Ethics, Effectiveness, and the Professional Communicator

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Critical Introduction for Master's Portfolio

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Introduction

This portfolio and critical introduction is in fulfillment of Master's in Writing, Professional Writing and Rhetorics, at Illinois State University. My audiences for this portfolio are the graduate committee, prospective employers, and future graduate students in the professional writing and rhetorics field. For these readers, I provide evidence of the quality of work that I have completed as part of my degree requirements and as a professional researcher, writer, and editor; showcase my intellectual and material work that concerns how power, ethics, and rhetoric influence professional and technical communication; and help facilitate communication that is ethical, effective, and helpful for academics and practitioners.

This critical introduction is meant to establish how my portfolio does the aforementioned by critically connecting my artifacts to the following goals:

- To define ethical communication.
- To articulate why professional communicators have an ethical obligation to those impacted by our communication by emphasizing the issues of representation, subjectivity, and identity construction in ethical communication.
- To investigate the purpose of technical and professional communication, which will illuminate the reasons professional and technical communicators have an obligation to ethical communication.
- To evidence how technical communication's historical, traditional basis in scientific and objective discourse has affected contemporary theory and practice in the field.
- To develop communication practices that promote more ethical and rhetorically effective professional communication by bridging the gap between theory and practice.
- To analyze how my research, writing, and editing helps to convey the power technical communicators have in constructing and understanding people's identities, bodies, and

minds through rhetoric. I will specifically focus on how technical communication can impact people with mental illness.

- To justify the visual and textual rhetorical choices made when designing my blog and portfolio, and why this medium and these choices for my portfolio are rhetorically effective and ethical for my audience(s).
- To provide an overview of the conclusions and implications for technical communication practice covered in this portfolio.

Articulating Ethical Communication

Building upon important work from Slack, Miller, Doak, Katz, Palmeri, and Lay—among many others—in this portfolio I articulate both the need for ethical communication in professional writing and rhetorics and provide examples of such communication. In order to communicate ethically, we must understand what ethical communication consists of in theory and in practice. To facilitate this understanding, I rhetorically analyze current definitions of ethical communication and draw upon current theorists to revise these definitions. Specifically, in this critical introduction to my portfolio, I articulate what ethical communication is by using what current scholars in the technical communication field have argued makes communication ethical or unethical, showing the many ways unethical communication has been prevalent in professional communication and other fields, and suggesting ways this can be turned around in theory and practice.

To begin, after reviewing a number of technical communication organization websites, I found that many of their definitions of ethical communication and the technical communicator's ethical responsibility fall short of the complexity needed to practice ethical communication in professional fields. For example, the Society of Technical Communication's (STC) "Ethical Principles for Technical Communicators" states, "We respect cultural variety and other aspects of

diversity in our clients, employers, development teams, and audiences. We serve the business interests of our clients and employers as long as they are consistent with the public good." STC's definition of ethical communication focuses on the clients or employers ethical responsibility to be "consistent with the public good." Who and what is the "public good"? Who has the privilege of being considered when deciding what is "good" for the public? Is it just STC's primary and secondary audiences: practitioners and scholars? Or does it encompass more diverse voices, groups, and cultures? There is no question that some will be privileged over others in all forms of communication, but it is important to analyze who will be left out and why in order to have an honest and multifaceted understanding of ethical responsibility; anything less than this is just empty words set out to make an organization appear ethical. Also, although it mentions the technical communicator's responsibility to "respect cultural variety," it does not go far enough to establish what this "respect" entails: is it surface acknowledgement of differences or incorporation of differences into the "articulation of voices" that is the process of communication (Slack, Miller, and Doak 93)? Once again, whose voices get articulated, why, and how can we change that? Surely, this question is a simplification of the complexity of analysis that goes into articles published in STC, but it suggests a problematic simplification of ethical responsibility not fully articulated by technical communicators or by the largest organization that provides guidance, education, and networking for technical communicators.

If technical communication organizations consider the needs of their primary audience, technical and other communicators, they will understand that articulating what ethical communication is and why it is important will assist technical and other communicators in their practice. It may not be as important for an organization to explicitly define their understanding of ethical responsibility on their website, but it is of vital importance for them to explicitly articulate this ethical responsibility to the technical and other communicators that make up their audience. As

I argue within many of my artifacts and throughout this introduction, continuously increasing the complexity of our understanding of ethical responsibility is the only way to be consistently aware of the rhetorical impact and ethical implications of what we, as communicators, do, say, think, design, and write. In the case of STC, do practitioners need explicit advice on how to, for example, "respect cultural variety"? Not necessarily, but they do need a framework on which to base their communication decisions that explicitly articulates how to understand cultural variety, what respecting other cultures and peoples entails, and how to use this critical inquiry and these rhetorical strategies in their practices.

Another example of a simplistic articulation of our ethical responsibility is on the Association for Women in Communication (AWC) website. On the "AWC Fact Sheet" under "Ethical Values," AWC states "AWC is committed to work nationally and internationally for pay equity for women in the communications workplace and for freedom of information." This one sentence is the only direct reference to ethical values on the website. The focus of their organization, women in the technical communication field, is fitting in light of this goal, but this goal does not contain any information on their and their members own ethical responsibility to their audiences and fellow communicators, how they and their members should go about working for equality in pay for women, or what exactly "freedom of information" has to do with these goals. Also, AWC's statement of ethical values focuses itself on only one part of the issue of equality: pay. Issues of equality are important considerations in ethical communication, and equity in pay is only one of countless ways people, women specifically, are subjugated in society, specifically in the workplace. There is no mention of the inequality of women to men in management positions, the inequality of health and other benefits, or the inequality of women in science and technology position. Once again, I am sure the majority of the technical communicators who belong to AWC are very aware of these equality issues and how they apply to their communication practices, but

presenting this one sentence as the whole of their ethical values does little for advancing and articulating ethical communication for their audience of technical and other communicators. Advancing and articulating ethical communication by explicitly stating what communicators can do to make a positive ethical impact, as I stated earlier, is important to developing a framework for technical communicators to understand how to go about understanding the complex issues like equality that impact our communication.

A majority of the organizations' websites I reviewed provide at least a couple sentences and up to a page or so of information on their ethical values, codes, or standards. For example, the National Association of Government Communicators (NAGC), the National Association of Science Writers (NASW), and the Human Factors and Ergonomics Society (HFES) have all dedicated at least a page of their websites to explaining, but in most cases listing, what they consider are their guides to ethical responsibility in their organizations and in technical communication. Most of these pages, however, only cover basic information for potential members and employees. For example, HFES provides a "Code of Ethics" that includes the categories general conduct, publications, subject precautions, and forensic practice. There are a handful of references to the impact practitioners have on their subjects (the humans and animals they perform tests on), but they mostly deal with specific parts of the variety of jobs their members and employees perform. They state, "[t]o promote and sustain the highest levels of professional and scientific performance by its members, the Human Factors and Ergonomics Society has adopted this Code of Ethics." It places importance on the "professional and scientific performance" of the members, but does not articulate what makes this performance "ethical" (as in "Code of Ethics"). The emphasis on general conduct and subject precautions calls for more discussion of the ethical implications, but HFES does not articulate this.

