





Class: GLS Senior Thesis Colloquium (CCCP)  
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### **Elements of your Senior Thesis Proposal (CCCP)**

*When you submit your proposal, please make each of these items a subject heading:*

- I. Proposed title of this thesis
- II. Description and Rationale
- III. Discussion of Key Questions / Themes addressed, authors named
- IV. Methodology proposed
- V. Presentation Style (if different from standard written thesis)
- VI. Chapter Breakdown (in paragraph form)
- VII. Timeline to completion
- VIII. Bibliography

### **Each Element, Explained for You**

#### **I. Proposed Paper Title**

- *Note: The reader must be able to instantly grasp your topic of your paper from your title.*

#### **II. Description of Your Thesis Topic and Rationale for GLS**

- a. **Describe for the reader the phenomenon, event, or topic that interests you as a researcher.**

*Note: Most students begin here with phrases like, "This project investigates..." or "My research interests lie in the area of..." etc. If you would like, you can make this part a bit more interesting by adding a "hook."*

- b. **Narrow things down, so your reader understands what you are investigating will be manageable in an undergraduate thesis.**

*Note: Here, students often use phrases like, "I am particularly interested in..." or "In this project, I focus specifically on..." Again, this should take no more than one or two sentences.*

- c. **If it isn't patently obvious, explain how you see your research interest connecting with our GLS mandate.**

*Note: Reminder: GLS emphasizes cross-cultural, cross-historical, and/or cross-disciplinary inquiries.*

III. **Questions/Themes Explored in this Thesis**

*Note: You are expected to come up with three themes you want to engage with during the course of your thesis. If you are having trouble understanding the notion of a theme, you are encouraged to look at your Workbook, under "Questions."*

a. **First theme**

i. **Explain/define your first theme for your reader.**

- *Note: If your theme contains specialized vocabulary, like "false sublime," or "noble savage," or "stoner," here is where you briefly define that vocabulary. You can expand your definitions in the full paper.*

ii. **Detail a question or two stemming from this theme.**

- *Note: this shouldn't take more than a sentence or two.*

iii. **Name and discuss some writers/materials you have read in class that you are using to think more deeply about your questions.**

- *Note: This should be two or three sentences.*

iv. **Name and discuss at LEAST TWO academic journal articles or book that you have researched on your own to help you explore your questions further.**

b. **Second theme**

i. **Repeat all steps done for the first theme, here.**

c. **Third theme**

i. **Repeat all steps done for the first theme, here.**

IV. **Methodology for this Paper**

a. **Explain precisely which objects you will be analyzing in your paper.**

*Note: It is important to be as precise as you can, here. See your workbook for more help!*

b. **Identify your methodological approach by name.**

*Note: For instance: semiotic analysis, discourse analysis, etc. See your workbook for more help!*

**c. Explain what will be looking for as you engage in your methodology.**

- *Note: Often, this is best done in terms of a question propelling your investigations. For instance, you might write, something like:*

*“ I will conduct a film and discourse analysis of recent commercials from the 2012 BMW advertising campaign, asking, “How do the directors of these commercials use lighting and music to give consumers a sense of driving as a sublime experience? How does the language of the voiceover enforce the notion that driving a BMW is the most sublime experience of all?”*

**V. OPTIONAL: Presentation Strategy for this Thesis**

*Note: Most people won't need to do this part, but if you are going to do something experimental writing-wise in this paper, this is where you explain your plan. You don't have to be very involved. Something like, “I am envisioning this paper as a series of letters,” or “ this paper will be structured like a Twitter stream,” or “ This paper will be a reflective document that comments on the video I have made...” will do.*

**VI. Chapter Outline for this Thesis**

*Note: **There are many, many different ways to outline a thesis.** What we are looking for here is an attempt at logic and flow. If you want to write a narrative with a more 'creative' bent, you may find yourself struggling with outline material here. That is okay; this is just a first-run plan, and can be thrown out if something better shows up. Do not get anxious about whether you are doing it “right” — just try something for now. Okay? Okay.*

