wednesday, speaking today, what would I want to happen? . . . I think I'd want someone to hear it to think, oh my goodness, these are people just like me or my grandfather or my sister or my daughter or something getting lost in the desert trying to get a job; I'd like for someone to make sure they have water. I think that's probably as complex as I can get it. I want someone to say,

hey, maybe I'll leave a gallon jug of water out for these people. And then maybe somebody will say, "well maybe we need to do something so that we can treat these people with some dignity, give them a green card at the border, let them work for six months, let them come home."

During our interview, Baker resisted my stated research purpose of "using the lessons from music to inform writing and pedagogy that seeks to respond to media silence." He responded in particular when I used the word "achieve" (in the context of "achieving our purpose with our audience"—a phrase that we use quite often in our composition classes), redirecting the question to process: "I don't know, *achieving achieving achieving outcome outcome outcome* – I can't write, I can't do anything like that. . . . I have to be *process process process*." This poses a big challenge to our audience-centered understanding of rhetoric. When I noted that it is 'tough to escape the language of outcome,' he agreed, further distancing his artistic work from academic work:

It is tough, tough, tough. And see you're in an outcome world: a) you're in a university, b) you're coming up with an advanced degree, and c) you're trying to get things done – in that world, it's outcome outcome outcome – now, in my world, I've got to have outcome, I've got to get to shows, I've got to produce stuff that makes some kind of sense, so there is outcome, but in the *writing process*, in the artistic process of getting things done, outcome has to be one of the lesser influences.

This suggests that although we privilege a focus on audience in our writing classrooms, there may be a productive shift in privileging a rhetoric of *responsiveness*; whether it's responsiveness to media silences like the silences that Guthrie, Baker, and Hernandez responded

to, or responsiveness to other social injustices. This does not move entirely away from questions of audience, but it does emphasize the writing process as something that is deeply tied to social justice. If we take Baker's advice (in conversation with Hernandez and Canales, whose perspectives I explore shortly) it is possible we may end up producing more effective arguments:

What I'm discovering, and I'm not saying it works for everybody, but just for me, good art is compelling. If you do good art, it has a message within it, whether you intend that message or you don't intend that message, because it flows naturally – your anger, indignation, or whatever – good art trumps message. But at the same time, good art delivers message in a far more effective way than message delivers art. Message rarely delivers art.

Although Baker sets up a rhetoric/poetic split, distancing art from argument/message, he notes that “good art delivers message”—in other words, art is not divorced from rhetoric or communication. He feels a sense of kinship with Woody Guthrie in part based on his understanding of Guthrie's writing process: “That's what he did . . . I think he was a flash writer too . . . a continuous stream . . . even when Woody was very ill . . . he had pages and pages of stuff, some gibberish some not gibberish . . . but it was the act of just writing, just laying stuff out.” While we can't know for certain whether this is true, the connection is notable, as it points to Baker's understanding of what it means to compose a song text in the wake of a transnational tragedy, and the connection of the act of composing to an emotional response. This process is not devoid of *purpose*; as Baker noted, he understands his position as author as “assum[ing] a role that helps take the inhumanity out” of words like “migrants.” However, he makes a very clear correlation between audience awareness and a compromised song text that is not as affectively powerful as it might be otherwise, thus directly tying an almost a-rhetorical composition process

to the power of a text to reach audiences. There is a tension here that is worth further exploration: to what extent does a transnationally literate writing process involve responsiveness that transcends audience-awareness? Is it even really possible to transcend audience awareness—or does this reflect the rhetoric/poetic split, and ideologies of artistic production that suggest that “real art” is not created for a specific audience?

Canales’s perspective on writing is in productive tension with Baker’s. Unlike Baker, Canales had a very clear purpose and audience in mind as he was composing—and this purpose and audience was closely tied to his emotional response to older versions of the song and his rhetorical intent in performing and circulating the song. Like Baker, he also tied emotion to his composition process of the new version of “Deportees”; as noted in the last chapter, Canales said that he was “upset” by versions of the song that seemed to place the Los Gatos plane crash in the past, and wanted to record a version that got at what he described as the desperate lived realities of the people in his community, and the racism faced by his family. As previously discussed, he shifted the lyrics to achieve this purpose in his writing; however, he located the emotional work of the song chiefly in the musical arrangement. In my interview with Tim Hernandez, he too linked Canales’s philosophy to these sonic elements:

. . . he has a whole philosophy about his approach to music – so when he did this song when we first collaborated, he said to me during our first rehearsal, “I’m excited I hope you like it it’s not going to sound anything like what you’re used to hearing.” He has this explanation as to why he changed it, and that he’s now singing it from the perspective of the grandson of one of the people who died – it’s different for him so he really has a philosophy behind it — and then it comes through in the music noone’s -- heard it like that.

His writing process, thus, is very closely connected to the sonic, and shifting the musical text of “Deportees” to meet the emotional effect he desired to have with various audiences—a sense of empowerment for people of color listening to the song, and a sense of discomfort for people who might not share his politics around immigration.

As previously discussed, Canales explicitly linked his song to the desire to change an unjust system; something that neither Baker nor Hernandez openly alluded to as a component of their writing process. This indicates that Canales has many of the same rhetorical considerations that we do in rhetoric and composition: the desire to critique dehumanizing language, reveal the humanity obscured by it, and persuade audiences to take action. Baker’s and Canales’s differing perspectives help us avoid generalizing about the incompatibility of rhetoric and poetic, a binary that is set up in Baker’s description of his writing process.

Tim Hernandez offers further insight into this rhetoric/poetic split, as he demonstrates the influence of “Deportees” on work done in other genres. Hernandez is currently working on both a nonfiction book and documentary titled *All They will Call You*, which will tell the story of the plane crash history and the memorial via interviews with family members of the crash victims and Martin Hoffman. Hernandez’s writing process has been impacted in significant ways from his engagement both with this story and music written in the folk tradition. That being said, Hernandez’s writing process, as he described it, has previously been linked to trying to counter silences. The project he was working on when he came into contact with the “deportee” story—the “sister project,” as he referred to it—was an investigation into the life of Bea Franco, who is referred to in Jack Kerouac’s *On the Road* as Kerouac’s “Mexican girlfriend.” Hernandez was troubled by what he saw as a “silencing” of her voice, the fact that *On the Road* or other texts written about it had never “asked *her* what she thought or her side of it, what she thought, *her*

story,” and the fact that because of this silencing she became an “invisible individual.” He went into his book project, titled *Mañana Means Heaven*, “with that intention of bringing her voice out, letting her tell her me her own story, and putting that down into a book.” His comments on Bea Franco’s story mirror his response to the “deportee” story, where he was troubled by the silencing of history and the absence of the “deportees” names from the mass grave where they were buried in California. In both cases, Hernandez drew a strong link between his work as a writer and his response to silences in the historical record. Thus, Hernandez’s work composing both the new memorial headstone, nonfiction book, and the documentary emerge from the desire to create a platform for making visible voices and people who have been marginalized and silenced.

In addition to this work of making repressed histories and people visible, Hernandez was deeply influenced by Guthrie’s lyrical work, which he sees as posing a question publically (“who are all these friends all scattered like dry leaves?”) without knowing the answer. During our interview, Hernandez relayed a story about interviewing Pete Seeger for his research that exemplifies the shift that has happened in his understanding of writing, where he has grown more and more comfortable “asking questions without answers,” as Guthrie’s lyrics do:

One of the first things I asked [Seeger] was “you know all these years that you sang that song that you’ve cast out this question to the world, *who are these friends*, did you ever think that, all these years that you sang that, it would be answered?” and he sat there really quietly for a long time and said “no, I never, ever really thought it would be answered, it was just a question that I sang.”

Hernandez went on to tie this public work of questioning to the idea of praxis, elaborating on Seeger's words to say that in his own writing craft, he is "really becoming comfortable asking questions without answers." He went on to quote Alice Walker, who wrote that "some years are meant for questions and other years are meant for answers." In a clip from his interview with Pete Seeger, he relays to Seeger that the families of the "deportees" sent their thanks to him for "keeping the question alive."

