

White Paper Report

Report ID: 113684

Application Number: HT-50086-14

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Institution: Middlebury College

Reporting Period: 9/1/2014-9/30/2015

Report Due: 12/31/2015

Date Submitted: 1/7/2016

Scholarship in Sound & Image: A Whitepaper

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December 2015

Introduction/Background:

From June 14-27, 2015, we hosted “Scholarship in Sound & Image,” a workshop on videographic criticism, supported by an NEH Institute for Advanced Topics in the Digital Humanities grant, at our home institution, Middlebury College. The workshop was prompted by our interest and participation in an important development in film and media scholarship: the increased production over the past decade of “video essays” -- or what we prefer to call videographic criticism -- both within and outside of academic contexts. Such works have appeared in a variety of online journals and as DVD supplements, and videographic essays have increasingly been exhibited as part of academic conference presentations, including panels and workshops featuring one or both of us. The groundswell of interest in this new form of multimedia criticism saw a milestone in 2014 when MediaCommons and the Society for Cinema and Media Studies’ official publication, *Cinema Journal*, came together to launch *[in]Transition: Journal of Videographic Film & Moving Image Studies*, the first publication to consist exclusively of peer-reviewed videographic work. We co-founded this journal, along with Christine Becker (University of Notre Dame), Catherine Grant (University of Sussex), and Drew Morton (Texas A&M

University at Texarkana). The work of *[in]Transition* was further validated upon receiving the 2015 Anne Friedberg Scholarly Innovation Award of Distinction by the Society for Cinema and Media Studies.

Through these various activities, it became clear to us that there were many scholars interested in making videographic criticism who lack both the technical training with digital editing software and a sufficient community of practice to support them as they developed their ideas. The Scholarship in Sound & Image workshop was designed to address these limitations, even if on a small scale and with only a handful of people -- but with the hope of creating a larger impact within the field of Film and Media Studies. After the successful launch of *[in]Transition*, it seemed a logical and important next step.

The workshop benefited enormously from the collaboration of others: firstly, Ethan Murphy, the Media Production Specialist for Middlebury's Film & Media Culture Department, who offered daily instruction and support on Adobe Premiere and associated software; and also Stella Holt, our (recently graduated) student assistant, who is also a talented maker of videographic work. In addition to their primary roles, both Ethan and Stella shared with us the tasks of leading group critiques and advising participants on work in progress. In addition, we enjoyed visits from three active videographic makers/critics: Catherine Grant (University of Sussex), Kevin B. Lee (Fandor/School of the Art Institute of Chicago), and Eric Faden (Bucknell University). Along with their stimulating presentations, all three generously spent time offering feedback to the participants as they were working on

their final projects. These visits, which came in the second week, just as we were all settled into our routines, served to jumpstart everyone's conceptual and work processes, further enriching the experience for us all.

Most importantly, we were fortunate to have an extraordinary group of workshop participants: Vicki Callahan (University of Southern California), Tracy Cox-Stanton (Savannah College of Art & Design), Corey Creekmur (University of Iowa), Allison de Fren (Occidental College), Shane Denson (Duke University), John Gibbs (University of Reading), Liz Greene (Dublin City University), Adam Hart (Harvard University), Patrick Keating (Trinity University), Melanie Kohnen (NYU), Jaap Kooijman (University of Amsterdam), Nic Poppe (Middlebury College), Michael Talbott (Castleton State University), and Kristen Warner (University of Alabama). We received over 100 applications for a small number of workshop spots, so we knew we were assembling an ideal group of participants; however, we were still overwhelmed by what an extraordinary creative and intellectual experience the workshop turned out to be, thanks largely to this terrific group.

In the workshop, we engaged with many key questions facing film and media scholarship in the digital age: How might the use of images and sounds transform the rhetorical strategies used by film/media scholars? How might incorporating aesthetic strategies common to moving images reshape scholarly discourse? How does such creative digital scholarship fit into the norms of contemporary academia? How do broader trends and developments in remix culture and copyright activism connect with new modes of film and media scholarship? The goal was to explore a

range of approaches by using moving images as a critical language and to expand the expressive possibilities available to innovative humanist scholars. But we approached all these questions through the practice of teaching and making videographic essay work.