*Possible ways you could arrange your paper are s follows:*

- **Arranging by chronology;** *i.e. from the beginning of a story to the end, or going from the end as a “flashback” and moving to the beginning.*
- **Comparing and contrast case studies:** *i.e. writing about one case study using your themes, then comparing to another case study, then comparing it to a third, etc.*
- **Examining a phenomenon using your three themes:** *i.e. looking at a phenomenon through theme x, then through theme y, etc.*

*The most basic version of a “analyze one case study using three themes” thesis is as follows:*

**I. Preface/ “Hook”**

This can take all sorts of forms. Sometimes a hook is one sentence. Sometimes it is one paragraph. Here are some suggestions:

- *Quick question that gets your reader thinking.* Example: “What does it mean to speak of the ‘pursuit of happiness’?”
- *A statistic or fact that gets your reader thinking.* Example: “According to the United Nations, women own less than one percent of the world’s land.”
- *A quick scene that gives your reader a sense of drama.*
- *A personal memory that seems to lead into the questions your paper ponders.*
- *A quote pulled from reading that seems to sum everything you want to say in your paper.* This is called an ‘epigram’ and goes at the top of your paper.

## **II. Introduction**

- Be sure we know your objects, and method, here.
- *Note: You don’t need to do it now, but remember: once you write your conclusion in your actual paper, you’ll want to come back here and ‘write in’ your argument.*

## **III. Theme One**

- Discussion of theme one, vocabulary defined, etc.
- Discussion of how theme one applies to your objects

## **IV. Theme Two**

- Discussion of theme two, vocabulary defined, etc.
- Discussion of how theme two applies to your objects

## **V. Discussion that Connects Themes One and Two**

## **VI. Theme Three**

- Discussion of theme three
- Discussion of how theme three applies to your objects

## **VII. Discussion that Connects Themes One, Two and Three**

## **VIII. Restatement of what you have argued/suggested/learned**

## **IX. Snappy ending that connects in narrative fashion to the beginning.**

**VII. Timeline to Completion**

**VIII. Bibliography for this Paper**

- List only scholarly sources
- Give full citation
- If you have sources from places like newspapers and the web, make a separate list for them and call it “other sources”

**SEE NEXT PAGES FOR THREE SAMPLE PROPOSALS**

**Thesis Proposal:**

**The World is Your Playlist: Music Consumers as Creators, Curators, and Collaborators in the Digital Age**

*“Most human beings impose their wills on the world partly with and through music, even if they are not musicians. The way they hear—you can call it taste, if you want—is in how they move and work and dress and love.”*

– Ben Ratliff, *Every Song Ever: Twenty Ways to Listen to Music Now*

This thesis is devoted to the question of how automated music recommendation and curation tools are creating a world in which music consumers are simultaneously rendered as producers (of things like playlists) and as online quantified data, which may or may not be sold to other vendors. In the quote above, Ben Ratliff makes an argument that humans use music to impose their will on other humans. In this project, I’m interested in complicating this argument, by exploring how music today (as listening experience, as an object circulated among others) imposes its will on us, even as it casts us as listeners, curators, remixers and tastemakers.

To do this, I would like to examine the recent rise of the digital playlist: a sequence of songs curated within an online music platform according to a series of variables and constraints for mood and activity based purposes. I’m interested in exploring playlists from multiple sides—creation, curation, circulation and monetization— as form of what Henry Jenkins terms, “spreadable media.” As someone who regularly curates music playlists for love and money, my interest in this topic is both professional and personal. As an example of what I mean, I’d like to take a moment to describe how I began writing this proposal.

In the past, I might have sorted through desktop folders for inspiration, or perhaps checked my Instagram to procrastinate. Now, I sit with my Spotify application open, shuffling through this week’s “Discovery Weekly” playlist—a selection of thirty songs algorithmically curated according to my unique listening habits. Lately, I’ve been enjoying a funky mix of

house, a genre of electronic dance music that follows a repetitive, trance-like rhythm to the beat of synthetic instrumentals. Other days, I return to old rock and roll or alternative favorites, ones I've handpicked and organized in a series of custom, self-generated playlists. Apparently, I am not alone in my desire to both consume and express myself via playlists, which today make up 68% of all music streaming consumption.

