

## Multimodal Revision Techniques in Webtexts

Cheryl E. Ball *Department of English, Illinois State University, Normal, IL USA*

### Abstract

This article examines how an online, scholarly journal, *Kairos: Rhetoric, Technology, Pedagogy* mentors authors to revise their webtexts (interactive, digital media scholarship) for publication. Using an editorial pedagogy, in which multimodal and rhetorical genre theories are merged with revision techniques found in process-based composition studies, the author describes how webtexts are collaboratively peer-reviewed in *Kairos* and authors are provided macro- and micro-level revision suggestions for their scholarly multimedia.

*Keywords:* digital scholarship, editorial pedagogy, process, revision, rhetoric-as-design, rhetorical genre studies, scholarly multimedia, webtexts,

### Introduction

In the 21st century, writing scholars study textual practices much broader than the linguistic communicative modes that the word “writing” might have previously suggested. Multiple modes—such as those that the New London Group (1996) laid out, including visual, aural, spatial, and gestural modes—and media are also at work in the meaning-making process. In my undergraduate and graduate courses on multimodal composition, technical communication, digital publishing, and pedagogy, I bring my particular expertise editing the peer-reviewed journal [Kairos: Rhetoric, Technology, and Pedagogy](#), in which webtexts are exclusively published. (Webtexts are screen-based scholarly articles that use digital media to enact the authors’ argument.) Multimodal theories suggest that texts should be designed, not ‘just’ written, within situated social and cultural contexts (see Cope & Kalantzis, 2000; Kress, 2010), and rhetorical genre studies provides an analytical and pedagogical framework to understand how those contexts, and their genres, constantly shift (see, e.g., Bawarshi & Reiff, 2010; Wardle, 2009). Both theoretical frameworks help authors learn how to produce better, more useful texts across modes, media, genres, audiences, and contexts.

It is this set of theories and praxis that informs my *editorial pedagogy*, a recursive and reciprocal process of professionalization through editing, writing, mentoring, and teaching. An editorial pedagogy combines rhetorical, genre-based writing instruction—analysis of textual production in its current environment; author mentoring and developmental feedback; room for risks, errors, and improvement in the composition process; real-life writing situations with assessment strategies specific to the genres in their contexts; and a flexibility to change methods of instruction to suit individual learning processes—with (in my case) the specifics of an academic, multimodal genre (webtexts). *Kairos* editors mentor authors through multiple revisions of their webtexts (usually through multiple “Revise & Resubmits”) because many of the journal’s authors are composing these mixed-genre, mixed-media, and multi-technological texts for the first time: They are developmental authors who need to revise multiple times before their submissions can be accepted for

publication. Just like students who author new genres in our classes for the first time, I work with *Kairos* authors to edit their multimodal scholarship. This article presents a case study of such mentorship with one *Kairos* author as he revised his webtext for publication.

### The Multimodality of Webtexts

While based in rhetoric and composition studies, *Kairos: A Journal of Rhetoric, Technology, and Pedagogy* inhabits the more recent transdiscipline of digital writing studies, a field that started with the rise of networked and personal computing in the early 1980s and came of age alongside the Web. Digital writing studies has focused heavily on the integration of multimodal theory (see, e.g., Cope & Kalantzis, 2000; New London Group, 1996) into writing research and the teaching of writing since the early 2000s. This match integrates the study and teaching of multiple modes of communication with digital writing technologies. Out of these complementary theoretical frameworks—digital rhetoric/writing and multimodality—the ability for authors to compose scholarly, peer-reviewed multimedia in the form of webtexts<sup>1</sup> is growing. Webtexts are not linear articles with a few multimedia elements such as video trailers, TED-like presentations, or video supplements.