The workshop convened in the state-of-the-art digital production facilities in Middlebury College's Film & Media Culture Department, located in the Axinn Center for Literary and Cultural Studies, which opened in 2008. These facilities, available to participants 24 hours a day, include four multimedia computer labs, each equipped with the latest versions of the software needed for to produce digitally based scholarship, including Adobe Creative Suite for video editing and finishing, and an array of sound production applications. In addition, the department's facilities include access to a range of other equipment – digital video and still cameras, lighting equipment, tripods, microphones and sound recorders, a production studio with green screen, animation stands, an audio recording and editing studio, a video game lab, and a range of other supplemental hardware and software. Middlebury also hosts a video collection of over 10,000 DVDs to provide access to a wide range of moving-image media to use in our study and scholarship. The college's ample technological and logistical support allowed participants to focus fully on the work at hand.

As a residential liberal arts college, Middlebury was well positioned to provide appropriate housing for this workshop. The participants resided in a single residential hall in individual ADA-compliant rooms, and they ate meals together in

one of Middlebury's excellent dining halls, with meal options to attend to any specific dietary needs. Given the two week duration of the workshop, we stipulated that participants would receive a small stipend to help defray the cost of attendance, in addition to having all travel, housing, and food expenses paid for.

Application/Selection Process:

We proposed a residential workshop of two full weeks so that participants would have sufficient time and support to learn how to conceive and produce film and media criticism via digital sound and moving images. The workshop was designed for 12 participants, and applicants could come from any academic rank, ranging from graduate students to full professors, as well as scholars working outside traditional faculty positions, whose objects of study involve audio-visual media, especially film, radio, television, and other new digital media forms.

Applicants were not expected to have experience producing videos; rather, the workshop was designed to equally support those with some hands-on production experience and those interested in exploring the format as a novice. Applicants had to come from film and media studies, or a related field, and could be of any nationality or residency -- though we made it clear that the applicant (if accepted) would be responsible for obtaining the necessary authorization to attend the workshop in the United States.

We asked applicants to submit an application portfolio to include the following:

- *A brief cover letter* providing contact information and a commitment that if accepted, the applicant would be able to attend the workshop. Additionally, we asked applicants to indicate if they required any special circumstances or accommodations to ensure we could provide any such support for an accepted applicant.
- *A statement of interest*, not to exceed 500 words. This statement was to outline the applicant's professional goals and motivations for applying to this workshop, including pedagogical uses and scholarly outcomes. It was to detail the applicant's experiences with video production and/or experimental scholarly work (although such experience was not a requirement). Additionally, we asked applicants to indicate what objects of study (e.g., specific films, television series, digital media, etc.) they might be interested in working with to produce videographic criticism.
- *A current C.V.*
- *A representative sample of scholarly work*, not to exceed 20 pages, or the equivalent if not in written form.
- *Names and contact information* of two professional references.

We set an application deadline of December 1, 2014, with participants to be notified about their acceptance by the end of January 2015. By the deadline, we had received 103 applications (as well as another dozen inquiries after the deadline) -- so selecting only 12 was to be a tall order. As we set about selecting our cohort of workshop participants, we strove for breadth and balance.

The applications we received came from scholars at all stages of their careers (from M.A. students to full professors and all stages in between), from all geographic regions (not only within the U.S., but also internationally), and from various kinds of academic institutions (from small regional colleges to large research universities) or working outside academia. We decided to narrow our breadth to consider only applicants who had completed their Ph.D., both as a practical measure, helping to focus our large pool, and a strategic one -- it allowed for a cohort that would have a strong impact on the field and it would minimize potential issues of disparity stemming from graduate students and senior faculty working side-by-side. We selected a group of participants that represented the geographic and institutional range of our applicant pool -- including three applicants from Europe, two post-doctoral fellows, and faculty employed at all ranks at institutions ranging from regional state colleges to top graduate programs. In addition, we selected applicants whose research and production interests represented a broad range of scholarly topics and methods prevalent in the discipline of film and media studies.

