

Introduction

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CCCC 2020 AND THE DOCUMENTARIAN PROJECT

What has become this particular collection of tales was occasioned first by the 2020 CCCC Convention, and then, later, by the cancellation of it. In its original conception, it was intended to document a conference experience; in its current expression, it has become a means for Documentarians to share a common experience in this uncommon time of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The idea for the Documentarian project first came about as an expression of the CCCC 2020 theme, “Considering Our Commonplaces,” which invited conference attendees to participate in conversations about the implicit values, core beliefs, and normalized practices at work in our professional community. The new role of conference Documentarian came about, specifically, as a means by which CCCC, as a professional community, might learn more about the needs and experiences of its members. We knew that the conference served a diverse array of professional people and purposes, but we wondered about how we might surface particular experiences of the conference through the stories Cs-goers might tell, if given the opportunity to articulate their plans, document their activities at the conference, and then reflect on these expectations and experiences. We suspected that everyone has an *idea* of the CCCC conference, and that everyone seems to want something from it, but—even given the post-conference surveys typically administered by CCCC staff—we didn’t have a nuanced understanding of what those ideas, experiences and desires are. We wondered: what IS a CCCC conference?

If you’re reading this, you probably know—or are learning—that the Conference on College Composition and Communication is the largest and most influential professional organization (among a cadre of organizations with similar disciplinary orientations) for those who work in the field of composition and rhetoric studies and who work as scholars and practitioners across institutional types in higher education.

Accordingly, the CCCC Annual Convention is the most well attended and most highly visible professional meeting for the field of composition and rhetoric studies and has been running, since its inaugural meeting in 1949, for over 70 years. The CCCC Wikipedia page will tell you that the annual conference typically has over 3,000 CCCC participants each year (presenters and attendees). It specifies, as well, that the conference is an itinerant affair: every year, a new city hosts the conference. The 2020 Convention was to be held in Milwaukee; the 2021 meeting—before it, too, was moved to a virtual platform—was to be in Spokane, Washington. The 2022 conference, scheduled to be held in Chicago, was also moved to a virtual platform. Conferencegoers can choose from a repertoire of activities that includes traditional panels, workshops, keynote speakers, and interest-group meetings. There are awards ceremonies for outstanding scholarly work and exemplary contributors to the profession.

From what we heard in listening sessions with our colleagues at MSU, we found, even via conversations with our students and colleagues in one institution, that our suspicion that CCCC represents a diverse professional community was affirmed. We could only imagine what kind of diversity existed on a national scale, to further complicate commonplaces about what the conference is and does, and for whom. Bump, in particular, had had some experience with the potential stakes of our commonplaces about CCCC. He recalled that the question, “What is a conference?” emerged in a particularly dramatic way for CCCC 2018 in the wake of travel advisories for people of color in Kansas City. If the conference were to be relocated or moved into virtual spaces, what all would need to be recreated? If there were no conference, what would be lost? What most needed to be preserved for the good of the Cs community? What did the conference *do* for people? What kinds of conference experiences could we imagine? It occurred to us that having a non-space-bound way of addressing problems of space and participation for CCCC could offer a benefit: each year, there were more people who wanted to participate in the conference—and get support for their participation from their home institutions—than there was space at the conference location. What if we could imagine a role that could be of service to the community that was NOT so inflexibly contingent on considerations of space, and thereby change the terms of participation in the event?

Our goal all along with the Documentarians project has been to surface a story of our field of practice via the stories of individuals working within it. Originally, when we conceived the project entitled

Recollections of a Common Place, the experience of the conference itself was the means for this larger view of who we are as a community of professional practitioners, and how we do our work.

ENTER COVID-19; EXIT CCCC 2020.

When the 2020 conference was canceled, one of the things we felt as a loss was the new Documentarian piece. How would we document an experience that . . . wasn't? When the three of us (Julie, Bree, and Bump) met for our planning meeting immediately following the decision to cancel CCCC 2020, we began commiserating about the loss of the Documentarian opportunity, as we'd had such faith in the potential of these collected stories to teach us more about common (and uncommon) experiences of our professional community. But we quickly realized that the project did not *have* to be lost—that it could be just as relevant, in some of the same ways, but also, perhaps, in different ones, in this time of COVID-19 and the profound, wide-scale disruptions to our everyday working lives. We saw that these narratives documenting a week of the pandemic—the week during which CCCC would have taken place—could not only document a period of time, but could also tell stories of learning, inclusion/exclusion, access, and professional participation—just as with the original version of the project.

Our goal in reconceiving this project has not changed; we want to make available a story of our field of practice via the experiences of its diverse practitioners. In the case of *Recollections from an Uncommon Time*, however, we do so via accounts of the shared experience of disruption in our work lives—which, as it turns out, also teaches us how deeply the terms of our work are implicated in our experiences of home, family, and everyday routines. A conference is a public-facing event relevant to our work; a pandemic returns us, abruptly and often traumatically, to private spaces relevant to that work. In this returning, we are invited—compelled even—to confront many of the common-places of our professional lives.

THREE READERS READING

The three of us worked closely together throughout the process of conceiving the idea for the Documentarian project, and editing the manuscript for *Recollections*. The story of our collaboration is one story the collection tells, since it, too, is a story of work routines and professional

lives during the onset of the US response to COVID-19. Even as we worked in consultation (and often, in direct conversation) with each other as we made decisions about what the book would be and how it would develop, we were very much aware—especially as we read the contributions, listened to the stories they were telling, and found moments of value and resonance in them—that we were three distinct humans, each with a history, set of lived experiences, and ways of finding meaning in (and ascribing meaning to) the stories. Sometimes we were in agreement about the value of the work a piece would do for its readers and for the collection; sometimes one of us would find and be deeply compelled by resonances having to do with her or his own experiences (of home, family, work, etc.). Throughout the process, we were very much aware of reading as *these three readers*; even so, we were also aware that there are and will be readers with many other kinds of experiences very much outside the scope of our own—and these other, potential readers (so many potential readers!) were not represented by our small editorial team (a fact that one Documentarian, Shelagh Patterson, points to directly, writing: “It scares me that my thoughts through this form may become aggregated data that I have no control over: a difference between creative writing and comp-rhet narrative. I have decided we are allies, but we don’t know each other well yet.”). We deeply appreciate having the honor to work with the stories that Documentarians have entrusted to us, and we feel the weight of responsibility that comes with their goodwill and generosity. We come to this project with particular experiences and investments having to do with the work we do and our role in it.

In what follows, we reflect on how we came to the project and to the stories collected here.

Julie

My vision for CCCC 2020 was developed, from the very beginning, in dialogue with Bree as my student and conference assistant, and with Bump, as my long-term research partner and collaborator. As is the customary charge of program directors, I needed to define a conference theme, an idea that would frame the experience as a whole, and serve as a heuristic for the contributions of convention participants. Bump and I had often remarked on how, as WPAs, we were compelled, in managing the everyday predicaments addressed to us by our teaching colleagues, to confront the truth that often the most deeply

held values and practice of teachers were both responsible for sustaining and thwarting their best efforts. From this observation—that enduring teaching principles and traditions of practice were not only responsible for thinking productively about teaching and learning, but also that these commonplaces could be *unproductively* durable—came the idea for the conference theme, “Considering Our Commonplaces.” This was to be not so much a topical theme as a kind of invitation for reflection.