Alongside this shift towards understanding writing as public questioning, Hernandez described a shift away from his training as a creative writer (he has an MFA degree), where he was accustomed to using his "authorial input" in his stories. From the folk tradition, he has learned how to step back and impose less of a narrative framework, "put up a mirror, and let the story tell itself." He says he learned this "through Woody's music and Pete Seeger's approach," going so far as to say, "I looked to the song, and it's like the more we share it . . . the more it never goes away, the more it stays and lives on." Hernandez drew other interesting connections between the writing process and the specific transnational story that he is trying to tell. For example, he tied the act of storytelling to the author's political orientation, stating that "everything you need is in the scene itself . . . Woody didn't need to state his radical politics, he just needed to tell a story." This "mirror" approach to writing is similar to the folk tradition in its understanding of audience interaction, as well; as Hernandez noted, "I just put up the mirror and the story tells itself, and people will bring their own ideas to it, their own sort of understanding," suggesting that part of a "folk" approach to writing is relying on audience participation to co-construct a text's meaning. On a similar note, the folk tradition has also challenged Hernandez's sense of ownership over his writing; going along with his "mirror" metaphor for composing, he also has felt the need to circulate the story ahead of publishing the book, something he has not

done for any of his other written works. Fittingly, this means that the act of writing in a capitalist system (where a story is “owned” and should not be shared until it can be sold) is subverted as he composes this transnational history:

What I’m doing now—as a writer this goes against everything I’ve ever believed in, or it goes against every sort of instinct I have—usually you write a book and research it in silence and no one knows about it and then you put out the book and release the idea, and it goes out to the world and does whatever and hopefully there’s some attention; but this is the other way around for me – in fact there came a point where I had to kindof check myself because I started to be real sortof paranoid about my research . . . [but] this is not my story, this story belongs to the world, this is something I have to let go of, it’s not my subject these are real people they’re not just characters in a book . . .

Finally, Hernandez tied his ongoing evolution as an artist, and the way he will be structuring his book, to the folk tradition: “I’ve been studying the music of Pete Seeger and Woody Guthrie . . . because I want to know how to use their techniques and tools for songwriting in terms of telling this story, this narrative of this plane crash.” Specifically, he cited the folk idiom’s use of repetition (i.e., of a chorus), stating that he will use repeated themes throughout his book to mirror this folk music practice. All in all, Hernandez’s descriptions of his writing process and rhetorical awareness offer important insights into understanding the intertextual rhetorical influence of folk songs, and the ability of song texts to blur not only language/music and performer/audience divides, but also the rhetoric/poetic split.

TRANSNATIONAL LITERACY

Within the theme of transnational literacy, there were several notable sub-themes, including emotion and its link to proximity/experience, audience accountability, and the important role that song texts can play in building transnational literacy. Here, I return to Gayatri Spivak's invocation of the term *transnational literacy* in "Teaching for the Times," where transnational literacy refers to an understanding of the effects of transnational capitalism, where although commercial borders are "open," the movement of people across borders is tightly regulated, and there are significant rhetorical and human consequences. Each of these writers came to the moment of invention with some degree of this literacy, in order to be sensitive to the dehumanizing/ silencing discourses they were responding to. While each interviewee emphasized the need to counter dehumanizing discourse like "migrants" and "deportees" (as well as terms that are common today, like "immigrant" and "undocumented"), I will not recap those arguments as these terms, and their link to silence, were explored in the last chapter. Here, I want to focus specifically on the authors' insights into transnational literacy building and the unique affordances of music in this effort. An underlying question here is that I want to understand how each of these writers understands transnational literacy, and how they developed it, so I can both continue to develop my own transnational literacy and ultimately foster it both in texts I produce and in writing pedagogies.

As explored in the last chapter, Sam Baker links his impetus to write the song "Migrants" to his experiences growing up working in agricultural jobs with people from Mexico, and then later working with people from all over the world as a contractor on building sites. This context was at play in the moment he wrote the song; indeed, he directly correlated empathy with "proximity" and "closeness," suggesting that there is an important affective component to his

transnational literacy development. Interestingly, Baker set this emotional composition process at odds with what he sees as a relative lack of knowledge of the things he is writing about; speaking specifically about the Los Gatos plane crash and the struggles of migrant workers, he commented, “I hate to sound ignorant, but I write stuff based on an emotional flash . . . I don’t know a whole lot.” He further articulated this affective dimension to transnational literacy as a capacity to see those who are different from you—where here, “different” means of another nationality, race, or ethnicity—as *capable of emotion*. Indeed, he directly linked dehumanizing words like “deportee” and “migrant” to the inability to see others as capable of emotion:

. . . without knowing anybody, it’s a vague fear, people get uneasy about the kind of things they don’t know, but you know if you grow up around people, it’s easier to see them as people that love their children, love their babies, love their little boys and little girls, and are capable of the whole range of human emotions, but if somehow you’re able to put them in a box, say they’re a “migrant” or a “deportee” or a whatever, then you never really see them fully as human.

This suggests that Baker’s songs, which make-visible people who have been erased in popular media, might implicitly aim to humanize the deceased, even if he resists the notion of writing with a specific purpose for an intended audience. If we connect his authorial intent to the rhetorical work of his song—which would be a dangerous move if the lyrical analysis did not show evidence of this rhetorical work—then we can deduce that Baker’s audiences are asked to become accountable to the dehumanizing terms widely circulated via popular media, and that this accountability may take the form of an internal shift, where they may begin to see “migrants” as humans capable of a range of emotions. This is a more nuanced argument than “they’re just like you or me”—a hollow multicultural rhetoric that erases the transnational power

dynamic at play in a border crossing. Instead, both Baker's interview and his lyrics seem to suggest, "we are both human, but our newspaper says you're not human, so we are not asked to see you that way." In our interview, when I brought up the idea that a song like "Migrants" might serve a "humanizing" function, he agreed, and demonstrated an analysis of the border-crossing that suggests an awareness of the transnational power dynamics described earlier:

I'm with you, I love it, and I love the way you phrased it. These people . . . they struggle like all of us. If that's the overall narrative of what you're doing, is to humanize a complex issue like immigration, I'm on your side. My particular thing is man, we can't let these people die out in the desert. It's wrong. And not to be repetitive, but *we will be judged harshly for it.*

Here, as in his song, the assertion of "sameness" is paired with a condemnation of "our" (documented U.S. citizens') complicity in the deaths on the Mexico/U.S. border, thereby maintaining a critique of power relations and avoiding charges of hollow multiculturalism.

During our interview, Baker also specifically noted the power of music for negotiating racial differences. He cited Woody Guthrie's collaborations with black musicians like Brownie McGee and Sonny Terry, noting that one "beautiful thing about music" is that "there's something in music where the color of skin doesn't matter that much – you know, just a chordal change, anybody can do a chordal change, anybody can sing a song, and it's not dependent on skin color, it's not dependent on where you come from, complexion." This suggestion that the sonic realm is colorblind is in direct contrast to Canales's assertion that the sonic elements of his rewritten version of "Deportees" allow him to target an audience specifically comprising people of color, with the purpose of communicating an empowering message and advocating material

change. These differing orientations suggest the various ways that songwriters position their music within questions of race; within the framework of transnational feminist theory, a rhetoric of “transcending” might fall too easily into multiculturalism, while calling out racial injustice by specifically targeting an audience of color suggests a stronger stand on the existence of racism, and an acknowledgment of transnational realities. This was also reflected when Baker noted that he blurred English and Spanish, almost as a transnational response to nationalistic media discourse, and as a way of furthering the emotional “humanizing” function that he suggests his song may be doing:

There’s a language, they’re saying “oh my dear ones, we are lost,” you know there’s both affection and despair, and that’s *their language*. You know my language, as a storyteller, is a newspaper, “they got twelve lines in a Midwestern paper,” but their lines are desperately human . . . “pull my brothers pull together, oh my dear ones” and then essentially “oh my dear ones we are lost” – the universal voice – ‘oh my dear ones we are lost.’ . . . and that’s how I end that song, and we do it in their language – but look their language is our language.

It is worth noting that Baker’s “their language is our language” is also counter to Canales’s comments on language in the song; Canales specifically praised Joan Baez for singing the song in Spanish, connecting that to her ethnic background, and suggesting that language does not transcend racial difference. However, Baker’s blurring of linguistic boundaries allows for a dual meaning in his line “oh my dear ones we are lost”—one that furthers his rhetoric of complicity. Linguistic blurring—something that all three songwriters do in their lyrics—allows yet another way of countering the citizen/noncitizen binary, and enacting accountability for the nationalistic discourse in the media reporting. Transnational literacy in each of these songs, it

seems, is tied not only to the affective dimensions of our orientation towards other humans, but also in the ability to cross linguistic borders.

As I described in the previous chapter (and earlier in this one), Canales also described his moment-of-invention as quite emotional—he was upset about the way the crash was being historicized and not connected to current struggles. Writing the song was tied to his desire to evoke a sense of empowerment in audiences. As part of a consideration of the role of emotion in transnational literacy development (specifically as that emotion is navigated in/through songs), I want to revisit his desire to make audiences who do not share his politics around immigration “uncomfortable.” This marks a shift from the correlation of music, empathy, and proximity, suggesting that discomfort plays a crucial role in reorienting audiences towards transnational issues that may not be familiar to them, or a political orientation (such as Canales’s historicization of the Mexico/U.S. border and identification with indigenous geographies) that they might disagree with. Canales’s understanding of music and transnational literacy asks audiences to be accountable in a new way; specifically, to be accountable to the ongoing struggles of people crossing the border, and to reorient themselves towards people whom they may not see as human.