We also wanted to select a group who would not only attend the workshop, but who would take what they had learned back to their home institutions and share it in other ways -- through teaching, scholarly publication, and promotion. In other words, as best we could, we wanted our selected participants to help us create a 'ripple effect' beyond the splash of this two-week workshop. In the end, due to budgeting advantages and increased support from Middlebury College, we were able to invite 14 applicants to attend the workshop, all of whom participated in June.

The Workshop Program:

The video production component of the workshop was divided into two parts. During the first week, we led participants in a series of exercises designed to introduce them both to the software they would be using (Adobe Premiere Pro, Adobe Audition, and Handbrake), and to the practice of working (or more accurately, playing) with the moving images and sounds of their objects of study. Participants spent the second week working on a larger videographic project within their scholarly area of expertise. Many of these were based on the projects that they had proposed in their applications, but all had reconceptualized their approach and some had even decided to start an entirely different project based on their first week experiences.

Our approach during the first week was based on two core principles. The first is that **one learns by doing**. Even though more than half of our participants had no video editing experience, we had everyone start making a short video on the very first day. Each morning, we gave a new assignment, after which our colleague Ethan Murphy gave the participants a tutorial in the core software features that they would need to complete that assignment; subsequent learning was accomplished via practice, peer advice, and consultation from the workshop leaders. Our mantra in the first week was 'Make First, Talk Later' -- a distinct challenge for a group of academics!

Our second principle was that **formal parameters lead to content discoveries**. Instead of asking participants to make a video that served a particular content goal (such as criticism, analysis, comparison, etc.), we created exercises with strict formal requirements, but open to whatever content people were interested in. We believe that producing work according to often arbitrary formal parameters will reveal something about your object that would be hard to discover through more typical analytical means. Such discoveries and revelations were a constant byproduct of these formal exercises, leading to deep conversations about the films that participants were working with.

To facilitate this process, each participant was asked to select a single film or similar media object to serve as their source text for the set of five daily exercises to be produced in the workshop's first week. (Feature films worked best. An entire season of a TV show was too expansive for the scale of the assignments we were giving. One participant chose an entire four-season webseries, but that totalled only 80 minutes in total, shorter than an average feature film. One participant chose an 8-minute silent film, which proved challenging, given the lack material to work with.) The exercises allowed for a good deal of experimentation and helped participants come to know one another's media objects as the exercises accumulated. While the ultimate goal of videographic work may be to produce scholarly knowledge about a particular media object of study, that goal must first be set aside in favor of a careful exploration of the object as an archive of moving images and sounds. We maintain that, if criticism is to be offered in a multi-media

form, you must first learn something about how to effectively use moving images and sound to express yourself, and through certain exercises your media object of study will teach you about itself. Thus, in these preliminary exercises, the goal was not to produce a videographic essay -- that is, not to produce scholarship, though sometimes that did happen. Rather, the goal was to have the participants play with their media object as a way to explore how manipulating its components could create a variety of effects.

This last point is crucial. Academic scholarship in the humanities has committed itself almost exclusively to an analytical approach that studies its objects from a critical distance. For film and media scholars, that distance is reinforced by the discursive separation of critical academic practice: the media objects communicate via images and sounds, and academic criticism uses the written or spoken word. But with videographic work, such a separation no longer holds. Analysis must always be conducted, to some extent, on the object's terms: that is, using its material, moving images and sounds. When working with these elements videographically, the poetic and aesthetic force of the source materials cannot be ignored or avoided. In the workshop, we explored the spectrum of videographic criticism, ranging between the explanatory and poetic registers, but highlighting that the most effective videographic works -- those that produce the most potent knowledge effect -- are those that employ their audiovisual source materials in the poetically imaginative ways, even when striving for a more explanatory approach .