### **Background: Spreadable Media and Curation as Digital Citizenship**

By Jenkins's definition, "spreadable media is media which travels across media platforms at least in part because the people take it in their own hands and share it with their social networks." In music culture, this new media has taken the form of music playlists, whose spreadable nature allows them to circulate with ease between countless online platforms and networks. For the music curator, playlists not only represent "a commodity or a promotion," but "a resource or a gift" as well. It certainly possible to argue that playlists allow consumers to communicate increasingly cosmopolitan displays of taste and style to one other. It's equally possible to argue that playlists exist to further the aims of worldwide recording industry giants, or that the data gathered by those who monitor playlists follows the logic of what Manuel Castells calls our increasingly networked global "information society."

As Castells points out, information is a double edged sword, which is why at one level, the global playlist phenomenon meshes well with contemporary champions of globalization who hail the Internet as opening up new cultural flows for previously ignored producers and consumers of music. The digital era has not only brought about the convergence and share-ability of different media, but also blurred distinctions between producer and consumer, essentially rendering these roles one in the same. This is why it is possible to conceptualize online music curators as new forms of "digital citizens": whether the curation results from corporate or consumer means, playlists dominate the mediasphere both financially and socially

Yet, market data from around the world shows that to date, the financial distribution of these flows has not been at all equitable. With very few exceptions, artists make a tiny fraction of the profits from their labor, and with no exceptions, consumers go without compensation for providing the processes mined by algorithms for marketing data, which is then sold to other companies, or monetized in other ways, such as a company going "public," or leveraging international financing. This leaves consumers with the question: Where is the line between

consuming a product made for you by a company, sharing with others something you yourself have made, and having yourself shared (in the form of quantified data) with entities you may never know about?

Obviously, this question encompasses more than music, but as someone who produces, consumes, and helps sell playlists, I am acutely interested in thinking within musical formats. One of my working hypotheses for this project is that any attempt to address these questions will require an approach that includes, but goes beyond technological and legal issues. Another hypothesis (borrowed from industry researchers like Alice Marwick) is that we can learn a great deal about issues like the ones above by speaking directly with people in industries that make, sell, and use products like playlists in-house.

### **Theme One; Consumption, Curation & Taste**

The formation of a global, digital marketplace has rendered modern-day consumerism to be essentially limitless; commodities are not only readily accessible, but their quantities seemingly infinite. Past music consumption limited itself to a single option: that of physical sales, most commonly in the form of CDs, which at \$10 to \$15 a pop equated to 92% of total sales in the multi-billion dollar record business in the year 2000. Fast-forward to the present, and you'll see this is no longer the case; music is accessible via a number of cheap, free—and even illegal—options: individual tracks for 99¢ to \$1.29 on iTunes, a free Spotify subscription (also known as the freemium tier), a \$9.99 monthly subscription on Apple Music, or any old form of internet piracy, like YouTube to MP3.

When dealing with my question of curation as consumption versus curation as production, I plan to explore the text “Curation Nation: How to Win in a World Where Consumers Are Creators,” by Steven Rosenbaum, as well as “Sharing the Loves: Understanding the How and Why of Online Content Curation,” by Changtao Zhong.

Finally, I want to probe the convergence and consolidation of the cultural industries in the modern era using the following text: “The Routledge Companion To The Cultural Industries,” edited by Kate Oakley and Justin O’Connor. This collection of essays affords me

countless means of exploration via a number of pertinent sections like: “The popular music industry,” “Consumption and place,” “Imagining the cultural consumer: Class, cool, and connoisseurship,” and “Popular music making and promotional work inside the new music industry,” to name a few.

## **Theme Two: Labor, Identity, Style**

Hearing the term “labor,” we automatically equate it with hard work resulting in some sort of benefit. The labor of curating music playlists, whether for an online audience or personal enjoyment, works in a different sort of way, and accrues a different sort of capital. As creators, the content we generate is often a reflection of our tastes and personal styles, as well as an attempt to appeal to those of certain audiences. For this reason, I seek to explore the crossover between production, identity, and style through the following works: “Finding meaning in the Masses, Issues of Taste, Identity, and Sociability in Digitality,” by Melissa Avdeeff, and “Sound Tracks: Popula Music, Identity, and Place,” by John Connell. Recently, I have also drawn inspiration from “Every Song Ever, Twenty Ways to Listen to Music Now,” a book focused on listening habit and taste by ex-New York Times music critic, Ben Ratliff. To understand the how this form of labor maps to the legislation, regulation, monetization and technologization of music—I will consult “All You Need to Know About the Music Business,” an industry guide by heralded expert, Donald Passman. The music business has a vast and complex history with countless interests and parties involved, and its crucial to my argument that I understand these relationships, both past and present.