Music plays an important role in Canales’s estimation of this, as he locates the power to emotionally reorient audiences in the sonic elements of his rewritten version of “Deportees.” In Canales’s understanding of the transnational rhetorical work of a song, transnational literacy necessitates being accountable and, as he repeated throughout the interview, *knowing what you’re singing about*, making sure that in the ongoing recreation of song texts we are also recontextualizing them rigorously in current realities so that audiences understand that the suffering of migrant workers is a present reality, not a historical event.

Canales also raised a new way of understanding the racial implications of the rhetorical work of songs. He explained that in central California, the white (and folk-singing) community knew about Guthrie/Hoffman's song, but not the local history of the plane crash, while the Mexican community knew the history of the plane crash but not the song. He described how, when he and Tim worked together to raise money for the memorial headstone, it brought these two communities together:

There's these two people living in the same city side by side and neither of them talked to each other because the Mexican community stayed Mexican and the folk community stayed white . . . It was very strange that here we are all of a sudden . . . we had a fundraiser for the headstone and we had members of the folk community and from the Mexican community and it was kindof the first time they sat in the same room – it was pretty incredible.

Unlike Baker's estimation of songs as "transcending" race, Canales suggests that music as a sonic artifact can lead people together into shared spaces that they have not inhabited before. Canales's version of the song has also led to interesting interactions with white folk musicians as he has joined the folk circuit. He shared a story from a show that he played at Northern Arizona University with well-known folk artist Joel Rafael, who asked Canales to sing "Deportees." Canales assumed that Rafael wanted him to sing the Guthrie/Hoffman version, but he was surprised when Rafael asked Canales to play the rewritten version, commenting: "there's only one version now, and he said, that's your version; if you're in the same room as me, I'm going to ask you to come up and do 'Deportee' your way, 'cause I can't do it your way, and it's got to be done your way from now on." The rewritten version of the song thus reaches the predominantly-white folk music scene, with the understanding that there is something more "authentic," or at

the very least, rhetorically appropriate for the history, when the song comes from Canales's voice, his body, and his musical style, than in Guthrie/Hoffman's folk music arrangement—an interesting commentary on the link between the sonic, race, and authenticity, particularly considering Rafael's comment that he “can't do” the song Canales's way.

As a final note, despite Canales's problems with Guthrie/Hoffman's version of the song as it circulates through sing-a-long folk scenes, he noted that the story was carried forward from 1948 to the present in large part because of the various versions of the song, and that this continual adaptation played an important role in keeping alive the story of the Los Gatos plane crash. Although Joel Rafael noted that there is “only one version” of the song now, Canales seems to contradict that, pointing to the power of the song's multiple adaptations:

. . . 65 years there's been people singing and it's like they sang it forward forward forward . . . all the way forward to now, and we're going to continue to tell it forward and sing it forward whether it's the old version or my version or in literary form or back to poetry how it started – however it is we're gonna continue to move it forward.

There is no one right version of the song, Canales suggests, as long as people understand that what they're singing about is not only a historical event, but also a present reality.

Tim Hernandez's particular orientation towards the transnational event of the plane crash—and the connection of history to present struggle—plays out in interesting ways on the memorial headstone. As previously mentioned, he noted some tension around whether to include the names of all 32 passengers on the headstone, or only the names of the 28 “deportees.” He described his internal navigation of the decision: “I had to make choices . . . as a Latino writer it would be easy and expected to focus on the 28 passengers, but 32 people died, so there's an

opportunity.” Ultimately, the decision was made to include all 32 names on the headstone, which Hernandez described as “a good move . . . a provocative move” that “subtly” became “probably the most political thing in the memorial itself . . . that image of the 32 leaves.” This decision was made in part to honor “the whole event”—and in making this decision, the headstone serves as evidence of the transnational literacy that was developed among all participants in putting the memorial together. These conversations, Hernandez noted, were not easy: “there are . . . nuances in this whole experience that we had to kind of inch our way around at times and also have conversations about . . . so there’s this context, that [the four American crewmembers] were part of it too, and I go that’s cool, that’s actually a good idea.”

This experience of developing a transnational lens for the Los Gatos plane crash has affected the choices Hernandez has made in the book he is writing about the event, to honor the fact that people on “both sides of the river” suffered from the crash:

You know one of the things I’m going to put in my book, two of the gems I’ve uncovered, is there’s a letter that the pilot wrote to his wife, about a month before they get married . . . and it’s going to be juxtaposed with a letter that Ramon, one of the passengers, wrote home to his wife right before he died – it was like four months before he died – and the way these two men are writing to their wives – it’s no different – the love is there, the feeling is all there, – the emotion is palpable – that’s what’s evident . . . and this is I think the kind of opportunity that this situation really opened itself up to is that humanity behind it, you know?

Like Baker, Hernandez locates the transnational work of these documents in the “humanity” that is evident in human emotional expression—specifically the expression of love

for family members. The commonalities he articulates via these letters, occurring within the context of a book that uncovers not only commonalities, but also transnational disparities, do not risk hollow multiculturalism, but instead attempt to reveal the connections between all of the people on the plane, U.S.-citizen or Mexican citizen. This suggests that in a transnational power agreement like the Bracero program, a transnational group of working people are bound up in the violence; rather than cast the American crew members as somehow not-mournable, Hernandez chooses instead to attempt to humanize them for an audience that might want to focus specifically on the 28 passengers whose names did not appear in the paper or on the original mass gravestone. In poststructuralist terms, rather than flip the citizen/noncitizen binary, his rhetorical choices attempt to deconstruct it. Hernandez's texts thus ask U.S.-citizen audiences to be accountable not only to their complicity in the exploitation of others, but also to the various ways that they are bound up in transnational capitalism. The image of the 32 leaves on the gravestone—an image taken directly from Guthrie's lyrics—suggests that the song “Deportees” is inextricably bound up in this particular transnational literacy.

When I asked Hernandez about the various versions of “Deportees” that have been covered by other artists, he emphasized that multiple circulating versions of the song make the story of the plane crash visible to more people, and that multiple musical arrangements enhance the “accessibility” of the song. A link between music and race emerged in his discussion of these various versions of the song; like Baker, he cited Guthrie's collaboration with black musicians, suggesting that music has unique power to move beyond race. However, he does not negate racial power dynamics; instead he invokes a strength that lies beyond them:

. . . any artist who's working really working towards bettering humanity, we start to not forget the sort of colorlines, obviously, but we start to find . . . that strength is beyond

colorlines also, the strength that we pull from our communities is beyond just one community, and we need to pull that together – and I think that’s what Woody Guthrie represented.

Like Canales’s re-telling of the collaboration between white and Mexican communities in California around the memorial project, Hernandez suggests that there is power in music to bring people into shared physical spaces. In the context of the history of the Los Gatos plane crash, it seems that the ability to bring people into shared spaces is at the heart of the song’s power— while we can also locate its rhetorical work in the music and lyrics, and the internal affective shifts that each songwriter imbues them with, the physical, material work of the song seems to be located in the spaces where the song and the history of the Los Gatos plane crash are shared between communities and people who might not come together otherwise. Thus, a rhetorical analysis of song texts can benefit from considering the spaces that are created as a result of these texts, and the people who are brought together, to deepen our understanding of the material effects of music.

TRACK #3: "NEVER FEEL SO GOOD AGAIN"

I sat out on a bench today watching the cars go by

Out in the morning sun I wondered if you'd wander by

It's all I ever wanted

Sitting in the basement of the library reading

You grabbed my bike and you laughed as you rode away

It's all I ever wanted

I took off from work at noon and came to your apartment

We biked down to the beach and stood on our heads in the sand

But they locked up our neighbor

He doesn't have his papers

She cried as she cut my hair

Said the men all stare and that she'll have to move

It's all she ever wanted

A tiny storefront, trees, and concrete

So we'll sit out on the bench today

And count the cars on Ocean Parkway

And never feel so good again

It's all we ever wanted

The Thanksgiving before we left for Colorado, Brian and I returned to Brooklyn from his family's place in Philadelphia to find that my apartment had been broken into. My clothes hamper was dumped out on the floor, all the dresser drawers were open, and the bedcovers were thrown back. The first thing I saw, though, was that all the musical instrument cases were open. My heart fell into my stomach, but then I noticed something strange; the instruments were still there: my father's guitar, my sister's violin, and my flute. Upon closer inspection, so were the string of pearls and the gold bracelet from India, where jewelry is cheap, but triples in value when you cross the border into the U.S. These were what I considered to be the only monetarily-valuable things that I owned, and they had not been stolen.