Accordingly, one of my goals for the conference—the most important one, to my mind—was to create a learning experience: a pedagogical event. I was hoping that the learning would happen for conferencegoers in their interactions with others, but also that we could surface stories and experiences that may otherwise be unavailable to the organization itself, to help it learn how it might do a better job of supporting education-related professional activities. This would be one way, I thought, for us as a professional community to consider our commonplaces. Bump and I had written about an approach to story-based learning that was very much in alignment with life history approaches, one that put methods of documentation and reflection to work to scaffold occasions for discovery via narrative inquiry. In fact, our first-year writing curriculum at Michigan State was (and is) an expression of this model of teaching and learning; it asks students to “*preflect*” on their plans and expectations for learning; to collect not only the drafts they submit for grading, but all of the exploratory drafts, peer-review work (given and received), instructor feedback, and process reflections. This archive of their previous writing activities and products serves as the corpus by which, in their final reflections, they identify their strengths as writers, lessons they have learned, and goals to direct their ongoing development. Their *preflective* works help them *prepare to reflect* (Halbritter and Lindquist, “Collecting and Coding,” “It’s Never about What It’s About,” “Witness Learning,”; Lindquist and Halbritter, “Documenting and Discovering Learning”).

When we learned from Cheryl Caesar, our colleague at MSU, about the Community Writing Conference Documentarian, we imagined that the concept could have uses in making visible the multiple, varied stories of the CCCC experiences, and that the scene of the conference itself could be another scene of our curriculum of narrative inquiry. I was terrifically excited to see what stories this role would surface and to find out what we would learn about our colleagues across the field

from them by way of their stories. In late February, the idea that the conference could be *cancelled* was remote, abstract, unthinkable. On March 1, alarmed by the news I was seeing about the virus and the conversations on social media that were developing in response to it, I wrote to my fellow CCCC officers with an alert and a question: the coronavirus situation seems to need our attention: should we talk? On March 2, we met with the NCTE executive director, reviewed what information we had about the situation so far, and approved a plan to go forward with the conference. By the second week of March, that possibility had morphed into a very different, much more ominous shape. And when, on March 11, we met as an Executive Committee to vote on whether to cancel the conference, that decision was inevitable, imperative, and unanimous. On March 12, members received notification that the conference had been cancelled. At that time, when the news had to be shared with the Cs community, the damages to the financial stability of the organization assessed, and plans for alternative means of sharing made, there was no time to indulge any experience, or to embark on any project, of grief. That particular agenda item could not, as it turned out, be permitted to rise to the level of priority. It was only later, when the most urgent business of following up on our decision to cancel 4C20 had been mostly accomplished, did I begin to confront what the loss of that event meant to me, the Program Chair. A moment of reckoning came with the first Documentarian survey on the morning of what would have been the first day of the conference, a day when we were to have met the members of the new Documentarian community at a reception that evening at the Milwaukee Hilton. I recall that the explicit invitation to reflect on the experience of that day the survey extended was a moment of turning to look that grief squarely in the face, and to begin the long, and ongoing, process of taking stock, feeling, healing. After the years of conceiving and thinking and planning that came to an abrupt halt on March 11, 2020, I should have been expecting that very thing. I'm pretty sure that it speaks to the level of enabling deferral I had been managing in the weeks prior.

Bree

As a PhD student on the job market, I was keenly aware of the sometimes disorienting project of navigating the CCCC conference; so in my role as assistant, I wanted to make visible those hidden stories of entering a new field and/or residing on its margins. The Documentarian

project made space for those stories to emerge, and with the print and digital publications, those stories would also have a platform to be heard by the field more broadly. Then the whole world itself became disorienting with the onset of COVID-19. The same curiosity resided in us as a team: how do we as individuals, educators, researchers, and students navigate this new space in our worlds, particularly as work becomes more acutely intertwined with home? In many ways, we thought the new version of the project might end up being even more insightful as individuals not only reflected on the loss of the conference, but also documented the pivoting taking place as their professional lives were upended.

On a personal level (where many of the stories in this collection reside), home and place became a theme that had a profound impact on my experience, and on my subsequent investment in this collection of stories. With my three teenage children, I had to move to a temporary place to live because my former home had people at high risk. We were generously welcomed in this new place, but it was challenging to meet the needs of my family while moving our entire lives, vocations, and school experiences to a home that was not our home. We were guests in a place that was new, in a world that was new. In addition, the uncertainty of the job market made it unclear the length of this temporary displacement as weeks stretched into months. Completing my dissertation felt peripheral as the crisis unfolded all around us. Questions and uncertainty kept me awake at night. How will I make enough money to support four people if hiring is put on hold? Where will we live? And then the guilt of those questions surfaced, especially when weighed against other larger ones. Will people we love become sick? How many people will die?

I include this tiny excerpt from my personal experience to make clear the lens with which I approached the project and the stories in this collection. In my own way, I also hope to honor the vulnerability the participants offer by offering it myself. This collection and the Documentarian experience was at times a comfort for me. I appreciated the daily structured space for sensemaking in the surveys. When I read the daily survey excerpts from others, I found I was not alone with my personal and professional life blending together in ways that offered both hardship and opportunity. Others were scared and hopeful. Others were in new spaces and appreciating the home they had. People worried about their students and questioned our definitions of

productivity. The project in many ways revealed that we cared about the work we do and how our lives move in meaningful and intentional ways in both our personal and professional lives.

Bump

Throughout the long process of 4C20 planning, I was pretty much *behind-the-scenes guy*. As Julie's long-term research partner, I had grown used to tackling most of each of our professional responsibilities and opportunities, to some extent, together. 4C20 was no different. I had just finished a 3-year term on the CCCC Executive Committee, and I was excited to leverage that experience to help brainstorm possibilities for the conference (and even happier to not have to do the heavy lifting of planning them!). However, the Documentarian project was truly a thing that, while suggested from something that happened at another conference, was reimagined by way of our work over the years: first by way of our LiteracyCorps Michigan documentary project (Halbritter and Lindquist, "Sleight of Ear" and "Time, Lives, and Videotape") and then by way of its pedagogical adaptation: Experiential-Learning Documentary (Halbritter and Lindquist, "It's Never about What It's About"; Lindquist and Halbritter, "Documenting and Discovering").

When we lost the conference, I remember sitting in Julie's office (now my office—where I sit writing this reflection) commiserating with Julie and Bree the consequent loss of the Documentarian project. I recall one of us saying how we wished we could still do it, and then Bree saying, "Well, why don't we?" We may have lost the conference, but we still had the infrastructure—that we had designed and built—to do it. We had a team of Documentarian volunteers. This was no pipe dream. This could happen. In quick succession, 1) we reimagined the role to document our shared experiences of the days that would have been spent at the conference—days that would also be the first days of the US response to COVID-19, 2) we revised our daily surveys to facilitate our documentation, 3) we resituated our common place(s) to be our homes as we sheltered in place, and 4) we reconnected with SWR to see if they may be willing to work with us to publish the re-born project.

They were!

It all re-happened so fast. "What *is* a conference experience?" became "What *is* a non-conference experience in the first days of the US

response to COVID-19?” Little did we know, the global COVID-19 pandemic would be only the first of the shared crises to impact the lifecycle of our project and the emotional and social conditions of our reflecting on it.

In retrospect, we were lucky.

