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SYSTEMIC FUNCTIONAL LINGUISTIC DISCOURSE FEATURES IN THE PERSONAL ESSAY

A Thesis submitted to
the Graduate College of
Marshall University

In partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts in English

by
Anna Jones Rollins

Approved by
Hyo-Chang Hong, Ph.D., Committee Chairperson
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Marshall University
May 2012

Acknowledgments

First, I would like to thank my husband, James, for bearing with me, and bearing with me gracefully, throughout the entire process of writing this thesis. Thank you for supporting me, for making dinner on those late nights (and early nights – and, well, pretty much every night), for listening to the thoughts that "came to me" always too early in the morning; thank you for your love.

Likewise, I would like to thank my family – my dad, Bob, my mom, Carol, and my brother, Bobby – for supporting me throughout my entire life, and specifically, for listening to each mini triumph and tragedy that occurred during the process of writing this document.

For my fellow teaching assistants – Cat, Sarah, Rajia, John, and David – thank you for keeping me sane and for cheering me on throughout the year. Our "teaching community" has been invaluable to me during this final year of grad school.

For Dr. Kelli Prejean, my first-ever English professor, and my constant support throughout undergrad and grad school – thank you for encouraging me, for taking a chance and hiring a sophomore at the Writing Center, and for mentoring me during this first year of teaching.

For Dr. Rachael Peckham – without taking your Creative Nonfiction course during my senior year of undergrad, I never would have found "my genre" in creative writing. Thank you for mentoring me and encouraging me in more ways than I can name over the past three years.

And finally, for Dr. Hyo-Chang Hong – thank you for introducing me to the theory of SFL, a theory which has changed the way I approach and analyze language. Your instruction, both in the classroom and one-on-one, is the only reason I could even

begin to write this thesis. Thank you for spending hours looking over my drafts, teaching me to analyze my own data, and investing your own time in this project. I am forever grateful.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgments..... i-ii

Table of Contents ..... iii-iv

List of Tables ..... v-vi

List of Figures vii

Abstract viii

Introduction 1-11

Creative Writing Programs and Pedagogy 1-4

Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) and Discourse Analysis ……... 5-8

Rationale 9-10

Research Questions and Thesis Overview 11

Review of the Relevant Literature 12-28

The Personal Essay: Defined and Explored 12-13

Systemic Functional Linguistics and Discourse Analysis..... 14-28

Appraisal 20-22

Ideation 23

Identification..... 24-25

Conjunction 26-27

Lexical Density and Grammatical Intricacy …… 28

Study 29-32

Joan Didion's "At the Dam" and Student Personal Essays……. 29-32

Methods of Analysis 33-62

Discourse Analysis .....…… 33-62

Appraisal ……. 33-38

Ideation ……... 39-51

Identification…… 52-54

Conjunction …… 55-60

Lexical Density and Grammatical Intricacy ……... 61-62

Results and Discussion 63-73

Appraisal and the Construction of Voice in the Personal Essay ……... 63-65

Ideation and Identification: The Focus of a Text ……..… 66-69

Conjunction and the Flow of the Personal Essay ……..… 70-71

Lexical Density, Grammatical Intricacy, and the Conversational Nature of the Personal Essay ……...…..… 72-73

Conclusion …….. 74-75

References 76-77

Appendices 78-103

Appendix A …… 78

Appendix B……..… 79-80

Appendix C……..… 81-86

Appendix D……..… 87-93

List of Tables

Table 1.1 …….. …. 24- 25

Table 1.2 ……..……..… 26

Table 1.3 …….. …… 27

Table 2.1 …… 30

Table 2.2 …… 30

Table 2.3 …… 31

Table 2.4 …… 31

Table 2.5 …… 31

Table 2.6 …… 32

Table 3.1 …… 33

Table 3.2 …… 34

Table 3.3 …… 35

Table 3.4 …… 37

Table 3.5 …… 43

Table 3.6 …… 46

Table 3.7 …….. 50-51

Table 3.8 …… 52

Table 3.9 …… 52

Table 3.10 …….. 53

Table 3.11 …….. 53

Table 3.12 …….. 54

Table 3.13 …… 55-56

Table 3.14 …… 56

Table 3.15 ……. 56-57

Table 3.16 …….. 57

Table 3.17 …….. 58

Table 3.18 …….. 59

Table 3.19 ……. 59-60

Table 3.20 …….. 61

Table 3.21 …….. 61

List of Figures

Figure 1.1..…….. 17

Figure 1.2…….. 22

ABSTRACT

Systemic Functional Linguistic Discourse Features in the Personal Essay

by Anna Jones Rollins

The purpose of this thesis is to look at published and student-produced creative writing, more specifically, personal essays, through the lens of discourse analysis theories in Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL). From the analysis of these personal essays, this thesis provides pedagogical insight concerning the linguistic features that are prevalent in published and student personal essays.

Although research has been conducted looking at academic student writing through the lens of SFL, little research has been conducted looking specifically at the elements that make up pieces of creative writing. In fact, Blythe and Sweet (2008), with over seventy years of experience teaching creative writing, question whether or not good creative writing can even be explicitly taught. Although creative writing is, by its nature, creative, and therefore artful, the effective (or ineffective) use of language in a text can be analyzed through the lens of SFL.

This thesis examines a model personal essay and student-produced personal essays through the lens of four discourse analysis theories in SFL: appraisal, identification, ideation, and conjunction. These theories are then paired with common global issues cited as problematic in creative texts—focus, flow, and voice—in order to demonstrate that issues that seemingly deal with content can be analyzed in the grammar of a text.

INTRODUCTION

Creative Writing Programs and Pedagogy

At the heart of creative writing programs across the country, no matter the specialty or aesthetic, is the question, "What is good creative writing?" Students and faculty attempt to answer this question in the workshop classroom. The typical procedure of the workshop classroom is as follows: the student writer composes a piece of creative writing and then distributes that piece to other members of the classroom; the class members take the piece of writing home and read through it, making written comments on the draft; and finally, the review of the student's piece culminates in a class discussion known as "a workshop." In the workshop component of the course, both students and teacher provide verbal and written feedback about the draft. Although the teacher acts as a discussion facilitator (or, depending on the climate of the classroom, a referee), oral student feedback is explicitly necessary for the workshop to succeed.

The workshop model is meant to teach students to become not only better writers, but also better readers. With numerous readers, at various levels of skill and familiarity with the genre, the writer is meant to receive a multiplicity of feedback. This feedback is primarily centered on what in composition theory is referred to as "global" issues. Issues such as flow, focus, and voice often arise in the midst of a workshop discussion and in the written feedback the writer receives post-workshop. Fellow students and the teacher may cite multiple passages from the piece in order to demonstrate the lack of focus or the lack of flow in a text. Some readers may simply state that the piece "feels as if" it is lacking and needs to be globally revised. Formal grammar rarely crops up in discussion and is often considered merely an issue that can be resolved while editing.

Menand (2009) explores the historical rise of creative writing programs in universities across the United States. One of the most prominent writing programs in the United States, the University of Iowa Writers' Workshop, states, "The fact that the Workshop can claim as alumni nationally and internationally prominent poets, novelists, and short story writers is, we believe, more the result of what they brought here than of what they gained from us" (p. 106). Representatives from the school have also stated that "writing cannot be taught but that writers can be encouraged" (p. 106). Although the University of Iowa Writers' Workshop does not hold the definitive opinion on creative writing pedagogy, its influence on the discipline of creative writing, as well as its ability to graduate writers who have substantially impacted the publishing market, is undeniable.

Whether or not creative writing is a teachable discipline has been a debate for as long as the workshop model has been in existence. According to Blythe and Sweet (2008), "We have been teaching creative writing classes for a combined seventy years, and we still don't have a well-defined pedagogy" (p. 305). In fact, Blythe and Sweet later question whether or not good creative writing can even be taught. Barden (2008) argues, "The way we teach creative writing, in my experience, suggests that there is *no way to teach creative writing*" (p. 83). The impetus for Barden's claim is the very model that pervades creative writing pedagogy: the workshop[1]. Barden extends his argument by saying that, in order for writers to grow and become better writers, a very explicit struggle is necessary: or, to invoke a cliché, *no pain, no gain*. Barden cites writers such as

[1] For the purpose of this thesis, the workshop as a collaborative meaning-making process will not be discussed due to constraints of both time and space; rather, this brief introduction of the workshop model serves as a means to enter into a larger discussion concerning the way in which a piece of student creative writing emerges from a classroom environment.

Flaubert, Tom Wolfe, even Dr. Seuss, and he states that from very real struggle, their best work was produced.

And yet, how can an environment of struggle be cultivated in a workshop classroom? And how does an environment that encourages struggle cease to become an unproductively negative, hostile classroom? Although a teacher does facilitate the workshop, the teacher is ultimately outnumbered by his or her students, and these students may or may not want to create an environment that encourages students to struggle through their writing. Ultimately, because the workshop is largely student-run, within the actual class hour, the only component of a workshop that is sure is chance. Outside of the actual creative writing classroom an implementation of a rigid grading system could produce a type of "struggle." Yet, creative writing teachers tend to shy away from grading harshly (and even giving grades in general), for a variety of reasons, perhaps most significantly being the question of how to numerically quantify the production of art (Peckham, 2011; Elbow,1997). Though many writing instructors may wish for one, there is simply not a right and wrong paradigm that can be applied to student writing, and in particular, a student piece of creative writing.

Despite a lack of definitive parameters for the features that are necessary for a piece of "good" creative writing, there still seems to be agreement concerning what constitutes a "good" piece of writing amongst those highly trained in the discipline of creative writing. Sajé (2004) notes that in one university situation, three separate creative writing professors, all subscribing to different aesthetics, could easily come to an agreement on who would be admitted into their program after having read writing samples from various students. The fact that, among those specially trained, there could

be a unanimous decision concerning what is considered “good” writing shows that there are features – perhaps even features that those trained in creative writing are not consciously aware of – that occur in strong pieces of creative work.

Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) and Discourse Analysis

Grammar and Western Linguistics finds its roots in the grammar of the Ancient Greeks, dated around the fourth century BC. Some concepts that linguists inherited from the Ancient Greeks include the following: active and passive voice, tense, subject and object, subject-verb agreement, and number. These concepts have shaped all fields in Western Linguistics.

Today, Western Linguistics can be divided into two major camps: formal linguistics and functional linguistics. Formal linguistics can be traced back to Swiss scholar, Saussure. Saussure believed that language could never be fully explained but could be perceived. The two areas where one could perceive language, according to Saussure, are *langue* and *parole*. *Langue* can be interpreted as the set of *signs* that compose a language system; whereas *parole* can be interpreted as an individual's use of that language system. Saussure's scholarship was primarily concerned with *langue*, arguing that *parole* is not situated within proper parameters for linguistic study.

From the scholarship of Saussure, three American linguists, Edward Sapir, Leonard Bloomfield, and Noam Chomsky, emerged and shaped present-day structural linguistics. Sapir's definition of language interpreted language as both social and arbitrary, as well as an inherent biological human capacity. Bloomfield's scholarship was primarily concerned with the structural analysis of language. This type of analysis allowed for both individual and scientific study of language. Even though Bloomfield's scholarship focused heavily on phonology, morphology, and syntax, little of his structural analysis was concerned with semantics. Likewise, Chomsky emerged out of Bloomfield's Structuralism. Like Saussure, Chomsky viewed language as a dichotomy, focusing on the

idea that one can look at an individual's language competence and performance. To Chomsky, only linguistic competence can be analyzed. The social aspect of language is considered irrelevant. Language is considered to be biologically determined, thus creating a need to study compentence to the exclusion of performance.

Formal linguistics, therefore, was heavily shaped by scholarship from Saussure, Sapir, Bloomfield, and Chomsky. In this tradition, form and function are viewed from a one-to-one, or syntagmatic, perspective. Syntagms show relations between elements in a clause that are realized by one particular form.

In contrast to formal linguistics, functional linguistics emerged out of the Prague School in the 1920s. The linguists in the Prague School were interested not simply in describing the forms of certain grammatical elements, but also in how those forms function in a particular context. From the Prague School, there emerged the idea of Theme and Rheme as a means to functionally account for syntagmatically ordered elements in a text. From this school, two major linguists influenced the emergence of functional linguistics: Bronislaw Malinowski and J.R. Firth. Malinowski coined the phrase *context of situation*. To Malinowski, in order to understand an utterance, an individual must know not only the literal meaning of the words uttered, but the social situation wherein the phrase is uttered. This phrase and its attendant meaning greatly influenced both Firth and, later, M.A.K. Halliday.

Firth played a substantial role in the development of functional linguistics by contributing to the idea of language as a *system*. To functional linguists, form and function do not simply have a one-to-one, syntagmatic relation. Because the elements in a particular clause do not have to be realized by one particular form, language can be

viewed as a paradigmatic system of resources. Thus, depending on the context, an individual can choose between various linguistic resources.

After Firth, the idea that language existed in the midst of and was influenced by a particular culture influenced Neo-Firthians. Neo-Firthians studied the relationship between the context of a situation and language (defined as register). Register can be split into three separate components: field (what is going on in linguistic context), mode (the communicative channel), and tenor (the power and status of an individual).

From Malinowski and Firth, M.A.K. Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) emerged. In contrast to formal linguistics, SFL is concerned with language in use, whereas Chomskyan linguistics is concerned with models of mental grammars. Likewise, SFL values meaning in all areas of the language, whereas Chomskyan linguistics isolates semantics from syntax.

