

ABSTRACT

MARIANA COLÍN. "The Morbid Zoo:" An Exercise in Scholarly Communication.
(Under the direction of Professors Marsha Gordon and Paul Fyfe.)

It is generally understood that the role of a university is to provide the dissemination of knowledge to a larger public. In STEM fields, the path to achieving this is often much clearer than in the humanities, where most education still takes place primarily in the classroom, and most scholarship still takes the form of academic articles, books, and conference presentations. However, the technology boom of the past couple of decades has changed the landscape of public communication. I argue that given the massive reach of social media and the increasing ubiquity of the internet in how people speak to one another, scholars have a new responsibility to learn how they might best harness those technologies for the benefit of their pedagogical goals.

To demonstrate this, I have created a YouTube channel comprised of video essays, each exploring the theoretical, psychological, and philosophical background of a different movie monster. "The Morbid Zoo" is intended to present one example of the ways in which we might make academic analysis of art more accessible to a wider audience, and how that might change the format through which we express academic ideas in the first place. Video essays are a staple genre of video on YouTube, with millions of engaged audience members, a fact which implies an opportunity to advertise scholarly work on a much wider scale. As I reveal in my quantitative assessment of my channel as it has grown over the past several months and my analysis of the YouTube algorithm, using a platform such as YouTube may require scholars to gain new skill set that is more empirical and tactical than interpretive. However, cultivating such a skill set may open the door to a new and necessary revitalization of scholarly humanities work to the public at large.