The only thing missing was my passport.

Part of me thinks that the italicized portions of this thesis—the questions that underlie the invention of transnational texts; the questions I want my students to be asking—questions of privilege and complicity and accountability—that these questions should be infused throughout the thesis rather than relegated to their own separate chapters. And yet I haven't figured out how

to do that, how to blend the personal and the academic in a way that will also allow me to advance in my graduate studies. I tried to do it in an article that I wrote about Sunando Sen's murder, but the peer-reviewers told me to take my family's immigration history out of the story. In response, I read voraciously about post-9/11 and homeland security policies and was able to parrot their discourse to produce an academic article. But where did the rest of this go—the anger, the confusion, the hurt that underlies any kind of cultural exploration and writing practice? This affective process has formed the foundation of the autoethnographic method for me—the “current of anger” described in Women Writing Resistance—and I want to say that it is at the heart of transnational literacy development—but I don't want to prove this using preexisting theories; I want to demonstrate it through stories.

In my interviews with Tim Hernandez, Sam Baker, and Lance Canales, I found myself describing creative work I've engaged in—as well as teaching—because I did not want to position myself as someone who was “researching them.” Their lives give me hope because they represent a world where texts tell simple stories, where stories are not theoretically framed for an audience; where story is method, and story is theory, where the simple act of responding to a historical silence underlies the invention process, and where each person is written into the stories he tells—as a writer “positioning a mirror”; as a songwriter articulating his own complicity or sharing his family or community's history. I felt crushed, too, at various points of thesis-writing, because of how impossible it feels to inhabit this simple sense of storytelling in a world where, as Sam Baker pointed out, the language of “achievement” and “outcome” dominates even the most fundamentally process-driven questions of how to work and write for social justice; because I do not know if justice is possible within the rubric of the academy. And yet, what kind of damage might be done in this line of thinking? Is, as my advisor so aptly put it,

“the disavowal of desired outcome a ducking of responsibility”? What happens when we “hide behind the guise of innocent storytelling”? Can we “deepen the autoethnographic obligation” by staying in touch with the deeply rhetorical work of storytelling—including purpose, audience, and even desired outcome, as Lance Canales seems to do in his songwriting?

I turned to these artists to learn how to write, and what they taught me was to connect writing to the act of responding to silence. To do so requires an uncomfortable level of self-reflexivity and self-critique—one that is not facilitated by most of the academic writing I’ve done. If I can begin to extend these songwriters’ writing practices in this way, I think there is room to begin to blur the academic/nonacademic binary that I found myself navigating in my interviews.

I share this song in particular because it represents a sonic and lyrical grappling with the lessons of the songs I’ve spent time with during this thesis, and along with them, the social divisions that result from immigration policy, if only subtly. I also share this song because as I wrote it, I found myself considering many of the lyric and sonic elements that are also present in “Deportees” and the texts influenced by it—specifically, shifting subjectivity (“I” vs. “You” vs. “We”), juxtaposition, complicity, and a simple musical arrangement.

This song is organized by verses, each of which ends with similar lines: all I ever wanted, all she ever wanted, all we ever wanted. Preceding each of these final lines are pieces of stories of daily life in Brooklyn—both mine and others’. These stories are juxtaposed, sometimes jarringly—for example, the song recounts biking down to the beach, and then shifts to a neighbor who was arrested because he didn’t have papers. By juxtaposing stories in this way, the song conveys that these different realities exist in close proximity in one small geographic

location (specifically, the Kensington neighborhood in South Brooklyn off of Ocean Parkway—something that people who have lived there will recognize in the lyrics).

The shifting subjectivity in the final line of each verse (all I ever wanted, all she ever wanted, all we ever wanted) serves as a thread uniting these stories. The last “we,” in particular, suggests that the juxtaposed stories are all connected, and that the daily reality of all the people mentioned in the song is very different, they are all pursuing something similar: a sense of place and a sense of home. This song juxtaposes “citizens” and “noncitizens,” showing that we live in close proximity, and may have the same daily goals.

The shifting subjectivity does accomplish a slight blurring of the citizen/noncitizen divide by uniting each of the stories presented in the song under the banner of “all we ever wanted.” When I was writing the song, I was trying to wrangle with the fact that a place that was home to me—a place I have frequently missed since moving away—was in fact a very oppressive situation for others around me, and by extension, those of us who are privileged-via-legal-documentation are likely surrounded by injustices we can choose whether or not to interact with. Also, I wanted to get at the fact that the people who face injustice are not only those injustices; they are also humans living their lives.

This song has a very simple musical arrangement—two plucked guitar chords with a low flute line. This simple arrangement foregrounds the lyrics of the song, unlike a more complex melodic line or harmonic movement. The melody of the song, with a few small deviations, repeats throughout—there is no verse/bridge/chorus structure, but rather a repeated verse melody. The two chords used in the song, A-Major-7 and D-Major-7, do not have the “happy” or “sad” sonic quality that major and minor chords do, respectively. Although they are based on

two major chords (A and D), the lowered 7 on top of each chord gives them an ambiguous, plaintive quality. The chords are plucked in the same repeated pattern, with when accompanied by the lyrics suggest the everyday movement of people in a neighborhood.

Where the melodic line does deviate from its verse structure, the lines are emphasized. For example, the lines “but they locked up our neighbor / he doesn’t have his papers” displaces “all I ever wanted” and adds a line to it. Similarly, the line “it’s all she ever wanted / a tiny storefront, trees, and concrete” adds details to the repeated line about what the character wants. Because these melodic lines deviate slightly from the pattern that has been set up in the first two verses of the song, they stand out slightly, contributing to the juxtaposition of self/other that is set up in the lyrics.

I wrote this song for what felt at the time like simple reasons: because I missed Brooklyn and the people I knew there, and because I know how privileged I was to live there as a documented citizen. However, writing it in conversation with this thesis leads me to complicated conclusions: at the end of the day, none of the positionalities that I bring to this research is as important as that overwhelming privilege of being a documented U.S. citizen; this fact may crowd out any other way that I position myself in relation to this research and to this history—and, by extension, the way I must position myself in future research and writing.

Sometimes I think that he or she or they came in the window and stole my passport because I took mobility for granted.

THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS & PEDAGOGICAL APPLICATIONS

In this chapter I discuss the findings from my analysis of the three songs and the interview transcripts, as well as the music autoethnographies. This story and Guthrie, Baker, Hernandez, and Canales's work and perspectives have important implications for how we understand our role as writers and teachers in rhetoric and composition and related fields—broadly, as scholars concerned with how texts, discourses, spoken and written languages both tell and circulate stories, and as writers who want to tell, facilitate, and circulate stories and storytelling in and out of the classroom. What can the field of rhetoric and composition learn from this story about responding to silences in the historical record, composing texts and developing pedagogies that engage with transnational events and challenge nationalistic epistemologies? Conversely, what can the field of rhetoric and composition offer transnational social justice efforts and/or songwriting via analysis of transnational texts like these songs?

To summarize, “Deportees” and the texts influenced by it work to reinscribe the history of the Los Gatos plane crash and transnational violences that followed in opposition to silence *in* discourse—specifically, the term “deportees” (Guthrie), “migrants” (Baker), versions of the song that do not appear to engage with current immigration realities (Canales), and a mass grave without names (Hernandez). In each of the three songs analyzed, lyrics and music work together to deconstruct the citizen/noncitizen binary that is reinforced by the media reporting. By circulating in participatory contexts specific to the folk song genre, the song “Deportees” invites audiences to position themselves in the position of complex, complicit solidarity that Guthrie articulates through the shifting subjectivity of the lyrics. Because it has been covered by so many musicians, the song “Deportees” has actually supplanted the “official” historical record, influencing the critical framework of Sam Baker’s song “Migrants” and ultimately being

rewritten by Canales from the “deportee” perspective to ask audiences to be accountable to current struggles. The responsiveness of these songs to popular media, the interaction of music and lyrics, and the reinterpretation/adaptation of the song by Baker and Canales, suggest pedagogical interventions for how songs might be incorporated into writing curricula to help foster transnational literacy.

I will move into my larger conclusions by first revisiting the theories set forth in the literature review and commenting briefly on how these (and other) song texts might enrich our work in these theoretical realms.