SFL differs from formal linguistics in two major ways. First, SFL views language as composed of a set of networks of paradigmatic systems and choices. Likewise, SFL emphasizes the idea that language is a system of options in the midst of a particular culture and context.

According to Halliday (1970), language is closely related to the demands individuals make upon it. The three language functions are as follows: the experiential, the interpersonal, and the textual. The experiential metafunction of language metaredounds with propositional content. The interpersonal metafunction of language deals with interpersonal constituents/elements such as Mood and Residue structure, mood and modality as well as speaker/hearer meanings such as propositional and proposal-related meanings. Among these interpersonal constituents, the Mood structure is related

to speaker meaning and is realized by conveying propositions. The Mood structure demonstrates that the speaker meaning is syntagmatically realized by a reorganization of the mood elements: declaratives, imperatives, and interrogatives.

A functional perspective will be utilized for the purpose of this thesis in order to analyze texts — specifically creative nonfiction personal essays — through the lens of SFL.

Rationale

The purpose of this research is to track the grammar of published and student-produced creative writing, more specifically, personal essays, through the lens of four discourse analysis theories in SFL: appraisal, ideation, identification, and conjunction. These discourse semantic features will then be analyzed for patterns and divergences from patterns. SFL provides a means to examine how grammar makes meaning within the midst of a particular context. In the workshop classroom, students and teachers typically shy away from discussions of "the grammar" simply because, traditionally, grammar has been taught from a formal perspective. When grammar is divorced from meaning there is little one can say, grammatically, about the quality of a piece of creative writing, or as composition theorists call it "the global issues." However, by looking at how the grammar semantically construes both formal and functional meanings in a text, the contribution of the grammar to the overall quality of the text can also be analyzed. The grammar of a text is the foundation of a piece of creative writing; therefore, by looking at the grammar from a meaning-perspective, one can more thoroughly look at the *way* in which a piece cultivates the semogenic properties of language in particular pieces of writing, both creative and academic.

In this thesis, the discourse analysis theories chosen to analyze personal essays all thoroughly contribute to issues that are commonly cited as problematic in creative texts: flow, focus, and voice. Jauss (2003) notes the critique that a text does not flow is ambiguous due to lack of a substantial definition for the word flow. Although Jauss does state that "variety of sentence structure" (p. 3) can contribute to the flow of a text, there is no quantifiable means to track the "flow" of a text.

The theory of identification, according to Martin and Rose (2007), deals with "tracking participants – with introducing people and things into a discourse and keeping track of them once there" (p. 155). Within the theory of identification, features that contribute to discourse semantic meaning, rather than lexical meaning – pronouns, articles, and prepositions – are all tracked in a text. Closely related to the theory of identification is ideation. The theory of ideation "is concerned with how our experience is construed in discourse" (2007, p. 73). In contrast to identification, ideation looks primarily at how participants construe experience in a text, tracking how and when those participants are utilized in a text. Both identification and ideation contribute to whether or not a text feels like it has a "focus." These discourse semantic theories can provide visual chains and can show whether or not a text has a particular focus by tracking consistent participant patterns within a text.

The theory of appraisal "is concerned with evaluation – the kinds of attitudes that are negotiated in a text, the strength of the feelings involved and the ways in which values are sources and readers aligned" (2007, p. 25). Appraisal looks at lexical patterns used in a text, and can give a reader insight into how the "voice" of a particular writer is construed lexically in the grammar.

Finally, the theory of conjunction "looks at interconnections between processes" (2007, p. 115). Conjunction tracks the way in which processes are related in a text; therefore, conjunction provides discourse semantic insight concerning the way in which a text "feels like it flows."

Research Questions and Thesis Overview

Through the lens of SFL, this thesis will attempt to track patterns that emerge in a published personal essay, Joan Didion's "At the Dam," and two student personal essays, "Crushed" and "The Room." The student personal essays were evaluated by instructors of creative nonfiction by means of a rubric derived from the characteristics of a personal essay as outlined by Moore (2007) (see Appendix A). One personal essay received average scores on the rubric, whereas the other personal essay received high scores on the rubric. Each personal essay was analyzed from the following discourse analysis perspectives: Appraisal, Ideation, Identification, and Conjunction. From the analysis, this thesis attempts to provide insight into the following questions:

1) Are there patterns or features in the grammar that seem to characterize the literary genre of the personal essay?
2) What discourse semantic patterns or features emerge amongst the published personal essay, the high-ranked student personal essay, and the low-ranked student personal essay?
3) Where problems of flow, focus, and voice have been cited, are there significant patterns (or lack of patterns) that are noted in the SFL analysis?

From these questions, this thesis will attempt to provide insight into the grammatical features that are prevalent, or perhaps should be prevalent, in the literary genre of the personal essay.

REVIEW OF THE RELEVANT LITERATURE

The Personal Essay: Defined and Explored

The word *essay* is derived from the French verb *essayer*. This verb literally means, "to attempt, to test" (Lopate, 1997, p. xlii). The personal essay is experimental in nature, and is a literary genre in which the author makes an attempt to test the self on the page. Barthes describes this literary attempt as "an ambiguous genre" (Lopate, 1997, xliii). However, despite the ambiguity of the genre, the personal essay has a rich history, with forerunners that include the likes of Seneca, Plutarch, Sei Shonagon, Kenko, and Ou-Yang Hsiu. From this rich history, the personal essay has permeated the written word of many cultures and continues to be read, studied, and written in various capacities, including in present-day Western Academe.

Moore (2010) notes that, due to the personal essay's rich history, many believe "that the essay needs to be antiquated and moldy, while others claim the essay must follow a menu of one hundred creativity-destroying rules" (p. 1). Although any genre whose name is derived from a word meaning "attempt" should be anything but rigid, there are still certain parameters that seem to guide the composition of the personal essay. Lopate (1997) notes several key elements that should characterize the genre: the conversational element; honesty, confession, and privacy; the contractions and expansions of the self; the role of contrariety; the problem of egotism; cheek and irony; the idler figure; and finally, the past, the local, and the melancholy. Rather than rules that personal essayists *must* follow in order to produce a good piece of creative writing, these qualities work as descriptions of the genre as it is currently canonized. These elements

have been valued by authors of the personal essay in the past, and they serve as hallmarks of the form as a genre.

Although Moore (2010) resists "creativity-destroying rules," in Moore (2007), several guidelines are provided for writers who want to begin writing personal essays. For one, writers are advised to "find a part of the subject that present the whole" (p. 90). Therefore, the personal essay must find a specific focus, or as Gornick (2002) refers to it, "an occasion." Likewise, Moore (2007) tells writers that a personal essay must have conflict because without it "your essay will drift into static mode, repeating your initial observation in a self-satisfied way" (p. 91). Therefore, the personal essay must include tension, partially as a means for the personal essay to invoke a certain amount of flow in the essay. Finally, Moore notes that "voice is more important than ever in the personal essay" (p. 91). Lopate (1997) builds upon the idea that voice is the most necessary element in the personal essay by stating that the personal essay, "tends to put the writer's 'I' or idiosyncratic angle more at center stage" (p. xxiv). Though the essay is an "attempt," focus, flow, and voice are all features that seem to comprise the best of personal essays.

Systemic Functional Linguistics and Discourse Analysis

Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) analyzes the lexico-grammar of texts from a meaning perspective. In SFL, language and meaning are inextricably related, and the lexico-grammar is presented as a resource for meaning-making. The way in which one makes meaning is contingent upon the grammar of a text. SFL provides a theoretical lens to analyze the lexico-grammatical resources employed in varying textual genres. Different genres utilize distinct lexico-grammatical features based on the purpose and nature of the genre. When texts diverge from the lexico-grammatical features that constitute the genre's typical discourse, those texts are often poorly evaluated in school settings and, subsequently, in the world outside of school (Halliday, 1998; Bloor and Bloor, 2004; Martin and Rose, 2008; Martin and Rose, 2007; Hyland, 2004; Coffin, 2000; Lee, 2008).

The lexicogrammar is a theory of human experience and is particularly concerned with the area of language in which an individual's personal or shared experience can be construed into meaning. According to Halliday (1998), "The powerhouse of a language is its grammar – grammar is the source of energy for our semiotic encounters with each other and with our environment; observing the grammar at work helps to provide some of the perspective that critical discourse analysis demands" (p. 2). The grammar of the language permeates all strata of meaning, affecting not only the lexical level of a text, but also the text as a discursive document, categorized as a particular genre, in the midst of a specific culture.

At the clausal level, the lexicogrammar of a text has three basic metafunctions: the interpersonal, the experiential, and the textual. Bloor and Bloor (2004) note that the interpersonal metafunction is concerned with a text's ability to "participate in

communicative acts with other people" (p. 11). The experiential metafuction demonstrates a text's ability to construe "our perceptions of the world and of our own consciousness" (p. 10). Likewise, the textual metafunction relates language to "what is said (or written) to the rest of the text and to other linguistic events" (p. 11).

The three metafunctions that describe the function of language provide three separate perspectives of the ways in which language construes meaning. Each of the three metafunctions utilizes different means of looking at the grammar based on the scope of the metafunction. The interpersonal metafunction describes the lexicogrammar of clauses from an SFPCA (subject, finite, predicator, complement, and adjunct) perspective. The placement of the formal classes of words, particularly the subject and the finite, determines the way in which the clause communicates and acts upon others. In declarative clauses, the subject is placed clause-initially and the finite is placed after the subject (S^F). In imperative clauses, the subject is implied and the finite is placed clause-initially ([S]^F). Finally, in interrogative clauses, the finite is placed clause-initially and the subject is placed after the finite (F^S).

Rather than identifying the subject and the finite of a clause, the experiential metafunction is concerned with varieties of processes and participants in a clause. Within the experiential metafunction, there are 6 types of processes that can occur: material, behavioural, verbal, mental, relational, and existential. Likewise, each process has a particular type of participant that performs said process. In material processes, there are Actors, Goals, Beneficiaries, and Scopes. In behavioural processes, there are Behavers and Behaviours. In verbal processes, there are Sayers, Quoted text, and Reported text. In mental processes, there are Sensers and Phenomenons. In relational processes, there are

either Carriers and Attributes or Identifieds and Identifiers. Finally, in existential processes, there are Existents. In the experiential metafunction, by identifying particular processes and participants, the lexico-grammar construes the way in which language is acted out in time and place.

The textual metafunction provides a means by which one can break clauses into two sections: the Theme and the Rheme. In many instances, the Theme corresponds with the given information in the text, and the Rheme corresponds with the new information in the text; however, this is not always the case. The Theme ends once a Subject, Predicator, Complement, or circumstantial Adjunct occurs in a sentence. This metafunction grammatically looks at the way in which language is organized within a text.

The next strata of language, discourse, redounds with the clausal level of language. Martin and Rose (2008) identify the three social functions of discourse as follows: field (the surroundings in a text), tenor (individuals in a text), and mode (the language in a text). Out of these social functions emerge the cultural function of language: genre. Various genres serve one of two purposes: to inform or to instruct. From these two purposes emerge many different types of texts. For example, genres that serve the purpose of instructing include procedures and protocols. Likewise, genres that serve the purpose of informing include descriptions, reports, observations, recounts, narratives, and “just-so-stories.”

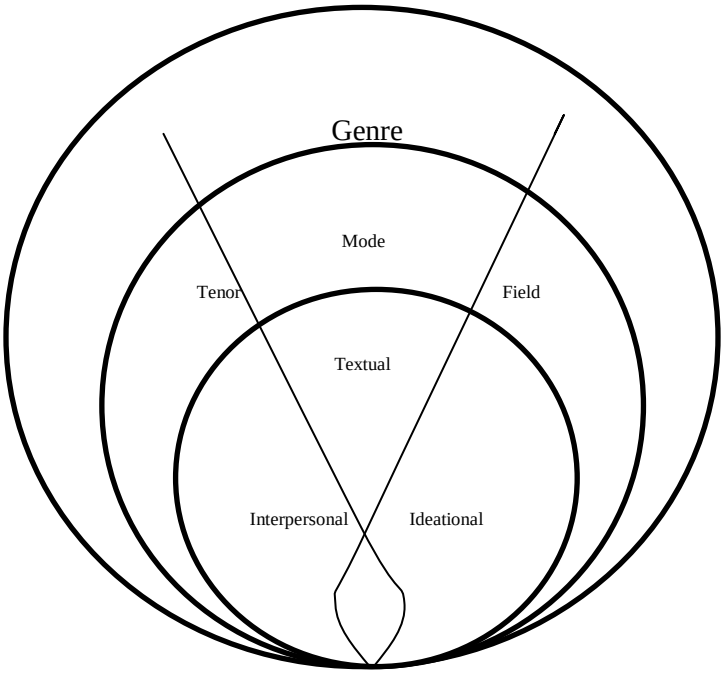

Figure 1.1: taken from Martin and Rose (2008) p. 17

Contextual meaning of a text, as defined by Martin and Rose (2007), can be analyzed in various genres through discourse semantics. Discourse analysis can be grouped into the following: appraisal (evaluation), ideation (content), conjunction (inter-connections), and identification (tracking participants). With these tools, one can evaluate the way in which genres make meaning in a particular culture. These discourse analysis theories will be explored in more detail in a latter portion of the thesis.