It seems wrong to say that given all that has happened since that day in March 2020. Nothing about this virus, the social unrest, or the economic crisis that has erupted in its wake has been lucky. The losses we have sustained world-wide, individually and collectively, have been terrible. Nothing about the conditions of the times could be construed as having to do with “luck.”

However, *we*—Julie, Bree, and I—were lucky. We just happened to have a tool—an infrastructure that we had created—for documenting the experiences of our colleagues at a time when an unprecedented set of experiences were beginning to unfold. In documentary-speak, we just happened to have our cameras out and rolling as the new storms began to roll in. In that sense, we were lucky. We were lucky, too, to have each other—trusted partners and colleagues who had been working together for many years and who have, together, faced previous challenges and pursued previous opportunities. Together, this new crazy thing seemed possible for the three of us to pursue. We were especially lucky to have a diverse cohort of Documentarians who had the courage and the goodwill to document and share their experiences of this wholly uncommon time. We were lucky to have SWR—and series editor, Steve Parks, in particular—share our enthusiasm for both designs of the project.

We were lucky. I was lucky. I *am* lucky. This project has turned into some of the most rewarding work of my career. I ended my Documentarian Post-Reflection on Sunday, April 4, 2020, with these words:

I hope that others have enjoyed and profited from this work as much as I have. I doubt that anyone could have had a more rewarding experience from it than I have.

It has buoyed my leaden heart. It has kept me tethered in a time when I have felt unmoored. It has connected me during a time of isolation. It has helped me see productivity in disruption.

It has helped me search for, discover, and name hope.

Inquiry, Discovery, and Communication.

That might could become a thing. :)

I am lucky. I hope that the Documentarian Tales in this collection and its larger electronic counterpart will help readers and researchers feel lucky to have access to these accounts of the experiences of their peers during these most unprecedented times.

THE WORLD AROUND US: A TIMELINE

Since we put out the call, and since the time during which 4C20 was scheduled to happen, much has happened—and continues to happen—in the world. When we put out the revised CFP in early spring 2020, the over-determining national event was the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic. By the beginning of summer 2020, we were witnessing a historic shift in the national conversation about race relations.

At the time of the final revising of this Introduction (the first weeks of February, 2021), it is already hard to remember how we got here—what we learned and when we learned it. So much happened in 2020, it can be difficult to remember versions of ourselves who did not, yet, know what we know now. Consequently, the Documentarian Tales in this collection may seem . . . *naïve* . . . to readers who encounter them in 2021 or later. But neither these stories nor their authors are or were naïve. We encourage readers to regard these tales as *nascent*, collected and recollected during the first months of the global COVID-19 pandemic, protests for racial justice in the US, and the 2020 US presidential campaign. As these tales were being drafted, the systematic dismantling of the US Postal Service was not yet being called into question, the election had not yet happened—or, rather, had not yet begun happening, the legal challenges to the election results had not yet ensued, the US Capitol had not yet been the scene of an act of domestic insurgency, and no president of the United States had yet been twice impeached. Nor can I imagine that any of us could have realistically expected that two months into the new year would find us with more than 27 million COVID-19 infections, nearly half-a-million COVID-19 deaths in the US, and daily COVID-19 death tolls that would surpass 4,000 US citizens. Back in the spring of 2020, few of us could foresee how dramatically 2021 would come in like a lion.

But, in, like a lion, it came.

Furthermore, the slew of things that will undoubtedly happen later this week, and next week, and the next, had not yet happened and were not yet informing the recollections and the voices of the Documentarians in this collection. However, they *are* informing us, now,

as we read these stories. The former selves who wrote the tales in this collection were, as were all of our former selves during that time, *coming to know* what we now know. We were learning. The stories of *Recollected from an Uncommon Time: 4C20 Documentarian Tales* give us a window into that learning in progress. With hope, they will provide a window into yours, as well.

And yet, it can be hard to unknow what we now know. In Table 1, we provide an incomplete sketch of happenings during the window of time that Documentarians were carrying out the work that would become this collection. The left-hand column indicates early- or late-month markers. The center column contains relevant developments in Documentarian duties that correspond to the time markers in the left-hand column. The right-hand column contains a vastly incomplete record of world and national events (especially those related to the unfolding COVID-19 pandemic and demonstrations of racial unrest in the US) that coincided with the Documentarian duties listed in the center column. We have shaded the four rows from late April through early June to highlight the active drafting time for Documentarians. These events are compiled to help readers place events that may have been (or were not yet) informing the Documentarian Tales in this collection.

Table 1: Dates for national and world events pulled from public news records: COVID-19, George Floyd, and Breonna Taylor timelines

Month	Documentarian Timeline	World/US National Events
Late Dec. 2019	Dec. 23: Documentarians are invited to do introductory survey and instructional module.	Dec. 31: First Cases of COVID-19 in Wuhan, China, reported.
Early Jan. 2020	Jan 6: Training Module and introductory survey completed by those who would have a role as Documentarians at 4C20.	Jan. 11: First COVID-19 death reported from Wuhan, China.
Late Jan.		Jan 30: World Health Organization (W.H.O.) declares global health emergency. Jan 31: Travel from China to US suspended (by this date, 213 people had died and nearly 9,800 had been infected worldwide)

Month	Documentarian Timeline	World/US National Events
Early Feb.		Feb 11: W.H.O. names the disease COVID-19.
Late Feb.	Feb 25: CCCC 2020 online program published announcing names of Documentarians.	Feb 23: Italy becomes a COVID-19 hotspot. Feb 29: US reports its first COVID-19 death.
Early March	March 2: CCCC Officers meet with NCTE Executive Director to assess coronavirus threat for CCCC2020. March 11: CCCC Executive Committee meets, decides to cancel 2020 convention. March 12: Notification to CCCC community that 4C20 would be cancelled.	March 13: Trump Administration declares national emergency. March 13: Breonna Taylor is killed in Louisville, Kentucky. March 15: C.DC recommends no gatherings of more than 50 people.
Late March	March 20: Notification to CCCC community about revised Documentarian opportunity and forthcoming CFP. Tuesday, March 24–Saturday, March 28, 2020: Five Days of 4C20. Wednesday, March 25–Saturday, March 28: 8 Conference Surveys	March 26: US becomes world leader in new cases. March 30: Stay-at-home directives become widespread in US
Early April	Sunday, April 5: Post-Conference Reflection due. April 10: Initial Survey Data released to Documentarians.	April 2: 6.6 million Americans apply for unemployment.
Late April	April 20: Call for Documentarian Tales.	April 17: Armed Protests against state restrictions in Michigan, Minnesota, and Ohio. April 26: Global death toll surpasses 200k; COVID-19 Task Force stops delivering daily briefings. April 27: Wrongful death suit filed in shooting death of Breonna Taylor. April 30: Airlines require facemasks.