## **Theme Three: Mechanization, Quantification, Tracking**

In order to compare the nature of musical playlist algorithmic tracking to other sorts of tracking that goes online, and to explore the similarities between the branded self and the quantified self, I plan on reading: “The quantified self: a sociology of self-tracking,” by Deborah Lupton, and “The sensitivities of user profile information in music recommender systems,” by Evelien Perik.

## **Methodology**

My methodological approach to this project will be mixed. I have been very influenced by Ashley Mear's essay, "Seeing culture through the eye of the beholder: four methods in pursuit of taste." Her project, which focused on the fashion industry, defines taste as a learned conditioning process, rather than innate knowledge. To corroborate this argument, she employs four methodologies that work in tandem to form a comprehensive study of the origins of taste: interviews, network analysis, participant observation, and carnal ethnography.

For my own thesis, I want to employ three of these four methodologies, the first being in-person interviews with senior executives of the top American record label, Republic Records. I spent both the Summer of 2015 and 2016 as the intern for the CEO of Republic Records, a music label with the highest market share in the United States for four years running. I plan to interview both my boss, Monte Lipman, and the label's COO, Avery Lipman, both of whom have a vast wealth of knowledge to share with decades of experience, and are heralded as the industry's top executives for their ability to remain cutting-edge, with a particular attention to emerging online technologies and the advantages they may offer to the recorded music business.

Next, I want to travel back to Paris-based music curation startup, Soundgood, where I worked last year as a playlist strategist and project manager. In addition to speaking with Co-Founder and CEO, Josquin Farge; Co-Founder and CMO, Louis Viallet, Co-Founder and CTO, David Billamboz, and fellow Project Manager, Jennifer Bouissou, I plan to observe how employees on the data and technological side of Soundgood work, again, noting the presence (or absence) of playlists in rotation in their workspaces.

A crucial part of my thesis depends on observing this work environment in real-time in order to understand the live function of the playlist, or more specifically, how employees on the data and technological side of Soundgood work in the presence (or absence) of playlists in rotation in their workspace. Since the primary function of Soundgood is that of a music curation tool, and the success of their product depends on the global community of tastemakers and influencers who use Soundgood to promote their own brands via the power of the music playlist, I want to explore their notions of curation and taste, as well as production and style. My plan is to document how changes in the streaming industry have affected both workflow and

environment at the Soundsgood offices, in part by engaging employees in conversations about the playlists now circulating there. Comparing the two working environments of Republic and Soundsgood especially interests me because while quantification and tracking are seen as the “non-sexy” side of the streaming business, most experts have declared it to be the key to its future. Because streaming services do not release listener data or playlist statistics, it would be impossible to track the Soundsgood team’s listening habits outside of in-person observation.

## **Chapter Breakdown**

The chapters in this thesis will be constructed to address particular thematic concerns in light of my observations from site visits in New York and Paris. In Chapter One, “Consumption, Curation and Taste,” I define playlists from a range of perspectives (as a consumer good, as part of a larger music industry investment in ‘streaming’ technologies, as a form of “spreadable media” etc.) The second part of this chapter consider questions like: in a world of billions of YouTube videos and bottomless online music catalogues, how do people narrow down a perfectly curated bundle of tracks? If they have neither time nor interest in curating, whom do they trust to do it for them, and why?” Next, I explore how in the music industry, this “tyranny of choice” tends to be addressed in one of two ways: via algorithm and via human selection. To illustrate I discuss some of the better-known via automated recommendation services and music curation tools on streaming platforms like Spotify, Apple Music, Google Play, etc. I end this chapter by juxtaposing these “textbook” explanations of curation with my on-the-ground ethnographic analysis and expert interviews with industry professionals at both Republic Records New York and Soundsgood in Paris.