According to Hyland (2004) genre analysis is defined as: "a branch of discourse analysis that explores specific uses of language" (195). Genres, as a category, are much larger than texts themselves. Coffin (2000) states that history is portrayed through "two modes of representation – the narrative and argument" (196). Narrative, story-telling, may seem to be less constructive, simply following a temporal sequence. Argument, on the other hand, is shaped through a rhetorical, rather than temporal, structure. Coffin

argues, however, that both modes are equally constructive and present differing types of "truth" in historical texts. Coffin states, "narrative genres are clearly more than an objective record of the past. […] In narrative genres, however, the moralizing or interpretive apparatus is largely submerged whereas in the argumentative genres it is, to some extent, laid bare" (200). In fact, the way in which history is presented is largely dependent upon the paradigm through which the truth in history is interpreted.

Both narrative and argument can be broken down into different types of genres. In history narratives, there are the following: autobiographical recounts, biographical recounts, historical recounts, and historical accounts. Likewise, in history arguments, there are the following: exposition, challenge, and discussion. These two modes and their particular genres can be analyzed through SFL's appraisal theory. In narratives, the extension of a temporal structure is constructed through the author's lexicogrammatical choices, and these choices must be focused on constructing causality. In history narratives, there are many examples of choices that are drawn from the system of Judgment, a subsection in the discourse analysis theory Appraisal. Judgment deals largely with the way in which a text refers to issues of social sanction and social esteem. However, in history arguments, there are many examples of choices that are drawn from the system of Engagement, also a subsection in the discourse analysis theory of Appraisal. Engagement deals largely with the way in which a text refers to issues of expectation and hedging.

Although little research has been conducted looking at student-produced creative writing from a discourse semantic perspective, significant research has been conducted that examines student-produced academic writing. Lee (2008) investigates the expression

of language in undergraduate persuasive essays using the analytical tool of Appraisal, more specifically, the system of Engagement. Lee notes that the high-graded student essays that maintain their formal tone often utilize various forms of Attitude within Appraisal. Deploying these multiple strategies, from a discourse semantic perspective, determines the success of the high-graded student essays.

Appraisal

The discourse analysis theory of Appraisal falls within the interpersonal metafunction, the metafunction that allows individuals to "participate in communicative acts with other people, to take on roles and to express and understand feelings, attitudes and judgements" (Bloor and Bloor, 2004, p. 11). Appraisal, according to Martin and Rose (2007) "is concerned with evaluation – the kinds of attitudes that are negotiated in a text, the strength of the feelings involved and the ways in which values are sourced and readers aligned" (p. 25). Within the theory of Appraisal, there are three interrelated systems through which one can look at discourse: the Engagement system, the Attitude system, and the Graduation system.

The Engagement system is concerned primarily with the way in which voice is developed within the text. Bakhtin (1981) takes the perspective that a discourse is dialogic, even if that discourse is found in a text that one traditionally views as a monologue. In a text, there can be both heterogloss and monogloss. Heterogloss is concerned with different voices, whereas monogloss is concerned with only one voice – the voice of the author. Within a heteroglossic text, one important way that an alternative voice can be introduced into a text is through modality. Halliday (1994) describes modality as the semantic space between positive or negative polarity. In SFL, modality is treated as a scalar notion. For example, the intrusion of the speaker meaning is sometimes realized with a modal verb which indicates 1) probabity, 2) usuality, 3) obligation, 4) inclination, which all can be scalarly realized as the differences between the statements "say it," "you must say it," "you should say it," and "do not say it."

The Attitude system is concerned primarily with attitudes are enhanced or diminished within the discourse. Within the Attitude system, there are three main types of attitudes that can be tracked: Affect, Judgment, and Appreciation. According to Martin and Rose (2003), Affect deals with instances in the lexico-grammar that indicate an emotional effect that is either positive or negative. An example of positive affect in the lexico-grammar would be the statement, "It **moved** me," with the process **moved** having positive affect on the speaker. Affect is concerned with the intentional feelings of a speaker, rather than with the reactions of a speaker.

Judgment is concerned with the character of people, either moral or personal. Within the realm of personal judgment, there is both admiration and criticism. Likewise, within the realm of moral judgment, there is both praise and condemnation. An example of condemnation would be, "it was **wrong** for her to ignore that man," where **wrong** functions as a condemning moral judgement.

Appreciation is concerned with the value of things, either positive or negative. For example, positive appreciation would be, "a **beautiful** necklace" where the speaker is expressing positive appreciation for the item that is the necklace. Likewise, an example of negative appreciation would be, "a **torn** relationship," where the speaker is expressing negative appreciation for the entity that is the relationship. Appreciation is concerned with the reactions of a speaker to a particular object, phenomenon, or person, rather than the intentions of a speaker.

Finally, the Graduation system looks at force and focus in the lexico-grammar of a text. When evaluating the degrees of intensity in lexico-grammatical items, this evaluation is concerned with force. Likewise, when evaluating the sharpening or the

softening in lexico-grammatical items, this evaluation is concerned with focus. Both force and focus constitute the Graduation system, and both can be amplified or de-amplified in a text.

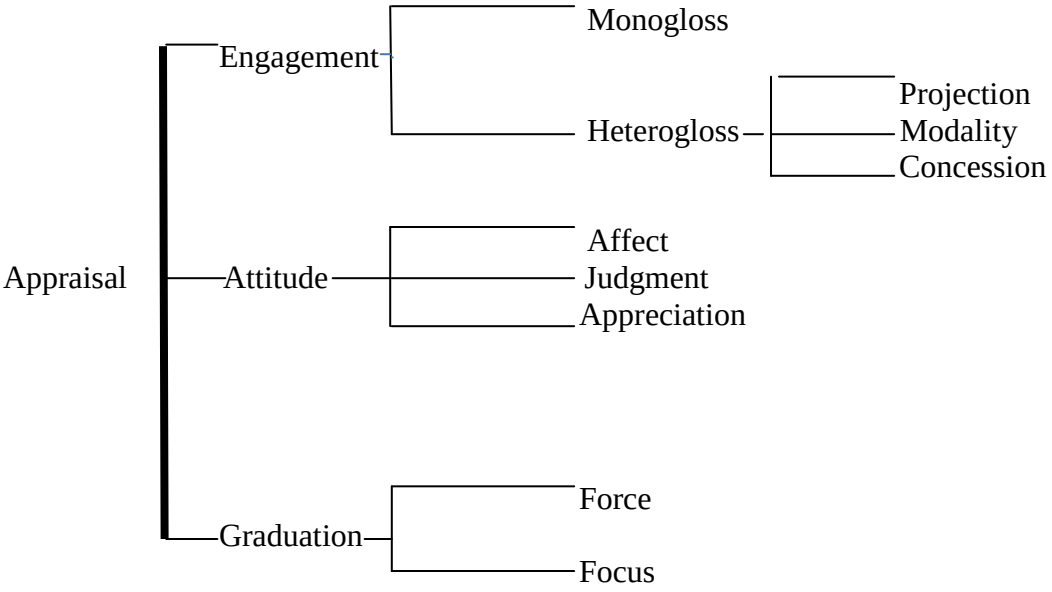

Figure 1.2: taken from Martin and Rose (2007) p. 59

Ideation

Martin and Rose (2007) describe ideation as the means by which experience is construed in a discourse. There are three main ways in which one can track the ways in which experience is construed: taxonomic relations, nuclear relations, and activity sequences. For the scope of this thesis, only taxonomic relations will be tracked in each text. Taxonomic relations demonstrate the relationship between lexical elements, specifically how lexical elements unfold in a text. These lexical elements that are tracked, in particular, are traditional nominal groups: people, places, things, and ideas.

When tracking these lexical elements, one can observe patterns of synonymy, repetition, meronymy, hyponymy. Synonymy occurs whenever lexical groups are instantially referenced in similar ways. Repetition occurs whenever the same lexical group is instantially referenced multiple times within a text. Both synonymy and repetition are used frequently in technical texts, in order to aid the reader in understanding complex ideas (Martin and Rose, 2007, p. 91). Meronymy occurs whenever lexical groups reference part to whole relationships. For example, if the lexical item “Bill” is referenced in a text, and later in the text the lexical group “his hands” is referenced, that would be considered a meronymic relationship. Finally, hyponymy occurs whenever lexical groups reference class-member relationships. Some examples of hyponyms that may occur within a text are the following: breed (in reference to dogs), make (in reference to cars), and brand (in reference to clothing).

Identification

In many ways closely related to ideation, the theory of identification deals with "tracking participants – with introducing people and things into a discourse and keeping track of them once there" (Martin and Rose, 2007, p. 155). The theory of identification is grounded in the textual metafunction, and is largely concerned with "how discourse makes sense to the reader by keeping track of identities" (Martin and Rose, 2007, p. 155). Identification is largely concerned with two functions in the text: presenting reference into a text and presuming reference from a text, if that reference is able to be recovered. When people are identified in a text, there are four resources by which they are identified: presenting, presuming, possessive, and comparative.

Likewise, whenever things are identified in a text, there are five resources by which they are identified: presenting, presuming, possessive, comparative, and text reference. There are various types of "things" that might be identified in a text. These "things" can include objects, institutions and abstractions, and text reference.

Resources for Identifying Things and People

Resources	Examples
PRESENTING	*a, an, one* *someone, anyone* *AK-47s, acid*
PRESUMING	*the; this, that; these, those* *the said purposes* *each, both; neither, either* *I, me, you she, he, it; we, us, they, them* *Helena; Section 5* *here, therewith*
POSSESSIVE	*his (twenties)* *my (girlfriends)* *Helena's (friends)*
COMPARATIVE	*same, similar, other, different, else …* *such inhumane, so inhumane, as inhumane as …*

	first, second, third; next, last; preceding, subsequent, former, latter … *more, fewer, less …* *better, best; more inhumane, less inhumane …*
TEXT REFERENCE	*this, that, it* *all my questions*

Table 1.1: Martin and Rose (2007) p. 168

Conjunction

Martin and Rose (2007) introduce the theory of conjunction as "the interconnections between processes – adding, comparing, sequencing, or explaining them" (p. 115). There are two separate divisions within conjunction: external conjunction and internal conjunction. External conjunction is concerned with the way in which grammar links processes together; therefore, external conjunction is rooted in the experiential metafunction. Internal conjunction is concerned with the way in which a text is organized, and is thereby within the realm of the textual metafunction. In both external and internal conjunction, there are four main types of conjunction: addition, comparison, time, and consequence. The follow tables provide types, sub-types, and examples for both external and internal conjunction:

External Conjunction Types and Examples

Conjunction Type	Sub-type	Examples
addition	addition alternation	*and, besides, in addition* *or, if not – then, alternatively*
comparison	similarity contrast	*like, as if, similarly* *but, whereas, on the other hand*
time	successive simultaneous	*then, after, subsequently; before, previously* *while, meanwhile, at the same time*
consequence	cause means purpose condition	*so, because, since, therefore* *by, thus, by this means* *so as, in order to; lest, for fear of* *if, provided that; unless*

Table 1.2: taken from Martin and Rose (2007) p. 122

Internal Conjunction Types and Examples

Conjunction Type	Sub-type	Examples
addition	additive alternative	further, in addition alternatively
comparison	similar different	similarly, for instance on the other hand, in contrast
time	successive simultaneous	firstly, finally at the same time
consequence	concluding countering	therefore, in conclusion, thus admittedly, nevertheless

Table 1.3: From Martin and Rose (2007) p. 133

Likewise, in both external and internal conjunction, clausal dependency can be examined. There are three main types of dependency: hypotactic, paratactic, and cohesive. An unequal dependency relation in a clause complex (independent clause joined with dependent clause) is considered to be hypotactic. Two independent clauses that are equally dependent are considered paratactic. Finally, two separate sentences that can be logically related are considered cohesive. Various types of conjunctions are present in situations of hypotaxis, parataxis, and cohesion.

Lexical Density and Grammatical Intricacy

According to Castello (2008) the lexical density and grammatical intricacy of a text quantifiably illustrate whether or not the text is spoken or written. Lexical density is calculated by dividing the number of contents words (content carrying nouns, content carrying adjectives, and content carrying verbs) by the total number of words in the text, as exemplified in the following equation:

Lexical Density = Content Carrying Lexical Items/ Total Number of Lexical Item

Likewise, grammatical intricacy is calculated by dividing the number of ranking clauses by the number of sentences in the text, as exemplified in the following equation:

Grammatical Intricacy= Ranking Clauses in Text/ Sentences in Text

Spoken text, typically, includes many pronouns, and has a low lexical density and a high grammatical intricacy. Conversely, written text includes fewer pronouns, and has a high lexical density and a low grammatical intricacy. Written texts tend to have a lexical density of over 40%, whereas spoken texts tend to have a lexical density under 40% (p. 49). These percentages are due, in part, because spoken texts are composed of more grammatical lexical items.

STUDY

Joan Didion's "At the Dam" and Student Personal Essays

For the purpose of this thesis, three essays have been chosen to be analyzed through the lenses of the aforementioned discourse analysis theories: Appraisal, Conjunction, Ideation, and Identification. Likewise, each essay's lexical density and grammatical intricacy have been calculated. Of the three essays that have been chosen for analysis, one essay, "At the Dam" by Joan Didion, has been published and anthologized in various creative nonfiction textbooks. The remaining two essays have been produced by students who have completed several creative nonfiction courses where they have read and studied model personal essays in various anthologies. The two student personal essays were chosen from a pool of fifteen personal essays submitted to undergo a workshop in an undergraduate intermediate creative nonfiction course. The two personal essays that were selected for analysis were chosen due both essays' similarities to the model, published essay. Like Didion's "At the Dam," both student essays have seemingly utilized the main topic of their essays as the titles of the essays. The first student essay, "Crushed" details a romantic history, beginning from childhood, about the author's various "crushes." The second essay, "The Room," catalogues the author's experience with depression, and contains that experience within a particular room. All three essays, therefore, have named the topic of their essay in the title of the essay. However, the way in which each author crafts his or her own experience in each essay differs significantly from one another.