The daily exercises were designed to foreground the poetic over the explanatory, encouraging participants to follow formal parameters rather than conceptual questions. Additionally, the pace was purposely fast so that it discouraged overthinking, as the participants had to focus on technical skills and making formal choices in order to meet the next day's deadline. Each day, participants would receive their assignment right before lunch; afterward, they would receive necessary instruction on software practices, and then they would spend the remainder of the afternoon and evening working on their videos. The assignments were screened the next morning -- first in small groups for discussion and critique, and then as a full group so that we could view everyone's work and discuss issues that emerged from the assignment, especially as such exercises might be used pedagogically. Then it was on to the next exercise. Here is a brief review of the daily exercises we assigned:

1. *Videographic PechaKucha*: The first assignment was a new form of videographic expression that we invented for the workshop: the Videographic PechaKucha. A typical PechaKucha is an oral presentation format that has strict parameters for the timing of slides: 20 automatically-advancing slides lasting exactly 20 seconds, resulting in a presentation lasting precisely 6:40. The goal behind such strict but arbitrary presentational parameters is to force presenters to adhere to a rapid pace of a 'lightning talk', while creating a uniform rhythm for visual materials. The effect is that every PechaKucha feels similar on one level, but allows for great creative variation within this uniform rhythm and structure.

Our videographic variant consisted of 10 video clips of precisely six seconds each, coupled with a continuous one minute audio segment, all from the same film. This 1-minute video proved to be an ideal first assignment because its limited scope allowed participants to become familiar with some of the the basics of video editing while also enabling them to make new discoveries about their films through their search for clips and to experience new revelations through image/sound juxtapositions.

But this assignment was a great beginning for a second reason. One of the first responses that parameter-based assignments prompt in the maker -- and we saw it in most of the daily assignments -- is to apply more parameters. That is, with the Videographic PechaKucha, makers tended not to select clips with total freedom, but rather to select and organize them in some logical and limiting way. For example, one might choose to alternate moving shots with static shots, or close-ups of people with long shots of action; or to restrict oneself to certain shots scales and contents; or to have the audio and video suddenly synch up in the middle. While ten segments of six seconds each must be used in this assignment, there is no parameter forbidding the repetition of a shot, so a maker might choose to repeat a segment five times, alternating it with other segments from the film. The additional parameters that might be imposed on this assignment by the maker are endless. The Videographic PechaKucha assignment -- like every assignment we offered -- is both firm and flexible.

But we did not suggest any of these additional parameters. The makers applied or discovered them on their own. The application of form to one's material is a basic element of videographic practice, just as it is in the media object one is studying. But for novice videographic essay makers, imposing form onto conceptual materials can be a special challenge, especially for scholars who are so used to focusing exclusively on conceptual analysis. It becomes all too easy to start with a core analytical idea that you aim to express, and then fall back on explanatory voiceover accompanied by illustrative clips, which often results in a clearly argued but stylistically deadened work. Giving participants formal limitations first without regard for content forces them to consider the ways in which the shape of a container determines what can or cannot be put in it. This was especially true in the first day's assignment, as most participants had to work so hard to learn the software techniques required to accomplish the project that they had little time to focus on intellectual ideas. Make first, talk (and think) later.

As we noted above, each new assignment was followed by a technology session in which participants would receive instruction in the skills necessary to complete the exercise. For the PechaKucha assignment, students learned the basic skills necessary to make videographic work. They learned how to: rip their media object from DVD using Handbrake; import it into an editing program (Adobe Premiere); make subclips; bring subclips into the timeline, unlinking audio/video tracks and adjusting timing; lay black slug; and export their finished video to a share folder on the college's network. For novice editors, these skills seemed quite

daunting, but by the end of a busy first day, they were all amazed that they had produced a project that not only accomplished the assignment's goals, but also revealed something about their chosen film.

2. Tell a Story: While writing is the predominant way that film and media scholars disseminate their critical ideas, the spoken word is another common mode of academic analysis. From class lectures to conference presentations, scholars are used to presenting their ideas orally. At its least sophisticated, the videographic essay format functions as an illustrated lecture, with a critic reading a manuscript over a series of clips, but such an approach misses both the poetic possibilities of videos and the engaged dynamic of a live lecture. Thus we wanted to introduce voiceover via an exercise that avoided associations with the typical academic lecture.