Month	Documentarian Timeline	World/US National Events
Early May	Documentarians are drafting their Documentarian Tales.	
Late May	Documentarians are drafting their Documentarian Tales.	Monday, May 25: George Floyd is killed in Minneapolis, MN.
Late May	Documentarians are drafting their Documentarian Tales.	May 26: Protests erupt in Minneapolis and other cities. May 27: US COVID-19 deaths surpass 100k May 28: National Guard mobilized in Minneapolis. May 31: President sequesters in White House bunker as DC protests turn violent.
Early June	Monday, June 8: First drafts of Documentarian Tales are due.	June 1: Two autopsies rule George Floyd's death a homicide. June 1: Peaceful protesters tear-gassed for President's public statement at St. John's Church. June 3: Officers charged in George Floyd's death. June 5: #SayHerName campaign is launched in honor of what would have been Breonna Taylor's 26 th birthday. June 5: DC mayor orders "Black Lives Matter" painted on 16th Street, adjacent to the White House. Mayor renames this section of 16th Street, "Black Lives Matter Plaza."
Late June		June 19: Juneteenth protests May 26 - June 30: <i>NY Times</i> reports tens of millions self-report protest participation in response to George Floyd's killing.
Early July	Mid July: Communication to Documentarians about decisions for this (print) volume.	July 6: Trump Administration withdraws from W.H.O. as US COVID-19 death toll surpasses 130k. July 10: New COVID-19 cases set record highs for 11 consecutive days.
Late July	Saturday, August, 14th: Revised drafts of Documentarian Tales are due.	

On a smaller scale (and yet, one that often can feel global, from the perspectives of academics), the world of higher education was in a time of unprecedented crisis management—triage—as colleges and universities struggled to make decisions about campus re-openings and instructional modes. This, too, was happening in the background as we worked through the stages of developing this manuscript. In the course of our work together on this project—developing the Documentarian concept, creating surveys, crafting the call(s) for papers, collecting submissions, reading and curating narratives, communicating with contributors, and writing the introductory material—we noticed a particular arc of production, productivity, interruption, and frustration. In spring 2020, when we were composing the revised CFP, building the surveys, reading the surveys, and making sense of what we were seeing and hearing, we met frequently—once or twice a week—to project, collect, and reflect on what was emerging in the work before us. Later in the summer, as we were pressed to plan for fall semester 2020 against the shifting landscape of the response of higher-ed (and our home institution) to the COVID-19 threat, our work routines shifted. It became more and more difficult to sustain the regular work routines we had established at the start of the lockdown (which, at first, promised to have very different affordances of time). By early fall, we found ourselves working in fits and starts, our project routines undercut by the persistent mundane interruptions of crisis management. We imagine that our experiences of crisis and time management during the fall of 2020 are not unfamiliar to you or to the authors in this collection.

In fact, a focus on lamenting professional “productivity” emerges across several of the Documentarian Tales of this collection. In the eight daily surveys that spanned Wednesday, March 25, through Saturday, March 28, Documentarians were asked in the mornings, “What do you hope to accomplish today?” and in the evenings, “What did you accomplish [today]?” It becomes clear that many Documentarians took these questions to be primarily asking for reports on professional productivity.

For example, Maggie Christensen, in Chapter 15, “Documenting Our Solastalgia: A New Landscape,” wrestles with discussing accomplishments that would not be “quantifiable” on a CV:

On Saturday evening during 4C’s week, in response to the question “What did you accomplish?” I wrote:

For the fourth day in a row, this question nags at me—as if I must always be able to list my accomplishments, like a line on the cv. Earlier in the week I took great comfort in this question: it reminded me to take stock of all that I am doing amidst all the uncertainty and fretting. Today—perhaps because it’s Saturday—the question feels more like a weight: what if my accomplishments today were not quantifiable? I curled my elderly mother’s hair for her and rubbed lotion on her dry feet; I gave my daughter some respite from her busy 3-year-old; I reassured a student that she would be okay in her comp class.

In my fatigue from Saturday evening’s writing, I wondered if I was doing enough.

In Chapter 14, “Growing up Again (and Again),” Shauna Chung reveals her shock at encountering a former version of herself in her responses to the daily surveys.

Revisiting my answers to the survey questions—e.g., what do you hope to accomplish today, what emotions are invoked by your reflections, describe the scene around you, etc.—I read another unrecognizable version of myself. Who was this person calling a “walk in the sunlight” an “accomplishment”? She expressed feelings of gratitude for the opportunity to “tune my ears more intentionally to those around me.” She even described and reveled in the sound of people snoring in the next room, the familiar scent of floral shampoo, the buzz of a light as she sat at a desk in her childhood room to write about the mundane moments of her day.

Across the Documentarian Tales in this collection, we can find and follow bread-crumbs trails of authors’ journeys to learn about the commonplaces of their work lives and their relationships to and understandings of those commonplaces. We imagine that readers of this collection will find and follow these and other bread-crumbs trails of learning in progress. We are hopeful that these will help readers, too, find and follow bread-crumbs trails of their own.

PROJECT DETAILS: BECOMING A DOCUMENTARIAN

Although we found ourselves in a position to capture an uncommon moment, a significant amount of planning and project development led up to that moment. When we initially recruited for the project through

the conference CFP, contact with caucuses, and personal invitations, we had 323 people interested in participating. To indicate continued interest in inclusion on the program, participants needed to complete an on-line informational module, which 146 people completed. In addition, those individuals agreed to complete the following project components:

1. Attend the convention
2. Choose a path through the convention experience and record some observations about the things you see and hear
3. Complete morning and evening daily surveys during the conference about your intentions for each day and reflection on your experiences
4. Potentially attend a Documentarian reception during the conference
5. After the convention, compose a reflective narrative about your experiences (prompt given).

Once the conference was canceled and the Documentarian role was revised, we sent out a renewed call for participation to all who had expressed interest previously, and 171 people signed up. Figures 1 through 5 show charts indicating the self-identified demographics of those who expressed interest in the revised version of the project.

We asked participants to share their gender, disability status, race/ethnicity, professional status, and level of conference experience. The language of these demographic questions followed that of demographic inquiries from the CCCC organization itself. In looking at professional status and conference attendance, we see that the participants were predominantly graduate students and non-tenure-track faculty. In many ways, we had hoped to hear the more hidden stories of the conference, so we were encouraged to see so many community members from marginalized professional statuses sign up. We also noticed that a substantial number of the participants had either never attended the conference or had only attended one previous time (Figure 2). These fresh encounters with the conference were also what we hoped to hear.

We had hoped to hear from a broad diversity of voices from the field; however, we found that the majority of those who participated in the surveys were white women (Figures 3 and 4). In some ways, this body does represent the overall demographics in our field, but the gender and race/ethnicity demographics became especially important as we engaged in the editorial process. We found that we did not always have a diverse range (in the available set) from which to select.

Current Professional Status

109 responses

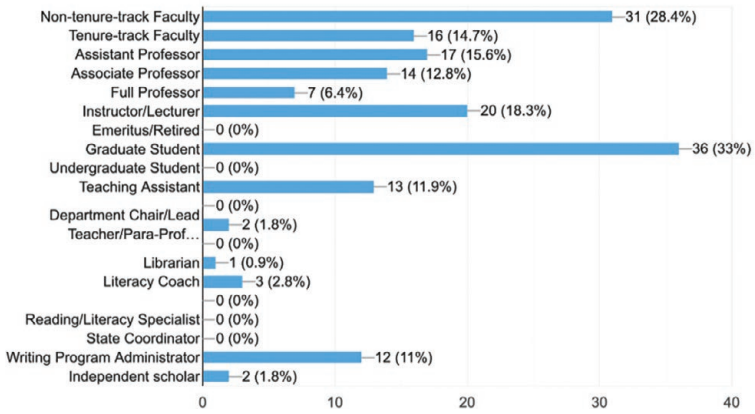


Figure 1. Current professional status

How many times have you attended CCCC?