A few organizations do a more effective job of providing employees and members with a more multifacted understanding of the ethical values of that organization. The Council of Science Editors (CSE) and the Localization Industry Standards Association (LISA) are two examples of these. The Council of Science Editors (CSE) has a 77 page document called "CSE's White Paper on Promoting Integrity in Scientific Journal Publications" that was updated in 2009. It includes sections on the "Roles and Responsibilities in Publishing" (for editors and for authors) and "Identification on Research Misconduct and Guidelines for Actions." While it does not specifically call the document a code of ethics, the rhetoric of "promoting integrity" suggests a focus on ethical responsibility that upholds a standard set by the industry of scientific writing. It is mostly a list of the "Dos and Don'ts" of working with publications and authors, which does not help the science editors understand how important their role can be in shaping a publication. While it is the most concerted effort to set out the ethical responsibilities of technical communicators that emerged during my review of these organizations, it still falls short in the generality of its language and lack of understanding the impact that the science editors can have on their audience, authors, and study participants.

There are many other technical and professional communication organizations that do not even provide even basic descriptions of ethical principles or values, at least not on their websites: Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers' Professional Communication Society (IEEE/PCS), Council for Programs in Technical and Scientific Communication (CPTSC), Society for Scholarly Publishing (SSP), and International Communication Association (ICA). ICA even states that they "have not established a comprehensive code of professional practice providing detailed guidelines on ethical issues" because "given the interdisciplinary diversity of research encompassed by ICA, a comprehensive code of ethics for ICA that would address this range of research methods and

scholarly approaches would be cumbersome." And they send their users to a list of organizations that do explicitly state codes of ethics.

The concern becomes, if the organizations that technical communicators belong to cannot or do not fully articulate ethical communication for their organizations, how are technical communicators to understand what ethical communication is or even know how to proceed in their communication practices? Surely there are individuals within these organizations who practice ethical communication; but with a more robust articulation of ethical communication, technical communicators can more fully understand the rhetorical power of their communication that underlies their ethical responsibility. And as the use of many professional and technical communication theorists, from Katz to Lay, in the artifacts in my portfolio suggest, theorists and practitioners have the potential to contribute to the complexity of this definition of ethical communication by rearticulating and complicating these general approaches to understanding this ethical responsibility and creating a framework for technical communicators to understand their ethical responsibility.

In "Between Efficiency and Politics: Rhetoric and Ethics in Technical Writing," Cezar M. Ornatowski illuminates some of the issues in technical writing that make an understanding of ethical communication difficult to teach and practice. He suggests that focusing on efficiency and effectiveness can create effective documents, but it does not further an understanding of ethical communication. He asserts that we, as practitioners, teachers, and theorists of technical communication, need to account for "the complex nature of the relationship between language and its social contexts" in order to understand our role as ethical communicators (174). He also states that "as long as we do not distinguish, and train writers to distinguish, between rhetorical effects and human attitudes, as long as we promulgate the view that there is a language that does not involve 'personal interpretation,' we have no way of talking about responsibility or ethics that does not

appear self-contradictory" (175). Here, Ornatowski is asserting the need for theories and practices in the field of technical communication that articulate the communication process as rhetorical rather than blankly serving interests of an employer for effective, efficient, objective, factual, and/or neutral communication (175). Ignoring the rhetorical power and influence of the communicator divests the communicator of any responsibility toward the effects of that communication and propagates a simplistic definition of ethical communication.

Steven Katz, in "The Ethic of Expediency: Classical Rhetoric, Technology, and the Holocaust," comments on this problematic tendency toward not considering the ethical impact of our communication. He highlights Hitler's and the Nazi's rhetoric during the Holocaust as an extreme example of communication that focused on expediency and efficiency as an ethos for committing atrocities on those not deemed *human* by their distorted definition of humanity. He asks practitioners, teachers, and scholars in the field of technical communication to consider their responsibility to the ethical implications, and understanding what that entails, rather than focusing on how effective and efficient we can make the communication. He suggests that we can begin to counter the ethos of expediency, efficiency, and effectiveness by "recognizing the essentially ethical character of all rhetoric, including our writing theory, pedagogy, and practice, and the role that expediency plays in rhetoric" (272). Recognizing this is essential to practice and teaching of ethical communication because it teaches practitioners to root their decisions and actions in a humanitarian concern rather than a "personal or political or corporate or scientific or technological goal" that is only concerned with expediency as an end in itself (Katz 272). Recognizing the "essentially ethical character of all rhetoric" also helps to create a definition of ethical communication that is multifaceted and challenges old ideas of where technical communicators' responsibilities lie.

Along with the aforementioned scholars, many feminist theorists and disability theorists have informed current definitions and understandings of ethical communication that I present in my

portfolio. Theorists such as Jason Palmeri and Mary M. Lay suggest ways of thinking of ethical communication as that which encompasses more diverse perspectives, is aware of the asymmetrical power relations that determine who gets represented and how they get represented in technical communication, and challenges normalizing rhetorics that define individuals in restrictive and negative ways. For example, in "Disability Studies, Cultural Analysis, and the Critical Practice of Technical Communication Pedagogy," Palmeri focuses on the need for adapting "social discourses and material environments to ensure equal participation for citizens of diverse abilities" (50). This focus leads him to a critique of "the ways in which technical communication discourse is enmeshed in the broader social construction of disability and normalcy" in order to develop ethical communication that does not "reinforce normalcy and marginalize the embodied knowledges of people with disabilities" (50). Lay suggests similar ways in which we can seek "the gaps or silences within traditional scholarship," among other things, in order to encompass more perspectives, thereby increasing the complexity of the communication process (352).

The aforementioned scholarship contributes to my understanding of what ethical communication is and what ethical communicators do. To summarize their views and how they are articulated in my portfolio, I emphasize that ethical communicators always strive to become aware of and make use of rhetorical choices in ways that make positive, rewarding, helpful, and constructive impacts on those who they communicate with and for. Ethical communication involves understanding how rhetoric shapes identities, represents others, and defines others and ourselves by interrogating and investigating the power relations, language, and structures involved in developing and using that rhetoric. Investigating and interrogating this rhetoric is necessary to creating a positive, respectful impact on and fair representation of individuals, communities, and cultures. Among other goals, ethical communicators must not cause emotional, physical, or social harm directly or indirectly to a culture, a community, or an individual through their communication

or through the acts, thoughts, or speech of the audiences and individuals impacted by that communication. This "harm" can include misrepresentation, which can lead to a negative and simplified understanding of others that create stigma and hate to be directed at them and others like them; construction of identities by those in power rather than the individual, group, or culture, which can lead to a harmful self-image or image of those one could identify with; and many other negative consequences. Doing no harm, however, cannot exist without investigating and interrogating how our rhetoric represents and marginalizes individuals, communities, and cultures. Without this interrogation, it is impossible to know what will do harm and to whom it is being done. Also, we cannot have equal participation, as Palmeri suggests we do, in the construction of communication that represent others without investigating who needs to be a part of that communication. In order to avoid these negative impacts, ethical communicators must be knowledgeable of the ways their communication will impact others through researching and gathering information from multiple perspectives, and understanding of how communication has caused negative impacts in the past. Ethical communication that encompasses more perspectives, individuals, and communities will help make a positive impact possible because it challenges rhetorics of objectivity, efficiency, and (in)humanity that professional communication has a tendency toward.

Ethical Obligation: Representation, Normalcy, Marginalization, and Identity Construction

In my portfolio, I explore many issues that create complexity and complicate ethical communication. I focus on the issues of representation, normalcy, marginalization, and identity construction in professional communication in my artifacts. Research into these issues gives insight into the power and agency professional communicators have in representing others, thereby affecting their lives. Understanding this agency shows professional communicators that they have an obligation and responsibility to those they represent because of the enormous impact it has on

their lives. These issues have powerful impacts on the ways people think about, feel toward, and enact their and others' identities, and they also impact the ways societies and individuals treat each other. If communicators can understand that their words, images, and the power behind those images and words, can affect individuals and communities, professional communicators will be able to change the ways they communicate in order to make a much more positive impact. The artifacts I have chosen for this portfolio demonstrate how and why technical and professional writers have this ethical obligation to the audience through the use of specific examples of that impact, exploration of the issues that influence that impact, and how the impact can be more effective and have positive effects.