Many videographic essays use voiceover quite effectively, and the question of modulating vocal delivery and performance is a crucial issue in a video's success, even much more urgently than it is in a lecture or conference presentation. In such live contexts, we seek to 'hear past' the vocal delivery in favor of what is being said, and unless the delivery is truly atrocious, we manage to do that without much effort. But in a videographic essay that disembodies the speaker, the quality of the vocal delivery is immediately conspicuous, and whether a viewer keeps watching depends in large part on whether they want to keep listening. In order to 'loosen' up vocal delivery, we asked participants to select a continuous video sequence from their media object (three minute maximum, although they could manipulate the clip's

duration) and simply tell a story over it. What kind of story? That was up to them to decide. But as we all know, telling a story successfully demands attention to vocal delivery, with emphases, pauses, volume modulation, and so forth all crucial elements in good storytelling. With this approach, then, most participants seemed to understand that simply writing something out and reading it aloud wouldn't do.

After the PechaKucha exercise, some participants were primed to engage in some more experimental work. One participant simply (but very effectively) recounted a dream she'd once had and laid it over a radically slowed down shot from her film. Others took the idea of a "story" somewhat more loosely, with one participant singing a song (in German) over her selected clips, and another reciting lyrics from a pop song. In these cases, the juxtaposition of what was being spoken/sung to what was being shown became the dominant impact of the video, rather than vocal delivery itself.

Other participants did not embrace the storytelling and performance elements of the parameters as much as we had hoped. Well-honed intellectual tendencies die hard, so for some participants, 'tell a story' was interpreted as 'read some academic theory,' which resulted in a dry explanatory register. Such an assignment needs to highlight parameters that work against the reflex to analyze and intellectualize, allowing the more associative and evocative way that storytelling and visual imagery might resonate in unexpected ways. We found that 'make first, talk later' was more difficult when the making required talking.

For the technology session, Ethan showed participants how to record their voiceover in our department's audio booth using Adobe Audition -- though using a computer's on-board microphone can work just as well, as long as one is attentive to the ways that the space in which one is recording will affect the tone and quality of the sound. In addition, Ethan showed how to change the speed of both audio and video, so that images could be slowed down or sped up, and the tone of the voiceover could be affected by speeding or slowing it even slightly.

3. *Alternative Trailer*: The conventions of the motion picture or television trailer are familiar to everyone, so this exercise aimed to re-work such a routine into something surprising. Our assignment asked the participants to produce a 60-90 second 'alternative' trailer with the following constraints: videos should use precisely three on-screen titles consisting of no more than five words each; videos should include at least three different transitions in addition to straight cuts (such as dissolves, wipes, and fades). Our goal was to encourage the production of trailers that did not focus on story -- that were not a narrative 'preview' of the film in question -- but rather that highlighted other aspects of the film, such as its visual and aural patterns or its tone. Ideally, we would see participants using the images and sounds of their chosen film to make a trailer, not necessarily one for the film from which the images and sounds were taken, but perhaps for its shadow film that emerges from the reworked material.

Though we received many fine videos, we quickly identified ways in which some of our parameters weren't as clear as we thought. For their title cards, most

participants used the existing film credits or recreated them (e.g., the film's title and/or "A film by..."), but we imagined titles that functioned differently -- more obliquely, perhaps, or as a critical commentary. Further, we wanted participants to play with the graphic qualities of titling, but few did. Just as we often hear past oral presentation at a conference, we can quickly become blind to the graphic qualities of written text. Unless a font or textual layout makes it difficult to read a book or article, it usually becomes invisible. Not so on screen. All graphic qualities of text -- font style, size, color, placing in the frame, movement, transitions -- are formal properties to be employed for the effectiveness of a videographic essay. Once we had the opportunity to discuss this, participants explored these possibilities in subsequent exercises.

For the technology workshop, Ethan showed participants how to make titles, including how to change font style, size, color, and motion, as well as how to make different transitions between shots (dissolves, various directional wipes, and so forth). This assignment also required some audio manipulation, so Ethan demonstrated how to open multiple soundtracks and manipulate the sound levels of these tracks.

4. Multi-screen composition: Just as the alternative trailer assignment was motivated by that well-known existing form, other assignments were prompted by formal strategies that have become commonplace in videographic essays. The use of frames within or beside other frames, or a 'multi-screen' approach, is one such strategy, and its use in videographic work is interesting partly because it is an

uncommon formal practice in mainstream cinema or television. Often this approach has been used in videographic work to effectively show (rather than just describe) the visual relationship between two media objects. With this exercise, we asked participants to use a multi-screen process to construct a 'response' to one of the exercises produced by another member of the workshop, using their chosen film and integrate it with clips from one or more exercises produced by other participants.

