

2. Narrative

I am applying for the CHSS 2017 Summer Research Grant Program to support my work as author-editor-translator of *Inventing the Avant-Garde: A Translation of "L'Artiste, Le Savant, et L'Industriel,"* a book-length translation and critical introduction to the first published reference and theory of the literary, artistic, and rhetorical vanguard.

A. Goal(s): The ultimate purpose of this project is to produce a book-length translation of Saint-Simon's 1825 essay, "L'Artiste, Le Savant, et L'Industriel," as a part of my long-term research agenda exploring the futures of arts and humanities education and its role in public discourse. This essay is often cited (see Calinescu) as the first published reference to the literary, artistic, and rhetorical avant-garde; however, only excerpts of the essay are available to English-speaking audiences. Little about the philosophical and social histories of the term are included in discussions of the avant-garde, which has led the theory of the avant-garde to be reduced to being about little more than aesthetic provocations. What's lost in these reductions is the stated purpose of the avant-garde: to use the popular arts (e.g., entertainment industries) to guide the social well-being of a global society.

The introduction will address a variety of practices and theories of social organization proposed by Saint-Simon and the Saint-Simonian movement, including, for instance, the movement's proposal for a European Union, support for women's suffrage across Europe, early feminist thought, an early argument for developing a democratic society focused on the social well-being of national and global citizens, the movement's shift from proposing a socialist political structure (Karl Marx was heavily influenced by Saint-Simon) into an authoritarian one, the application of Saint-Simon's work in the popular arts and humanities education, and their relation to Saint-Simon's more extensive proposal for reorganizing social, cultural, and political institutions in light of European Industrialization.

B. Significance: The implications of this research span a variety of fields and social institutions. Most immediately, the translation challenges the academic and popular view of the avant-garde as nothing more than the production of strange aesthetic artifacts, methods, and practices by interjecting a common purpose to organize the work of the arts and humanities. Specifically, the translation and introduction situate the avant-garde as one of three primary social institutions in post-industrial societies, tasked with guiding the ethical and social well-being of the general public. The other two institutions are the Sciences and Industry. Together these three institutions are tasked with transforming the social, cultural, and political model of Western society toward a more equitable and freer world. In essence, Saint-Simon proposes to invert the model of Plato's republic (citing much of early Greek philosophy across his published works) by placing the artists in the first order of knowledge (ethics), the sciences in the second order (technological invention), and industry in the third order (production and commerce). In this model, governments serve to regulate the work of these three institutions and to ensure that their works serve the interests of the (global) social body.

My particular interest in this work is to consider Saint-Simon's proposal for re-organizing universities using the proposed model (above) and how such a model might transform the mission, place, and purpose of arts and humanities in higher education. In future work, I will explore what it might mean for the arts and humanities to adopt the charge provided them by Saint-Simon (serving as the institution tasked with addressing the ethics of social well-being/-justice) alongside the sciences and industry. Specifically, I consider how the arts and humanities might transform pedagogical practice to focus on experiential learning wherein students produce work in transmodal (across media such as narrative, video, audio, performance, etc.) designed to tackle a particular ethical concern within particular communities and societies—what critical theorists refer to as *aporia*, problems that are unresolvable using conventional methods and practices.

This work extends my prior work on the invention of graphic storytelling, *Inventing Comics* (Parlor Press, 2017). In that work, I re-position Rodolphe Töpffer's work as more than simply the formalization of graphic storytelling practices. In this work, I position Töpffer's work as one that adapts the theory of the avant-garde proposed by Saint-Simon while maintaining the mission and practices of the movement: to use the popular arts as a platform for directing social, cultural, and political bodies toward a greater sense of well-being and justice. Together, *Inventing Comics* and *Inventing the Avant-Garde* will serve as the foundation for a monograph (*Rhetoric and the Humanities in an Electrate University*) addressing one possible future for arts and humanities education in the United States and abroad. This work both builds on and challenges some of the foundations of twentieth century rhetorical theory, media studies, social organization, socialist thought, critical and postcritical theory, cultural studies, and the ethical mission of the arts and humanities, collectively (specifically, see Ulmer, *Konsult*, 2019).

- C. Outcomes:** The impact of this work for Kennesaw State faculty, staff, students, and the community (local, regional, national, international), as well as related disciplines, are far-reaching. First, this work will (and has) greatly informed by approach to curricular and program design, and may serve as a starting point for a conversation among the arts and humanities disciplines about how to design and promote the learning outcomes of our various programs. At KSU (and at other universities), the humanities generally play a much smaller role and have a smaller presence in the campus communities than our colleagues in social science, hard science, and business fields. The aim of this project is to propose a model by which faculty, staff, students, communities, and the humanities disciplines might organize around a collective goal: to serve as the ethical heart of a university education.

As noted elsewhere in this application, this project will result in one published book-length work (*Inventing the Avant-Garde*) and contribute to a monograph (*Rhetoric and the Humanities in an Electrate University*). The former will be a short work, approximately 100-

125 pages, while the latter will be a more traditional length work prepared as a scholarly monograph, approximately 200-250 pages.