Many of my artifacts cover factors that influence the impact of professional communication on individuals and communities, such as culture, language, gender, sexuality, and ability and how that relates to issues of representation, normalcy, marginalization, and identity construction. These factors are some of the most influential to the ways people are represented, constructed, and marginalized in society and in each other's eyes. I analyze how these factors play a part in the effects of professional communication; such factors influence professional communication because they are complex and involve incorporating multiple perspectives into a document that may not have been considered before.

In my portfolio, I explicate some of the instances where professional communicators, from members of the media to writers and researchers for medical texts, make rhetorical choices that perpetuate rhetorics of normalcy, misrepresent individuals or groups of people, and generally support unethical ways of communicating. These examples reflect the reasons why communicators need to understand their obligation to ethical communication as well as reflect the ways I, as a professional writer and researcher, understand my ethical obligations to the people, communities, cultures, and institutions I write about and represent.

In "The Use of the Words 'Evil' and 'Monster' to Demonize and Dehumanize Violent Criminals," I analyzed the rhetorical use of the words "monster" and "evil" to define a certain group of people as non-human: violent criminals. I asked what it means to be non-human and what our responsibility is to those who are considered non-human by society and employed feminist, narratological, and literary theories to deconstruct the rhetoric of those words uses on violent criminals. It demonstrates the importance of understanding the rhetorical purposes and effects of our words (by everyone from professional communicators to politicians) and how we can use them responsibly and ethically. For example, I analyze the ways people who are considered "social failures" by their society's standards are often equated with being less than human. I use the example of Susan Smith, who in 1994 murdered her two children and blamed it on "a black man." Her social failure was in not being a "good mother" by anyone's definition of the term; this lead to her being referred to as *monstrous* and *evil* by the public and the media. Newspapers columnists, media commentators, and other professional communicators perpetuated a social belief that Edward Ingebretsen, in the article "Monster Making: A Politics of Persuasion" explains the way people who fail in these social roles are seen as more like lessons than human beings: "every society needs a stigmatized person . . . whose function it is to provide readily moralized examples of how not to think and act" (26). I explain that defining someone like Susan Smith as a monster and using the etymological history of the word to then use them as messages and warnings reassures the rest of society that we are not like them: "The monster . . . reconfirms the virtues of the normal for those who . . . need persuading" (Ingebretsen 25). Using these words not only negatively impacts that criminals themselves, but becomes an easy answer to the complex question of what makes us *human*, and professional communicators play an important role in defining that for society.

In "Technical Communication and Representation of People with Mental Illness" I analyzed how professional communication impacts people with mental illness specifically with regard to the

DSM-IV. I used the DSM-IV as an example of a piece of technical communication that directly and indirectly affects people with mental illness and those close to them. I used Palmeri's article on disability and technical communication to argue that the DSM-IV uses normalizing rhetoric to label people as disordered (vs. "ordered") based on a list of symptoms, which can lead to stigmatization of that person and other adverse effects. I interviewed Keith Brotheridge, a supervisor in the field of mental health who has regularly treated patients for over 15 years and now mentors others who provide direct therapy to clients, who explained, "I treat symptoms, not so much a specific diagnosis, but it is the diagnosis number that drives the business side of mental health." Brotheridge further explained that what medication a person can receive (and be paid for by insurance), as well as other aspects of treatment, are based solely on the diagnosis that the clinician gives to a patient. And this diagnosis can affect whether or not patients can continue medical treatment if they switch to another insurance carrier based on it being a pre-existing condition. These and other adverse effects of the normalizing rhetoric (which effectively "others" people with mental illness) of the DSM-IV illustrate how powerful technical communication is in giving, accessing, and taking away agency, individuality, and humanity. I end the research essay with three ways these adverse effects can be countered: challenge normalcy rhetoric in both theory and practice, critically analyze the impact of "assistive" technology/usability, and involve people with mental illness in their representation.

In "How Television (Mis)Represents the Culture of the Mentally Ill," I analyze the social impact of representations of people with mental illness on television in order to show how the technology of television and popular culture can affect the way a group of people is represented and treated in society. I focus on fictional television shows (dramas and comedies) as well as anti-stigma and mental health awareness commercials. I refer to the stigma of mental illness as a defining factor of how and why the majority of the representations on fictional television shows are negative:

people with mental illnesses are most often depicted as violent criminals or, at least, people who cannot function in or make a contribution to society. Citing the research that states the negative impact these representations have on people with mental illnesses (e.g. increase in stigma from the public), I conclude:

> All of the people that are involved in creating and producing television programming and commercials, as well as mental health professionals, advocates, and the public . . . . has the responsibility to understand and respect people with mental illness as individuals that deserve to be represented with respect and compassion. Not only television needs to adapt to this sensibility, but the public needs to be more respectful and knowledgeable in their television viewing habits. This means one of the best ways organizations who are interested in creating awareness and fighting stigma is through television. With the help of more positive representations and a more knowledgeable public, a shift away from stigma and toward positive representations could assist mentally ill people to create identities, define their voice, and stand up to represent their culture. (8)

While the previous examples deals with the ethical obligations on technical and professional communicators in practice, my research essay "Ethical Implications of Aristotle's Influence on Technical Communication" explicates the ethical obligation of teachers of technical and professional communicators. In this research essay, I analyze three technical communication textbooks over the past thirty years that purport to teach how technical and professional writers should practice in the field. I explore the ways the two older of these textbooks uses traditional rhetorical strategies and understandings, focusing primarily on Aristotle's *On Rhetoric*, to largely ignore the ethical implications of writing, except for small and hardly articulated issues of gendered language and "whistleblowing." To relate the purpose of understanding the ethical obligation this analysis examines, I use these textbooks as a way of connecting the theories I used to define ethical communication to the practice of being a technical communicator; they are a vital part of how practitioners, scholars, and teachers have an equal obligation to ethical communication.

As a professional communicator, I have an ethical obligation to the people and the subjects I write about. In the feature article for the Illinois State alumni Magazine, "Peeling Back Prejudice: Life in America a Struggle for many post-9/11," I interviewed Dr. Louise Cainkar about her

research on the impact the events of September 11th had on Arab and Muslim Americans. The subject was sensitive because the impact the events of September 11th had on Arab and Muslim Americans was (and still is) a controversial topic according to many. This meant I not only had to consider and be sensitive to how I represented Cainkar, but also how I represented and constructed the subject and people she was researching: American individuals of Arab ethnicity. I had to be aware of my obligation to the interviewee as well as the people represented in the article. I read her research (in the form of the book *Homeland Insecurity: The Arab American and Muslim American Experience After 9/11*) and others' on the subject in order to understand the complexity of the subject. Also, it was important to get her individual perspective on the subject in order to write an article that represented her thoughts and goals on the subject.