Prior to analysis, the two student essays were ranked by the two instructors of the course according to a rubric that focuses primarily on issues of focus, flow, and voice

(see Appendix A). The rubric contained six separate categories, and each category was ranked on a 4-point scale (4 – excellent, 3 – good, 2 – average, 1 – needs improvement). Each essay could earn a maximum of 24 points. The two essays received the following rankings:

Instructor 1

"Crushed"

Category	**Score**
Subject/Focus	2
Structure	3
Stylistics	3
Voice	4
Transitions	3
Grammar and Spelling	4

Table 2.1

The student essay, "Crushed," received an average (2) ranking from Instructor 1 in the area of Subject/Focus. In the areas of Structure, Stylistics, and Transitions, the essay received good (3) rankings. In both Voice and Grammar and Spelling, the essay received excellent (4) rankings.

"The Room"

Category	**Score**
Subject/Focus	3
Structure	4
Stylistics	4
Voice	4
Transitions	4
Grammar and Spelling	4

Table 2.2

The student essay, "The Room," received a good (3) ranking from Instructor 1 in the area of Subject/Focus. In the areas of Structure, Stylistics, Voice, Transitions, and Grammar and Spelling, the essay received excellent (4) rankings.

Instructor 2

"Crushed"

Category	Score
Subject/Focus	2
Structure	4
Stylistics	2
Voice	2
Transitions	2
Grammar and Spelling	4

Table 2.3

The student essay, "Crushed," received average (2) rankings from Instructor 2 in the areas of Subject/Focus, Stylistics, Voice, and Transitions. In the areas of Structure and Grammar and Spelling the essay received excellent (4) rankings.

"The Room"

Category	Score
Subject/Focus	3
Structure	4
Stylistics	4
Voice	4
Transitions	4
Grammar and Spelling	4

Table 2.4

The student essay, "The Room," received a good (3) ranking from Instructor 2 in the area of Subject/Focus. In the areas of Structure, Stylistics, Voice, Transitions, and Grammar and Spelling, the essay received excellent (4) rankings.

"Crushed"

Instructor	Score
Instructor 1	19
Instructor 2	16
Combined and Averaged	17.5

Table 2.5

“Crushed” received a combined score of 19 (out of a possible 24 points on the rubric) from Instructor 1. Instructor 2 gave the essay a combined score of 16 (out of 24). The two instructors’ overall scores, combined and averaged, was 17.5.

“The Room”

Instructor	**Score**
Instructor 1	23
Instructor 2	23
Combined and Averaged	23

Table 2.6

“The Room” received a combined score of 23 (out of a possible 24 points on the rubric) from Instructor 1. Instructor 2 gave the essay a combined score of 23 (out of 24). The two instructors’ overall scores, combined and averaged, was 23.

As seen in the above tables, each essay is free from any distracting formal grammar errors. Therefore, the features that make “Crushed” a lower-ranking text are situated within the realm of global issues.

METHODS OF ANALYSIS

Discourse Analysis

Appraisal

To examine the means by which the voice of the author is construed in each personal essay, the Attitude system within the discourse semantic theory of Appraisal was employed. The Attitude system is concerned with the way in which authorial attitude is construed in a text. Within the Attitude system, there are three separate categories: Affect, Judgment, and Appreciation.

In order to apply the Attitude system to each personal essay, each attitudinal item was highlighted in all three of the personal essays. The following table highlights the number of attitudinal items in each essay:

Attitudinal Items in the Personal Essays

Essay	Total number of attitudinal items	Total number of clause complexes	Percentage of attitudinal items in each text
"At the Dam"	41	73	56%
"Crushed"	97	242	40%
"The Room"	105	272	39%

Table 3.1

"At the Dam" is composed of 73 clause complexes and has 41 attitudinal items. Therefore, attitudinal items comprise 56% of the text. "Crushed" is composed of 242 clause complexes and has 97 attitudinal items. Therefore, attitudinal items comprise 40% of the text. "The Room" is composed of 272 clause complexes and has 105 attitudinal items. Therefore, attitudinal items comprise 39% of the texts.

Each attitudinal item was then analyzed in each essay. These items were tracked by isolating Epithets, Attributes, Circumstances, and modal Adjuncts in each text. After

the attitudinal items were coded, each item was evaluated and categorized as Affect, Judgment, or Appreciation. Affect is concerned with either the intention or the reaction of the speaker, and deals with situations involving happiness, security, or satisfaction. Judgment is concerned with either social esteem or social sanction. Within social esteem, Judgment deals with normality, capacity, or tenacity. Within social sanction, Judgment is concerned with either veracity or propriety. Appreciation is concerned with a speaker's reaction to outside phenomena. These reactions include impact, quality, balance, complexity, and valuation of outside objects. The following tables illustrate the frequency of occurrences of Affect, Judgment, and Appreciation items in the texts:

Attitudinal Items in "At the Dam"

Attitudinal item	Number of instances in text	Percentage of attitudinal items
Affect	4 (41)	10 %
Judgment	14 (41)	34 %
Appreciation	23 (41)	56 %

Table 3.2

Of the 41 attitudinal items in "At the Dam," there are 4 instances of Affect, 14 instances of Judgment, and 23 instances of Appreciation. Therefore, Affect comprises 10% of all attitudinal items; Judgment comprises 34% of all attitudinal items; and finally, Appreciation comprises 56% of all attitudinal items.

An example of Affect that occurs in "At the Dam" is the word *suddenly*, as seen in the following clause:

Clause 3: "and <u>suddenly</u> the dam will materialize"

In this clause, the word *suddenly* functions as a modal Adjunct describing how the event of *the dam materializing* occurred to the speaker. This lexical item is an example of Affect because it deals with the insecurity (due to the surprise) of the speaker.

An example of Judgment that occurs in "At the Dam" is the word *innocent*, exemplified in the following clause:

Clause 19: "Hoover Dam, showpiece of the Boulder Canyon project, the several million tons of concrete [[that made the Southwest plausible]], the *fait accompli* [[that was to convey, in the innocent time of its construction, the notion that mankind's brightest promise]] lay in American engineering."

In this clause, the word *innocent* functions as the speaker's judgment of the nominal group *time of its construction*. This lexical item deals with a judgment pertaining to the normality of the nominal group.

An example of Appreciation that occurs in "At the Dam" is the word *pristine*, as seen in the following clause:

Clause 4: "its pristine concave face gleaming white against the harsh rusts and taupes and mauves of that rock canyon hundreds or thousands of miles from where I am."

In this clause, the word *pristine* functions as the speaker's positive appreciation of the *face* of the dam in relation to its composition. This lexical item is an example of Appreciation because it is concerned with the speaker's reaction to an item.

Attitudinal Items in "Crushed"

Attitudinal item	Number of instances in text	Percentage of attitudinal items
Affect	24	25%
Judgment	43	44%
Appreciation	30	31%

Table 3.3

Of the 97 attitudinal items in "Crushed," there are 24 instances of Affect, 43 instances of Judgment, and 30 instances of Appreciation. Therefore, Affect comprises 25% of all

attitudinal items; Judgment comprises 44% of all attitudinal items; and finally, Appreciation comprises 31% of all attitudinal items.

An example of Affect that occurs in "Crushed" is the word *insecure* as seen in the following clause:

Clause 62: "and [I] felt insecure"

In this clause, the word *insecure* functions as an Attribute, describing the way the speaker felt with regards to confidence. This lexical item is an example of Affect, because it deals with the insecurity (with regards to confidence) of the speaker.

An example of Judgment that occurs in "Crushed" is the word *psychotic*, exemplified in the following clause:

Clause 81: "It wasn't even really flirtatious, more just psychotic."

In this clause, the word *psychotic* functions as a judgment of an utterance previously noted in the text. This lexical item is considered Judgment because it is concerned with an individual's capacity.

An example of Appreciation that occurs in "Crushed" is the word *handsome*, as seen in the following clause:

Clause 94: "How could Peter, the perfect blend of tall, dark, and handsome, be the child of Denise, a short, squat redhead <<who resembled my imaginings of Dolores Umbridge?>>"

In this clause, the word *handsome* functions as the speaker's appreciation of the participant Peter. This lexical item is an example of Appreciation because it is concerned with the speaker's reaction to an item.

Attitudinal Items in "The Room"

Attitudinal item	Number of instances in text	Percentage of attitudinal items
Affect	15	14%
Judgment	26	25%
Appreciation	64	61%

Table 3.4

Of the 105 attitudinal items in "The Room," there are 15 instances of Affect, 26 instances of Judgment, and 64 instances of Appreciation. Therefore, Affect comprises 14% of all attitudinal items; Judgment comprises 25% of all attitudinal items; and finally, Appreciation comprises 61% of all attitudinal items.

An example of Affect that occurs in "The Room" is the word *urgent* as seen in the following clause:

Clause 37: "Wake to an urgent need to pee"

In this clause, the word *urgent* functions as an Epithet, describing the way the speaker *needed to pee*. This lexical item is an example of Affect, because it deals with the satisfaction of the speaker.

An example of Judgment that occurs in "The Room" is the word *petty*, exemplified in the following clause:

Clause 27: "the round, smooth tones of Oprah's billion-dollar voice randomly interspersed with self-conscious guests and petty commercials."

In this clause, the word *petty* functions as an Epithet judging the commercials. This lexical item is considered Judgment because it is concerned with the speaker's judgment of the normality of the commercials.

An example of Appreciation that occurs in "The Room" is the word *dank,* as seen in the following clause:

Clause 19: "The room around me was a dank, warm hole, off-white walls cloying and obtrusive in the few light bulbs left alive in my ceiling fan."

In this clause, the word *dank* functions as the speaker's appreciation of the walls. This lexical item is an example of Appreciation because it is concerned with the speaker's reaction to an item.

Ideation

Ideation is concerned with the construal of participants in a text. In each of the three essays, the participants were coded and grouped into categories. For the purpose of this ideation analysis, the participants in the essay "At the Dam" were identified and grouped under distinct headwords. These headwords include the following: the dam, the author, the Reclamation, places, time, and other items. In this ideation analysis, arrows are provided to show the way in which the Dam is construed as a participant in the text. Each participant is listed across from the clause number in which it occurred. Below is a sample of the ideation chain for "At the Dam."

"At the Dam"

Headwords	The Dam	The Author	The Reclamation	places	time	other items
1.					the afternoon 1967	
	[[the Hoover Dam]],					
	its image	my inner eye.				
2.				Los Angeles New York		
3.	the dam					
4.	its pristine concave face					
	the harsh rusts					
	taupes					
	mauves					
	that rock canyon					
				hundreds or thousands of miles		
5.				Sunset Boulevard a freeway		
6.	those power transmission towers					

7. the tailrace.

Headwords	The Dam	The Author	The Reclamation	places	time	other items
8. the intakes						
9. the shadow of the heavy cable			[[the canyon]]			
10. the ominous outlets						[unused spillways],
11.			the lunar clarity [the desert light]			
12. the turbines.						
13. [[[[the dam [[water | downstream orders]] [[lights]] [[which generators]] [[which *(generators)*]]]].			this instant, this precise intersection of time and space]],			
14. [[the dam				times places the Mindanao Trench		the stars their courses the words *the beginning* *world*]]
15. Dams commonplace:						
16. one.						
17. This particular dam an idea						
				the world's mind	forty years	

Headwords	The Dam	The Author	The Reclamation	places	time	other items
18.	Hoover Dam ↓ showpiece of the Boulder Canyon project ↓ the several million tons of concrete ↓ the *fait accompli* ↓ its construction the notion ↓ mankind's brightest promise]]			[[the Southwest]] [[the innocent time		American engineering.
19.	the dam ↓ its emotional effect ↓ that aspect ↓ that sense ↓ a monument ↓ a faith					
20.						
21.						
	a.			desert		
22.						a plaque [[the 96 men [[this first of the great high dams]]]],
23.						context the worn phrase
24.	that rust					resources the meliorative power the dynamo,
25.				the early Thirties		
26.				Boulder City << 1931 the construction town		
	the dam>> ↓ a model city					the ambience

a new town

The arrows in the ideation analysis are utilized to show how the participants pertaining to the title of the text, the dam, are taxonomically related to one another. There are various relations that participants can have in regards to one another. Some of these relations include synonymy, repetition, hyponymy, and meronymy.

Synonymy occurs whenever different lexical items are used that share approximately the same meaning. With regards to the headword "the dam," the following participants function as synonyms: *commonplace, one, an idea, showpiece of the Boulder Canyon Project, Hoover Dam, the several million tons of concrete, the fait accompli, its construction, the notion, mankind's brightest promise, a monument, a faith, this first of the great high dams, the dynamo, a model city, a world, the image, a dynamo, man, world.* Therefore, there are 20 synonyms for "the dam." Many of these synonyms occur in a chunk located between clauses 15-24.

Repetition occurs whenever the same lexical item is repeated throughout a text. "The dam," or forms of "the dam," are repeated 11 times.

Hyponymy occurs whenever different lexical items are used that show a class to member relationship. The following words are hyponyms with regards to "the dam": *the rock canyon*, *that place*, and *its absolute isolation.* Therefore, in this text, there are 3 hyponyms for the headword "the dam."