Here again, participants stretched themselves beyond the simple parameters of the assignment. Indeed, by this point in the first week, we were all most curious to see how participants would fulfill the assignment while also doing something surprising. This assignment was particularly successful in building a community of practice amongst participants, as they became more invested in each other's works and actively discussed both the films and the videographic explorations we had been undertaking.

5. *Videographic Epigraph*: In the Alternative Trailer exercise, we asked participants to work with text on screen, and we returned to that formal component here, but in a way designed to engage with their scholarly interests. Many effective videographic essays involve some combination of sound, images, and critical text, and most of our participants were looking for ways to bring their media object of study into direct contact with some critical writing. This assignment, which was designed to facilitate this process on a small scale, was inspired by several 'tribute' videos produced by one of our special guests, Catherine Grant. These tributes are

typically short memorial works made on the occasion of a star's passing, but in each of these videos, Grant uses a quote from some critical text -- a kind of 'epigraph' -- that serves as a frame through which to read the video memorial. As one of our participants noted, the epigraph is one place where the traditional scholarly essay dips its toe into the poetic, but here the goal was the reverse, with the epigraph designed to serve a more obviously explanatory function. Given that a primary goal of the workshop was to encourage (and even bring into balance) a combination of both modes, this short assignment seemed an ideal way to reintroduce the explanatory into the poetical.

Loosely following Grant's model, we developed this 'videographic epigraph' assignment. We asked participants first to select a favorite quote of no more than 10 sentences from some critical text that could serve as an epigraph -- possibly related to the media object they were working on, but not necessarily. Next, the participants were to select a continuous scene or sequence from their film object and alter it in some way -- through slow motion, image manipulation, or some other visual or temporal effect. The source soundtrack was to be replaced or significantly altered via effects. The selected critical quote was then to appear as text on screen in some dynamic interaction with the images in the scene.

By the fifth day, even the novice video editors were quite capable using Premiere, allowing the technical workshop to explore more specific techniques and possibilities of playing with sounds, footage, text, and still images. Having spent the week watching each other's projects had encouraged more of a peer learning

environment, seeking out technical tips and aesthetic techniques from each other rather than just consulting the experts leading the workshop. This is in keeping with our experience teaching this type of production to undergraduate students: once you get over the initial hurdles in learning editing software, most advanced techniques are developed by experimentation, peer mentoring, and self-exploration.

Once these five exercises were concluded, participants were well practiced in treating their media objects as an archive of images and sounds. Exploring their films as poetic works that might guide their own analyses, rather than just distant objects of critical analysis, led them to rethink and reimagine the video essay projects they proposed when applying for the workshop. The option of creating a video functioning as an illustrated lecture no longer seemed appropriate to the aesthetic rhetoric of the film itself. Thus the task of the second week became to discover how to make a piece of videographic criticism that worked with and responded to the poetic dimensions of the films and media texts that they were analyzing. In many ways, this process was harder than the first week of exercises, even though the participants had gained technical and conceptual expertise. But shifting back into the analytic and argumentative mode of criticism sometimes overwhelmed the more experimental and playful possibilities developed in the first week. We realized that striking this balance between analysis and expression requires a longer term investment and process of working with images and sounds, meaning that most of the projects developed in the second week were incomplete works in progress. Nonetheless, five of the workshop participants developed their

final videos into videographic essays, published and peer-reviewed in *[in]Transition* issue 2.4 in January 2016, a special issue focused on works developed at the Middlebury workshop; additionally, two other participant videos have been submitted to the journal, and a number of participants have been actively making and sharing videographic pieces in the six months since the workshop's conclusion.

While the second week was far less structured, given the lack of formal exercises and training sessions, we featured morning conversations on specific topics, including issues of copyright and fair use, the role of peer review and professional accreditation of videographic work, and how to teach videographic criticism both within a traditional critical studies curriculum and in dedicated specialized courses. Additionally, the visiting experts Catherine Grant, Kevin B. Lee, and Eric Faden all presented some of their videographic work and facilitated a conversation around their own experiences in the field. The workshop concluded with a celebratory screening of works in progress, and productive conversations about how to sustain momentum beyond the conclusion of what we affectionately began to call "video camp."