I was aware of my ethical obligation to the texts and authors that I edited as well. When editing the thesis and the television script, I considered all of the previously mentioned ethical implications of my changes and influence on the texts. These included my interactions with the author, which had to be considerate of the authors' perspectives on the text as well as on the subject material and characters (in the case of the script) in these texts. I thought of my ethical obligation in almost the same way I had when writing the magazine article because the power I wielded over the text could have just as many effects as the author's words would have. For example, in the television script, the subject matter was about a group of very successful and very diverse group of friends: most of the characters were differently-abled or in another way marked by being different from the so-called "norm" in society (e.g. one character was in a wheelchair, another was blind, another had albinism, etc.). I considered how the depiction of each of these characters represented groups of people who have been largely left out of popular media and balanced that with the author's purpose and goal for writing a script that represented these groups through these characters. How to balance these issues was also part of my ethical obligation as an editor. When

editing the part of a thesis for the graduate student, I had to be aware of many of the same issues but had concerns of a very different audience to consider: a graduate committee and other graduate students. When editing the thesis, I did a rhetorical analysis of this audience and focused on different levels of the thesis than the television script. The subject matter was still an important consideration, since it included data from interviews she conducted with people, but it was based on factual and well as ethical representation.

As my examples demonstrate, the professional communicator has a responsibility to interrogate and challenge the asymmetrical power relations that affect all relevant rhetorics and the ways each of us relates to and rhetorically constructs oneself and others. These asymmetrical power relations place limitations on how well a professional communicator can foresee the impact of her rhetoric on diverse communities of readers and users. In other words, communicators can never be knowledgeable of all the possible negative impacts. But an ethical communicator uses every tool and ability she has to ensure that the impact is not negative. Using every tool and ability we have to ensure this ethical communication includes challenging the rhetorics of normalcy, (in)humanity, and objectivity that exist within the field of technical communication.

Technical and Professional Communication

The traditional and modern purpose(s) and basis of technical and professional communication are important to understand if we wish to understand how technical and professional communication has developed and why this purpose and basis are connected to the ethical implications of the text. Many of my artifacts in my portfolio deal with these issues in order to form a clearer picture of what the ethical implications are and how communicators can integrate that into their communication.

The Purpose of Technical and Professional Communication

In "Feminist Theory and the Redefinition of Technical Communication" Mary M. Lay states that technical communication was "defined initially as the objective transfer of information" (348). If this is the traditional definition of technical communication, what then would have been considered the purpose of this communication? As discussed earlier in Ornatowski's article on technical communication and rhetoric, he outlines the traditional purpose of technical communication as performing this objective transfer of information in the most effective and efficient way for purposes defined by whomever the technical communicator is employed by. Also, in Slack, Miller, and Doak's article "The Technical Communicator as Author: Meaning, Power and Authority," they state, "[t]echnical communicators are taught . . . that the highest goal they can achieve is 'clarity and brevity,' which suggests a transparency that belies what they really do" (85). But if we understand technical communication in the rhetorical sense that enables a more complex use of language and other forms of communication, the understanding that requires a discussion of ethics, responsibility, and obligation, we recognize a need for a more intricate set of purposes for technical and professional communication.

Generally, one of the purposes of technical and professional communication is to influence how readers, users, or audiences will act, which can have huge consequences for the individuals and communities affected by those actions. One way of understanding this purpose for technical communication is that it communicates meaning that assists in the use, production, and/or development of technologies often within a company or society, and it most often provokes the user or reader to an action. Anyone who uses or takes part in producing or developing that technology is impacted by technical communication. Anyone affected by the actions or policies of an individual, company, corporation, and/or the technology produced by those actions is affected by technical communication. Palmeri argues that technical communicators "increasingly take on the vital and

important work of advocating for worker and consumer safety," this implies that part of the job of a technical communication is to be ethically responsible for the impact their communication has on their readers, users, and audiences. Part of their job as a human being and as a professional in the field is to be advocates for those readers, users, and audiences. This includes anyone that is directly involved with using, producing, or reading the communication *and* those affected by the actions of those directly involved.

Technical Communication, Scientific Objectivity, and Transparency

My research on current and past technical writing and communication textbooks and the history of technical communication has shown that there is a historical precedent for professional communicators to emphasize scientific objectivity above all else. As stated before, Slack, Miller, and Doak state, "[t]echnical communicators are taught . . . that the highest goal they can achieve is 'clarity and brevity,' which suggests a transparency that belies what they really do" (85). This communicative model of discourse, transmission, is the simplest and easiest form of technical writing to teach because it relies only on a clear, objective reasoning from the side of the writer that transmits information from one person to another.

In "The Rise of Technical Writing Instruction in America," Robert J. Connors outlines where technical communication began and how it has developed over the decades since it began. He explains that technical writing pedagogy started in the field of engineering, where engineers were not taught in college (330). Theresa Kynell in "Technical Communication from 1850-1950: Where Have We Been" further explains that between the years 1850 to 1862 "they were trained either in apprenticeships or they picked up a random engineering or science course" (144). In 1862, after "land-grant colleges like Purdue and the polytechnics emerged as places where engineering would become an alternative," she states, "[o]ne can imagine the cultural split brewing in this environment as traditional liberal arts schools perceived their mission as higher education, whereas the land grant

colleges appealed to the middle class desirous of a professional trade" (144). This cultural split was based on the land-grant college's emphasis on science and technology vs. the liberal arts colleges' emphasis on the humanities. Connors states that "until the 1950s technical writing and engineering writing were synonymous" (33). And this conflation of technical writing and a wholly scientific and technological field is not something that is easily broken apart. In fact, it comes from even further back than the beginning of technical writing instruction.

Beginning with Aristotle in ancient Greece, the emphasis in forming any argument or presenting any information, deliberative rhetoric, was in using clear, concise, and objective language. In my research essay, "Ethical Implications of Aristotle's Influence on Technical Communication," I point out that in *On Rhetoric*, Aristotle puts a clear focus on the subject of clarity. He states, "let the virtue of style . . . be defined as 'to be clear' (speech is a kind of sign, so if it does not make clear it will not perform its function) . . ." (*On Rhetoric* III. ii. 1404b). In my research on the three separate technical writing textbooks (Mills' and Walter's *Technical Writing* 4th ed. from 1978; Huckin's and Olsen's *Technical Writing and Professional Communication* 2nd ed. from 1991; and Johnson-Sheehan's *Technical Communication Today* 3rd ed. from 2010), I analyze how each of these textbooks demonstrate the same emphasis on how the text needs to be "clear," "accurate," "concise" throughout their instructions on style and technical writing as a field. I state:

> This emphasis on clarity is something that has been around since ancient Greece and before, and it is still something that most instruction manuals and guides to style focus on as an important aspect of writing. However, new developments have moved away from this focus because of the increasing acknowledgment that nobody can really determine one "clear" language. Clarity depends on the audience and their cultural situation, and this is nearly impossible to determine, even through complex analysis. The issue of clarity is so subjective, just general style guidelines on one person's idea of clarity do not provide many answers, and the answers they do provide are often so generalized they leave out the complexities of the rhetorical situation (leaving out voices, audience and writers alike). (7)

As Connors explains, the engineering schools were where technical writing instruction began (330). Having this historical basis in both deliberative rhetoric and science, it is easy to see why the

importance is placed on logical, objective, rational arguments within the field of technical writing. I argue that this focus on clarity and logic leads to, among other things, a focus on objectivity that ignores the *human* in the process of developing an argument, persuading an audience, and communicating with others. This de-emphasis on the human element in front of, behind, or otherwise involved in the text dismisses and ignores individuals within the process. I use Katz to demonstrate the "expediency and the resulting ethos of objectivity, logic, and narrow focus that characterize most technical writing" (257). He argues that because Aristotle's writings were so influential on all of rhetoric, and especially so on deliberative discourse, this emphasis on logic, objectivity, and science influenced the field of technical writing.