Finally, meronymy occurs whenever different lexical items are used that show a part to whole relationship. The following words are meronyms for "the dam": *its image, its pristine concave face, taupes, those power transmission towers, the tailrace, the intakes, the shadow of the heavy cable, the ominous outlets, the turbines, water,*

downstream orders, *lights*, *which generators*, *which (generators)*, *its emotional effect*, *that aspect*, *that sense*, *that rust*, *muscular citizens*, *the massive involvement*, *power*, *pressure*, *the transparent sexual overtones*, *that involvement*, *parts of the dam*, *generators*, *transformers*, *the gratings*, *a hundred-ton steel shaft*, *the water*, *the water*, *the turbines*, *power*, and *water*. Therefore, there are 34 meronyms for "the dam" in the text.

The following table highlights the number of participants related to "the dam" and how those participants are construed in the text:

Taxonomy in "At the Dam"

Taxonomy	Number of Occurrences	Percentage
Synonymy	20 (68)	30%
Repetition	11 (68)	16%
Hyponymy	3 (68)	4%
Meronymy	34 (68)	50%

Table 3.5

This table shows that in the personal essay "At the Dam," out of 68 participants related to the dam, synonyms are utilized 20 times (or 30% of the time), repetition is utilized 11 times (or 16% of the time), hyponyms are utilized 3 times (or 4% of the time), and meronyms are utilized 34 times (or 50% of the time).

The participants in the essay "Crushed" were identified and grouped under the following headwords: the crushes, the author, family, places, time, and other items. In this ideation analysis, arrows are provided to show the way in which the crushes are construed as a participants in the text. Each participant is listed across from the clause number in which it occurred. Below is a sample of the ideation chain for "Crushed."

"Crushed"

Headwords	The Crushes	The Author	Family	places	time	other items
1.		child		neighborhood	two separate times	
2.						
3.				a different house		
4.				Cedar Crest Drive		
				a home coming	the second time	
5.	my original neighborhood gang					
6.	Michael					
	Brian					
	two rough, lanky brothers					
	my best playmates.					
7.	Michael					
	Brian	my age				
8.				every sunshiny moment		
				outside		
				the time		
						breakfast
						dinner
9.					of our time	
						a little Maple
	tree					
10.						ghost stories
11.	"the Midnight Society,"					
						the Nickelodeon
						show
						"Are You Afraid of
						the Dark?"
12.					One day	
			my Papaw			
a.			"Papaw,"			

	Headwords	The Crushes	The Author	Family	places	time	other items
13.							
14.							a swing
15.							
							that tree
					back		
16.						a moment	
17.			my request.				
18.							a tire swing
19.							
20.							
21.							a wooden swing
		two people					
22.				my grandmother			
				amused glances			
				the idea			
		eight years old					
23.		Michael					a cool breeze
24.		↓					
25.							
26.		Michael					

The arrows in the ideation analysis show how the participants pertaining to the title of the text, the crushes, are taxonomically related to one another. In this text, there are instances of the follow relations: synonymy, hyponymy, and meronymy. The lexical item "crush" or forms of that lexical item are never repeated in the text, despite the title of the essay.

With regards to the headword "the crushes," the following participants function as synonyms: *Michael*, *Brian*, *two rough lanky brothers*, *Michael*, *Brian*, *two people*, *Michael*, *Michael*, *Peter*, *Peter*, *a prince*, *this boy*, *this boy*, *those cartoon characters*, *one person*, *Peter*, *the perfect blend of tall, dark, and handsome*, *the child*, *the man*, *a tall, goofy fellow named Matt*, *a boyfriend*, *Matt*, *Matt*, *Matt*, *the man*, *Matt*, *Matt*, *the*

professor, professor, and *this genius man*. Therefore, there are 30 synonyms for "the crushes."

The following words are hyponyms with regards to "the crushes": *my original neighborhood gang, my best playmates, my age,* and *the Midnight Society [the Nickelodeon show, "Are You Afraid of the Dark"]*. In this text, there are 4 hyponyms for the headword "the crushes."

Finally, the following words are meronyms for "crushes": *his thick, black eyelashes, his head, a greeting way, his hand, his mother [the teacher, Denise, a short, squat redhead, my imaginings of Dolores Umbridge], head, his father, his beauty, his constant Monty Python references, 21, his t-shirt, the face, his insistence, whose life, our vows, our lives, our daughter, his eyes, our two year old, his easy way of speaking, an easy way, his face,* and *his whole face*. Therefore, there are 23 meronyms for "the crushes" in the text.

The following table highlights the number of participants related to "the crushes" and how those participants are construed in the text:

Taxonomy in "Crushed"

Taxonomy	Number of Occurrences	Percentage
Synonymy	30 (57)	53%
Repetition	0 (57)	0%
Hyponymy	4 (57)	7%
Meronymy	23 (57)	40%

Table 3.6

This table shows that in the personal essay "Crushed," out of 57 participants related to the crushes, synonyms are utilized 30 times (or 53% of the time), repetition is

utilized 0 times (or 0% of the time), hyponyms are utilized 4 times (or 7% of the time), and meronyms are utilized 23 times (or 40% of the time).

The participants in the essay "The Room" were identified and grouped under the following headwords: the room, the author, family, places, time, and other items. In this ideation analysis, arrows are provided to show the way in which the room is construed as a participant in the text. Each participant is listed across from the clause number in which it occurred. Below is a sample of the ideation chain for "The Room."

The Room

Headwords	The Room	The Author	People	places	time	other items
1.						
2.						
3.						
4.				high school		
5.				college		
6.		my family				
7.						the sticky strands
8.						abuse punishment
9.						the pain
10.		the new person the one others would like				
11.						
12.		the sound of my mother's words				
	a.					
	b.					

13. a path
14.
15.

Headwords	The Room	The Author	People	places	time	other items

16.
17. a black computer chair
18.
19. the screen
20. The room
    a dank, warm hole
    off-white walls
    the few light bulbs
    my ceiling fan
21. The fan the heat
22.
23.
24.
25.
26.
27. The television
28. the round, smooth tones of Oprah's billion-dollar voice
    self-conscious guests
    petty commercials.
29. four

the afternoon

The arrows in the sample ideation analysis are utilized to show how the participants pertaining to the title of the text, the room, are taxonomically related to one another.

In this text, there are instances of the follow relations: synonymy, repetition, and meronymy. There are no instances of hyponymy in the text.

With regards to the headword "the room," the following participants function as synonyms: *a dank, warm hole and a place.* Therefore, there are 2 synonyms for "synonyms."

Repetition occurs whenever the same lexical item is repeated throughout a text. "The room," or forms of "the room" are repeated 12 times.

Finally, the following words are meronyms for "the room": *off-white walls, the few light bulbs, my ceiling fan, the fan, the door, the door, the lock, the heating vents, a window, my bed, objects, the floor, the window, the screen, the knobs, the window, my door, my bed, my posters, the walls, the mounting squares, sections of the paint and drywall paper, the knobs, my windows, my bed,* and *the creamy, all-encompassing walls of my room.* Therefore, there are 26 meronyms for "the room" in the text.

The following table highlights the number of participants related to "the room" and how those participants are construed in the text:

Taxonomy in "The Room"

Taxonomy	Number of Occurrences	Percentage
Synonymy	2 (40)	5%
Repetition	12 (40)	30%
Hyponymy	0 (40)	0%

Meronymy	26 (40)	65%

Table 3.7

This table shows that in the personal essay “The Room,” out of 40 participants related to the room, synonyms are utilized 2 times (or 5% of the time), repetition is utilized 12 times (or 30% of the time), hyponyms are utilized 0 times (or 0% of the time), and meronyms are utilized 26 times (or 65% of the time).

Identification

Identification is concerned with the way in which resources are identified in a particular text. There are five means by which resources can be identified in texts: presenting, presuming, possessive, comparative, and text reference. The follow tables detail the number and means of identified resources in each personal essay:

Identified Resources in "At the Dam"

Resources	Number of Instances in Text
PRESENTING	34
PRESUMING	126
POSSESSIVE	13
COMPARATIVE	0
TEXT REFERENCE	22

Table 3.8

In the essay "At the Dam," there are 34 instances of identified resources that fall under the category of presenting; there are 126 identified resources that fall under the category of presuming; there are 13 identified resources that are considered possessive; there are no identified resources considered comparative; and finally, there are 22 identified resources that are considered text reference.

Identified Resources in "Crushed"

Resources	Number of Instances in Text
PRESENTING	58
PRESUMING	295
POSSESSIVE	79
COMPARATIVE	2
TEXT REFERENCE	44

Table 3.9

In the essay “Crushed,” there are 58 instances of identified resources that fall under the category of presenting; there are 295 identified resources that fall under the category of presuming; there are 79 identified resources that are considered possessive; there are 2 identified resources considered comparative; and finally, there are 44 identified resources that are considered text reference.

Identified Resources in “The Room”

Resources	Number of Instances in Text
PRESENTING	37
PRESUMING	300
POSSESSIVE	82
COMPARATIVE	5
TEXT REFERENCE	47

Table 3.10

In the essay “The Room,” there are 37 instances of identified resources that fall under the category of presenting; there are 300 identified resources that fall under the category of presuming; there are 82 identified resources that are considered possessive; there are 5 identified resources considered comparative; and finally, there are 47 identified resources that are considered text reference.

Overall Identified Resources

Personal Essay	Number of Identified Resources
“At the Dam”	195
“Crushed”	478
“The Room”	471

Table 3.11

The essay “At the Dam” contains 195 identified resources overall. The essay “Crushed” contains 478 identified resources. Finally, the essay “The Room” contains 471 identified resources.

The following table statistically highlights the percentage of "presenting" resources, with regards to the total number of identified resources.

Percentage of Presenting Resources

Personal Essay	Number of Presenting Resources	Total Number of Identified Resources	Percentage
"At the Dam"	34	195	17%
"Crushed"	58	478	12%
"The Room"	37	471	8%

Table 3.12

In the personal essay "At the Dam," there are 34 presenting resources out of a total of 195 identified resources; thus, presenting resources compose 17% of all of the resources in the text. Likewise, in the personal essay "Crushed," there are 58 presenting resources out of a total of 478 identified resources; therefore, presenting resources compose 12% of all of the resources in the text. Finally, in the personal essay "The Room," there are 37 presenting resources out of a total of 471 identified resources; thereby, presenting resources compose 8% of all of the resources in the text.

Conjunction

Conjunction is concerned with the way in which processes are interconnected. There are two types of linking conjunctions that relate to texts: external and internal. External conjunctions deal with organizing various processes in a text, and thus contribute to the flow and structure of a text. Internal conjunctions deal with the organization of the actual text. There are four conjunction types within external conjunctions: addition, comparison, time, and consequence. Likewise, within those four types of external conjunctions, there are various sub-types. Within addition, there are two sub-types of conjunctions: addition and alternation. Within comparison, there are two sub-types: similarity and contrast. Within time, there are two sub-types: successive and simultaneous. Finally, within consequence, there are four sub-types: cause, means, purpose, and condition. Likewise, there are four conjunction types within internal conjunctions: addition, comparison, time, and consequence. Within addition, there are two sub-types: additive and alternative. Within comparison, there are two sub-types: similar and different. Within time, there are two sub-types: successive and simultaneous. Finally, within consequence there are two sub-types: concluding and countering (Martin and Rose, 2007). In the following tables, the types and sub-types of conjunctions used in each text are detailed:

"At the Dam" External Conjunction Types and Sub-types

Conjunction Types	Sub-type	Number of Instances
addition	addition	12
	alternation	3
comparison	similarity	1
	contrast	5
time	successive	7
	simultaneous	1
consequence	cause	0
	means	0
	purpose	0

	condition	0

Table 3.13

In the essay "At the Dam" there are 15 instances of conjunctions that fall under the category of addition. Within that category, there are 12 instances of the sub-type addition, and there are 3 instances of the sub-type alternation. Within the category of comparison, there are 6 instances of conjunctions. Within that category, there is 1 instance of the sub-type similarity, and there are 5 instances of the sub-type contrast. In the category of time, there are 8 instances of conjunctions. There are 7 instances within the sub-type successive, and there is 1 instance within the sub-type simultaneous. Finally, within the category of consequence, there are 0 instances of any conjunctions in the text. In this text, there are a total of 29 external conjunctions.

"At the Dam" Internal Conjunction Types and Sub-types

Conjunction Types	Sub-type	Number of Instances
addition	additive alternative	0 0
comparison	similar different	0 0
time	successive simultaneous	0 0
consequence	concluding countering	0 0

Table 3.14

In the essay "At the Dam" there are no instances of internal conjunction types or sub-types. See Appendix B for a complete conjunction analysis of "At the Dam."

"Crushed" External Conjunction Types and Sub-types

Conjunction Types	Sub-type	Number of Instances
addition	addition alternation	30 0
comparison	similarity	0

	contrast	8
time	successive simultaneous	15 10
consequence	cause means purpose condition	8 0 0 0

Table 3.15

In the essay “Crushed” there are 30 instances of conjunctions that fall under the category of addition. Within that category, there are 30 instances of the sub-type addition, and there are 0 instances of the sub-type alternation. Within the category of comparison, there are 8 instances of conjunctions. Within that category, there are no instances of the sub-type similarity, and there are 8 instances of the sub-type contrast. In the category of time, there are 25 instances of conjunctions. There are 15 instances within the sub-type successive, and there are 10 instances within the sub-type simultaneous. Finally, within the category of consequence, there are 8 instances of conjunctions in the text. Within the sub-type of cause, there are 8 instances of conjunctions. However, within the sub-types of means, purpose, and conditions, there are no instances of conjunctions. In this text, there are a total of 71 external conjunctions.