Pedagogical outcomes:

One distinct result of the workshop was that the majority of participants were committed to incorporating videographic exercises and assignments into their courses. We certainly encouraged the teaching of videographic criticism in an array of contexts, and the participants have maintained correspondence to share notes

about their pedagogical experiences. One advantage of videographic criticism in undergraduate film and media studies courses is that, although it enables students to work with images and sounds, it does not require costly cameras and editing systems. All of these exercises can be done with software that is either free or part of modern operating systems. While asking students to produce a very short video production piece of their own is one of the best ways to get them to appreciate all the care that goes into any film or television episode, not every institution has cameras, tripods, and microphones available for such an assignment. But most do have computer labs with video editing software, where a course like this might be reasonably mounted. We can attest that this is a fun, stimulating, and unpredictable experience, requiring a willingness to make last minute changes and experiment with whatever presents itself.

In teaching the videographic assignments to undergraduates, we have found that any given student's video for one assignment may unwittingly suggest the possibility of yet another parameter-based assignment. Such teaching needs to be highly collaborative and flexible, with the instructor prepared to relinquish some of the authority she commonly enjoys in traditional courses. But it is a collaborative opportunity that's all too rare: working with students to develop the forms that this nascent scholarly innovation will inhabit. Our experience of the workshop with professional scholars suggests that it is never too late to learn by doing, to open yourself up to new tools, methods, and discoveries, and to make first, talk later.

Evaluation:

In the weeks after the workshop's conclusion, we conducted an online survey and asked the participants to respond anonymously. The survey included the following questions:

- What were your expectations & goals for attending this workshop? In what ways were your expectations met, exceeded, and/or not met?
- What were the two or three most valuable things you learned at this workshop? Were there things you hoped to learn but did not? If so, what?
- If this workshop were offered again, what elements do you think should not be changed? (Think about location, timing, composition of participants, material covered, assignments, technology, events, etc.)
- If this workshop were offered again, what elements do you think should be changed, and how so? (Think about location, timing, composition of participants, material covered, assignments, technology, events, etc.)
- Are there any other things you'd like to communicate to the organizers and/or NEH?

Thirteen of the 14 participants responded to this survey and submitted detailed answers that were overwhelmingly positive, such as:

- This was the best professional experience I have had to date. The group of people gathered, from organisers, presenters, support staff and participants all allowed for the most fruitful creative/critical experience to consider the video essay. I would not have been able to make some of the discoveries I did without attending this workshop with these people.
- I don't think I've ever taken part in a professional experience of such sustained focus, which was a product of the design, the setting and the participants/presenters.
- This was a terrific workshop, with a great sense of balance: we spent some time discussing the video essay in more theoretical terms, and some time working on our own projects, and some time giving feedback to others on their projects. Each component complemented the other.
- Not only do I feel comfortable that I can create intellectually compelling videographic work different to, but on the same level as my more traditional scholarship, but I believe my research practices have been fundamentally changed.
- My conception of audiovisual scholarship has been significantly expanded. I now feel confident implementing audiovisual essay assignments in my courses.

- The most valuable part of this workshop was not something I learned (although I learned a great deal), but rather the inclusion in and development of a community of film/media scholar/practitioners invested in videographic criticism as a mode of humanities scholarship. One of the most important things emphasized was videographic criticism not only as a form of scholarship, but also as a research practice (there are insights gained about one's media text from the process of making a video essay that contribute to one's understanding in deeply meaningful and even surprising ways).
- I feel like I've learned things about all the films I worked with that I'd never realized, even though I've already spent a whole lot of time with all of them.
- The workshop also helped me better understand my own scholarly and aesthetic approach. This understanding will be helpful not only as I continue to create videographic work, but also as I continue to teach and write.
- This was a wonderful event that opened up my understanding of research, criticism, and pedagogy substantially. Even if I never produce a video essay worth publishing, this workshop will affect every aspect of my work and has instantly made me a better scholar and teacher. It's helped me to reconceive how digital tools can be integrated into academic work.
- These were without a doubt the most intensive and rewarding two weeks of my academic career, and I believe they have laid the groundwork for exciting developments in the film & media studies community (and beyond)!