Webtexts are a specific (and ever-changing) genre of peer-reviewed scholarship that use the affordances of the Web (browser-based presentation, multimedia, hyperlinks, etc.) to make a scholarly argument. Webtexts often need to be experimentally multimodal—merging modes and genres together in ways that are often new to readers. The concept of “new” in *new media* can be a troublesome for scholars who research digital technologies’ impact on writing, culture, art, etc., but as Lisa Gitelman (2008) in *Always Already New*, Claire Lauer (2012) in “What’s in a Name? The Anatomy of Defining New/Multi/Modal/Digital/Media Texts,” and others have said, new media is new in the context of the reader, the historical moment, the other technologies at play, and other socio-cultural-historic contextual factors. I’ve described elsewhere (Ball, 2004) how webtexts as multi-genred texts can be categorized within this contextual understanding of new media as *new media scholarship*, as opposed to digital (linear) scholarship or scholarship *about* new media, both of which primarily feature the linguistic mode. Instead, new media scholarship “juxtapose[s] semiotic modes in new and aesthetically pleasing ways and, in doing so, break[s] away from print traditions so that written text is not the primary rhetorical means” (p. 403). “Aesthetically pleasing” is meant to be synonymous with overt multimodality, as Anne Wysocki (2004) better described it:

We should call ‘new media texts’ those that have been made by composers who are aware of the range of materialities of texts and who then highlight the materiality: such composers design texts that help readers/consumers/viewers stay alert to how any text—like its composer and readers—doesn’t function independently of how it is made and in what contexts. Such computers design texts that make as overtly visible as possible the values they embody. (p. 15)

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<sup>1</sup> Because writing about interactive multimedia such as webtexts can only be a pale comparison at best, I encourage you to visit one of the many journals that publish webtexts: *Kairos*, *Computers & Composition Online*, *Harlot of the Arts*, *Vectors Journal*, *Journal of Artistic Research*. There are many other journals that occasionally publish webtexts, such as *Enculturation*, *Fibreculture*, *Digital Dafoe*, etc.

As such, composers of webtexts design their arguments through combinations of visual, aural, spatial, gestural, and linguistic modes that often enact new ways of understanding the texts, people, cultures, and contexts which, and in which, we study: scholarship *through* multimedia.

Because of the overt use of multimedia in webtexts, readers have to learn how to read a webtext differently than reading traditional scholarship, sometimes privileging the non-linguistic elements above the linguistic. For readers of the new *Journal of Artistic Research*, this may be easier given that field's audience of art practitioners than it is for journals like *Kairos*, given an audience primarily consisting of writing teachers and researchers (although the audience for *Kairos* is growing to include those in communication and user-interface design). However, webtexts, at their best, teach readers how to engage with them and do so by using genre conventions familiar to traditional scholarship (see Purdy & Walker, 2012; Warner, 2007), such as scholarly citations—even if those citations look different in webtexts because the authors draw on the affordances of their multimodal designs to re-imagine what a citation can and should look like (see Ball & Moeller, 2007; Kuhn et al, 2008; Reilly & Eyman, 2006; Arola, Sheppard, & Ball, 2013). Otherwise, the design of a webtext should function rhetorically, persuading an audience through non-linguistic, multimodal elements. Just as theories of multimodality assumes design is integral to meaning-making, digital writing studies assumes design is integral to rhetoric (Dilger, 2010; Folk, 2013; Knight, 2013). And, as pedagogies of multiliteracies assume that multimodal design processes should be taught to students (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000; Miles, 2003), so does digital writing studies (see, e.g., Arola, Sheppard, & Ball, 2013; Ball, 2012a; The Normal Group, 2012; Selfe, 2008; Sheppard, 2009; WIDE Collective, 2005; Wysocki, Johnson-Eilola, Selfe, & Sirc, 2004). What's missing is the discussion of teaching rhetoric-as-design to authors who are not students in our classrooms—specifically how overt, multimodal design works rhetorically in our scholarship (see Eyman & Ball, forthcoming/2014) and how we can teach webtext authors to revise with rhetoric-as-design in mind.

### **Peer Review and the Design-Editing Process**

The revision process that *Kairos* uses—what I described in the introduction and elsewhere (Ball, 2012c) as the recursive and reflective aspects of my editorial pedagogy—is not unlike how a teacher uses peer review in her classroom to help student-writers see how a reader responds so that they may revise. There are three tiers to *Kairos's* peer-review process, as outlined here:

- **Tier 1: Internal review**, where section editors provide an initial review of the submission to see if it's ready for the editorial board.
- **Tier 2: Editorial board review**, where the editor sends the submission to the editorial board for discussion. Editorial board members participate in a review if the text's subject matter or design strikes their interest. On average, a webtext-submission will have 6 reviewers, each providing their own reading of the text based on their own expertise. If an author receives a Revise & Resubmit from a Tier 2 review, they are

asked whether they would like a mentor from the staff, to work with them through Tier 3.