POSTSTRUCTURALIST THEORIES OF SILENCE

A song like “Deportees” or “Migrants,” as well as Hernandez’s story about the memorial site in California, shed light on how silence can exist *in* discourse rather than solely in the absence of it. By looking specifically at how music counters silence, and considering both the lyrical and musical work of the songs analyzed here, we can learn more about the silences themselves. Theoretical work in silence might be enriched by considering how the discursive work of metonymic stand-in terms like “deportees” and “migrants” is navigated in song texts that circulate in participatory performance contexts. This is particularly salient in light of Lance Canales’s critique of sing-a-longs that do not contextualize the story of the “deportees” as a current reality; in this sense, a decontextualized song might actually serve a silencing function by historicizing the struggles of immigrants in the U.S. and thereby suggesting that this is not still happening. The way a song is rhetorically positioned in a performance space, thus, becomes crucial for songs to serve as transnational-literacy-building tools that counter silences.

Furthermore, each author's focus on silence, and responsiveness to silence in popular media, suggests that one way of teaching composition could be asking students to locate silences through examining media, and compose as an act of responding to that silence. This has implications for our work as writers as well. For example, in considering each of these songs, and the memorial, there is still at least one major silence: a recognition of the devastating on-the-ground effects of the Bracero program (and immigration policy more broadly) in Mexico. Moving the story of the Los Gatos plane crash forward within this framework necessitates a consideration of this silence, and deliberate steps towards countering it.

To what extent do we ask our students to pay attention to silences and attempt to fill them/narrate them ethically, rather than the more popular rhetoric of "joining the conversation" or "carving out a niche"? What if we were to foreground *responsiveness to what is missing* rather than encouraging students to engage with what is present, to be reassembled, framed, and responded to? How do we engage a more critical practice of history-writing/narrating in rhetoric and composition? Focusing on writing as countering silence provides a way of understanding our teaching and writing efforts as firmly grounded in rhetoric and composition's commitment to social justice and narrating marginalized histories. Furthermore, these songs and their responses to silence could be employed pedagogically to introduce this idea to a writing classroom.

MUSIC, RHETORIC & SONIC LITERACY

This study complicates Deanna Sellnow's theory of "incremental persuasion," where music is understood as persuading in two mediums—nondiscursive (musical) and discursive (lyrical). Specifically, this study necessitates that we understand the rhetorical relationship of music and lyrics *within performance contexts*. Each person interviewed talked about song texts

much in the same way that we talk about texts in rhetoric and composition—as situated artifacts that both shape and are shaped by their material contexts. The songs’ meanings shift and change as they move into different contexts and communities, and as different performers (like Hoffman and Canales) rewrite the words slightly to feel comfortable singing them.

Furthermore, the interesting connections between music and race that emerged in the interviews—where music enables people of different races to come together to perform, and where the song in part allowed the white and Mexican communities in central California to come together—suggests that we can understand the rhetorical implications of music not only in terms of text-internal resources (music and language), but also in terms of how songs physically bring people together.

Finally, the emergence of a focus on emotion in the interviews—both the emotional impact of music, and the emotional moment-of-invention for each of these writers—suggests that a rhetorical analysis of the music and lyrics of song texts must take emotion into account, and consider the affective implications of different lyrical and sonic combinations. As ethnomusicologists John Shepherd and Peter Wicke write in *Music and Cultural Theory*, within disciplines such as sociology and communication (and, I would argue, rhetoric and composition), there has been a tendency “to look to the lyrics of songs in dealing with questions of affect and meaning in popular music . . . [t]he analysis of affect and meaning is grounded exclusively in an examination of language decontextualized from sounds recognized as ‘musical’” (9). I fall into this trap in the analysis chapters of this thesis—although I do consider the musical elements of each song text, I privilege an analysis of lyrics.

One way to integrate an analysis of emotion into these song texts would be to draw from scholarship in critical emotion studies. For example, Sara Ahmed’s concept of “affective economies,” where emotions circulate through discourse, shaping the surfaces of bodies and constructing certain bodies as acceptable objects of particular emotions (see *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, particularly Ahmed’s discussion of citizenship and nationalism in her chapter on love) could be applied to the song texts, considering the extent to which each song text supports transnational feminist theory’s commitment to denaturalizing the affective economies that hide structural violence (see, for example, feminist rhetorician Rebecca Dingo’s comments in “Living a Rhetorical Life in a Transnational World”). Within this analytic framework, words like “deportees” and “migrants” could still be understood as metonymic stand-ins for the people they represent, thereby asking U.S.-citizen audiences to see these people as less-than-human, and by extension, hate or fear them. To extend this analysis to music, however, would require integrating a theorization of music that ascribes specific affective rhetorical work to particular melodic and harmonic combinations, and understands how these combinations are shaped by the lyrics to which they are set.¹³ I attended to this in very elementary terms in my analysis chapters (e.g., major chords are typically understood as having a “happier” sound than minor chords), and although a more in-depth analysis of the music texts is beyond the purview of this thesis, it represents an area for further research. Additionally, a focus on affective economies as they circulate through music could contribute to our understanding of sonic literacy, which Sellnow defines as a critical practice where listeners “become more critical

¹³ This is yet another site where nonwestern theories of music and language could benefit western rhetorical theory. In South Asian classical music, each *raga* melody is assigned with a specific affective descriptor called *ras* (which translates as “flavor and often corresponds to a particular time of day). This taxonomy is quite useful for an analysis of music and its affective implications.

consumers of such public communication when it is used in an unethical way” (81). A synthesis of affective economies and sonic literacy could help us find ways to describe and critique uncritical messages that circulate through discourse, upholding hegemonic affective economies.

This analysis is complicated by scholarship on folk music which suggests that critical messages may be able to circulate through “uncritical” media like popular song texts (Berger 67). The story of this song and the Los Gatos plane crash history challenged my assumptions about the circulation of songs through capitalist economies. To what extent does mode of circulation enhance or inhibit a song’s critical or anticapitalist message? Because the song “Deportees” was covered by dozens of popular artists, I asked Tim Hernandez what he thought about it, as I had mixed feelings about the idea of “pop” folk artists like The Kingston Trio performing the song. This popularization of the song could be understood as a form of cooptation and conscription into a capitalist artistic for entertainment and profit. However, Hernandez countered this by saying that we need the song to be in as many contexts as possible, reaching as many different audiences as possible. This suggests that although a folk song like “Deportees” may circulate via a capitalist economy, this circulation enables it to reach multiple discourse communities that might not find their way into a community organizing space or folk song circle. The cooptation of a folk song like “Deportees”—so long as it is not drastically edited like “This Land is Your Land,” and if we ascribe to Sellnow’s theory of “incremental persuasion”—might actually serve a critical function from within a capitalist musical economy.

This suggests that there are various modes of circulating the same text that can enact varying degrees of critical function, and perhaps can even enact a critical function even as they support an artist’s fame and recognition. For example, folk icon Joan Baez’s song about the United Farmworkers’ boycott persuaded many people not to buy grapes during the labor

organizing campaign. Although “Deportees” doesn’t enact a simple consumer-based solution like not buying grapes, it does ask audiences to reorient themselves both towards “noncitizen” migrant workers and to popular media reporting that describes these people, and to see their complicity in labor exploitation—quieter epistemological shifts that can ultimately support the deconstruction of the citizen/noncitizen binary. We can also consider that the wide circulation of the song “Deportees” points to the fact that its musical arrangement is simple, catchy and resonates with audiences—a lesson that is worth taking into account when we compose texts that incorporate sound. However, this analysis of the song’s sonic elements and circulation is complicated by Canales’s critique of the musical arrangement of “Deportees,” particularly when we listen to his version and begin to pay attention to how he adapted the song to fit his critique, purpose, and intended audience. A simple, “catchy” musical arrangement that is easily picked up by instrumentalists may sacrifice the weight of its content. There are rich contradictions here—grounded within questions of music, rhetoric, race, and representation—that are worth further exploration.

TRANSNATIONAL FEMINIST THEORY & TRANSNATIONAL LITERACY

This results of this study suggests that there is an important affective component to transnational literacy development that should be considered both in composing transnational texts and facilitating writing assignments about transnational subject matter. At the heart of this is the deep emotional work that is necessitated when responding to terms like “deportees” or “migrants”—or any other dehumanizing language. As I briefly mentioned earlier, in “Living a Rhetorical Life in a Transnational World,” rhetorician Rebecca Dingo connects transnational feminist rhetorical analysis to a “transnational literacy project,” wherein rhetoricians seek to “lay bare” affective economies that conceal structural violence. Within this framework, the terms

“deportee” and “migrant” can be understood as asking documented-citizen audiences to *not* have an emotional stake in the well-being of the people being described—or worse, to have an emotional aversion to or anger at those people for being “outsiders.” Thus there is a lot of hard, emotional work needed in order to *rehumanize*, as Baker and I discussed in his interview. This process is closely tied to language and rhetoric; Baker described people who reproduce racist language as those whose “language is not broad enough.” The “humanizing” project that he invoked during our discussion of his song suggests the unique affordances of “Migrants” and other songs in the effort to build transnational literacy. By studying the rhetorical work of songs that do this, educators may be able to harness the affective benefit of song texts as part of Dingo’s “transnational literacy project.” Baker cited Guthrie himself as an example of how racist attitudes can change as a result of education, connecting anti-immigrant sentiment to fear and suggesting that a transnationally literate pedagogy must be prepared for, and face, that fear. Because of the affective affordances of music, it may be well-placed to intervene in fearful and hateful discourses:

Woody changed from the small-town kid in Okemah to somebody that saw the world in a pretty broad way . . . I think every student has that potential, you know, no matter what they say, they can say the nuttiest things, but man people have *such an ability* to change . . . and that includes me too. Look I have great empathy for Woody and all those small town people who come out into the big world and they are terrified. They don’t know what to expect.