“Crushed” Internal Conjunction Types and Sub-types

Conjunction Types	Sub-type	Number of Instances
addition	additive alternative	0 0
comparison	similar different	0 0
time	successive simultaneous	2 0
consequence	concluding countering	0 1

Table 3.16

In the essay “Crushed,” there are 3 instances of internal conjunction types and sub-types. There are no instances of addition or comparison. There are two instances of the conjunction type time. Within the sub-type successive, there are two instances of conjunctions; however, there are no instances of simultaneous conjunctions. There is one instance of a conjunction with the conjunction type consequence. Within the sub-type concluding, there are no instances of conjunctions, while in the sub-type countering, there is one instance of a conjunction. See Appendix C for a complete conjunction analysis of “Crushed.”

“The Room” External Conjunction Types and Sub-types

Conjunction Types	Sub-type	Number of Instances
addition	addition	26
	alternation	5
comparison	similarity	0
	contrast	18
time	successive	20
	simultaneous	7
consequence	cause	4
	means	0
	purpose	2
	condition	0

Table 3.17

In the essay “The Room” there are 31 instances of conjunctions that fall under the category of addition. Within that category, there are 26 instances of the sub-type addition, and there are 5 instances of the sub-type alternation. Within the category of comparison, there are 18instances of conjunctions. Within that category, there are no instances of the sub-type similarity, and there are 18 instances of the sub-type contrast. In the category of time, there are 27 instances of conjunctions. There are 20 instances within the sub-type successive, and there are 7 instances within the sub-type simultaneous. Finally, within the

category of consequence, there are 6 instances of conjunctions. Within the sub-type of cause, there are 4 instances of conjunctions. Within the sub-type of purpose, there are 2 instances of conjunctions. However, within the sub-types of means and conditions, there are no instances of conjunctions. In this text, there are a total of 82 external conjunctions.

"The Room" Internal Conjunction Types and Sub-types

Conjunction Types	Sub-type	Number of Instances
addition	additive alternative	1 0
comparison	similar different	0 0
time	successive simultaneous	2 0
consequence	concluding countering	0 0

Table 3.18

In the essay "The Room" there are 3 instances of internal conjunctions. There are no instances of comparison or consequence conjunctions. Within the conjunction type of addition, there is one instance of a conjunction. There is 1 instance of the conjunction sub-type additive; however, there are no instances of the conjunction sub-type alternative. Likewise, within the conjunction type of time, there are 2 instances of conjunctions. There are 2 instances of the conjunction sub-type successive; however, there are no instances of the conjunction sub-type simultaneous. See Appendix D for a complete conjunction analysis of "The Room."

Conjunction in the Personal Essays

Text	Number of External Conjunctions	Number of Internal Conjunctions	Total Number of Conjunctions	Percentage of Conjunctions/Clause
"At the Dam"	29	0	29	40% (73)
"Crushed"	71	3	74	31% (242)

“The Room”	82	3	85	31% (272)

Table 3.19

Lexical Density and Grammatical Intricacy

The lexical density and grammatical intricacy of a text indicate whether the text is closer to written or spoken language. The following table illustrates the lexical density of each of the personal essays:

Lexical Density in the Personal Essays

Essay	Content-Carrying Lexical Items	Total Lexical Items	Lexical Density
"At the Dam"	482	968	50%
"Crushed"	972	2021	48%
"The Room"	1029	2100	49%

Table 3.20

In the essay "At the Dam," there are 482 content-carrying lexical items and 968 total lexical items. Therefore, the lexical density of the text is 50%. Next, in the essay "Crushed," there are 972 content-carrying lexical items and 2,021 total lexical items. Thus, the lexical density of the text is 48%. Finally, in the essay "The Room," there are 1,029 content-carrying lexical items and 2,100 total lexical items. Therefore, the lexical density of the text is 49%.

Likewise, the grammatical intricacy of a text also indicates whether the text is closer to written or spoken language. The following table illustrates the grammatical intricacy of each of the personal essays:

Grammatical Intricacy in the Personal Essays

Essay	Ranking Clauses	Sentences	Grammatical Intricacy
"At the Dam"	73	39	1.9
"Crushed"	242	114	2.1
"The Room"	272	166	1.6

Table 3.21

In the essay “At the Dam,” there are 73 ranking clauses and 39 sentences. Therefore, the grammatical intricacy of the text is 1.9. Likewise, in the essay “Crushed,” there are 242 ranking clauses and 114 sentences. Therefore, the grammatical intricacy of the text is 2.1. Finally, in the essay “The Room,” there are 272 ranking clauses and 166 sentences. Therefore the grammatical intricacy of the text is 1.6.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Appraisal and the Construction of Voice in the Personal Essay

Lopate (1997) states, "The enemy of the personal essay is self-righteousness, not just because it is tiresome and ugly in itself, but because it slows down the dialectic of self-questioning" (p. xxx). Although student personal essayists may be advised to avoid self-righteousness in content, the student's construction of a self-righteous persona should also be intentionally avoided. An essayist's persona is constructed within the voice of the text. The way in which the voice is construed, grammatically, in the text, has been analyzed through the lens of Appraisal through the Attitude system. After analyzing each of the three personal essays, the results showed that the published and high-ranked essay had few instances of Judgment and many instances of Appreciation.

Joan Didion's "At the Dam" included nearly double the amount of Appreciation than it did Judgment. Of the attitudinal items in "At the Dam," Appreciation comprised 56% of the text, whereas Judgment comprised only 34% of the text. Likewise, in the high-ranked essay, "The Room," the text included more than double the amount of Appreciation than it did Judgment. Appreciation comprised 61% of the text, whereas Judgment comprised 25% of the text.

However, the moderately ranked essay "Crushed," did not demonstrate the same pattern as the former essays. In the essay "Crushed," Judgment comprised 44% of the text, whereas Appreciation only comprised 31% of the text.

The voice of the personal essayist is paramount in the genre, perhaps even more so than in other genres of creative writing. The personal essay is less concerned with the story, the traditional narrative arc, but is more concerned with the thoughts that emerge

from the act of observation – or, as Lopate (1997) refers to it, idling. Lopate (1997) notes, "the essayist is fascinated with perception" (pp. xxxiv-xxxv), and the *way* in which an author perceives the world is construed most specifically in the lexis of the grammar. The theory of Appraisal gives individuals a means to analyze the way in which he or she constructs his or her own voice through the lexis of the text.

Although both Judgment and Appreciation have positive and negative dimensions, the scope of the systems' concerns differs greatly. The Judgment system is concerned with lexical items that contribute to a discussion of social esteem and social sanction. While evaluating Judgment items, individuals are asked the following questions: "is s/he special?; is s/he capable?; is s/he dependable?; is s/he honest?; is s/he beyond reproach?" (Martin and Rose, 2007, p. 68). Conversely, the Appreciation system includes lexical items that contribute to ideas concerning reaction, composition, and valuation of outside stimuli. When evaluating Appreciation items in a text, individuals are asked to consider the following questions: "did it grab me?; did I like it?; did it hang together?; was it hard to follow?; was it worthwhile?" (Martin and Rose, 2007, p. 69).

The questions that aid in evaluating the lexical items within the systems of Judgment and Appreciation differ in one explicit way: questions within the Judgment system deal with other-evaluation; questions within the Appreciation system deal with self-evaluation. Thus, lexical items found in the Appreciation system most specifically curtail the self-righteousness that the personal essayist must so diligently avoid.

The distinctive voice of a personal essayist is constructed, most basically, on the lexical level. By utilizing the Attitude system within Appraisal, one can more explicitly

see the type of voice than has been constructed in a text and can thus more easily revise the voice utilized in a text.

Ideation and Identification: *The Focus of a Text*

Although the personal essay does value the act of digression, authorial acts of digression should not subtract from the overall focus of the personal essay. As Lopate (1997) states, "The digression must wander off the point only to fulfill it. A kind of elaboration, it scoops up subordinate themes in passing" (p. xl). Thus, even though a personal essay might seemingly have multiple themes, the personal essayist must always return to the topic that was spurring the digression in the first place. Therefore, digressions must not occur without focus; rather, the digression must be utilized as a rhetorical tool to further develop a particular topic or idea.

In each of the three essays that were analyzed, the main focus of each of the essays was seemingly noted in the titles of the essays. In "At the Dam," the focus was the Hoover Dam; in "Crushed," the focus was the speaker's crushes; in "The Room," the focus was the speaker's room wherein she struggled with depression.

However, the visual representation of the participants that were construed in the text – the ideation chains – show different patterns of focus. In each of the ideation chains, participants were isolated within clauses, and were then grouped together by headwords. The ideation chain allows individuals to more clearly see participant "chunks" and patterns.

The ideation chain for "At the Dam" shows exquisite focus with regards to the construal of participants in the text. Each participant was grouped under one of the following headwords: the dam, the author, the Reclamation, places, time, and other items. Throughout the chain, participants grouped under similar headwords occur frequently in clauses close to one another in the text. For example, clauses 3-4 construe 5 participants,

and all of these participants are grouped under the headword "the dam." In clause 5, the four participants shift to other headwords —"places," and "time." However, in clauses 6-13, the bulk of the participants shift back to the headword "the dam." This construal of participants continues throughout the entire text, thus creating visible chunks of meaning.

Likewise, not only are these chunks of participants grouped closely together underneath the same headwords, the chunks also seem to show similar patterns with regards to the participant's relationship to the headword. There are four major classes of participant relations: synonymy, repetition, hyponymy, and meronymy. One way that "At the Dam" distinguishes itself most notably, on the level of the lexico-grammar, from the two student essays was that in each participant chunk, the relationship between the participants seemed the same. For example, in clauses 6-13, the participants grouped under the headword "the dam" were all meronyms of "the dam." Likewise, the 7 participants grouped under the headword "the dam" in clause 18 were all synonyms for "the dam." Each participant chunk distinguished itself, not simply by the size or frequency of the chunks, but by the way the construal of participants changed from chunk to chunk.

The ideation chain for the student essay, "Crushed" differs significantly from the ideation chain for "At the Dam." Each participant was grouped under one of the following headwords: the crushes, the author, family, places, time, and other items. The most notable difference in the ideation chain for "Crushed," as compared to "At the Dam," is that, although there are chunks of participants, these chunks do not occur under the headword "the crushes," or even the headword "the author"; rather, the chunks of participants occur most frequently under the headword "other items." Therefore, the

focus of the essay drifts away from both the title of the essay and the speaker herself, and into non-classifiable topics.

Though most of the participant chunks occur under the headword "other items," there are several instances of chunks under the headword "the dam." However, in these chunks, the participants are not grouped by similar participant relations. Rather, in one chunk, there are instances of meronymy and synonymy. Therefore, the discourse concerning "the crushes" feels less deliberate and less thorough.

Finally, the ideation chain for the student essay, "The Room," though not as thorough as the ideation chain for "At the Dam," is still more focused than the ideation chain for "Crushed." Each participant was grouped under one of the following headwords: the room, the author, people, places, time, and other items. Significantly sized chunks were apparent under each of the headwords.

Although all three of the essays have a similar distribution of identified resources, the essay "At the Dam," notably, has a significantly higher percentage of identified resources categorized as "presenting" than the student essays. Of all of the identified resources, "At the Dam" included 17% of presenting resources, whereas the student essays, "Crushed" and "The Room," only utilize 12% and 8%, respectively.

Presenting reference is utilized whenever a participant is first included in an essay. The larger frequency of presenting resources in "At the Dam" could be due to the varied means by which Didion references the dam. Because the dam is not just mentioned repetitively throughout the text, but rather is construed through various means – most notably, through synonymy and meronymy – the large frequency of presenting resources could very well be due to the close and varied attention that the dam receives throughout

the entire text. Rather than presenting many new participants in the essay, Didion utilizes varied means to introduce the dam, thus emphasizing the meticulous focus of the entire essay.

Conjunction and the Flow of the Personal Essay

Rather than finding contradictions in the conjunction analysis of each of the personal essays, there was a significant pattern that emerged from each of the essays: all three of the personal essays were comprised (nearly) solely of external conjunctions; there were only 6 instances of internal conjunctions, and each of those instances occurred in the student essays. External conjunctions are concerned with construing a sequence of activities in a text; internal conjunctions deal with organizing the text itself. Therefore, conjunctions, when used in the personal essay, should connect the activities that are occurring in the actual text. Conjunctions should not be utilized to connect the discourse in and of itself.

Internal conjunctions, according to Martin and Rose (2007), "have become particularly elaborated in the written mode, building on older spoken ways of meaning" (p. 133). Therefore, the lack of internal conjunctions in the genre of the personal essay may be due to one of the main elements that is valued in the personal essay: the conversational element. As Lopate (1997) states, "The conversational dynamic – the desire for contact – is ingrained in the form, and serves to establish a quick emotional intimacy with the audience" (p. xxv). Thus, whereas external conjunctions are necessary to construe participants and processes in the text, internal conjunctions, used frequently in academic texts, necessitate a flow not consistent with one of the most prominent hallmarks of the personal essay – the conversational element.