- **Tier 3: Mentoring**, where a staff member partners with the author(s) to help them work through major revision suggestions.

We do as much as we can to help authors without actually writing or designing any of the text for them—after all, it has to be *their* work—but we also know that, for many of our authors, it is their first time authoring a webtext, and so we take a Writing Center approach to helping them develop as authors. It's not unusual for *Kairos* authors to go through at least two rounds of revision during the Tier 1 stage, another two rounds of revision in the Tier 2 stage (with a Tier 3 inserted between those rounds) before having their work accepted for publication. This recursive revision process, which can produce as much as 30 pages of single-spaced comments among a dozen or more participants (editor, section editors, editorial board members, authors), can take anywhere from a year to three years (see Delagrange, 2009). So it is only fair and just that we provide our authors some assistance navigating this webtext-publishing ecology that is, under most circumstances, totally new to them. One reason *Kairos's* review process is so thorough is because editors and editorial board members attend to editing all modes of communication that are represented in a webtext, not just the linguistic mode as most editors are accustomed to. When referring to editing the linguistic mode, it's traditional to call this process *copy-editing*. But when we're referring to editing multiple modes simultaneously, particularly the visual, audio, gestural, or spatial modes involved in layout, design, navigation, interaction, and so on, I call this process *design-editing*. Below I take readers through the Tier 3 review process of Carter's webtext, focusing on the macro and micro design-edits that Carter and I (as editor) discussed<sup>2</sup>.

### Case Study: Revising a Video-Based Webtext

Geoffrey V. Carter recently authored a video, "A Thrilla in ManiLA" [sic] that he submitted as part of an edited webtext collection for publication in *Kairos*. I had first witnessed the collection as a set of scholarly multimedia installations during the 2012 Modern Language Association conference in Seattle, Washington, and invited the session organizers to submit the collection as a whole to *Kairos*. I had previously worked with the same group of authors for a similar collection *Kairos* had published in 2008, so I was familiar with their authorial styles and revision capabilities. Thus, with an editorial board review of the whole collection that suggested some authors' webtexts were publication-ready without any additional revisions and some webtexts still needed different levels of revisions, I offered to publish the revised collection under a tight timeline and to work with some of the authors who

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<sup>2</sup> I recognize the difficulty of discussing some design-editing issues (such as those that attend to sonic and gestural modes) in this written form, and so I ask readers to watch Geoffrey V. Carter's "A Thrilla in ManiLA" [sic], published in the 17.2 issue of *Kairos* (<http://kairos.technorhetoric.net/17.2/topoi/vitanza-kuhn/carter.html>) before continuing. For more scholarship about revising webtexts composed *as webtexts* (where all the modes of design can be easily portrayed), I encourage readers to read Susan Delagrange's (2009) "When Revision is Redesign: Key Questions for Digital Scholarship" and Geoffrey Carter's (forthcoming/2013) "iPad Invention: Reflections on 'A Thrilla in ManiLA'."

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needed to turn revisions around quickly. All authors were provided feedback from the editorial board, but with Carter's permission, I take readers behind the scenes of *Kairos's* developmental design-editing process, with a particular focus on the journal's third tier of review. In this particular case, I worked directly with the author (instead of assigning a staff member) as he revised his video through several iterations to make it publication-ready, in part because I had previously worked with this author on two different webtexts he published with me in 2006 and 2008, so I had built an editorial relationship with him that would facilitate his revision process, which I knew from experience (with his 2008 webtext, "Plates, Pleats, Petals") would require him to significantly shorten his video. Carter's original MLA video was 25 minutes long. Less than a week after the Seattle viewing, the authors were exchanging emails, copying me, on their revision strategies. Carter noted in that original email:

As I think about it currently, what I'll need to send along are the [three] 10-minute YouTube links that I generated by ... digital camera. These will be the clips Kairos Reviewers could consider, and then I will make any necessary corrections on my iPad. (If memory serves, my first version of my Plates piece for the first Kairos ran a little long too.)