D. Methods/Plan: - My methods for the translation portion of the project are fairly simple. I will use the Literal Translation (word-for-word translation, achieving a text in the target language which is as correct as it is idiomatic) and Transposition (moving from one grammatical category to another without altering the meaning of the text) methods. I will use archival research methods and textual analysis methods in the introduction to contextualize the translation in its socio-cultural and socio-political historical moment, as well as its function as a summary of Saint-Simon's wider theory of social organization, intended as a response to the early stages of European industrialization. I have already completed a rough draft of the translation and have started collecting and reading archival and secondary sources to write the introduction. Some of my initial findings have been disseminated in previous publications and presentations (see CV). However, an in-depth introduction to the essay as a standalone work requires a more extensive review of existing literature on the author and the movement, as well as a close-reading of the author's other works and life.

By August 2019, my aim is to have this project close to 75% complete. The remaining 25% will take place over the 2019-2020 academic year and includes: editing, revising, and conducting any remaining or needed research to flesh-out the introduction; identifying and communicating with editors at presses with interest in the work (I have identified two elsewhere in this application); requesting field review of the full manuscript; revising the manuscript based on field reviews; and preparing the final manuscript for publication. By May 2019, the project should be 95% complete. The remaining 5% includes reviewing page proofs, promoting the book, and asking scholars to review the book in appropriate venues.

E. Qualifications: I am a scholar with expertise in rhetorical histories and theory, media studies and production, and ethics, and I am trilingual (English, Portuguese, French). I have published over 15 works on these topics with several more accepted for publication in the

coming years, and presented at several national and international conferences on this ongoing research. Most significant is my 2017 book-length translation of Rodolphe Töpffer's essays on media rhetorics, aesthetic practice, and pedagogy. Töpffer, I have learned, has identified himself as a 'comrade' of the avant-garde, suggesting that his work in formalizing graphic storytelling practices as a pedagogical method was directly influenced by Saint-Simon's work. I have also traced out longer-term application of this avant-garde theory through the nineteenth century and its significance for the arts and humanities in publications and presentation (see CV). This historical research, combined with my working knowledge of French and nineteenth century Europe and prior work in this area, qualify me to do this work.

F. Assessment: Given the benchmarks established for the project discussed in this application, the current project plan includes having a full draft of the book ready to share with potential academic presses by May 2019. Completing the full draft will accounts for 75% of the assessment, with the other 25% accounting for revisions and final publication procedures (cover design, reviewing page proofs, etc.). The assessment procedures for the publication includes feedback from the publisher, published reviews of the text with attention to the target audience, and sales/adoption of the book. Progress for this particular grant will also be addressed in the progress report due to Marshal Chaifetz on February 3, 2020, and a final report will be due by November 30, 2020.

G. Dissemination: My intention is to publish the book-length translation with an open-access academic publisher by Spring 2021. In addition, I will incorporate my research findings into a variety of publications (currently accepted or proposed) and presentations over the coming 2-5 years. Over the course of those 2-5 years, I will also be developing a monograph for an academic publisher, adapting the model proposed in the translated text to explore the potential of that model to re-organize the arts and humanities disciplines around the task/charge of contributing to the ongoing ethical and social well-being of a global, networked society (see Rice and McNely, *Networked Humanities*, 2018). I will also submit a request to be included in a Department of English Works-in-Progress "brown bag" in Spring 2020.

5. Timeline

March 2017 – Published *Inventing Comics*, the first of a series of projects exploring the history of the early nineteenth-century avant-garde (see CV).

August 2018 – Published co-edited special issue of *Textshop Experiments*, Issue 5 (see CV). Issue focuses on experimental avant-garde practices for 21st-century rhetorical education.

April 2019 – Complete rough draft of transcription and translation and preliminary reading.

May-August 2019 – Conduct additional research and draft introduction to the translation.

June 2019 – Complete full, edited draft of transcription and translation.

June 2019 – Attend 2019 Rhetoric Society of America Summer Institute workshop, Delivering Rhetorical Education (University of Maryland, College Park).

September-October 2019 – Reach out to potential open-access academic publishers about the book project (e.g., Punctum Books; Minor Compositions).

September-December 2019 – Revise draft of introduction to the translation.

Jan-April 2019 – Request preliminary review of introduction and translation from scholars studying the literary, artistic, and literary avant-garde – prior to submitting full manuscript to an open-access academic press (TBD).

May 2019 – Submit manuscript to the press identified in September/October 2019.

NOTE: My findings over the course of the year will inform other ongoing projects not included above. For instance, I am working on a short article for a journal on the relationship between the description of the avant-garde in Saint-Simon's work and work on algorithmic logics and various popular pseudosciences (like physiognomy, phrenology, and hypnosis) in the nineteenth century. This book-length translation will also serve as a framework (along with my earlier book-length translation, *Inventing Comics*) for a monograph I am currently outlining, tentatively titled, *Rhetoric and the Humanities in an Electrate University* (target press: University of Pittsburgh Press—in the Composition, Literacy, and Culture series).

6. References – Selected

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