Likewise, in all three personal essays, the two types of external conjunctions that are utilized most frequently are addition and time. Very few consequence conjunctions are utilized. Again, as Lopate (1997) notes, the essay is open to digression, to the wandering

of the author's mind. The author of an essay "attempts to surround something […] by coming at it from all angles" (p. xxxviii). Therefore, the use of addition and time conjunctions allows for the essayist to textually construe many participants in space and time; the sparing use of consequence conjunctions could be due to the personal essayist's resistance to "sum up" a narrative. The goal of the personal essayist is not to find a moral to the story; rather, the goal of the personal essayist is to surround an idea, to turn it over, and to reflect upon it throughout the entire piece.

Lexical Density, Grammatical Intricacy, and the Conversational Nature of the Personal Essay

Despite one of the major hallmarks of the personal essay – the conversational element – the lexical density and grammatical intricacy of each of the personal essays demonstrated that the texts were, indeed, within the bounds of written text. According to Castello (2008), written texts typically have a lexical density above 40%; spoken texts typically have a lexical density below 40%. Each of the personal essays had lexical densities that fell within the written range. In fact, "At the Dam" had the highest lexical density – 50%. Next, "The Room" had a lexical density of 49%. Finally, "Crushed" had the lowest of the three lexical densities – 48%. Short clauses contributed to the lower lexical density of "Crushed." Therefore, the published essay actually had the highest lexical density, moving it further away from the spoken range of texts than any of the other personal essays.

Likewise, texts that have low grammatical intricacies are considered to be within the realm of written language; texts that have high grammatical intricacies are considered to be within the realm of spoken language. In this case, "The Room," the high-ranked student essay, had the lowest grammatical intricacy of the three essays – 1.6. Next, "At the Dam" had a grammatical intricacy of 1.9. Finally, "Crushed" had the highest grammatical intricacy of all three personal essays – 2.1.

This points to an important feature of personal essays: although Lopate (1997) notes that personal essays are characterized by a conversational nature, personal essays do not actually mimic literal human conversation. Personal essays, therefore, establish the conversational element through other grammatical features, such as a lack of external

conjunctions and a surplus of internal conjunctions, rather than simply by mimicking actual human conversation.

CONCLUSION

After analyzing and evaluating three personal essays with seemingly similar focuses, significant patterns emerged amongst all three essays with regard to the flow of the essays. Each of the essays demonstrates high instances of internal conjunctions and fewer instances of external conjunctions. These patterns demonstrate that the use of many internal conjunctions and few external conjunctions is a lexico-grammatical feature of the literary genre.

Likewise, there are distinct patterns that occur between the published essay, "At the Dam," and the high-ranked student essay, "The Room," but not in the low-ranked student essay, "Crushed." The Appraisal analysis notes that the speakers' voices that were constructed in both "At the Dam" and "The Room" were characterized by high instances of Appreciation and low instances of Judgment. Conversely, the Appraisal analysis shows that in "Crushed" there is an inverse pattern which includes high instances of Judgment and low instances of Appreciation. This pattern demonstrates that a speaker's resistance of a self-righteous persona should not simply be an attempt to avoid self-righteous content, but also an attempt to avoid a lexis that includes Judgment items.

Although each of the essays appeared to name their subject in the titles of the essays, the Ideation and Identification analyses demonstrated that the focus of each essay could be visualized after tracking both participants and identified resources. Perhaps most notably, "At the Dam" included significant participant chunks with regard to the dam. While "The Room" had significant participant chunks, those chunks did not occur most frequently under the headword "the room." Finally, "Crushed" had very few occurrences of any participant chunks under any of the headwords. From this lexico-grammatical

pattern, one can see that the way in which the focus of the personal essay is constructed relies closely on the grouping of participant items throughout the essay.

By examining ideation chains and their relationship to the focus of the text, one can see that the field of creative writing can pedagogically benefit from future research analyzing creative texts through the lens of SFL discourse analysis theories. Although different readers in a workshop classroom do bring various experiences and expectations to the text as they read it, the text, as a stand-alone document, should include particular features and patterns on the level of the text as a particular genre. Teaching students that focus, flow, and voice occur both on a global level, and are also developed locally, at the level of the lexis, allows students to become not only more meticulous writers and editors, but also more strategic readers.

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Appendix A: The Personal Essay rubric

The Personal Essay

CATEGORY	**4 – Excellent**	**3 – Good**	**2 – Average**	**1 – Needs Improvement**
Subject / Focus	The subject of the essay explores the nature of the self and relates the self to the rest of humanity	The subject of the essay explores the nature of the self and attempts to relate the self to the rest of humanity	The subject of the essay explores the nature of the self in the essay; however, the author does not attempt to relate the self to the rest of humanity	The subject of the essay does not explore the nature of the self
Structure	The essay includes roughly equivalent amounts of scene (narrative) and commentary (exposition)	The essay includes both scene (narrative) and commentary (exposition); however, one or the other is particularly dominant in the essay	The essay only includes either scene (narrative) or commentary (exposition)	The essay includes neither scene (narrative) or commentary (exposition)
Stylistics	The author utilizes both syntactical (sentence structure) variety and vivid language	The author utilizes syntactical variety, but does not utilize vivid language	The author utilizes vivid language but does not utilize syntactical variety	The author utilizes no syntactical variety and no vivid language
Voice	The author utilizes an authentic and intimate voice	The author attempts to utilize an intimate voice, but the voice does not feel authentic	The author's voice does not feel entirely intimate or authentic	The author's voice is neither intimate or authentic
Transitions	A variety of thoughtful transitions are used. They clearly show how ideas are connected	Transitions show how ideas are connected, but there is little variety	Some transitions work well, but some connections between ideas are fuzzy.	The transitions between ideas are unclear OR nonexistent.
Grammar & Spelling	Author makes no errors in grammar or spelling that distract the reader from the content.	Author makes 1-2 errors in grammar or spelling that distract the reader from the content.	Author makes 3-4 errors in grammar or spelling that distract the reader from the content.	Author makes more than 4 errors in grammar or spelling that distract the reader from the content.

Appendix B: Conjunction Analysis of "At the Dam"

1. Since the afternoon in 1967 [[when I first saw Hoover Dam]], its image has never been entirely absent from my inner eye.
2. I will be talking to someone in Los Angeles, say, or New York,
3. and [EXTERNAL: TIME-SUCCESSIVE] suddenly the dam will materialize,
4. () its pristine concave face gleaming white against the harsh rusts and taupes and mauves of that rock canyon hundreds or thousands of miles from where I am.
5. I will be driving down Sunset Boulevard, or about to enter a freeway,
6. and [EXTERNAL: TIME-SUCCESSIVE] abruptly those power transmission towers will appear before me,
7. canted vertiginously over the tailrace.
8. Sometimes I am confronted by the intakes
9. and [EXTERNAL: ADDITION-ADDITION] sometimes by the shadow of the heavy cable [[that spans the canyon]]
10. and [EXTERNAL: ADDITION-ADDITION] sometimes by the ominous outlets [to unused spillways],
11. black in the lunar clarity [of the desert light].
12. Quite often I hear the turbines.
13. Frequently I wonder [[[[what is happening at the dam this instant, at this precise intersection of time and space]], [[how much water is being released || to fill downstream orders]] and [EXTERNAL: ADDITION-ADDITION] [[what lights are flashing]] and [EXTERNAL: ADDITION-ADDITION] [[which generators are in full use]] and [EXTERNAL: ADDITION-ADDITION] [[which just spinning free]]]].
14. I used to wonder [[what it was about the dam that made me think of it at times and in places where I once thought of the Mindanao Trench, or [EXTERNAL: ADDITION-ALTERNATION] of the stars wheeling in their courses, or [EXTERNAL: ADDITION-ALTERNATION] of the words *As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end, amen*.]]
15. Dams, after all, are commonplace:
16. we have all seen one.
17. This particular dam had existed as an idea in the world's mind for almost forty years
18. before [EXTERNAL: TIME-SUCCESSIVE] I saw it.

19. Hoover Dam, showpiece of the Boulder Canyon project, the several million tons of concrete [[that made the Southwest plausible]], the *fait accompli* [[that was to convey, in the innocent time of its construction, the notion that mankind's brightest promise]] lay in American engineering.
20. Of course the dam derives some of its emotional effect from precisely that aspect, that sense of being a monument to a faith
21. since misplaced.
22. "They died
    a. to make the desert bloom,"
23. reads a plaque [[dedicated to the 96 men [[who died building this first of the great high dams]]]],
24. and [EXTERNAL: ADDITION-ADDITION] in context the worn phrase touches,
25. suggests all of that rust in harnessing resources, in the meliorative power of the dynamo,
26. so central to the early Thirties.
27. Boulder City, <<built in 1931 as the construction town for the dam>>, retains the ambience of a model city, a new town, a toy triangular grid of green lawns and trim bungalows, all fanning out from the Reclamation building.
28. The bronze sculptures at the dam itself evoke muscular citizens of a tomorrow [[that never came]] (=) sheaves of wheat clutched heavenward, thunderbolts defied.
29. Winged Victories guard the flagpole.
30. The flag whips in the canyon wind.
31. An empty Pepsi-Cola can clatters across the terrazzo.
32. The place is perfectly frozen in time.
33. But [EXTERNAL: COMPARISON-CONTRAST] history does not explain it all,
34. does not entirely suggest [[what makes that dam so affecting]].

35. Nor, [EXTERNAL: ADDITION-ALTERNATION] even, does energy (suggest), the massive involvement with power and pressure and the transparent sexual overtones to that involvement.
36. Once when I revisited the dam
37. I walked through it with a man from the Bureau of Reclamation.
38. For a while we trailed behind a guided tour,
39. and then [EXTERNAL: TIME-SUCCESSIVE] we went on,
40. went into parts of the dam [[where visitors do not generally go]].
41. Once in a while he would explain something, usually in that recondite language [[having to do with "peaking power," with "outages" and "dewatering,"]]
42. but [EXTERNAL: COMPARISON-CONTRAST] on the whole we spent the afternoon in a world [[so alien, so complete and so beautiful unto itself [[that it was scarcely necessary [[to speak at all]]]]]].
43. We saw almost no one.
44. Cranes moved above us
45. as if [EXTERNAL: COMPARISON-SIMILARITY] under their own volition.
46. Generators roared.
47. Transformers hummed.
48. The gratings [[on which we stood]] vibrated.
49. We watched [[a hundred-ton steel shaft [[plunging down to that place [[where the water was]]]]]].
50. And [EXTERNAL: ADDITION-ADDITION] finally [INTERNAL: TIME-SUCCESSIVE] we got down to that place [[where the water was, where the water sucked out of Lake Mead roared through thirty-foot penstocks and [EXTERNAL: ADDITION-ADDITION] finally [INTERNAL: TIME-SUCCESSIVE] into the turbines themselves]].
51. "Touch it,"
52. the Reclamation said,
53. and [EXTERNAL: ADDITION-ADDITION] I did,
54. and [EXTERNAL: ADDITION-ADDITION] for a long time I just stood there
55. with my hands on the turbine.
56. It was a peculiar moment,
57. but [EXTERNAL: COMPARISON-CONTRAST] so explicit [[as to suggest nothing beyond itself]].
58. There was something beyond all that, something beyond energy, beyond history, something [[I could not fix in my mind]].
59. When I came up from the dam that day
60. the wind was blowing harder, through the canyon and all across the Mojave.
61. Later [EXTERNAL: TIME-SUCCESSIVE] , toward Henderson and Las Vegas, there would be dust [[blowing, blowing past the Country-Western Casino FRI & SAT NITES and [EXTERNAL: ADDITION-ADDITION] blowing past the Shrine of Our Lady of Safe Journey STOP & PRAY]],
62. but [EXTERNAL: COMPARISON-CONTRAST] out at the dam there was no dust, only the rock and the dam and a little greasewood and a few garbage cans, their tops chained, banging against a fence.
63. I walked across the marble star map [[that traces a sidereal revolution of the equinox and fixes forever, <<the Reclamation man had told me>>, for all time and for all people [[who can read the stars]], the date the dam was dedicated]].
64. The star map was,<< he had said>>, for [[[[when we were all gone]] and [[the dam was left]]]].
65. I had not thought much of it
66. when he said it,
67. but [EXTERNAL: COMPARISON-CONTRAST] I thought of it then,
68. with the wind whining and the sun dropping behind a mesa with the finality of a sunset in space.
69. Of course that was the image [[I had seen always, seen it]]
70. without quite realizing [[what I saw]], a dynamo finally free of man,
71. splendid at last in its absolute isolation,
72. transmitting power
73. and [EXTERNAL: ADDITION-ADDITION] releasing water to a world [[where no one is]].