To help negotiate this fear, I suggest that instructors of rhetoric and composition offer students the chance to “write themselves into” the histories they might be reading about in class. For example, Hernandez talked about visiting predominantly-Mexican classrooms, reading the

names, and asking students whether any of them had the same last names as the crash victims. He reported that students were very excited to feel connected to the names, and by extension, the history. (I will elaborate on these pedagogical possibilities later in this chapter when I discuss autoethnography.)

Finally, considering the texts' responses to each other—and the silence that I noted earlier about the gendered logics at play in immigration policies like the Bracero program—I want to suggest that there is an emotional response to transnational injustices that could unite moments of invention in academic and vernacular writing traditions. Guthrie, Baker, and Canales each wrote songs out of an emotionally-charged place in response to a silence around transnational violences. I will continue to consider how we can pedagogically harness and scaffold these moments of exigency; in the meantime, though, what I am left with is an observation that emerged from a previously-discussed moment of tension in my interview with Baker, where he challenged the “outcome-driven” nature of academic writing, and in doing so, set up an academic/nonacademic binary. Ultimately, through our conversation, he and I concluded that we were part of the same “humanizing” project in that we were both attempting to publically respond to the silencing and dehumanizing effects of widely-circulated discourse like “migrants” or “deportees.” In other words, our motivations for invention, and the sense of exigency around composing texts that engage with transnational events, united us.

There is immense potential for crossover work here, and for our writing theories, pedagogies, and circulation practices to mutually inform and influence each other. While I have attempted to put the rhetoric and composition and folk songwriting discourse communities into conversation with each other through this thesis, there is much more work to be done, as evidenced by the tension embedded in my conversation with Baker about the rhetorical

implications of his work, and my own concerns about what I perceived as the limitations of academic writing compared to songwriting and storytelling. As Canales noted, a focus on purpose and audience does not necessarily compromise a song—in his case, this rhetorical focus was deeply tied to his desire for justice.

Within the specific frame of transnational feminist theory, I want to consider what an academic theoretical stance (like this thesis) can offer a male-dominated folk tradition. It is no coincidence that every artist I interviewed was male; while there are certainly notable female folk artists, a glance down any folk festival program will show that the scene is quite skewed in favor of male artists. A specifically feminist lens can broaden the scope of songs that aim to engage with social injustices, extending their critiques to deal more explicitly with gender inequality (i.e., by extending a transnational critique so it engages with on-the-ground realities on “the other side of the border”). In other words, when we find texts that break silences, we cannot assume that they have done the complex rhetorical work called for by transnational feminist rhetorical theory. This indicates to me that transnational feminism has implications for both academic and texts and popular texts like songs. How could we create a text that circulates like “Deportees” or “Migrants,” blurs us/them lines and gets at the transnational violence, but also attempts to uncover the damage done by the Bracero program in Mexico? Finally, a feminist lens can help us think through the political implications of “humanizing” via showing “others” to be capable of emotion, loving their families, etc. To what extent does a rhetorical tactic like this uphold normative notions of family and gender? I look forward to further exploring the affective dimensions of transnational literacy, and elaborating on these questions.

AUTOETHNOGRAPHIC LESSONS

Composing the music and music autoethnographies for this thesis taught me a lot about how to facilitate (or not facilitate) autoethnographic writing in the composition classroom. Here I want to share my key reflections on this process, and recommendations for those who might want to bring autoethnographic writing or music composition into their classrooms.

First, *build in enough time for students to gain critical distance from their work*. This recommendation stems from the song “A Different Battle,” which I wrote in the fall of 2012, revised over the next year, and from which I still do not totally have critical distance. It took the better part of a year to begin to see the shortcomings of this song: although it represents an experience in which I tried to help a student develop transnational literacy around the “war on terror” and drone strikes specifically, I was not applying that same transnational lens to my own work. The autoethnography that accompanies this song notes that in the song, I am openly frustrated with the student’s limited vantage point; through this critical assessment of the song, I was able to reveal the limitations in my own lens (i.e., not fully taking in what drone warfare represents for U.S. soldiers who are concerned about the risks of on-the-ground combat). The revelation in this complicity—alongside an analysis of Guthrie and Baker’s deliberate rhetorics of complicity in their song texts—suggested to me that composing song texts (and perhaps other popular creative texts as well) and then reflecting on them autoethnographically offers an important literacy-building tool, where a self-reflexive writing practice can ultimately reveal to us our own shortcomings and transnational illiteracies.

The biggest constraint in this type of work—at least, the biggest constraint that this thesis taught me—is *time*, and the crucial need to build *time* and *space* into the equation when trying to

facilitate this type of writing practice. If there is sufficient time and space, I think autoethnographic reflection on creative writing can help navigate the emotional responses that might underlie the sense of exigency around textual invention—and reflect on our emotional impulses to evaluate the extent to which they reproduce dominant affective economies.

In my case, with the military, I had to navigate quite a bit of anger, sadness, guilt, and confusion in order to begin to develop a transnational understanding of war that is locally as well as internationally grounded, and understand the shortcomings of my own transnational epistemology. These uncomfortable affective shifts remind me of Canales's desire to *make audiences uncomfortable* through his rewritten version of "Deportees," suggesting that one of the transnational rhetorical strengths of a song like his is its ability to ask audiences to engage in the uncomfortable self-reflexive critique that is required to better understand their own positionalities. While there likely isn't a way to transcend the time constraints of a semester-long composition course in order to facilitate this long-term work, I do think instilling habits of self-reflexivity and responding-to-silence may have long-term benefits in students' work and thinking beyond the confines of our classrooms.

As I further reflect on the pedagogical interactions that I shared in the music autoethnography about "A Different Battle," I realize there are pedagogies that "Deportees" demands we enact. Ultimately, the song articulates the way I *wish* I'd responded to my students—with recognition of my complicity in reproducing the citizen/noncitizen binary, and my complicity in benefitting from my family's immigration history in the post-9/11 U.S. If something like this happens in my classroom again, I will not invoke citizenship. Perhaps I will reference the songs and simply tell the story of how they led me to re-think citizenship and immigration (I imagine I will be thinking about this for quite some time).

This reflection leads me to a second caution, which is to *be more mindful of the art versus academic binary*. I unwittingly set this up throughout my thesis-writing process, and am still struggling to find ways to both blur the evocative/analytic autoethnographic binary, and also to articulate the interrelationships between “creative” and “academic” texts and the blurry genre boundaries between those two poles. This is where invention—specifically, the emotional *impulse* to create a text in response to a silence—became very important; this framework for invention offers a way of collapsing the creative/academic binary and understanding both (within the framework of this thesis) as representations of the authorial impulse to narrate transnational stories within different discourse communities and using different rhetorical techniques. If we understand ourselves as part of the same “humanizing” project that Baker cited in our interview, we can begin to define a common rhetorical project that has at its heart the social practice of writing; as Werner writes in “Democratic Visions, Democratic Voices: Woody as Writer,” Guthrie’s writing is “at once intensely personal and broadly democratic. . . . Democracy sings in each of us individually, Woody intimates, as long as we understand that who we are—and what we sound like—is shaped by and best responds to everyone we hear” (70). That being said, in light of the field’s shift towards non-alphabetic texts, I do think we could benefit from writing more publicly in “nonacademic” genres, and making efforts to theoretically and practically link transnational feminist rhetoric with sonic rhetorics and literacies to the good benefit of the field’s social justice efforts—not solely in terms of analysis, but also production. As Arlo Guthrie says in an introduction to a performance of “Deportees,” the Los Gatos plane crash was “just another incident where [Guthrie] could tell a story without having to make a big political or social spiel. He could just say, ‘this is what happened’” (Guthrie & Harris). Stories matter; sometimes a story

might say more than an academic analysis or argument; and yet, as this study demonstrates, stories can also communicate important analysis and argument.