One of the many negative impacts of valuing scientific objectivity above all else, is that certain cultures, languages, and values are privileged while others are left out, misrepresented, or undervalued. For example, cultures that subscribe to the Western reliance on science and logic as the answer to all the worlds' problems are often privileged over those with different conceptions of the world. And many cultures have been forced to assimilate to this valuing of so-called "scientific objectivity" in order to have a voice in world affairs. This basis on Western knowledges means that language and values of non-Western cultures are often misrepresented, if represented at all, in creating knowledges and ways of understanding the world. In order to counteract the ubiquity of Western knowledges and incorporate other knowledges and cultures into our communication, technical communicators must analyze the ethical implications of their texts in regard to this issue.

Referring to the need to analyze the ethical implications of communication, Slack, Miller, and Doak state, "Such knowledge is all the more important given the current tendency to define their work as (ethically) transparent. In a sense, technical communicators need to be shaken from the somnambulistic faith that their work is ethically neutral" (95). Valuing so-called "scientific objectivity," language, and knowledge over other knowledges suggests that this kind language is

correct, thereby privileged it as "truth," and by default other knowledges are false. The myth that knowledges based on science and logic are objective and therefore "truth" is tied to the myth of "ethical neutrality" or "transparency," because it implies that if the language is "transparent" or "objective" the audience can only access the "truth" of the words. This myth of transparent language is what I challenge in my essays "Summation and Conversion Style" and "Editing for Style" (among others).

I use Kenneth Burke and Paul Butler in these essays to demonstrate the ways language, and subsequently knowledges, are contingent and subjective, and how that means there can be no such thing as "neutrality" in either. In *Permanence and Change*, Kenneth Burke, in his chapter on style, discusses the myth of a neutral language and how people have tended toward scientific language in hopes of making everything clearer in a diverse world. He argues that this concern with clarity only concerns the communication of simple ideas, but ignores the communication of emotions, feelings, or spirituality, which form the basis for other knowledges. He uses the example of Shakespeare to show how poetic language works to describe complex human thoughts, emotions, and feelings. He also refers to Charlie Chaplin and his "accurate mimetic style" to demonstrate how the actions of the body can be a kind of style/language/knowledge (52). Most important, he points out that scientific language is designed for machines, not humans (58). Butler discusses the same issues in *Out of Style: Reanimating Stylistic Study in Composition and Rhetoric* when he refers to "clarity" in writing (21). He argues that "clarity" is a vague term and the concept of a transparent language is a misnomer because language is never transparent. The perception of a clear language depends on the audience, situation, and writer. The "clearest" language for a text would depend on the purpose of the text and the purpose for reading the text; therefore, there cannot be one uniformly clear language. Dispelling this myth of a "clear," "scientific," "transparent," etc. language will encourage

technical communicators to encompass more perspectives, individuals, communities, and knowledges, which will also lead to more effective communication.

An example of how emphasis on scientific objectivity has had terrible consequences is in Katz's article, which explores the direct and indirect impact of a simplistic model of communication that values objectivity, expediency, and logic over the human impacts. I use Katz's article in my research essay on Aristotle and ethics in order to show the direct result of an attitude based on apparent scientific objectivity, logic, and the absence of human concerns: Nazi Germany. In order to gain complete acceptance of the Nazi agenda, the attitude towards Jewish people and those considered "undesirable" needed to be such that no one would see them as human beings; therefore, every aspect of the daily lives of Germans was permeated by a rhetoric that presented the undesirables as nonhuman, "pieces of dirt" (Katz 256). The example Katz gives is a technical memo written by an engineer, Just, recommending efficiency improvements be made on gassing vans used to murder "undesirable" people. For example, Just argues that the front axle of the gassing van would not actually be overloaded if the size of the van was reduced by stating, "In fact, the balance is automatically restored because *the merchandise* aboard displays during the operation a natural tendency to rush to the rear door, and is mainly found lying there at the end of the operation" (emphasis added) (255). He refers to the people being gassed as "the merchandise" that "displays . . . a natural tendency to . . ." and the murdering process as "the operation." He also refers to the bodies, blood, and other fluids left by those people being murdered as "pieces of dirt" and "fluid liquids" to be evacuated through a drain in the van (256).

This text has the appearance of being objective, but is in fact written from a perspective that values logic and expediency and scientific language. It is far from "objective" partly because the complete lack of human recognition in the language expresses the clear attitude that certain human beings were no more than a byproduct of technological expediency; it values certain people as

"human" and others as "dirt." This memo is a perfect example of how technical and professional communication can have an immense, and sometimes horrific, impact on individuals and communities. Based on ideas that have been ingrained into the technical and professional communication in the past, the ethical issues of being human have often been replaced with technical jargon that places more importance on expediency, technology, and efficiency than humanity. This rhetoric of the "non-human" (the other) also means that the others' knowledges and perspectives are not valued, thereby dismissing large and important parts of the population. This rhetoric of the "non-human" or the "other" is part of the rhetoric of expediency, technology, and efficiency because it enables and encourages the hegemonic and privileged cultures to ignore large portions of audiences that their rhetoric directly and indirectly impacts as irrelevant in their rhetorical choices.

I continue to critique the myth of scientific objectivity in my essay by explaining the ethical implications of the transmission model of communication, which profoundly affects the ways technical communicators understand their role as more than trying to achieve clarity and brevity (Slack, Miller, and Doak 85). Slack, Miller, and Doak are attempting to challenge the rhetorics of (in)humanity and efficiency by identifying a way of communicating that necessitates complexity and ethical awareness of the technical communicator. Articulating the need for complexity in the models of communication utilized in professional communication is vital to ethical communication. The power and position of the technical communicator can determine the ethical impact on the readers, audience, and users of a text. Slack, Miller, and Doak identify the articulation model of communication, "a view characterized by concerns with the struggle to articulate and rearticulate meaning and relations of power," as a model that could help technical communicators work toward more complex and ethical practices (89). The tendency of these scholars is to explain the communication process as something complex in order to counteract the simplistic definitions of

scientific-based technical communication of the past. This involves not only being more aware of our understanding of what the communication process is, but being more aware and acting upon the cultural, ability, and other factors that make the articulation of meaning so multifacted.

Many of the artifacts I have chosen for my portfolio deal directly or indirectly with this problematic tendency of communication to rely on logical, technical, and "objective" knowledge rather than those based in other important aspects of humanity and society, such as emotional, subjective, and local knowledges. As I have shown in the analysis of my essay on Aristotle and ethics, in my portfolio, I explore where this tendency arose, how it has been used and misused, and the affect it has on technical communication and audiences. These theories and practices from Aristotle to feminist and disability studies inform communicators how we have balanced ethical and effective communication in the past, how it can be more effectively balanced, and what knowledge can be created from the process of learning how to balance these issues. Knowing and exploring these theories and practices inform technical communicators how to be ethical and effective by showing them how communication has worked in the past and what can be done to make it more effective.

Ethical Communication in Theory and Practice

One of my purposes for this portfolio is to bring together the theory that is used to understand what ethical communication consists of and the practice that performs this ethical communication. This is vitally important for students of technical communication because they will be taught not only how to communicate effectively, but ethically. Bridging theory and practice will also enlighten practitioners and theorists on ways they can be more ethical.