Afterwards, unless I'm able to establish a Vimeo account that will accept a 20+ minute upload from my iPad, I'll need to chop my iPad effort in half, upload the new version in parts. This will require rebuilding a portion of the work, but this won't be difficult. (personal communication, January 12, 2012)

At this early stage, the author is still considering length as the primary issue with the video, because he knows that I will have a problem with that aspect of the text. When I discuss length with authors, it generally translates to specific genre conventions such as appropriateness of (multimedia) evidence for an argument, clarity and conciseness of that argument, and readability (e.g., how long will readers tolerate watching an experimental video). Length is a by-product of rhetorical effectiveness: too short and the video may not have enough evidence to support its claims, too long and it might have too big a scope or too many tangential pieces of evidence that don't support its claims. The question for an editor (as well as for a teacher guiding a student through a genre-based writing assignment) is what does the reader need and expect from the venue and how can this particular text meet those expectations while also, perhaps, pushing against them?

In Carter's case, his genre and theoretical framework for the video made this latter question crucial. Carter's work draws on the rich (sometimes thick) theoretical framings of The Florida School's approach to new media critique through Gregory Ulmer's notion of electracy (Rice & O'Gorman, 2008), mixed with the Arlington's School's approach to rhetoric-as-remix (Leston, 2006), exemplified through Victor Vitanza's playful yet critical mash-ups of words in this example from the submitted collection's introduction (co-edited with Virginia Kuhn, 2013):

Virginia Kuhn (VK): Hey! Hey! What about our talking quickly through these objects/projects, projections/objections!

Victor Vitanza (VV): Okay, VK, let's attempt a sparse dialogue on each of the videos. How they ex-plode. Or vice versa. Whatever!

VK: Okay, VV, first, let's accept that a W is a W, not two Vs scrunched, VV, together! So stop that nonsense. Enough is enough!

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VV: VVhateVer you vvish, VK. But have you looked at our alpha bet names? You are a V with a K, but that's really a re(in)formed couple of Vs issuing forth a pinched third V.

Within the framework of Ulmer's electracry and Vitanza's wordplay, Carter creates playfully inventive multimedia pieces that fly over some readers' heads with an insider's wit and wisdom. This is not unlike authors whose academic prose is difficult to parse, but in Carter's case, he has the addition of several modes working for and against him, with which he acknowledges in his email above are often overly long and unnecessarily complex for first submissions. His video, in this case, is an experimental video genre that combines documentary, remix, and art to raise questions about the connections between race, creativity, and urbanity. The subjects of his film are the boxers Muhammad Ali, Joe Frazier, and Chuck Wepner; Rocky Balboa, the fictional character from the movie, *Rocky*, which was based on Chuck Wepner's life; Sylvester Stallone, who played Rocky; and the city of Philadelphia, which serves as the setting for the Rocky films and is where Joe Frazier lived most of his life. These subjects form a complicated pattern, and the MLA version of Carter's film attempted to weave these subjects through writing pedagogy.



The scope of the film was too complicated for a webtext intended to be the scholarly equivalent of a journal article—made more complicated, for example (see Fig. 1), by Carter's use of wordplay subtitles (linguistic, spatial, visual) accompanying a barely audible soundtrack featuring Joe Frazier (aural, linguistic) pulling dollar bills out of his sock (visual, gestural, spatial). Many parts of Carter's initial video submission asked readers to parse all

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of the modes simultaneously. It was too much, as one reviewer noted in a response that is meant to be equally full of word-play, as both Ali's performances and Carter's videos were:

I grew up on boxing, Ali, and the earlier Rocky films, so the subject matter is inherently appealing to me, but I'm feeling a little rope-a-doped, here. In some of the three sections, GV uses text to help connect the unfolding interviews and clips with the classroom and his MLA experience, but for the most part, if it weren't for the written introduction, I'd be a bit lost. Right now, it seems to me that the three video pieces here still need something more to become meaningful for the Kairos audience....

Since Carter's video went well over YouTube's then-10-minute limit per video rule, he had to cleave the video into three parts to upload and submit to *Kairos*. This technical issue made his problem with scope even more evident to readers: Only the first video could be linked from the "Gallery" submission because of its design, which highlighted each of the seven authors' videos center-screen; readers had to search for Carter's other two video sections on YouTube in order to read the whole webtext.

But because Carter knew that *Kairos* preferred a shorter, more succinct video, he was willing to revise according to *Kairos*'s recommendations. He and I exchanged 5 video drafts over 10 months (January to October 2012) and shared 20 single-spaced pages of written reviews (some based on the editorial board reviews) to produce the publishable 13-minute video. While the editorial board focused on macro-level issues, such as the relationship between Carter's argument, audience, and technological implementation, they were also tasked with reviewing the whole collection, which left the micro-level issues, such as how to specifically implement the changes the board wanted to see, to me and Carter.