Finally, as I alluded to earlier, I want to ask educators in rhetoric and composition to give students opportunities to *write themselves into transnational realities*. How do we make space for transnational stories in our classrooms and in our writing, and give our students a chance to “write themselves into” histories like the Los Gatos plane crash, the Bracero program, and immigration policy generally? The music autoethnographies gave me the chance to attempt this, and I came away with several insights. For example, conducting this analysis made me think about how the construction of immigrants as “other” can go both ways, and “naturalize” them as either inherently suspect or inherently “like us.” The post-1965 Asian immigration wave that my father’s family was part of was constructed as a “model minority” and was invoked by conservative politicians to counter Civil Rights activism by being held up as a non-white ethnic group that didn’t need a “leg up” to succeed. This is in stark contrast to immigration from Asia to the U.S. pre-1965. In fact, the Bracero program almost immediately followed the deportation of thousands of Asian agricultural laborers on the West Coast following the Chinese Exclusion Act and Alien Land Laws, which ensured that Asian laborers could not be granted the right to citizenship or to own property. The U.S. government, as Vijay Prashad argues in *The Karma of Brown Folk*, looked for a more geographically proximate cheap labor force, and turned to Mexico and the Caribbean. Transnational agreements like the Bracero program followed.

Prashad has described the interwoven immigration histories of the Mexican and South Asian diasporas as “Braceros” and “Techno-Braceros,” indicating that both diasporas were constructed by U.S. labor needs (see, for example, *The Karma of Brown Folk*). By extension, the stereotypes surrounding both of these diasporas—“rustlers/outlaws/thieves” in the case of the

Braceros, “model minority” in the case of the Techno-Braceros—were deeply tied to the nature of these immigration policies. By juxtaposing the proximity of the Mexico/U.S. border with the image of Braceros being chased like rustlers/outlaws/thieves, Guthrie draws attention to both the arbitrary nature of the divide between “citizens” and “noncitizens” and the racism that results from this divide. The fact that post-1965 South Asian immigrants were similarly naturalized with a set of characteristics suggests that this naturalization accompanies the economic impetus for shifting immigration policy. In the case of the Braceros, their labor was wanted only for a short time to support the agricultural system at a time of war; in the case of the “Techno-Braceros,” their labor was wanted indefinitely, as a long-term investment in the U.S. science and technology sector.

The effort to allow students to write themselves into history, if we look to Guthrie, Baker, Canales, and Hernandez for guidance, may end up focusing on geography. Each of these artists drew directly from their hometown and work experiences—and, in Canales’s case, a deep philosophy of indigenous geography—to compose transnational texts. If a student comes from a community that is primarily inhabited by documented U.S. citizens, they might be given a chance to ask why, and historicize the immigration or migration of their own families to that geographical location, in attempt to see even “U.S. citizenship” as an inherently transnational phenomenon, one that carries with it the vestiges of migration, immigration, and colonization, and one that—when considering military history—is inherently transnational at times of war. A geographic focus necessitates that we think locally as well as transnationally, and understand the “blind spots” in both our local and transnational subjectivities (as I discovered, uncomfortably, in my autoethnographic writing about “A Different Battle”).

Within this final point on “writing ourselves into” transnational realities, I want to return to considering the slide between subjectivities that occurs within both Guthrie and Baker’s lyrics. While I would never encourage students to risk speaking *as/with* “the other” in composing transnational texts (nor would I want to in my own writing!), the slide between subjectivities is a part of what allows all three writers to connect to the transnational violence that they are observing from a privileged positionality. In *The Rhetoric of Racism Revisited*, rhetorician Mark McPhail argues that understandings of racism should not be “reduced to a relationship between oppressors and the oppressed, between victimizers and victims” because “[s]uch a reduction only reaffirms racism’s most basic assumption: that we are in essence separate and distinct from one another and only indirectly implicated in each other’s lives” (viii). By challenging this oppressor/oppressed division, Guthrie and Baker’s lyrics effectively challenge the citizen/noncitizen binary, countering nationalistic epistemologies. As McPhail notes, breaking down the “oppressor/oppressed” binary “is not meant to deny the material or ideological dimensions or consequences” of “unequal and inequitable historical relationships,” nor does it mean to suggest that “oppressor” and “oppressed” play an “‘equal’ role in the maintenance and perpetuation of racism” (x). Instead, the lyrics show—in true autoethnographic sense—that via self-reflexivity and the articulation of complicity, people in positions of privilege can speak out against injustice. By doing this in participatory performance contexts, Guthrie’s lyrics in particular may encourage audiences to articulate that same complicity and solidarity; it is this cultural rhetoric of complicity in the transnational rhetorical repercussions of transnational capitalism that allows Guthrie and Baker to speak—a conclusion that is particularly salient for universities with a largely-white student population like the one where I currently study. While I would not advocate asking students to slide between subjectivities in their own writing, I would

certainly advocate analyzing the slide between subjectivities within these particular songs, and teasing out the power dynamics reflected in these rhetorical moves.

In the future, I want to try two classroom experiments, which are drawn from the lessons I learned doing the music autoethnographies for this thesis. The first is to ask students to write family immigration and military histories, as a way of building a framework for a transnational autoethnographic writing assignment.¹⁴ By critically investigating these stories and engaging in research to understand the social/political contexts in which they occurred, I think students can better situate themselves in a transnational world at a time of war. At least, this was the case for me in composing the music autoethnographies; I had to contend with the fact that my songs were missing my complicity in war, and the fact that I am privileged in being descended from people who had access to higher education because of their military service. These lessons—the various ways I am embedded in transnational power relations via immigration and war—have taught me a lot about self-reflexivity and making transnational arguments.

PEDAOGIGES OF SONG: QUESTIONS FOR CRITICAL, SELF-REFLEXIVE TRANSNATIONAL WRITING

In order to facilitate the crossover work between rhetorics of silence, music and rhetoric, transnational feminist theory, and autoethnography, I want to put forth a series of questions that could be used to facilitate discussions in a writing classroom. These questions are rooted in (and in some cases drawn directly from) the songs themselves, and the ways in which these songs

¹⁴ This assignment—like all writing assignments—should be understood as context-dependent. I took a course with a community-college instructor who worked with many adult immigrant students and found that students were often reluctant to write about their immigration histories in great detail out of a desire to keep certain details personal. This assignment is one that I would feel comfortable assigning at the specific university where I now work—one that is primarily attended by white, documented-citizen students.

respond to dehumanizing discourses. These questions ask students to become more critical audiences when they interact with popular media. I believe a rhetorical analytic method that begins with questions like these could contribute to a transnational feminist writing approach that interweaves “critiques, actions, and self-reflexivity” (Nagar & Swarr 5).

- From what perspective is the text written? How are “us/them” divisions established/navigated/deconstructed/affirmed/maintained through subjectivity in the text?
- *Where* does this text appear? For example, if it is in a newspaper, where in the newspaper is it? How long is it? What other things are in close proximity to it?
- Is the listener implicated in the song through shifting subjectivity, or asked to be “accountable” via silence/rhetorical listening?
- To what extent does the text encourage audience participation or co-construction of the text? Is it possible for the text to stand alone?
- What genre is this text? What texts are cited in the text under question? What genre are those texts? If they are embedded, to what extent are they critiqued? How does each genre typically circulate?
- What questions does the text ask of its audience? What actions are demanded by these questions? Does the rhetor include him/her-self in these questions or position him/her-self as separate or outside the line of questioning?
- Who is named and who is not? What words or phrases stand in metonymically for those who are not named?

- If you were going to write a song responding to this text, what story would the song tell?
What questions would it pose publically?

I reach the end of this thesis with more questions than answers, but I think this is a good thing. I am excited about the pedagogical potential of transnational feminist analyses of texts that respond to historical silences, as well as autoethnographic processes of writing ourselves into history and the creative and critical affordances of songwriting. If we can begin to bring these analytic and composing techniques into our classrooms, we may contribute to our students' transnational literacy development and support the field's commitment to social justice.

EPILOGUE: MARTIN HOFFMAN & THE PUBLIC WORK OF QUESTIONING

Martin Hoffman, who set Woody Guthrie's poem "Plane over Los Gatos" to music, moved from Fort Collins to Rough Rock, Arizona, to teach at a Navajo school, and in the early 1970s, shot himself. Judy Collins, a folk singer, songwriter, and friend of Martin's from Denver, Colorado, wrote "Song for Martin" following his death:

In Rough Rock, Arizona he lived for many years alone

A gangly kid from Colorado, who could sing the sweetest songs

I first heard Woody's songs from him in a cabin in the snow

Seems like it was yesterday but it was years and years ago

I'll never know what brought him to where he finally stood

A shotgun pointed at his head in a cabin in the woods

But somehow I could hear it, it struck my heart as well

For the unknown man who needs a hand

For the friend I'll never know

As I worked on this thesis (and chatted with archivists at the Morgan Library), I had the persistent feeling that Martin Hoffman was "one of us"—someone studying English at CSU, living in beautiful northern Colorado, and perhaps wrestling to hold on to hope that his work held meaning. His story—a local history for those of us who live in Fort Collins and study/work at CSU—is one additional silence in this story that I feel compelled to respond to, because the

act of composing texts that respond to injustices may not have a “payoff” in our lifetime, but, as Tim Hernandez noted, we can become comfortable with the art of asking questions publically. Hoffman’s small act of setting Guthrie’s poem to music was a crucial moment in carrying forward the story of the Los Gatos plane crash, and ultimately paving the way for the new memorial headstone and the connection between the families of the crash victims.