Bridging the Gap between Theory and Practice

Ornatowski's article, "Between Efficiency and Politics: Rhetoric and Ethics in Technical Writing" illustrates the steps practitioners and instructors should take to bridge the gap between theory and practice. He states that there is a rhetorical crisis in technical communication, "the contradiction goes beyond the difficulty of reconciling usefulness to employers with a sense of personal and social responsibility. It is, I think, ultimately the contradiction between two incompatible claims we make at once about the nature of technical writing and two in incompatible conceptions of language that these claims imply" (175). He continues by explaining that the goal "to serve the interest that employ her effectively and efficiently while being objective, plain, and factual" is contradictory because it takes an understanding of rhetorical choices in order to create communication (175). He points out that these attributes of clarity, plain, and factual are simply stylistic choices the writer makes. Understanding how and why to make these rhetorical choices are a part of understanding the theory behind rhetoric, technical communication, and the ethical impact of those choices.

Feminist theorists have been very concerned with the ethical implications of technical and professional communication because of the fields' overreliance on traditionally masculine systems of knowledge making. In "Feminist Theory and the Redefinition of Technical Communication," Mary Lay outlines the ways that technical communication can be and has been impacted by feminist theories. She makes the argument that technical communication scholars use many disciplines that are associated with feminist theory practices (e.g. feminist ethnography and the considerations of researcher subjectivity and positionality). The use of these research practices has led to a need to redefine technical communication away from a sole focus on scientific objectivity and toward an incorporation of multiple perspectives and knowledge systems. This and other gender-oriented theories and practices in technical communication have sought to create a more multifaceted

definition of technical communication. And a more multifacted definition of technical communication would serve to change practices within technical communication that discriminate and marginalize, based on everything from gender to ability. I utilize this view of the possibilities for technical communication in "Ethical Implications of Aristotle's Influence on Technical Communication," in order to demonstrate the ways Aristotle's influence on technical communication has functioned largely against this understanding of technical communication and to argue for a move towards more ethical practices in technical communication.

One of the ways this has been sought is through a change in the pedagogy, textbooks, and manuals that teach future technical and professional communicators. Palmeri argues that this is exactly where the change needs to occur in order to change a larger social discourse concerning disability (49). I utilize Palmeri in my artifacts about mental illness and technical communication and in my research project on Aristotle's influence on technical communication in order to develop a perspective on technical communication that considers and includes people who are differently abled. Although Palmeri does not directly discuss mental illness as a disability (his main argument concerns physical disabilities), mental illness has been viewed as a disability by many segments of the population, e.g. government institutions concerned with disability pay. The ethical implications of representing and othering people with disabilities are a large part of Palmeri's argument against technical communication's normalizing tendencies.

My portfolio connects theory to practice by demonstrating to technical communicators and teachers of technical communication how much they can impact audiences', users', communities', and others', like people with mental illness, everyday lives and practices. This portfolio and the ideas expressed within are meant to be taken up by technical communicators and instructors in order to improve the ways that we communicate and teach people to communicate and to get technical communicators to understand what agency they have in communicating ethically and effectively.

Much of my research has been focused on ways to establish these ethical and effective ways of communicating. Editors, writers, and anyone who communicates meaning meant to provoke action need to know where the rhetorical traditions we use every day come from to be able to decipher what of these traditions we can and will still use and know how we can adapt those ideas to new ways of knowing and communicating.

Professional Communication and Mental Illness

This portfolio contextualizes the importance of critically exploring the issues of representation, normalcy, and identity construction in professional communication for those in the fields of professional writing and rhetorics, from teachers to practitioners. One of the most prevalent examples of these contexts my research on the subject of professional communication and the impact it has on people with mental illnesses. I have found in my research, as well as in my day to day life, that people are more aware of mental illness and mental health issues. This is shown in the increased representation of people with mental illness and coverage of these issues in popular mediums like television and the increase of organizations whose goal is to reduce stigma of mental illness. This has led to an increase on the scholarship on the subjects of the stigma surrounding mental illness, the similarities between mental illnesses and physical disabilities, and the "normalizing" social discourse that surrounds mental illness. Disability studies speak to these issues in a unique way because mental illnesses are not as visible as physical disabilities and less understood by the general public: "Representation studies demonstrate . . . generally, negative stereotyping of [mental disorder] images is more frequent than those of physical disability" (Klin 437). My interest in disability studies is to understand mental illness as a disability that is highly stigmatized, marginalized by the public, and normalized by the medical world and, subsequently, by the field of technical communication and medical writing.

My reports "Technical Communication and Representation of People with Mental Illness" and "How Television (Mis)Represents the Culture of the Mentally Ill" investigate how professional communicators have represented and constructed identity for people with mental illness. I analyze people with mental illness as a culture that has been negatively impacted by professional and technical communication and popular culture because they have been largely misrepresented, subjected to a skewed view of what is "normal," and marginalized as violent criminals who cannot offer anything to society: "The common perception is that those afflicted with [mental disorders] . . . are dangerous; developmentally disabled, of low intelligence, have communication disorders, or all of these; are dysfunctional; and do not contribute as workers as they lack desire or are lazy" (Klin 435). Using specific examples of television programs depicting people with mental illness, commercials aimed at representing people with mental illness that combats stigma, and the construction of normalcy in the DSM-IV, I demonstrate a few of the ways people with mental illnesses are represented and constructed through these communication processes.

Specifically, in the investigative report on television and mental illness I argue that the medium of television is a technology that largely represents the dominant culture in which it is created, which means it leaves some groups of people out of. As Slack and Wise explain in "Identity Matters," unrepresented cultures like people with mentally illnesses have not participated in the innovation process because "[n]ot everyone, with their various agendas, values, and criteria, participates equally in making the decisions that matter," and "[t]echnological decisions are made by some and then impinge on others" (152). I argue that, for this reason, the mentally ill have not only been left out of the decision making process, but those who do make the decisions have impinged on the public a representation of the mentally ill that has been almost entirely misrepresentative. This misrepresentation then leads to an increase in the stigmatization of people with mental illnesses:

> In 'Television and Attitudes Toward Health Issues: Cultivation Analysis and the Third-Person Effect,' Diefenbach and West cite many surveys that . . . state that the representations that have existed in television and other forms of media came out of a misrepresentation of mentally ill people as violent and dysfunctional. They explain that a survey on the issue of mental illness representations on television 'indicates that television is, in fact, a primary source of information about mental illness' (183). The surveys also states that 'violence, unpredictability, and dangerousness [were] cited as common characteristics of mentally disordered characters in the media' (184). The people that were represented as mentally ill were 'disproportionately portrayed as violent criminals and as having a significantly negative impact on society' (193). (2)

In this report I explicate both the negative and the positive impacts that the representations have on the culture of people with mental illnesses; because this technology has the power to create negative and positive representations, it can also have positive effects. For example, shows like *United States of Tara* and *Monk* have been lauded for their largely positive (although often simplistic) representations of people with mental illnesses. Also, anti-stigma and mental health awareness commercials seek to combat these negative representations. As I point out in my report, the producers of the television shows often hire medical experts (psychiatrists and others in the field) to serve as consultants in order to try to maintain respectful and considerate representations. These consultants, as well as those who produce the anti-stigma and mental health awareness commercials, are professional communicators that have an ethical obligation to represent these people in a positive way due to their expert position.