108 responses

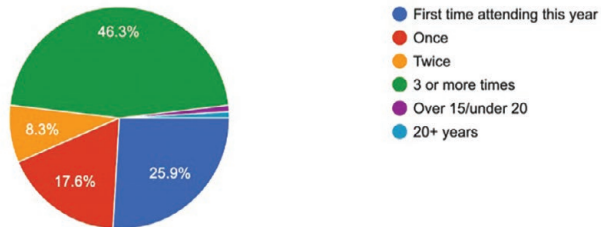


Figure 2. How many times have you attended CCCC?

Race/Ethnicity

108 responses

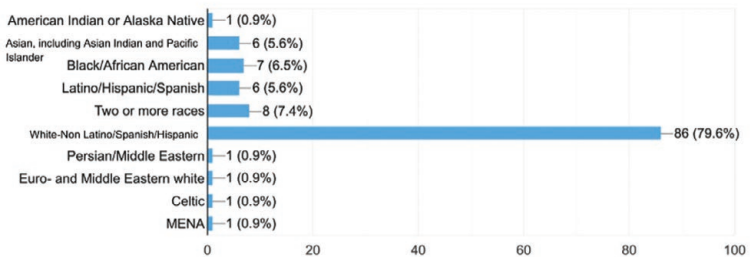


Figure 3. Race/ethnicity

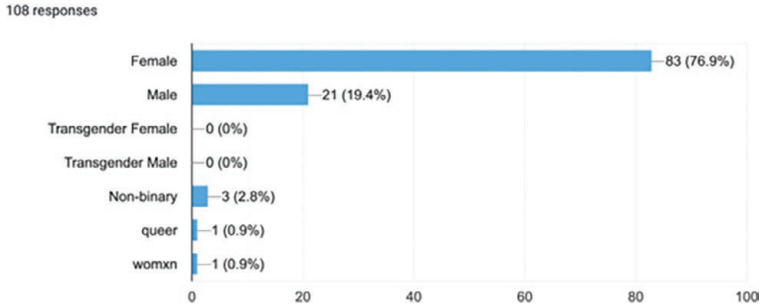


Figure 4. Gender identity

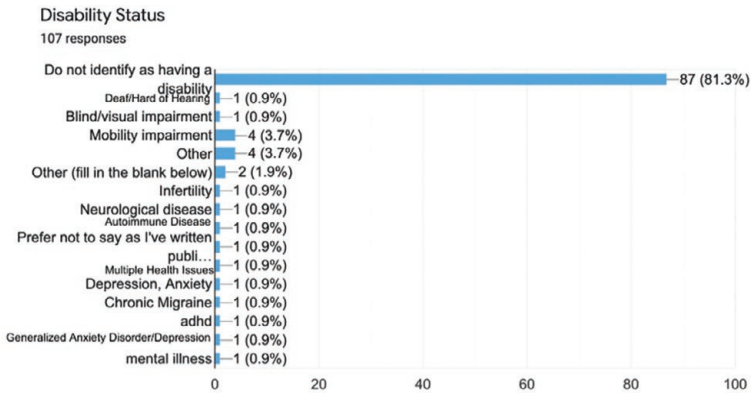


Figure 5. Disability status

In particular, we received few submissions from writers who identify as male, and especially few from R1 institutions. In fact, we did not have a single paper submitted from a tenure-line, male faculty member at an R1 institution. We are left to ask, why? We wonder if the idea of “serving” as a Documentarian was not particularly attractive, if the labor of the position and/or the investment in training seemed too demanding, if the newness of the role made it seem too risky, not legitimate enough, too hard to justify on a CV. We hope that, in future iterations of the Documentarian role, that more male-identified Documentarians from across the diverse reaches of our field will volunteer to serve in the role.

When we initially inquired about disability status (Figure 5), we considered the ways this might impact navigating conference and social spaces. When the conference was canceled, space and place took on a whole new dimension with people no longer navigating a new city or location, but instead navigating intensely familiar home spaces

but with new work demands imposed upon those spaces. Some challenges gave way to others as those with underlying illnesses or disabilities expressed concern over the danger of the COVID-19 illness. Anxiety and depression took on new shades as isolation grew. Many expressed challenges within the narratives they wrote that did not necessarily show up in the demographic identification.

The overall demographics of the project provoked us to consider Documentarians' motivations for participation as well as how this group of people represented our field. Who was missing? Why? Was it the design of the project itself that appealed to particular people? Did this initial group offer some insight into labor conditions, participation, and voice in our field? Many of the Documentarians in the collection write about their professional roles and working conditions in a professionally diverse—and not always equitable—field. We believe that the matter of how the invitation was taken up, and by whom, surfaces this story, as well.

WRITING AS ARCHIVING, EDITING AS CURATION

The Documentarian Tales collected here began their lives as responses to four sets of daily (morning and evening) surveys sent out to all who wished to participate as Documentarians 2020 (pandemic version¹). We designed the surveys that Documentarians would complete to serve three purposes: 1) to provide writing prompts for the authors themselves, 2) to amass an archive of each Documentarian's evolving experiences, and 3) to offer a means for Documentarians to share an experience during the days when CCCC 2020 would have taken place. In that they are records of a kind of shared experience and of a particular moment, the surveys *were* our convention. A foundational premise of the Documentarian project all along has been that when we each go to the same convention, we each come away from a common place with a unique (even uncommon) conference experience; similarly, we assume that we have each had a unique experience in writing individual responses to the same survey prompts.

We designed our surveys both to define a shared experience and to document one. And we were confident that those documents would have things to teach us, each and all. For these reasons, we have named

1 Actual Participants in daily surveys: Wednesday 110, Thursday 109, Friday 107, Saturday 85 (some did not plan to attend this day).

the particular sort of reflective writing that is produced by acts and archives of documentation *Experiential-Learning Documentary* (ELD), in keeping with a term Bump and Julie had created to describe the acts and resulting products of students' reflections on the archives of their learning experiences ("It's Never About What It's About: Audio-Visual Writing, Experiential-Learning Documentary, and the Forensic Art of Assessment"). As part of their writing processes, Documentarians returned, in late April through early June, to their experiences of the span of time from March 25 through 28 via their documented survey responses, in order for their current selves to learn from interactions with those documents created by their former selves. In fact, the title of this collection, *Recollections from an Uncommon Time*, arises from acts of documentation: collecting observations, and then re-collecting storyable information from that archive. We find, in reading these collected Documentarian Tales (ELDs), that there is a diverse range of ways acts of documentation show up in the finished narratives: some make specific reference to survey texts—jottings of the moment—and some are more mediated, operating at a greater remove from the original acts of documentation that informed them. We suspect that, were the authors collected here to return to the writing produced by the original surveys *now*, rather different stories would emerge from reflections on those same survey responses.

So it goes with documentation and reflection.

So it goes with present and former selves.

Our first step, after the surveys were completed, was to take stock and to reflect back to Documentarians what was showing up so far. We did some reading and reviewing around and across all the responses to observe common trends and themes. We collected a sample of responses to be shared with Documentarians (along with a list of the most frequently occurring words) so they could begin to see the kinds of topics, concerns, and experiences that were being expressed and taken up and so that they could begin to imagine what kinds of stories that "data" such as these may suggest. When we did a scan for the most frequently occurring words (as indicators of thematic threads) across all the survey responses, we found the most frequently occurring words to be *work*, *time*, and *students*. Among words for emotions, *hope* showed up most often.