Hoffman’s act suggests that my life and the lives of those around me who are engaged in writing and education work are “enough,” and that what we do might lead to real material change that we may never see. Or rather, the things we do are never enough on our own; they must fit into a web of other people’s work. Set alongside the story of the Los Gatos plane crash and, years later, the memorialization of it, Hoffman’s story is, paradoxically, evidence that we have reason to hope. The story provides a rare example of the “outcome” of public questioning—the necessity of it—even if we do not live to see our questions answered.

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APPENDIX A: SONG LYRICS

Deportees (Woody Guthrie / Martin Hoffman)

The crops are all in and the peaches are rott'ning,
The oranges piled in their creosote dumps;
They're flying 'em back to the Mexican border
To pay all their money to wade back again

[chorus]

Goodbye to my Juan, goodbye, Rosalita,
Adios mis amigos, Jesus y Maria;
You won't have your names when you ride the big airplane,
All they will call you will be "deportees"

My father's own father, he waded that river,
They took all the money he made in his life;
My brothers and sisters come working the fruit trees,
And they rode the truck till they took down and died.

Some of us are illegal, and some are not wanted,
Our work contract's out and we have to move on;
Six hundred miles to that Mexican border,
They chase us like outlaws, like rustlers, like thieves.

We died in your hills, we died in your deserts,
We died in your valleys and died on your plains.
We died 'neath your trees and we died in your bushes,
Both sides of the river, we died just the same.

The sky plane caught fire over Los Gatos Canyon,
A fireball of lightning, and shook all our hills,
Who are all these friends, all scattered like dry leaves?
The radio says, "They are just deportees"

Is this the best way we can grow our big orchards?
Is this the best way we can grow our good fruit?
To fall like dry leaves to rot on my topsoil
And be called by no name except "deportees"?

Migrants (Sam Baker)

it is not that far
the coyote said walk north one day
across la cabeza prieta
keep walking to interstate eight
they walked that day
the next
the next
the water ran out
one by one
they looked like dried leaves
scattered in the sun

oh dear ones
we are lost

it is so far away
from the low lands of Veracruz
to the desert north of Sonora
where they strung out in ones and twos

they got twelve lines in a midwestern paper
on the pages with the ads for shoes
fourteen men got lost in the desert
they were migrants they got
twelve lines of news

pull together my brothers
the devil is passing
pull together my brothers
we are burning

they got twelve lines in a midwestern paper
on the pages with the ads for shoes
fourteen men
got lost in the desert
they were migrants
they got twelve lines of news

oh dear ones
we are lost

Deportees (Lance Canales & the Flood's rewrite)

Crops are all in and the peaches are rotting
The oranges are piled in their creosote dumps
They're flying me back to the Mexican border
To pay all my money to wade back again

Goodbye to my Juan goodbye Rosalita
Adios mis amigos Jesus y Maria
No we won't have a name when we ride the big airplane
All they will call us will be deportees
[whispered names]

My father's own father waded that river
They took all the money he made in his life
My brothers and sisters come working the fruit trees
And they rode the big truck 'til they took down and died

We died in your hills we died in your deserts
We died in your valleys we died in your planes
We died 'neath your trees we died in your bushes
Both sides of the river we died just the same

Goodbye to my Juan goodbye Rosalita
Adios mis amigos Jesus y Maria
No we won't have a name when we ride the big airplane
All they will call us will be deportees

Goodbye to my Juan goodbye Rosalita
Adios mis amigos Jesus y Maria
No we won't have a name when we ride the big airplane
All they will call us will be deportees

Some of us are illegal and some are not wanted
Said most are illegal and most are not wanted
Six hundred to the Mexican border
They chase us like outlaws like animals like thieves

The skyplane caught fire over Los Gatos canyon
Fireball of lightning that shook all the hills
Ask, who are all these friends all scattered like dry leaves
The radio calls us all just deportees

Goodbye to my Juan goodbye Rosalita
Adios mis amigos Jesus y Maria
No we won't have a name when we ride the big airplane
All they will call us will be deportees

Goodbye to my Juan goodbye Rosalita
Adios mis amigos Jesus y Maria
No we won't have a name when we ride the big airplane
All they will call us will be deportees

Goodbye to my Juan goodbye Rosalita
Adios mis amigos Jesus y Maria

No we won't have a name when we ride the big airplane

All they will call us will be deportees

APPENDIX B: CONSENT FORM

Consent to Participate in a Research Study

Colorado State University

TITLE OF STUDY: Rhetorics of Song: How Music Critiques, Persuades, and Educates

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Sue Doe, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Department of English (sue.doe@colostate.edu)

CO-PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Vani Kannan, MA Candidate, Rhetoric & Composition, Department of English (vani.kannan@colostate.edu)

WHY AM I BEING INVITED TO TAKE PART IN THIS RESEARCH? You are being asked to take part in this study because we believe that your artistic and cultural work can inform our understanding of the relationship between music and language and how songs might be used in educational settings to teach critical thinking and argument.

WHO IS DOING THE STUDY? Under the direction of Dr. Sue Doe, the principal investigator, Ms. Kannan, the co-principal investigator, will conduct the interview.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY? The purpose of this study is to explore the influence of Woody Guthrie's poem-turned-song "Deportees" on modern creative artists working in different genres, and to explore the way music and language work together to persuade and educate.

WHERE IS THE STUDY GOING TO TAKE PLACE AND HOW LONG WILL IT LAST? The study will take place via Skype/in-person interview (no more than 45 minutes) in October 2013, scheduled at your convenience.

WHAT WILL I BE ASKED TO DO? You will be asked to participate in an interview in which Vani Kannan, the co-principal investigator, will ask you a series of questions and engage you in conversation. The questions will ask you to talk about your creative practice and how you envision your work being used in an educational setting. The interview will be tape-recorded, but if at any point in the interview you should wish to speak off record, you have the right to do so. When the interview is transcribed, we will send the transcription to you and you will have opportunity to revise any of your comments.

ARE THERE REASONS WHY I SHOULD NOT TAKE PART IN THIS STUDY? We see no reason that you should not participate in this interview.

WHAT ARE THE POSSIBLE RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS?

There are no known risks associated with this study. However, it is not possible to identify all potential risks in research procedures. The researcher(s) have taken reasonable safeguards to minimize any known and potential, but unknown, risks.

ARE THERE ANY BENEFITS FROM TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY? There are no known benefits for participating; however, we hope this interview will give you the satisfaction of knowing that your work is valued by people working as literacy educators who see the educational potential of music and song. We hope that you will find some satisfaction in knowing that you are making a contribution to the work of teachers who draw on music to work for social justice.

DO I HAVE TO TAKE PART IN THE STUDY? Your participation in this research is voluntary. If you decide to participate in the study, you may withdraw your consent and stop participating at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

WHO WILL SEE THE INFORMATION THAT I GIVE? We will keep private all research records that identify you, to the extent allowed by law. We may publish the results of this study; however, if you wish, we will keep your name and other identifying information private and undisclosed. Only the research team will have access to your data. The only exception to this is if we are asked to share the research files for audit purposes with the CSU Institutional Review Board ethics committee, if necessary.

CAN MY TAKING PART IN THE STUDY END EARLY? Your participation in this interview is voluntary. You may withdraw your consent and stop participating at any time during the interview (or afterward) without penalty.

WHAT HAPPENS IF I AM INJURED BECAUSE OF THE RESEARCH? The Colorado Governmental Immunity Act determines and may limit Colorado State University's legal responsibility if an injury happens because of this study. Claims against the University must be filed within 180 days of the injury. However, this is highly unlikely in the case of a one-time interview.

WHAT IF I HAVE QUESTIONS?

Before you decide whether to accept this invitation to take part in the study, please ask any questions that might come to mind now. Later, if you have questions about the study, you can contact: Principal investigator, Sue Doe, sue.doe@colostate.edu, or Co-investigator, Vani Kannan at 703.819.3586 or vani.kannan@colostate.edu. If you have any questions about your rights as a volunteer in this research, contact the IRB Coordinator at Janell.Barker@colostate.edu or 970-491-1655. We will give you a copy of this consent form to take with you.