In the investigative report "Technical Communication and Representation of People with Mental Illness," I analyze how the culture of mental illness is affected by the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders; the DSM-IV, while helpful in prescribing medicine and for insurance purposes, literally defines what is "normal" by defining the abnormal. Among other things, this is an ethical issue because it leads to people with mental illness being defined by their illness, and it is also problematic because it labels certain actions and thoughts as "disordered" based on societal standards that are often highly complex and subjective. It's important for professional and technical communicators to be aware and conscientious of such issues when they are creating a

document that may label and define a group of people in a way that is simplistic and potentially harmful. This is why I chose the DSM-IV as an example of a piece of technical communication in which the writers, editors, and researchers developing the text had an ethical obligation to those people they were defining.

Editing

My research on professional editing covers the different ways to approach the editing process and text in order to be ethical and effective. As with all of my essays, they offer contextual examples of the ethical implications of communication. Although I have focused on the technical and professional fields in my artifacts, a couple of my artifacts are examples of my editing in the creative writing field. These examples demonstrate that my expertise is in a variety of areas as well as to show how these fields are closely connected to technical and professional editing in many ways. The purpose of the editor for both fields is very similar because they both involve communicating meaning.

Constructing and conveying this meaning comes with a level of power and authority because of the rhetorical impact of that meaning. As Slack, Miller, and Doak assert, "Because professional communicators contribute to the process of articulating meaning . . . they must be able to analyze critically the ethical implications of the meanings they contribute to" (95). Wielding this power and authority ethically is the responsibility and obligation of all communicators. I demonstrate with my artifacts that technical communicators especially have an ethical obligation to the audience, users, and readers of their texts, but so do the more professional and creative communicators.

The research I have done regarding the roles of the editor has lead me to conclude that the editing process is not something that happens after the product of the text has been finished; editing is an ongoing process that is not always performed by the person called "editor." In most writing, there is never a person who is considered the "editor." In the article "When the Editor Disappears,

Does Editing Disappear?," Susan Greenburg makes the argument that the writer of the text, as well as every other person who helps develop the text participates in the process of editing the text (8). This implies that editing is a part of the creation of a text as much as it is part of the end product. Therefore, those who edit a text ("editor" or not) are also a part of the creation of meaning. Professional and technical communicators are then editors and editors are communicators. Editors have just as much of an ethical obligation to the audience of a text as the writer does, but they have the added ethical obligation to the writer for which they are editing.

As Greenburg suggests, editing is a vital part of the writing process that is often misrepresented or unnoticed by those who do not understand the complexity of the writing process. In my editing and research in editing artifacts, I explore this misconception of editing and demonstrate how powerful an editor's role is in shaping the ethical implications of a text. For example, in my research essay "The Art of Ethical and Effective Editing," I discuss how in technical and professional editing, editors are seen as advocates for the readers and users of the text they are editing. This is the largely accepted role of the editor in this context. When editing a technical text, the editor must have a clear view of the intended audience for the text, but they must also be aware of the unintended audiences and others who would be affected by the text. I see editors as advocates for the readers, and a vital part of that role is that they must bring multiple perspectives to the text that the author and other creators or developers may not have considered.

On the ethical implications of editing, this research essay shows how editors' roles in the editing process have a powerful impact on the ethical implications of the text as well as the relationship between author and editor. I contextualize the different ways to approach the editing process and text in order to be ethical and effective. For example, I show the complexity of the editing process and suggest ways editors can develop a relationship with an author that will create an equal partnership with overlapping goals and purposes in order to create an effective text that does

not negatively impact the author of the text. One of my suggestions involves the editor as diplomat. In the article "The Technical Editor as Diplomat: Linguistic Strategies for Balancing Clarity and Politeness," Jo Mackiewicz and Kathryn Riley assert that the technical writer needs to balance "clarity and politeness" when leaving feedback and/or speaking with an author about a text. This is done through "managing the directness" with which they communicate with the author (83). This linguistic strategy requires the editor and the author to develop a professional relationship that is based on mutual respect, for the text and for each other, in order to communicate ethically and equally.

The role of the editor as diplomat, as well as the other roles that create relationships between editors and publishers and authors and publishers, has a powerful impact on the text's impact on audience(s), and it is important for editors to understand this and their other roles in order to be the most effective and ethical they can be. Editors are also the last line of defense in considering the ethical implications of a text because they are often the last person to see a text before it is published or sent out. They must bring those multiple perspectives along with their skills as communicators in order to make the text as effective as possible, for the purposes of the writer *and* the audience. Editors must be aware of various audiences and purposes for a text and be able to incorporate these perspectives in order to create an ethical and effective text. How the editor approaches the task of editing is the most important determiner of how effective and positive their relationship with the author will be. The editor's role in the editing process in regard to the author will also determine the effectiveness of the text; editors must be knowledgeable, able, and open to multiple perspectives in order for it to be an ethical and effective relationship *and* text.

In my metaphor analyses "Magician, Chef, and Artist: The Many Metaphorical Hats of Authors and Editors" (Part 1) and "A Magical Persuasion: Engaging the Audience in Truth" (Part 2), I analyze the way Stephen King constructs writing, editing, and the creative process in *On Writing*.

In part one, I argue that analyzing the way King constructs himself as an author and the writing process as "a magical process that expresses/produces truth" through metaphor constructs the role of the editor in the writing process as "assistant to the magician." I argue that since this role implies that the editor is in the position of intermediary between the author and the audience because they must understand the author's audience as well as possible and be able to make the author understand what impact that audience has on her or his final product. In part two, I argue that if King is "a synecdoche for what it is to be a popular fiction author" and "in an important place for my exploration as to the ways authors . . . frame the role of the editor in their writing," then King's position in the writing industry makes these metaphors representative of the editor-author relationship during the writing process. I utilize Kenneth Burke's *A Grammar of Motives* and *Permanence and Change: An Anatomy of Purpose* to develop the metaphors of writing as "magic" and "truth" and how they do and do not represent the role of the editor. In these analyses, while I do not explicitly discuss the ethical implications and responsibility of the editor as "assistant to the magician," I demonstrate one of the many roles of the editor. This is a perception of the role of the editor that editors may have to confront when editing a text, which will require them to reconstruct themselves to the author in order to develop a more equal, effective, and authentic perception of her role. And this will then enable her to balance her ethical responsibility more effectively.

An important part of the editor's skills is an awareness of the rhetorical effects of the style of the document. This can refer to any rhetorical impact of the text that is not explicitly stated through the words in the document (e.g. word choice, arrangement, design, images, etc.). The editor must have knowledge of what these rhetorical effects could be and how best to use rhetorical strategies to impact the audience. I explore the issue of style in the research essay "The Art and Craft of Editing for Style" especially in regard to how communicators' knowledge of stylistics is important to their abilities as editors and writers. For example, I research and compare many of the current style

guidelines used by writers and editors. I discuss what these concepts of style are, whether or not they are effective or helpful, and how editors need to have an understanding of style in order to edit for it. I employ Paul Butler's *Out of Style: Reanimating Stylistic Study in Composition and Rhetoric* to develop a way of thinking about style the moves beyond the emphasis on clarity and redefining style as "the deployment of rhetorical resources, in written discourse, to create and express meaning" (Butler 3). He states, "style involves the use of written language features as habitual patterns, rhetorical options, and conscious choices at the sentence and word level" (3). This understanding of style as rhetorical supports my argument for complexity of editing for style: how the practice changes in different fields of writing, how it has changed (or hasn't) over the years, and what editors need to know in order to effectively edit for style in any context. It also shows the power of the rhetorical choices communicators make; these rhetorical choices ("stylistic" choices) are the key to creating an ethical and effective text. I elaborate on this argument for an understanding of style in my essay "Summation and Conversion of Style" (previously discussed) by using Kenneth Burke, George Lakoff, Butler, and other theorists to create a definition of style that is most effective for this purpose.