### ***Macro-editing***

Macro-level reviewing is akin to *comprehensive* (Rude & Eaton, 2010) or *substantive* (Mackiewicz, 2011) editing in which an editor helps an author develop their argument. At *Kairos*, this level of editing generally takes place during Tier 1 and 2 of the review process, which are primarily the domain of the staff and editorial board members, respectively. The editor, however, compiles these reviews and structures them into a holistic letter of review for authors, which sometimes prompts further exchange of ideas between the editor and author. It is that exchange in the macro-edit that I want to focus on since it best exemplifies the beginning mentorship between editor and author.

Between March and August 2012, the editorial board conducted two rounds of peer review on the collection in which Carter's piece was submitted. Based on the March review, I offered the following macro-level questions to Carter:

There's a lot going on here – too much, from the reviewers' perspective. I wonder whether – within the framework of the collection as it's currently being presented – it's possible to break out the seven [sections of the YouTube videos] into separate parts and have readers interact with them in a way that doesn't lose the frame of the Gallery itself? ...

And/or: I wonder if the turn to pedagogy is needed at all? ... The [university you work at] angle is commendable, but the verb "attempts" in this sentence – "my installation attempts to say something about "Place" and "Writing" to [University] students who often identify with tough talkers and tough Philly settings, especially given their proximity to downtrodden cities like Saginaw, Flint, and Detroit" – is telling in relation to the reviewers' "being lost."

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At this level of review, it's not atypical for *Kairos* editors to pose questions, make macro-level revision suggestions that would produce two competing concepts of a webtext, and engage in a discussion with the author. Sometimes this happens *before* a webtext is accepted, but in Carter's case, it happened after the collection in which his piece appeared had been accepted with revisions. It was my hope that by opening up the possibility for conversation with an author I knew was capable of revising quickly and well, with some guidance, that we could keep Carter's video in the Gallery instead of having to pull it altogether. Carter took up these suggestions in his next revision to produce a more tightly focused video.

The August 2012 review from the editorial board concluded with one reviewer's macro-level remark about Carter's piece:

Progress, but maybe not enough. This is tighter and briefer, but along the way some crucial bits of background information have gotten lost. ... It doesn't hang together for me just yet. This is another that I'd be tempted simply to cut if I were the goddess of editing, which we can all be grateful that I am not. I see possibilities here, but it feels unfinished to me, and it requires an awful lot of background knowledge, seems to me, for anyone fully to appreciate what it's after. Needs a focus. Doesn't really have one right now, but it could.

From that point, we had approximately five weeks to finish revising Carter's piece so that it could be included in the collection. Because we were pressed for time, I decided to get more involved in the review process by watching the video and providing my own revision suggestions that would, hopefully, provide a more concrete direction for Carter to take during his next revision. My review letter presented what I saw as three unconnected but useful tropes amidst several other topics in his video. Carter used these tropes to show the tensions between Ali and Frazier (as boxers and civil rights leaders) and between Wepner and Rocky as Stallone (as uncredited vs. credited characters). The tropes, although still treated too broad in this video, included

- (1) **calls** (e.g., footage of phone calls, call-and-response-style dialogue and video remix, and characters "calling each other out"),
- (2) **race relations** (specific racial slurs and issues, including Civil Rights, that the characters discussed or used, as well as film techniques that highlighted these issues),
- (3) **poems/songs/dancing** (footage of the characters' reciting poems, singing, and dancing as well as a repeating "remix" segment of the video that was more like a music video than the experimental documentary style Carter otherwise used)

I provided examples of how these tropes worked (or not) in this version and ended my next revision letter with a pointed question to encourage Carter to take up the "goddess of editing" tactic that the reviewer had suggested:

So, a blunt question to prompt a discussion: What point do you want to make? Yes, you have the footage to make ALL of these points (and, thus, the original, too-lengthy-for-Kairos piece). To make a point we can hold onto in the course of a conference presentation (short) or journal article (slightly longer, but not much), what scenes do you NEED to keep, and cut, and what do you need to re-include (possibly) from previous versions to help explain the missing info for readers?