In Chapter Two, “Production, Labor, Identity & Style,” I consider playlist production as a form of labor, and as a mode of identity production. At present, the question of whether curating music playlists counts as a form of labor worth of copyright is under debate in many legal fields.

After detailing some of this debate, I argue that whether done by professionals or amateurs, it makes more sense to consider the labor of playlist creation as an engagement three sorts of capital: cultural, social and fiscal. As creators, the content we generate is often a reflection of our tastes and personal styles, as well as an attempt to appeal to those of certain audiences. I end this chapter by discussing my time examining in-house playlists compiled by employees at Republic and Soundgood, noting that the former of the two uses playlisting to fulfill corporate means, while the latter strives to provide a consumer-centric playlist curation tool.

Ending with Chapter Three, “Mechanization, Quantification, and Tracking,” I dissect different forms of data acquisition in corporate playlisting practices, examining how consumer information is collected and analyzed, and then re-used in marketing campaigns, music recommender systems, or external advertising opportunities. Throughout my research process, responses to questions of data usage have been varied and vague, leaving me to discern for myself what constitutes “best practices” in its retrieval and exploitation. On the one hand, industry executives refer to favoring “gut over data” in talent discovery; however, based on my own experiences in the Republic Records office, data tracking is a central component of the company’s business strategy. My observations in the Soundgood office compliment this trend: data acquisition is recognized as the future of music distribution and consumption, particularly in the realm of playlist production.

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Senior Colloquium I  
Professor Senft

Caroline Cunfer  
December 1, 2016

### **Thesis Proposal: Translating Trauma: An Audio Documentary Project**

For my creative thesis project, I would like to create an audio document that uses sound to investigate the memories, narratives, and coping strategies of individuals living in Paris during the time of the November 13<sup>th</sup> terror attacks. I then plan to share this audio project with a group of people touched by New York City's 9/11 attacks. This thesis aims to answer the question: how might art rework responses to divisive political trauma in ways that might work to connect populations that feel separated?

It is an irony of contemporary global culture that we simultaneously find ourselves socially separated living in a political climate typified by a generalized distrust of "the other," yet are united in our struggles to exist in what John Urry calls "risk culture."<sup>1</sup> Literature on cosmopolitanism holds that the more we choose to interact with strangers, the more potential we gain to be culturally aware, open, empathetic and tolerant. I'm interested in exploring how art can work toward those ends, possibly even building community with people we don't know, which is why a creative project like this matters to the field of global liberal studies.

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<sup>1</sup> Saito 444

## Background

This project stems from personal experience. On November 13, 2015, I was living in Paris during an unprecedented terrorist attack that left 130 dead, hundreds injured, and thousands with psychological complications that would forever change the way they interacted with their world. In the forty-eight hours I spent trying to confront and live in a post-terror Paris, I felt something I hadn't ever felt before in the three months leading up to that unimaginable night. I felt a strange sense of closeness and commonality to every person I saw on the streets and interacted with. I had added a new facet to the ever-evolving gemstone of my identity: I suddenly felt like a citizen of Paris, I had lived through a terrorist attack there, and something about that reality left me feeling rooted to the city. In a way I wasn't able to fully articulate, it made it feel as though Paris finally belonged to me, as if my name had been etched somewhere into its landscape, proclaiming that I had been there.

In the months following my departure from Paris, this new component of my identity seemed to be able to explain a lot about how I operated, how I interacted with the world around me and the people who inhabited it, and the new relationship I had with my sense of safety. I became aware of two contradictory poles I exhibited—my need to engage face-to-face with strangers to fulfill my need for connection and community, contrasted with a traumatic experience in Paris that resulted in a newfound anxiety and distrust surrounding people I didn't know. I became interested in observing the ways in which I reconciled these paradoxical feelings, as well as how people in Paris reconciled theirs while coping with new fears, reservations, and apprehensions about the place they lived in and the people who occupied it.

In the few hours I spent in the streets and cafés of Paris two days after the attacks, it became evident that for me and many others, community served as the antidote to trauma. Gathering seemed to heal people; an entire city had been faced with terror in varying degrees of proximity, and the experience of a collective trauma left people—even utter strangers—with the potential for exhibiting an unaccustomed sense of mutual understanding and oneness, something that perhaps wasn't quintessentially Parisian in nature.