Editing for style is related to both editors' effectiveness and their ethical obligation. Because style is such a strong determiner of the rhetorical effect of a text, editing for style is the editor's most important role in the process of editing a text. The words, images, and placement of those elements in a text can determine how an audience, readers, and users are impacted by that text. The editor's role in editing for style, editing for an author, and editing for an audience determines the effectiveness and ethical implications of the text.

I revised and edited my investigative report "Technical Communication and Representation of People with Mental Illness" for style issues and to expand on the depth of the subject. It offered very new issues to confront as an editor as well as many of the same concerns I did when editing

others' texts. While I did not have to concern myself with how to interact with someone else and their text, I still had to consider how the text itself represented myself and my subject. I had to consider my role as a technical communicator, specifically as a technical editor, in presenting research on the subject of people with mental illness and how they are represented in the DSM-IV. When I returned to investigative report, I had to reconsider some of the language I used when referring to people with mental illness. I had to make sure that the language I was using was respectful and representative of people with mental illness and how the readers of the text would then perceive them. Because this portfolio will be available to anyone, but I primarily directed it at prospective employers, the graduate committee, and fellow graduate students, I also had to consider how this text reflects upon me as a writer, researcher, and editor: Does my subject have sufficient kairos? Am I being ethical in my representation of the subject and the people being referenced in the text? How am I balancing ethicalness and effectiveness in a way that will get across one of the purposes of my portfolio to my audience and provide ways of practicing ethical communication? Because this was my own text, it was difficult to edit until I got some distance from the text. I see this fact as an example of one of the most important roles editors play in developing a document: a third-party who can incorporate more perspectives and angles to a text in order to make it more ethical and effective.

The Portfolio

I have chosen the format of a blog at Wordpress.com to showcase my portfolio because it enables me to show my work to the graduate committee and prospective employers, and receive feedback from all of the people who encounter my blog. This feedback will not only help me make effective improvements to the portfolio, but will also facilitate communication between myself as an ethical communicator and my audiences.

The Audience and the Blog

My audience for this portfolio is the committee, graduate students, as well as prospective employers. I felt that a web-based portfolio would be the most rhetorically effective for this audience because of the ease of access a website provides, both in seeing the portfolio and being able to look through it. The audience members will be easily directed to sections of the portfolio that may interest them the most: employers may decide to go straight to my resume, while graduate students might be more interested in the artifacts in the portfolio. I also contextualize my portfolio in a way that shows the audience members what my portfolio about, which would allow them to understand what they will be reading and why. I contextualize my portfolio in words on the About the Portfolio page, but I also contextualize one of the focuses in my portfolio in the header image:

I felt it was important to include an image in my portfolio that was rhetorically effective for the purpose of my portfolio, as an apt example of the impacts of technical and professional communication, and for the issue of mental health and illness awareness, which is an issue that has become a more and more valuable source of insight in my career as a student and as a communicator.

One goal of mine with the portfolio was that I make it accessible to people with varying abilities and varying access to technology. I feel I made the blog accessible to people with varying abilities and access to technology to the best of my ability and Wordpress.com's capabilities. I made sure that all of my documents are available in pdf format, which will enable more users to access the documents because the Adobe Acrobat Reader is a free and relatively ubiquitous program. This also

allows users who have reading and vision difficulties to enlarge the print on the page in order to read the content. I also made sure to use color and images in a way that would not confuse users or decrease legibility and navigability of the blog. The images I use for each of the documents give the users an idea of what they will see when they click on the document (e.g. paper, article, etc.). Also, in order to make the content clear, my headings and menu items accurately describe the content on each page. I also have two easily accessible menus in order to make the content more accessible: I divided the portfolio both into categories (on the right-side) and in a menu (across the top). Also, Wordpress.com has two different ways people can make comments on the posts and pages, which means users do not have to create an account if they do not want to.

While a regular website might have given me more freedom in design elements, one of the most important reasons I chose the blog format is because I felt that using a blog for the portfolio could engage my audiences in a way a regular website does not as easily do. On each page of my portfolio, there is an easy way for users to give me feedback. This feedback will be useful to me for ways of making my portfolio more effective, but it also promotes a sharing of perspectives that I think is vital to any form of communication. I see my portfolio as a piece of communication that provides people with a way to think about and perform ethical communication practices. This piece of communication, however, should not be just for my benefit, and should therefore not be one-sided. I do not wish to privilege my ideas over those of others, and the blog format encourages two-sided, or rather multi-sided, conversation that demonstrates one of the ways communication can be more ethical: by incorporating multiple perspectives.

Conclusions and Implications for Practice

One of my many goals for this portfolio is to facilitate ethical communication in technical communication practice. All of my artifacts and this critical introduction have pointed to many ways

practitioners can practice ethical communication, and I think it is important to restate those ways here in order to clarify what I see as my most important goal.

- Technical communication organizations need to explicitly define a collective understanding of ethical responsibility to their primary audience of technical communicators. A intricate and effective definition of ethical responsibility makes communicators consistently aware of the rhetorical impact and ethical implications of what they do, say, think, and write and provides a framework on which to base their communication decisions that explicitly articulates how to understand their ethical responsibility.
- Technical communication practitioners and instructors must recognize and articulate the communication process as rhetorical because ignoring the rhetorical power and influence of the communicator divests the communicator of any responsibility toward the effects of that communication and propagates a simplistic definition of ethical communication. Recognizing this is essential to practice and teaching of ethical communication because it teaches practitioners to root their decisions and actions in a humanitarian concern rather than a "personal or political or corporate or scientific or technological goal" that is only concerned with expediency (or other rhetorics) as an end in itself (Katz 272).
- Technical communicators and practitioners need to challenge the myth of scientific objectivity. This myth can be countered by incorporating a variety of knowledges and cultures into the communication process and analyzing the ethical implications of texts in regard to where these ideas come from.
- Recognize the power and position of technical communicators and their impact on the readers, audience, and users of a text by using the articulation model of communication: "a view characterized by concerns with the struggle to articulate and rearticulate meaning and relations of power" (Slack, et al 89). Explaining the communication process as something

complex will counteract the simplistic definitions of scientific-based technical communication of the past. This involves not only being more aware of our understanding of what the communication process is, but being more aware and acting upon the cultural, ability, and other factors that make the articulation of meaning so multifaceted.

- Technical communication practitioners and instructors need to utilize theories that suggest ways of thinking of ethical communication as that which encompasses more diverse perspectives, is aware of the asymmetrical power relations that determine who gets represented and how they get represented in technical communication, and challenges normalizing rhetorics that define individuals in restrictive and negative ways. This utilization requires, among other actions, involving diverse perspectives, especially of those who would be most affected by the communication, in the communication process.
- Technical communicators must research the issues that give insight into the power and agency professional communicators have in representing others, such as representation, normalcy, marginalization, and identity construction. Understanding this agency shows professional communicators that they have an obligation and responsibility to those they represent because of the enormous impact it has on their lives.
- Technical communicators must constantly critique their own roles in any process of communication, from writing, to research, to editing, in order to understand the power they wield in working with other communicators, as well as the impact it will have on the audience.

Overall, technical communicators need to always strive to become aware of and make use of rhetorical choices in ways that make positive, rewarding, helpful, and constructive impacts on those who they communicate with and for. Knowing their impact by conducting research, understanding communication as an articulation of voices, and being aware of how communication has caused

negative impacts in the past will challenge the harmful rhetorics of objectivity, efficiency, (in)humanity, and others.

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