One of our first editorial tasks, after reading each of the submissions we received in early June, was to make decisions about which would go

into the print version and which would be included in the digital-only collection. We asked ourselves: what would inform these choices? Our first priority was to choose a set of narratives that we thought rendered diverse experiences of pandemic work lives. This diversity expressed differences in embodiment and identity (e.g., race, gender, and sexual orientation) and in institutional positions, labor conditions, and kinds of work. We are not, as a field represented by CCCC membership, overdetermined by positions of high prestige and visibility in Research 1 institutions. Most of us, in fact, are teachers working under rather more precarious labor positions; many of us are graduate students looking ahead to an unstable job market. We saw that the new Documentarian role for CCCC was taken up mostly by people who were not, or not yet, in positions of high prestige and visibility in our field; accordingly, the CFP for *Recollections* drew authors whose stories of work experience and professional lives were not likely to be those most available, in published accounts, to the Cs community.

We also found ourselves drawn, for the purposes of this collection, to narratives that demonstrated that reflection is ongoing. Reflection is no static noun; it is a progression that emerges, always, as the product of a present progressive verb. Similarly, we found that many of these tales, as narratives that began their lives as records of experiences documented in real time, often came to us without a clear destination (or “lesson”) in evidence at the onset. We saw this quality of unfinishedness—of becoming—to be a virtue in rendering the uncertainty and disorientation of life during the early days of the pandemic.

Some of the pieces describe what the authors would have done had the 2020 convention gone on as planned. These stories teach us not only what many of those in our community *do* at the conference, but also what the CCCC convention means to them in their lives—one of the things we most hoped to learn in the original Documentarian project. We learn what Cs goers (or Cs didn’t-get-to-goers) feel they’re missing from their professional lives in the absence of a F2F meeting, often via reflections on other mundane activities.

THEMATIC RESONANCES: WORK LIFE AND LIFE WORK

As you read through the collected Documentarian Tales, you will notice a pattern of themes: for example, labor, home, family, work routines, community identity, precarity, access, aspirations. Many of the authors in this collection reflect on the experience of documenting

and reflecting on their experiences as a writing practice that can be (among other things) difficult, vexing, enlightening, sobering, and/or therapeutic. These thematic resonances are not surprising given the nature of the writing task and authors' everyday concerns, but they are also products, and expressions, of a particular historic moment. In our CFP, we wrote:

Of course, we recognize that this is not just any uncommon time. It's a time of a dangerous pandemic that is unprecedented in our lifetimes. By the time this is published—possibly by the time you get this—some of us may be sick. Many of us will know somebody who is, or has been, sick. The stakes will have grown higher, the situation, more dire. To make sense of that (future) moment, we will likely return to the stories of this earlier moment. In sharing the experiences of having our practices and routines upended when COVID-19 hit, we may find that we are in different phases of this experience, different positions in relationship to it. Each story is a radically generative partiality: our collective stories are a way to map that experience in time, as well as across place.

As we reread these tales, we see that they are, in fact, products of a very specific moment in pandemic time, in the lifespan of a lockdown (lock, unlock, relock, rinse, repeat). As we finalize our preparations to release this collection, one year into the pandemic, these tales, grown from a set of inquiries in March 2020, speak to the novelty of the pandemic world—of a nascent new world, yet to be formed in its new set of expectations, reconciliations, hopes, and routines. At this moment, these would be different stories: they would surface new work routines, accommodations to a new relationship between home and work life.

In fact, another story these collected stories tell is one of a very particular moment in time and of the changes that have come with time elapsed.

ACCESSING THE ARCHIVE

Though *Recollections from an Uncommon Time* is an edited collection, the Documentarian Tales collected here are more curated than edited. And while the collection is published by an academic press (CCCC/NCTE), the mission of this project is one that challenges (in the spirit of the 2020 conference theme) our commonplaces about scholarly

editing. Even as the authors have contributed their ELDs, we, the editors, have curated them *as* ELDs. For example, an art museum may curate existing works of art from a sculptor (e.g., Rodin) or a group of sculptors (e.g., those from a specific period who worked in steel). Those artists (should they still be alive) would likely not present drafts of their sculptures. They would contribute finished sculptures. The curators of those works would not send the sculptures back with a list of requests for their revision that would make those works conform to their own ideas of the experience that they hope the exhibit would create for those who may attend the exhibit. They would work with the art as it was submitted/collected. They would curate these works—assemble them—not edit or modify them. In this way, our editing more closely resembles a form of curation. As individual Documentarian Tales, we have aimed to present these works, essentially, as is, working with each Documentarian in the print collection to adhere, primarily, to a maximum word count that would allow us to include as many individual Documentarian Tales as our finite number of paper pages would permit. As a collection, we have aimed to present not what we have determined *should* be the story of our work or perspective or sensibility or ethical commitment (those that get it, somehow, “right”), but rather the story/stories that the evidence they offer suggests. What *was* our work during the first weeks of the US response to the global pandemic? What did *we* experience?

The tales collected here might not reveal the learning until the end. Expect to have some of the tales resonate with your experiences and others to depict a process of sensemaking that might not align with your own. Some of the tales, and the learning they depict, are still in process—they’re still happening. All of this is to say that this collection of Documentarian Tales might challenge your sensibilities . . . it might not fall together quite how you expect or even how you hope it may. But, really—given its mission, its diverse sites of origin and diverse authorship—how could it? We ask you to take a moment, read, and listen to each other.

In and across these tales, you’ll discover many themes, many stories. If you’re a student reading this book in order to learn about forms of work and professional lives in writing studies, you can read these Documentarian Tales in relation to a capacious landscape of ideas, with pathways defined by experiences of productivity, precarity, loss, grief, attentionality, reflection, anxiety, dread, disruption, trauma, hope, joy,

crisis, resilience, connection, isolation, solitude, race, gender, reconciliation, participation, mundanity, curation, routines, mentorship, identity, self, observation, stress, process, community, perception, purpose, resilience, memory, access, space, learning, disjuncture, mindfulness, holism, time, work, students, privilege, risk, belonging, environment, dislocation, exile, faith, stasis, chaos, uncertainty, story, shame, home, patience, family, survival, inclusion, adaptation (to name a few). Insofar as these are tales of everyday life, you will see multiple planes of meaning, multiple threads and relevancies. We think that one of the lessons of the collection as a whole is just how much meaning, how much “aboutness” that extends into the project of understanding our work as writers and educators, is encoded in the mundane details of experience. Another is the value of reflective writing, something all the authors address implicitly, some of them directly.

In many ways, we struggled over how to create a story arc of these chapters as a collection. The collection seemed to resist that sort of linearity and neatness. We came to realize that a story of diversity is just that, and we came to realize that each reader of such a collection would interpret and prioritize the stories according to their own sensibilities and experiences. We encourage you, as a reader, to do just this—to feel free to chart a course through the collected tales that suits your inclinations, your present needs, and your habits of reading. That said, we understand that most readers are inclined to begin at the beginning of a collection, and to make their way through it in a more or less linear fashion. Because paper pages demand both priority and linearity, we’ve ordered the pieces in such a way to give attention to particular moments of encounter, or points of contact, as each reader makes their way through the collection: first, the experience of entering the world of these tales; next, that of moving from one Documentarian Tale to the next; and finally, that of concluding the reading journey. We begin, therefore, with Adrienne Jankens’ piece as a point of departure; Jankens speaks directly to the fact of the cancellation of the 2020 conference, and the sudden shift in plans that this disruption occasioned. Accordingly, we end with Rachel Panton’s call for reflection and mindfulness as an ongoing practice of learning, healing, and self-care. The pieces that lie between these two points are organized in what you might think of as a braided, or enchainé fashion, each one treating the adjacent pieces as present interlocutors, proximity to which offers additional framing and context for what follows and precedes. You

might think of the authors in this collection as seated around the table at a dinner party, at which each guest may be in most frequent conversation with those seated on either side, but which conversation across and around the table is also possible.