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Carter was having difficulty seeing his work editorially – that is, for a usable audience. This is not an unusual problem for many authors, working in either print or multimedia, but because multimedia feels more like art than writing for *Kairos* authors (because of the aesthetic qualities of the multimedia-based compositional process), it's challenging for authors to rethink—and revise—the work through that editorial lens. Through the reviews, I was trying to teach him how to see his own multimedia work in the context of others' readings habits, expectations that are certainly different in scholarly multimedia than in traditional articles, but ones nonetheless that require a text to teach the reader how to satisfy gestalt without the author's commentary. The text had to speak for itself.

A week later, Carter returned a wholly revised draft, significantly shorter and without the (cumbersome) wordplay subtitles. He recognized from previous revision comments that "captions were something of a stumbling block." Within the course of two days, he sent two further drafts, based on his feedback from the collection's co-authors. Between these three subsequent drafts, Carter had deleted the references to writing pedagogy and tightened the scope of the piece so that the three tropes (calls, race relations, and poetry/song/dance) would present a clear focus and single argument for the audience. He noted additional changes he wanted to make, based on further feedback, in his fourth revision cover letter:

Now the ending is something that I'm still open to fixing. I added a little segment of Ali & Frazier shaking hands and kind of making up, and that's a more uplifting ending than I original had....

Anyway, I also came back around to the Rocky statue in my new version. It's very quick, but I think it bookends nicely with the Stallone material that I start with. I really scaled back the entire story about Stallone. I try to leave with the idea that Stallone sees "everybody" have a little Rocky in them, BUT that there is "proof" that both Wepner and Frazier are also big (if hidden) influences in that story. I think the ending now connects better w/ my write-up, though I'll need to double-check.

I really like the connection you're seeing w/ regards to Ali and Minstrels. Ali is such a fascinating figure for both his physical and verbal prowess. His calling Frazier an Uncle Tom and calling him a gorilla (also newly added) adds a complicated layer to Ali's own role as a civil rights figure. Of course, Wepner's claim that he needed Ali to call him names on national tv is something else too. There's a clip that I didn't use where Ali is talking about his ability to sell tickets to his fights. This was, as [collection editors] Virginia and Victor note in their MoMLA write-up "showvbusiness," after all. Rich, rhetorical stuff!

His response to the revision suggestions indicates a better awareness of audience and the need for a narrower scope based on the boxers' roles. This is the first email, for instance, that Carter was able to clearly articulate (to those who knew his video) how some of his remixed video clips of Ali, Frazier, etc., were functioning to further the thesis of the webtext. Revising the nondiscursive portions of his video led to this discursive discussion that allowed me to better understand his authorial intentions. (This is perhaps why many teachers of multimodal composition require their students to write design justifications or process documents for non-linguistic-based texts; see Shipka, 2012. I believe that requirement takes away the power of the multimedia text to speak on its own and, thus, have stopped assigning this explanatory text in my classes; see Ball, Bowen, & Fenn, 2013)

Although Carter still somewhat missed the point that *Kairos* has an international audience who, indeed, may not know either Stallone or Ali, the truth is that I don't know for sure whether *Kairos's* audience would stumble over these heavily televised figures, and Carter and I could make sure any confusion was accounted for in Carter's written introduction to

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the piece. In any case, by the time I reviewed this fourth draft, I recognized that Carter had used the macro-level feedback he'd gotten from me and his collaborators to tighten the piece in such a way that I could move from macro-editing to micro-editing in this developmental process.

***Micro-editing***

Most micro-editing in *Kairos* happens in production, after a text has been accepted for publication and the staff has begun copy-and design-editing for clarity and correctness. At that stage, design-editing involves adding alt tags, moving videos from third-party hosting sites to our own servers, uploading transcripts, and adding metadata, among other accessibility and usability checks. This kind of micro-editing can be done with HTML-based webtexts and with some multimedia (such as Prezis), but proprietary software such as videos can't be design-edited to, for instance, delete that overly long transition or to adjust the gain during the second scene. These multimodal grammar errors must be fixed by the author, so *Kairos* has to provide micro-edits to them at the end of our substantive-editing process. This is what I did for Carter's webtext after the fourth revision, providing him a one-and-a-half page list of micro-edits to make as he revised towards his fifth and final version. I noted several additions, deletions, and technical changes I wanted him to do.