Through my art process, I'd like to validate, to unite, to foster empathy and mutual understanding and generate a feeling of humanity amidst a political climate that is clouded with anti-foreigner and anti-outsider sentiments. I believe there is possibility—and perhaps even inevitability—for something beautiful to come out of something utterly tragic; we just have to make it and share.

### **Theme One: Strangers and Strangeness**

The first theme I plan to explore is of “the stranger.” I am primarily interested in how people perceive and choose to interact with strangers; in terms of my thesis, I am interested in how people interact with strangers in the context of terrorism and trauma. As mentioned above, I believe that as a result of events such as 9/11 and November 13<sup>th</sup>, 2015 in Paris, people affected by the event feel compelled more than ever before to embrace people they don't know (fellow survivors, other citizens etc.) for purposes of healing and community, yet also exhibit a newfound distrust of people they don't know as a result of the traumatic event. I plan to investigate how people combat cultural anxiety towards strangers and how strangers and fear are linked, how we decide who we want to embrace and who we don't want to embrace, and

how strangers can fulfill needs for intimacy. I am also interested in how easily strangers are able to nurture feelings of community in a post-traumatic climate, and what evidence of this can be found in the place of trauma's landscape. I plan to examine *When Strangers Meet* by Kio Stark, *The Stranger* by Georg Simmel, and *The Modern Stranger: On Language and Membership* by Lesley Harman, and *The Uncanny* by Sigmund Freud to approach my research questions.

### **Theme Two: Trauma, Memory, Recovery**

Trauma is the second theme I plan to use for my thesis project. I am interested in how trauma can initiate spontaneous feelings of community among complete strangers, as well as how people heal post-traumatic event both together and alone. By traveling to Paris and doing archival research on 9/11, I plan to examine how the two events of terrorism are memorialized, and how art and writing in response to trauma can bring people together. I also plan to investigate the difference both in how post-traumatic stress disorder was handled after 9/11 and after November 13 by psychologists and medical officials in both cities, as well as how trauma and PTSD affect the way we view and interact with our world. I plan on reading *Recovering 9/11 in New York* by Robert Fanuzzi, *Remembering 9/11: Terror, Trauma, and Social Theory* by Victor Jeleniewski Seidler, and *Trauma and Recovery: The Aftermath of Violence—From Domestic Abuse to Political Terror* by Judith Herman.

### **Theme Three: Community & Collectivity**

My third theme is community and collectivity. My interest in theories of community are rooted in my fascination with a perceived increased attempt to escape community and tend toward isolation in an age of increased access to technology. I am driven by questions of how we can turn an individually-invested culture into one that puts more investment in communities. For my thesis, I plan to investigate the interplay of both imagined communities and physical communities in New York and Paris post-terrorism, as well as how communities—both physical and emotional— manifest in times of trauma. To help with my investigations, I plan to read *Imagined Communities* by Benedict Anderson and *Collective Trauma, Collective Healing : Promoting Community Resilience in the Aftermath of Disaster* by Jack Saul.

### **Methodology**

My methodology involves returning to Paris (I'd like to secure a grant to return this winter) to track my phenomenological reactions. I also want to interview psychological professionals, and meet survivors. I'm very interested in interviewing psychological professionals in the city to investigate the treatment and stigma of PTSD in France, since more than one newspaper account has made it clear that France is country with a medical system not exactly equipped to deal with large cases of mental illness, a country that stigmatizes mental illness. I'm fascinated by how Parisians stood up to the stigmatization of mental illness, how they got past the common Parisian indifference and embraced being fearful and unwell.

In addition to mental health professionals, I plan to speak with survivors of the Paris attacks, including Maureen Roussel who created the online community "Life for Paris", in order

to understand how her website functions as a victim support group. I'm hoping that I will also be able to speak with ex-pats, or survivors who did not call Paris home at the time of the attacks to understand how experiencing trauma differs when it happens in a place that isn't familiar or that feels like home. The question of how to respond to strangers after trauma is a guiding one in my project; I know (or I think I know) how I feel about this issue, but I'd like to talk directly to Parisians on the topic. I am interested in how their memories of the traumatic event exist, how they have been affected post-trauma and if it has significantly altered the way they interact with their city, world, and the people who inhabit it, and how community has aided their healing process.