And with that, let's meet our dinner companions.

In "A Sweet Spot, a Safe Space," **Adrienne Jankens** writes, "I realized, as I took notes during the week that we didn't go to Milwaukee, that the conference had become part of an annual restorative pause for me, sometimes in the midst of deep personal pain. The work of conference preparation aside, the experience itself was a retreat into safe being." Jankens begins her tale looking at the ways CCCC has offered that safe pause. She then goes on to reveal a complicated set of conditions of relative safety in the spaces of her life during the pandemic—safe in that the spaces function as scenes for the acts they contain, not that they are in some way inherently safe spaces.

In "Other Disseminations," **Erika Luckert** invites reflections on what it means to relinquish attachments to the usual routines and desires for productivity and control and to embrace, instead, an ethic of patience. "Other Disseminations" considers the life-cycle of the pandemic and the thorny yet unpredictable effects it yields through the lens of the author's garden. Luckert wonders, "What is the mortality rate of tomatoes, collard greens, peppers, and kale? I can't find any projections, nobody online seems to know. I figure seven seeds, or maybe nine, should yield a healthy plant or two."

In "Seeking Shelter in the Eye: What We Can Get out of the Storm," international graduate student **Xiao Tan** chronicles her search for truths during the earliest days of the COVID-19 pandemic—from early reports coming out of China and through the reports in US media outlets (and the very real consequences these reports had for her in her daily interactions in the US). Tan writes, "Having access to both the Chinese and English media puts me at a unique nexus of opposing viewpoints and ideologies. It also gives me a jarring feeling to see the vicious accusation of China downplaying the severity of the disease when all I heard from the Chinese media in January and February was how dangerous it was." Tan finds that reflecting during this uncommon time offers clarity by way of exposing disrupted commonplaces. She writes, "I hesitate to see the pandemic as an 'opportunity' in the usually positive sense because I wish so badly that we would learn about ourselves and the world in a less traumatic and devastating way.

But a crisis of this scale forces us to detach ourselves from the daily messiness and to reassess the status quo.”

Nancy Henaku, an international graduate student, shares the effects and affects of her experiences of sheltering in place in the US during the time that was to have offered access to her first-ever CCCC experiences. In “Navigating the Ph.D., and Everything Else, in a Pandemic: Reflections on my New and Not-So-New Experiences,” Henaku writes, “The effects of routines, scheduling, mobility and engagements (with people and news for example) form ‘an archive of feeling,’ to cite Cvetkovich, that reflect my status as an international student trying to be resilient in a moment of crisis.” Throughout Henaku’s tale, we follow her as she physically engages with familiar places and paths, and documents the ways they are altered during this time with the reflections offering an outline to form an “archive of feeling.”

Lynn M. Ishikawa, in “Risk and Refuge: The Role of the Commonplace in Navigating Crisis,” reflects on COVID-19 through the lens of a past national crisis she had lived through in Japan during the 2011 earthquake, tsunami, and nuclear disaster in Fukushima. In comparing these two situations, she discusses the role of the “quotidian” and risk assessment as bringing both healing and harm. She draws upon the movie *Night of the Living Dead* to highlight that what we fear on the outside might not be as terrible as the social inequities and unjust systems we find on the inside. She notes, “For me, home has been a refuge, but it is clearly not so for everyone; indeed for many, inside is more dangerous than outside. In this and other ways, the pandemic has exposed the inequities in society and the ways in which the systems meant to protect are either broken or unjust. What is commonplace for some is fraught with risk for others.”

Morgan Hanson, in “‘Yes, and . . .’: Confronting Work, Miscarriage, and Grief during a Pandemic,” returns to her daily Documentarian writings to narrate the experience of documenting a period of loss and grief in her life at a moment of profound isolation, reflecting on the effects of that reflective practice in her life. She writes, “Even though the Documentarian reflections had me confront the harder parts of my isolation experience and how that affected my productivity and mental health . . . I think of the great relief I felt with each reflection. Through the power of writing, my stressors became more tangible; they were real, and they deserved my attention.” In telling this story of the difficulties and benefits of reflective writing in a time

of trauma, Hanson is motivated to consider her relationship to professional “productivity,” a relationship further vexed by isolation and grief, and invites us all into a reflection on the meaning of productivity.

In her piece, “On Choosing,” **Lindsey Albracht** wrestles with the decision to leave her home in the city and move to her family home. She notes, “The choice to leave or to stay is not the same one.” She reflects on the dynamics and the privilege of being given the choice to leave or to stay and what it means for others in her local community, but also what it means for her scholarly work and the work of education. Her piece ends with a call of sorts asking educators to consider what it means to move beyond “empowerment” and to consider how the machinations of the university are made possible in order to shed light on both privilege and the colonial history in education.

In “Pondering the Quiddities,” **Miriam Moore** takes up and extends the project that we (Julie, Bree, and Bump) began in an earlier moment of encountering the products of the Documentarian surveys, performing a content analysis of the words that appear most frequently in her daily survey responses. In so doing, she identifies the “quiddities,” or distinctive qualities, of her quarantine experiences, leading to a reckoning with, as she writes, “the very difficult lessons of my privilege.”

Cheryl Price-McKell, in “Scholarship Interrupted: How Unsettling Compartmentalized ‘Normal’ Can Inspire Wholehearted Insight,” rediscovers and considers the artifacts of her writing life: a collection of notebooks in which she had kept alive her practice of imaginative writing. By way of these artifacts, Price-McKell reflects on commonplace expectations of academic roles, writing selves deferred, and professional identity. She asks: “What physical, mental, and emotional work does it take to separate, compartmentalize, and choreograph our individual selves? What possibilities reside in that overlooked, wholehearted liminal space where—as students of writing, creators of writing, instructors of writers, and artists—identities overlap?”

Xinquiang Li’s tale, “Pandemic Life: Adventures in the Virtual World,” describes the changes in routines of teaching and interactions with students against the background of everyday life in lockdown. His tale is a meditation on isolation—social, cultural, professional. He considers the affordances for connection within the new virtual social world, reflecting that “With the limits of travel and expense erased, I could actually enjoy accesses to more social gatherings online,

sometimes hiding behind the screen listening to the school president's announcements, sometimes sitting before a background image of a tropical beach and planning summer activities with colleagues, sometimes even attending a virtual film festival held in a neighboring town or discussing a fantastic TV show with an international group in London." Implicitly, the narrative explores solitude, loneliness, and the difference between the two.

Isaac Ewuoso's, "Some Lessons and Tales: Moving Classes Online in the Advent of a Crisis for Which No One Signed Up," offers the author's perspectives on learning to identify his students' needs as their interactions moved online. Ewuoso reflects on working to meet those needs both in and out of the classroom, on the challenging work conditions of adjunct faculty, and on the powerful potential for reflective activities to be of value to both instructors and students. He finds that personal connection through phone calls and texts have been instrumental in reaching those students who are struggling with life's complexities: "I found out about one or more problems they were having that they did not feel comfortable discussing in an email or Zoom. In fact, most would not say anything unless I asked them." After making these personal connections and hearing students' stories, he found himself questioning his former classroom policies and how we tend to think about student success and participation.