Within three hours of my email, Carter had made the changes I wanted and replied to each point, confirming or explaining what he had changed (or not) and why. Below, I present some of this discussion because it exemplifies the recursive mentoring—from editor to author and back to editor; from teacher to student and back to teacher—that an editorial pedagogy requires. The micro-edits are noted by their minute:second start times in the video, which, although I provided them and Carter addressed them chronologically in his response email, I've arranged them the types of edits I asked of him: rhetorical and technical.

***Rhetorical edits***

One of my first micro-edits to Carter was about the *logos*, or structure, of his video. The first few minutes of the video engaged me as a reader, but then the narrative arc broken down and was inconsistent through the rest of the video. I came up with a solution I thought would clear up the confusion for readers *and* retain Carter's innovative approach in this multimodal argument:

2:40 – there's two things here that bother me: (1) an abrupt switch to Wepner's discussion of race and (2) it takes until 5:20 (nearly half way thru) for the "Ali remix" part to start. Can we foreshadow the remix *and* race parts, which I think will help remove some of the (unnecessary, here) abrupt switch to race by inserting a very short remix clip at 2:40ish? This might be as short as the "rumble in the jungle" tagline used later. This would also make the movie into roughly thirds w the primary remix appearances at 3ish, 5:30ish, and 8:15ish. Thoughts?

This was a large change and could be considered a macro-edit, but I classify it as a micro-edit for three reasons: (1) I needed to see the trajectory of Carter's argument more clearly, which I couldn't have done before he made the macro-edits to narrow the scope. (2) Unlike the macro-edits, which were global, thesis-based changes, this micro-edit didn't involve any *significant* or fine-tuned video editing—only adding to what was already there with

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material that Carter already had. (He did have a soundtrack clip, but I don't recall this edit affecting that mode; either the soundtrack began after this edit suggestion or wasn't synced with the video in any way that would have deleteriously affected the meaning.) (3) Finally, I could point to a specific location (minute and second, roughly) where I wanted the change made. Carter already had the "Ali remixes," as we called them, at the "5:30ish and 8:15ish marks," so, although this micro-edit did significantly better the narrative, rhetorical structure of the piece, the requirements to make that change were micro in nature. This is perhaps why—in response to my attempts to persuade Carter to make these changes through politeness strategies such as attending to his "thoughts" about my suggestions (Mackiewicz, 2011)—Carter simply concurred with an "Okay, I added a remix element here as you suggest."

Some of my later cuts were more directive than the tentative and polite "can you?" of my previous micro-edit. I felt my *ethos* allowed for this shift since some edits were ones he did not necessarily need to complete while the following were ones I required—so, a give-and-take was at play. I had some difficulty with the last third of the video: Parts were too long, others too short, some too loud, others didn't take as much advantage of the aesthetic moves Carter made elsewhere in the video as they could. I pinpointed precise scenes and segments that I wanted him to address. Specifically, Carter had nearly a minute-long excerpt from the *Rocky* movie embedded near the 11-minute mark. The scene involved Rocky standing outside of a Philadelphia row house reflecting (mostly in silence) on the break-up with his girlfriend and his other missed opportunities. For readers who hadn't seen this *Rocky* movie in over twenty years (such as myself), this scene wasn't contextualized enough for the purposes of "Thrilla in ManiLA" and thus didn't make sense. It diverged from the narrative arc for too long, so I recommended cutting half of it, to which Carter agreed (his response is indicated by the arrow).

11:19-11:42 – depending on how the music works, I'd like you to cut this part of the scene out. Without the context of the Rocky movie more apparent in *your* video, it doesn't add anything and just raises more questions than it's worth. The heart of this scene in relation to YOUR video comes with Rocky's line about "you are that place" where you live. That relates back to Joe [Frazier] as prominently as any, but that beginning part is taking too long to get there.

—> I cut this segment too. This was a hard one to let go, but –yes– it does take too long to get here. The place stuff seemed to be at the heart of the project at first, but now I think it can go on without it.

### *Technical edits*

Some micro-edits are about technical considerations—in this case, of video production. But something I thought was a problem actually turned into a more robust interpretation of Carter's argument:

6:00ish – did you add the filter that makes it look like Ali is in whiteface? Or is he really in whiteface? I'm glad VK made that association because I was a little disturbed by it at first then realized how it fit. But, still, his face is nearly invisible at all in those clips because of the lighting/effects. I don't know if it's possible to change the hue at all, and you may not want to. Just a thing I noticed.