### **Rationale for Creative Component**

The form I ultimately want my creative project to take is an audio broadcast of about 45 minutes. I intend to weave the oral histories of people I have interviewed in Paris with my own experiences and reactions to being back in Paris a year post-trauma. I would like this to take on a thematic format so that I may convey peoples' shared marks of trauma, and plan to use a sort of methodology of triangulated trauma between my own, other peoples', and the collective. I envision this project as a creative thesis that gathers personal experiences, which I will mix with critical literature on strangeness, strangers, trauma and community.

As much as I've tried to sift through and write about my own feelings, it's extremely difficult to do and there are many things I feel that aren't fully translatable into written word. I'm interested in my feelings and responses to being back there, how my relationship with the city will have changed if it changed at all, how I interact with spaces that hold both good memories and bad

memories, and the level of fear may still experience. I think it will be powerful to put this in dialogue with strangers' oral histories I plan to collect while in Paris, which I hope to allow me to come to a greater understanding of my own experience.

As a creator, I believe that I can learn a lot more about my own feelings as well as others' by trying to link them together and then create something from them, as opposed to simply trying to analyze them through writing. My hope is that in creating something to represent this question of stranger relations and community post-trauma, it will allow not only myself, but also the people viewing and interacting with my project, to have a greater understanding and capacity for empathy for people they don't know, along with a greater sensitivity towards the healing process and how individuals cope with new feelings of fear and its subsequent shame.

### **Creative Thesis Evaluation Plans**

To gather feedback about my creative thesis, I plan on curating a sort of storytelling event in order to create dialogue between Paris and New York and the traumatic events that have transpired in both cities. I intend to try to create a microcosmic post-trauma community by gathering 9/11 survivors who are strangers to one another in a space to react to my creative material in an attempt to foster intimacy between strangers who have shared a collective traumatic experience. In addition to having this group of strangers receive my project through the lens of having experienced relatable trauma, I imagine this to also be a storytelling event of sorts, but haven't fully fleshed out this idea. My hope is that by bringing together this focus-group of strangers who will be reacting to strangers' stories of a similar traumatic experience abroad, I will not only be creating a dialogue between Paris and New York and the affected

strangers in each city, but will also be able to demonstrate the ease in which strangers cultivate community post-trauma. In the post-production portion of my thesis, I will then be able to write about other peoples' trauma as someone who's trying to process her own trauma, my own narrative acting as the weaving thread. The emotional stakes I have in my project will allow me to refract and reflect upon other peoples' oral histories and narratives, and perhaps allow me to make better sense of my own. Through this, I hope to convey the power of personal narrative in the memorialization and preservation of traumatic history.

### **Chapter Arrangement**

This chapters in my process document will be best split into three stages: pre-production, production, and post-production. The pre-production chapter will address topics and fundamental questions that come into conversation when we're discussing the aftermath of a political trauma. First, in what ways does a global-risk culture unite and divide populations? How do people approach and interact with their neighbors, who is a stranger and who is an outsider, what does it mean for something to be "strange" as opposed to familiar? Next, I consider the notion of personal and political trauma, asking: in what ways is art a productive and meaningful way to process ones' own trauma?

In the production chapter, I discuss the artistic process of making my audio-documentary, and the rationale behind conducting art-based research. I consider the impact of sound as opposed to writing as a narrative form of testimony, and the way in which an audio-documentary can function as a form of cosmopolitan writing practice. Because I am interested in juxtaposing notions of strangeness and strangers in my audio project, I also examine Sigmund Freud's "The Uncanny" and the concept of "strangeness."

In the post-production chapter, I gather the reflections and refractions from having shared my project with my audience, which will hopefully enable me to come to a better understanding of the relationship I have to my own trauma. I will discuss the performativity of voice, evaluate sound narration as inquiry of memories, narratives, and coping strategies, and consider how the aesthetic components of my audio documentary served to elicit different responses from myself and my audience.

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