- Something that everyone said at the end of our time in Middlebury, but bears repeating: the workshop was a singular event, and is perhaps one of the most enriching scholarly experiences I have had. It is also an experience that has changed the ways in which I think and write about my area of study. It was, in short, an enormous success.

While there were a few constructive suggestions for future improvements (such as providing more structure for the second week of work on the individual videographic essays), overall it seems to have been a uniformly positive experience for all participants. The conveners, guests, and support staff all felt similarly gratified by the community of practice and learning that emerged in the two weeks, which has continued onward beyond the workshop.

Outcomes:

The Scholarship in Sound & Image workshop will directly result in two significant publications. First, the workshop organizers have co-edited a special issue of *[in]Transition: Journal of Videographic Film & Moving Image Studies* that features five peer-reviewed videos that were begun by participants during the second week of the workshop. This issue went live in January 2016 at <http://mediacommons.futureofthebook.org/intransition/issue-2-4>. Other participants have expressed their intention to submit completed video essays to *[in]Transition*, which is the only academically affiliated journal that publishes exclusively videographic work in an open peer reviewed process.

Second, the Kino-Agora series from by caboose books of Montreal will publish a special volume co-edited by the workshop organizers. This volume, *The Videographic Essay: Criticism in Sound & Image*, will feature a detailed account of the workshop assignments, and the caboose website will link to a Scalar book featuring samples of the videographic work discussed in the book. The book will also feature a discussion about the short history of videographic criticism by two of the workshop's special guests, Eric Faden and Kevin B. Lee, both groundbreaking producers of such work. Finally, the third special guest, Catherine Grant, is contributing an essay that reflects on the production of her video "Dissolves of Passion," which was produced for the 70th anniversary of the motion picture *Brief Encounter* and shown in-progress at the Middlebury workshop. *The Videographic Essay: Criticism in Sound & Image* will appear in print in spring 2016.

<https://www.caboosebooks.net/the-videographic-essay>

In addition, the workshop will be reported on at the 2016 Society for Cinema and Media Studies international conference, which will include two panels devoted to videographic criticism -- "The Attainable Text? Reflecting Upon The Evolving Status of Videographic Film Studies and Criticism" and "New Directions in Videographic Criticism" -- that feature presentations by six workshop participants. Additionally, Jason Mittell will discuss the topic on a 2016 SCMS workshop presentation called, "Digital Humanities and Media Studies: Methodological Expansion and Hands-On Experimentation." Six more participants are currently

submitting proposals to participate in two panels on videographic criticism at the 2016 Screen Studies Conference at the University of Glasgow.

These conference presentations were stimulated in part by a questionnaire we sent to participants (along with the anonymous workshop evaluation questionnaire) a few weeks after the workshop's conclusion, asking about ways to sustain momentum from the summer workshop. We believe that this coordination of post-workshop activities in the weeks immediately following the workshop helped to secure commitments and helped to sustain videographic production work that was initiated during the workshop's second week.

Future Plans:

It is not surprising that, given the overwhelming interest in the first workshop and the positive buzz generated on social media and face-to-face conversations by the participants, Keathley and Mittell have received dozens of inquiries about whether we will host any more such workshops. We plan to submit another application to the NEH's Institute for Advanced Topics in the Digital Humanities in 2016 -- this time seeking support for two more iterations of the Scholarship in Sound & Image workshop for 2017 and 2018. Christian Keathley and Jason Mittell will continue to be the lead organizers for the workshop at Middlebury, but expand our roster to invite participants from the 2015 workshop to present and help lead conversations.

Additionally, Mittell is the faculty director for Middlebury College's Digital Liberal Arts Initiative, and our (hopefully repeating) summer workshop will function as a pilot program for an ongoing Middlebury Summer Digital Liberal Arts Institute. Our long-term goal is to build on the success of Scholarship in Sound and Image to create a sustaining annual workshop program at Middlebury covering a range of topics in the Digital Humanities and related digital fields. We hope that a course in Videographic Criticism will continue to be a staple in Middlebury's summer institute for the foreseeable future, helping to grow and sustain this developing but thriving subfield at the intersection of film and media studies and digital humanities.