In "Building Strength in an Uncommon Time," **Catherine Lamas** reflects on labor conditions for contingent faculty—both in terms of teaching duties, often carried out at multiple institutions, and in terms of service to their larger professional communities. Lamas writes, "My 'temporary' status puts me in a different category than those who have tenure. This faculty divide was evident in the demographics of this activity. As I reviewed the demographics of this activity, I was both disappointed yet not surprised by the contributors to this data collection. We need a well-rounded group of educators to keep this data from being biased. Over 70% of the Documentarians were part-time educators. I wonder why we did not get a greater contribution from the Tenured faculty. There is an unspoken divide that I often witness between 'Full Time' professors and 'Contingent' faculty in my teaching institutions, and this was also visible at the 2020 CCCC convention."

In "Feminist Mishmash: COVID-19 CCCC," **Heather McGovern** reflects on her everyday routines of caretaking at home and work—that is to say, with family and co-workers—to suggest what the collapsed space

and of the pandemic may reveal about the experience of women's work. In reviewing her daily Documentarian survey responses, she writes, "The observations in my journals about what I planned, what I accomplished, and how I felt are a tangled hair knot, a scramble. They're likely not a mash up, because that would be more intentional; they are not a hodge-podge because the things in them matter: they are a mishmash."

Shauna Chung writes in "Growing up Again (and Again)," about returning to her family home during shelter-in-place protocols. This movement prompted her to question what is lost in performance and productivity. She composes dialogue with her mother as she faces returning to a life where productivity at times is demanded and her mother encourages her to hold on to her humanness. She reflects, "'Don't forget to be human?' Didn't I meet my 'being human' quota after giving up so much time to be with family? Wasn't I the *most* human in the family since I was dedicating my professional life to the *humanities*? Doesn't my scholastic striving for attuned, empathetic, civic-minded rhetoric speak for itself?" In answering those internal questions, she finds the need to "re-version" herself, leaving space for the human, instead of reverting to her former life and notions of productivity.

In "Documenting Our Solastalgia: A New Landscape," **Margarette (Maggie) Christensen** asks, "what will the university be like after all this? What if we cannot or do not return?" Christensen names the feeling of regarding the familiar as suddenly unfamiliar *solastalgia*, "Sheltering in place, I was 'homesick,' longing for my familiar worlds and routines which were replaced by a gnawing sense of uncertainty and fear. Like many of my colleagues and students, I was experiencing *solastalgia*." Christensen offers *solastalgia* as a reorienting tool and a "collective comfort" even when a sense of closure or normalcy is not possible.

Soha Youssef, in "Self-Reflexivity is/as Resistance," reflects on ways her Egyptian heritage has influenced her relationship with productivity in her academic career path: a history that adds complexity to her experiences with self-reflection (brought about by way of the Documentarian role) and her revised work pace (brought about by the shelter-in-place orders in the US). Youssef writes, "Being forced to actually sit down, take a deep breath, and watch my own life—for the first time—I got to experience my own life as a viewer, instead of an active agent; as an acted-upon, instead of an actor. It was like a curtain had been lifted to afford me clarity of vision."

In “‘Tending to My Life’: On Resilience and Academic Work,” **Charlotte Asmuth** invites us to reflect on our often-invisible work routines and on how graduate students are (and are not) socialized into these. She begins with a meditation on what the scene of her own dissertation work—the details of time, space, and the artifacts of writing—during quarantine have taught her about what it means to mentor students into work habits that are grounded in needs of the fully-embodied self. She situates these observations within scholarship on academic work routines (in particular, that of Paul Prior and Jody Shipka) to call attention to commonplaces of work, productivity, learning, and embodiment. She asks: “How can faculty teach graduate students to take up useful work habits and care for themselves during times of collective crisis? How can faculty support graduate students’ work practices when both their own and graduate students’ working conditions are increasingly precarious and inconsistent?”

In “A Controlled Freak-Out: Mentoring, Writing, and Parenting during COVID-19,” **Katrina Powell** reflects on her learning about her professional community, roles, attachments, and responsibilities occasioned by the cancellation of CCCC at the moment when the pandemic crisis mandated a transition to working from home. Powell considers the benefits of the Documentarian experience at such a time, wonders how the practice of participating as a Documentarian might be taken up among differently positioned members of our professional community, and asks what the fact of this participation might reveal about professional roles more generally. She writes: “A question that I thought about throughout this time was whether the role of Documentarian and the time to write/reflect in this way has something to do with privilege. I wondered if most of my fellow Documentarians were graduate students and junior colleagues, and, if so, what does it mean that the role falls to them? I wondered if it mirrors administrative, committee, and mentoring work in our field that is often taken up by junior colleagues and underrepresented groups?”

In “Harnessing the Magical Properties of Collaboration for Transforming the Neoliberal University,” **Shelagh Patterson** considers a complicated jumble of experiences during the first days of the COVID-19 pandemic in the US and reconsiders and re-presents them as a sensible rendering of a jumbled life. Patterson reflects not only on her life and professional responsibilities during the days of the conference, but also on both the personal vulnerability and collaborative

empowerment she has found in her work as a Documentarian. Paterson writes, “My writing as a Documentarian exponentially increased the quality of my health and wellbeing which grounds me for resisting and reshaping the neoliberal waves gathering in our universities.”

Gabrielle Isabel Kalenyi’s tale, “Hitting Pause on Productivity: Finding Mindful Labor in Quarantine,” is a meditation on the meaning and perils of “productivity,” especially for those who feel a sense of responsibility not only to achieve legitimacy and impact, but to do so on behalf of marginalized others. She writes, “I believed my efficiency training would continue to serve me well, despite the unprecedented circumstances. Without clear boundaries, professional productivity has come to mean progress and living my personal life has come to mean a pause in that productivity. As a result, productivity for professional progress has begun to take precedent over what seems like pausing for personal connection.” As a scholar of color, Kalenyi considers the additional burden of the quest for productivity for persons of color who feel a sense of responsibility to their communities: “If I don’t do it, who will?”

Rachel Panton, in “‘You Good, Fam?’: Mindful Journaling, Africana Leadership, and Dialogic Compassionate Rhetorical Response Pedagogy During a Pandemic,” explores the uses of compassion and mindfulness in a chaotic time, and from a perspective of Black Womanist care and holistic understanding. She describes the benefits of writing as a Documentarian, observing that “reflective and mindful journaling in a moment of actualized trauma, heightened my personal self-care practice, as well as my Africana womanist pedagogical outlook on care in the classroom.” Panton recommends that mindful, reflective writing can be a therapeutic and pedagogical practice, an antidote to pathologies of compartmentalization and hyperproductivity.

CONCLUSION AND INTRODUCTION

As the record here suggests, during those few months in the spring of 2020, we experienced a lot. And while we can find common experiences, we are mostly overwhelmed by myriad differences: we were isolated with our families, we were isolated alone, we were isolated at home, we were isolated far from home, we did familiar work from home, we did uncommon work from home, we ventured out into the world, we were afraid to go out into the world, we were glued to news coverage, we avoided news coverage, we remained healthy, we did not

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