—> Nope, no filter. This is mostly a result of the original filming (poor lighting at the press conference), though I may have had the contrast set a little high too when I captured it onto my iPad. I never really

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paid that much attention, but I think this reading of whiteface, in the face of Ali calling Frazier a Gorilla is interesting. Let's keep it!

I agreed since three of us had had similar readings of what I originally thought was an inappropriate video effect applied to the clip.

Another example of my making a technical micro-edit came at 6:55, when I noted that the "audio is a bit too clipped in this part. Can you do anything about that? It's really hard to understand." This micro-edit seemed fairly innocuous to me at the time, but I was also aware that technology is never divorced from its rhetorical situation, and that form and content are inseparable, which is why I asked Carter *if* he could fix it instead of telling him to fix it. When revising multimedia—either in webtexts or in the fixed-term of a classroom—authors are under rhetorical and technological constraints that may mean readers (editors and teachers) have to be accepting of less polished texts sometimes (Ball, 2012a). Indeed, as Carter responded, the reasons he couldn't adjust the clip any further were complicated by the technologies, historical artifacts, and rhetorical scenes in which he was working:

→ This audio is just part of the original. Again, press conferences weren't wired for sound very well. Keep in mind that Ali is showing what he's doing by punching at Wepner, and I wanted this association to follow his punching the gorilla doll in his pocket. I wish Wepner's attempt to read a poem of his went a little longer, too, as I was trying to jump from that to Frazier singing. The original clip didn't give me much room to work with, and I had to clip it at the end sooner than I really wanted to do.

Carter's explanation for why he couldn't make the change I was requesting was thorough enough that I dropped the issue and decided that one small segment (roughly 20 seconds in a 13-minute video), which *may* be difficult for readers to understand, did not warrant monkeying with the text any further, particularly since Carter cut other scenes where the audio was in worse condition or there were other problems.

### **Learning from an Editorial Pedagogy**

This case study based on Geoffrey Carter's webtext is but one of many examples that enact an editorial pedagogy. The outcome for Carter, as with any *Kairos* author, is eventual publication of their webtext, which leads to other professional rewards that would seem to fall outside the scope of this mentoring process—although rarely are the lines so clearly drawn when editorial work moves beyond gatekeeping and into teaching. For me as editor and teacher, the recursive nature of multiple layers of revision and feedback is exciting, but it is the reciprocal nature of an editorial pedagogy that prompted my theorizing this approach. As I've discussed elsewhere (2012b, 2012c), my greatest realization to the benefits of an editorial pedagogy came in an undergraduate Multimodal Composition course. I was teaching student-authors to compose webtexts for scholarly multimedia journals like *Kairos* when I realized that the webtexts they produced in a 15-week semester were on par with many *Kairos* submissions from first-time authors.

In addition, my efforts to enact a multimodal, genre-studies pedagogy—implementing the New London Group's (1996) *situated practice, overt instruction, critical framing, and*

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*transformed practice*—by providing students with explicit instructions that outlined the generic and disciplinary conventions of webtextual peer reviews helped students write peer reviews of each others' webtexts that were on par with *Kairos's* editorial board's reviews (Ball, 2013). The irony is that I had not provided that same level of detail for the journal's board or its authors. Board members don't typically receive such explicit training in reading/evaluating webtexts in their graduate programs, and I assumed that authors learn to compose webtexts from analyzing current ones. I quickly made my review expectations explicit for the editorial board, which changed their overall participation for the better, and began to explicitly mentor authors more closely, such as I did with Carter. Teaching undergraduates taught me to be a better editor.

Whether authors are students or faculty, the key in providing revision advice to multimodal texts seems to be rhetorical and pedagogical generosity (Santos, 2011). While students may need explicit instructions to conduct peer reviews and revisions, so might editorial boards and authors. My goal here has been to show how revision can be approached as a collaboration between authors and editors (students and teachers, and vice versa) in a writing process where multiple drafts should be expected and encouraged, particularly for writers new to certain genres. Throughout the draft process, different levels of editorial intervention are as useful in multimodal writing situations as moving from macro- to micro-revisions in written texts has been taught rhetorically for decades.

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