Appendix C: Conjunction Analysis of "Crushed"

1. I lived in the same neighborhood two separate times as a child,
2. moving away
3. and then [EXTERNAL: TIME-SUCCESSIVE] moving back, only in a different house.
4. Because [EXTERNAL: CONSEQUENCE-CAUSE]of that, <<when I moved on to Cedar Crest Drive for the second time>>, it was like a home coming
    a. <<when I moved on to Cedar Crest Drive for the second time>>
5. as [EXTERNAL: TIME-SIMULTANEOUS] I was returned to my original neighborhood gang.
6. Michael and Brian, two rough, lanky brothers, were my best playmates.
7. Michael was my age, Brian two years below us.
8. We spent every sunshiny moment together**,** outside from the time breakfast had been consumed until [EXTERNAL: TIME-SUCCESSIVE] we were called in for dinner.
9. Most of our time was spent in a little Maple tree,
10. usually telling ghost stories
11. and [EXTERNAL: ADDITION-ADDITION] calling ourselves "the Midnight Society," taking after the Nickelodeon show, "Are You Afraid of the Dark?"
12. One day, after much consideration, I went up to my Papaw.
    a. "Papaw,"
13. I said,
14. "I need you to buy me a swing for that tree out back."
15. He thought for a moment,
16. considering my request.
17. "I could make you a tire swing."
18. "No,"
19. I said,
20. "I want a wooden swing. One wide enough for two people to sit in."
21. He and my grandmother exchanged amused glances at the idea of me at eight years old wanting to swing with someone.
22. I envisioned Michael and I sitting side by side, riding along with a cool breeze.
23. It only made sense
24. because [EXTERNAL: CONSEQUENCE-CAUSE] I had decided
25. that, someday, Michael and I would get married.
26. Instead of my old fashioned Secret Garden type swing, I got the tire swing, a synthetic plastic one made by Little Tykes.
27. It was not big enough for two riders to share the hole,
28. but [EXTERNAL: COMPARISON-CONTRAST] one of [us] usually rode inside
29. while [EXTERNAL: TIME-SIMULTANEOUS] the other stood on the top,
30. clutching the thin yellow string <<that connected us to the tree.>>

31. The ink spilled from my pen faster than the words were formed in my head. **'**Promises, pledges of eternal love, the certainty of soul mates, and my confession that sometimes I couldn't stop staring at his thick, black eyelashes.
32. I was in love
33. and [EXTERNAL: ADDITION-ADDITION] I was telling him.
34. I sighed
35. as [EXTERNAL: TIME-SIMULTANEOUS] I signed the note,
36. then [EXTERNAL: TIME-SUCCESSIVE] folded it
37. and [EXTERNAL: ADDITION-ADDITION] slipped it into my pocket,
38. anticipation constant
39. as [EXTERNAL: TIME-SIMULTAENOUS] I waited
40. until [EXTERNAL: TIME-SUCCESSIVE] I would see Peter in the hallway
41. and [EXTERNAL: ADDITION-ADDITION] be able to expose my feelings.
42. We had met a month before, in an afterschool drama program.

43. I had been forced to go by my grandparents <<who worried that I was anti-social and depressed,>><< who wanted to make sure[that] I didn't get stuck in my habit of lurking in the attic.>>
44. Since [EXTERNAL: TIME-SUCCESSIVE] moving to Huntington,
45. I had become weird and withdrawn, the polar opposite of <<the girl they expected me to be.>>
46. Living with my grandmother intensified the problem
47. because [EXTERNAL: CONSEQUENCE-CAUSE] I blamed her for all the problems in our family,
48. mostly for shacking up with my grandfather's friend after [EXTERNAL: TIME-SUCCESSIVE] their divorce.
49. It was a constant push and pull between us,
50. she needed to be in control of everything
51. and [EXTERNAL: ADDITION-ADDITION] I needed to take it away from her.
52. To set my own terms,
53. I threw on a pair of pink cloud pajama pants with a princess t-shirt to wear,
54. petulantly defying my grandma's opinion that wearing pajamas in public was the epitome of trashy behavior.
55. I arrived at the old high school building,
56. [I] walked up to the poorly lit, musty smelling classroom class
57. and [EXTERNAL: ADDITION-ADDITION] [I] sat down in one of the forty desks crammed into the mirror lined room.
58. I adopted an air of superiority for the purpose of alienating the youngsters that surrounded me.
59. Most of the kids were only a year younger than me,
60. but [EXTERNAL: COMPARISON-CONTRAST] they were in middle school.

61. I was in high school, a freshman,
62. and [EXTERNAL: ADDITION-ADDITION] [I] felt insecure,
63. like everyone was thinking:
    a. *she doesn't belong here,*
    b. *she's too old*.
64. Looking down at the etchings of people <<who had once sat where I was now,>>
65. I didn't even notice
66. when [EXTERNAL: TIME-SIMULTANEOUS] he walked in
67. until [EXTERNAL: TIME-SUCCESSIVE] he sat down next to me.
68. Nodding his head in a greeting way,
69. he held out his hand.
70. "My name's Peter. What country are you the Princess of?"
71. I stared at him,
72. confused,
73. until [EXTERNAL: TIME-SUCCESSIVE] I remembered my stupid, sparkly shirt.
74. Why had I worn this?
75. Trying to redeem myself,
76. I answered,
77. "Bolivia. Are you a prince? Because [EXTERNAL: CONSEQUENCE-CAUSE] maybe we're betrothed."
78. As [EXTERNAL: TIME-SIMULTANEOUS] it came out of my mouth,
79. I realized
80. I wasn't clever at all.
81. It wasn't even really flirtatious, more just psychotic.
82. I had revealed way too much about myself in that moment,
83. [I] made it obvious <<how hungry I was for male attention.>>
84. Feeling heat creep into my face,
85. I turned back to the doodles on my desk,
86. vowing not to ever say something so embarrassing again.

87. In fact, I would be silent,
88. [I would] listen to this boy, but [EXTERNAL: COMPARISON-CONTRAST] not talk.
89. By not speaking,
90. I gathered a lot of information about this boy.
91. I learned <<that he was only participating in the program because [EXTERNAL: CONSEQUENCE-CAUSE] his mother was the teacher.>>
92. The news was shocking.

93. I must have looked like one of those cartoon characters whose head jerks back and forth from one person to the other in sync with an animation of a tennis match.
94. How could Peter, the perfect blend of tall, dark, and handsome, be the child of Denise, a short, squat redhead <<who resembled my imaginings of Dolores Umbridge?>>
95. I needed to meet his father,
96. to see where his beauty had come from.
97. He never responded to me
98. after [EXTERNAL: TIME-SUCCESSIVE] I gave him the love letter,
99. and [EXTERNAL: ADDITION-ADDITION] I spent weeks
100. licking my wounds,
101. tending to my broken heart.
102. Under the tree in my backyard,
103. I snuck clove cigarettes,
104. [I] wrote bad poetry about poisonous love,
105. and [EXTERNAL: ADDITION-ADDITION] [I] cried,
106. but [EXTERNAL: COMPARISON-CONTRAST] inside me I was thrilled by the depths of my heartbreak.
107. I knew
108. this was just part of the process, <<=that pain is part of love.>>
109. I reveled in it,
110. [I]wore it like a badge,
111. proud of my unrequited love.
112. Besides [EXTERNAL: ADDITION-ADDITION] , I knew somewhere out there, somewhere wandering around alone was
my real soul mate.
113. Consumed by this idea of a soulmate,
114. by sixteen I was already a serial monogamist,
115. usually fortunate enough to attract the eye of other desperate souls
116. and, [EXTERNAL: ADDITION-ADDITION] after a month or two, we'd be talking about that magic day when I was eighteen and [EXTERNAL: ADDITION-ADDITION] we could get married.
117. At seventeen I started seeing the man I would actually marry, a tall, goofy fellow named Matt.
118. While [EXTERNAL: TIME-SIMULTANEOUS] we had little in common
119. and [EXTERNAL: ADDITION-ADDITION] I didn't get his constant *Monty Python* references,
120. I liked having a boyfriend
121. and [EXTERNAL: ADDITION-ADDITION] was just grateful to have steady made plans.
122. When I was 21,
123. I married Matt.
124. On the day we decided to get married,
125. my grandmother looked me in the face
126. and [EXTERNAL: ADDITION-ADDITION] said,
127. "Brittany, I will give you five hundred dollars cash not to marry Matt."
128. I wish
129. I had taken it and [EXTERNAL: ADDITION-ADDITION] ran.
130. To be honest, I considered it.

131. Our decision to finally set a wedding date after [EXTERNAL: TIME-SUCCESSIVE] two years of engagement was the result of him cheating on me with a girl named Raven, something I found impossible to endure,
132. me ripping his t-shirt,
133. him punching me in the face,
134. and [EXTERNAL: ADDITION-ADDITION] me sleeping with someone else.
135. Out of some sort of desperation, he begged me
136. to marry him,
137. and [EXTERNAL: ADDITION-ADDITION] I accepted,
138. although [EXTERNAL:COMPARISON-CONTRAST] I didn't really understand his insistence.
139. Honestly, most of the time it didn't seem like he even liked me.
140. The truth, no sugar coating, was [[that we hated each other and [EXTERNAL: ADDITION-ADDITION] had from just after the beginning, we stayed together because I couldn't stand to be rejected, when he cheated on me I needed him more, was desperate to be good enough for him to be faithful to]].
141. To me, marriage was something that I'd listed as a goal long ago.
142. Once you got married, after all,
143. you had someone that belonged to you, whose life was intertwined with yours.
144. There would always be someone there for you.
145. Somehow, I tricked myself into thinking
146. that once we took our vows,
147. Matt and I would love each other.
148. At my wedding day, my Papaw walked me down the aisle after a phone call full of guilt tripping and tears.
149. I resisted at first,
150. not wanting to be given away.

151. Kasey, my father's younger daughter was in my wedding,
152. but [EXTERNAL: COMPARISON-CONTRAST] titleless.
153. We had one female attendant and one male attendant, each of our siblings.
154. My father's other daughter is not my sister, though;[INTERNAL: CONSEQUENCE-COUNTERING]
155. not because we only share half of the same blood, blood means nothing,
156. but [EXTERNAL: COMPARISON-CONTRAST] because we weren't raised together.
157. Her life and my life have no combining qualities.
158. There is no familial knowledge that bonds us.
159. She lived in a small house in a quiet neighborhood with parents that were happily married.
160. Her grandparents lived five miles away,
161. always available to spoil her and dote on her.
162. My mother was fifteen
163. when she had me,
164. so [EXTERNAL: CONSEQUENCE-CAUSE] I was raised by my grandparents.
165. Our father, the only factor that seemed to unite us, was the biggest division of all
166. because [EXTERNAL: CONSEQUENCE-CAUSE] he was a different father to each of us.
167. To Kasey, our father was the man that married her mother, tucked her in at night, and [EXTERNAL: ADDITION-ADDITION] was there when she needed help.
168. To me, he was the man who would pop up sporadically, give me the hope that things were going to be different, then [EXTERNAL: TIME-SUCCESSIVE] just as suddenly disappear again.
169. When it happened,
170. I pretended to be fine,
171. used to it,

172.but [EXTERNAL: COMPARISON-CONTRAST]I would spend weeks wondering what I had done that he wouldn't be that father to me.
173.After [EXTERNAL: TIME-SUCCESSIVE] the wedding, nothing changed, except that our lives grew more separate.
174.I went to Marshall
175.while [EXTERNAL: TIME-SIMULTANEOUS] he slept most of the day
176.and, [EXTERNAL: ADDITION-ADDITION] when I got home from school
177.he was just leaving for work.
178.I loved school,
179.loved the way people just got to think about things, then [EXTERNAL: TIME-SUCCESSIVE] talk about those thoughts.
180.Only one class gave me any problems: IT 101.
181.Computers made no sense to me,
182.they were too closely related to the demon math,
183.and [EXTERNAL: ADDITION-ADDITION] I struggled.
184.One day I ran late,
185.rushing around
186.trying to get dressed
187.while [EXTERNAL: TIME-SIMULTANEOUS] I fed Zoe in her ocean wonders highchair.
188.Mascara and eyeshadow cluttered the sink in my bathroom
189.and [EXTERNAL: ADDITION-ADDITION] my hairspray was nowhere to be found.
190.Rousing Matt,
191.I had him come in him
192.and [EXTERNAL: ADDITION-ADDITION] help me feed our daughter
193.so [EXTERNAL: CONSEQUENCE-CAUSE] that I'd be on time.
194.He tripped
195.as [EXTERNAL: TIME-SUCCESSIVE] he wandered out,
196.rubbing his eyes.
197.It was after two when he had finally made it home the night before.
198.Irritated about being woken up,
199.he went into the kitchen
200.and [EXTERNAL: ADDITION-ADDITION] made himself breakfast,
201.ignoring me
202.as [EXTERNAL: TIME-SUCCESSIVE] I continued to nag him about helping me.
203.Finally [INTERNAL: TIME-SUCCESSIVE] I sat down
204.and [EXTERNAL: ADDITION-ADDITION] prodded food into our two year old,
205.hoping against hope
206.I would get to school in time,
207.nagging with each push of the fork.
208.Finally [INTERNAL: TIME-SUCCESSIVE] it got to be too much,
209.went too far,
210.and [EXTERNAL: ADDITION-ADDITION] Matt walked over to me.

211.He rubbed something into my hair, something thick and disgusting.
212.I reached up,
213.grabbing at it.
214.He had rubbed fucking peanut butter into my hair
215.when I was late for school.
216.I hated him.
217.Never since then have I been so glad to walk out the door
218.and [EXTERNAL: ADDITION-ADDITION] get away from someone.
219.I sat at my desk,
220.elbows propped
221.and [EXTERNAL: ADDITION-ADDITION] hair in my eyes,
222.listening to the professor talk.

223.He was telling the class about an event that the English department was having at Ritter Park downtown.
224.Urging us all
225.to come
226.in his easy way of speaking,
227.I considered it.
228.If nothing else,
229.it would be an easy way to get to know him on a more personal level,
230.maybe impress him in some way.
231.This fantasy was like a bitter lie salvation, my way of escaping what was real.
232.*Are you going to be there, professor*?
233.I asked, schoolgirl coy, a flash of fluttering eyelashes and twirling hair.
234.He smiled at me
235.and [EXTERNAL: ADDITION-ADDITION] nodded,
236.his face lit up.
237.Did that mean something, the way he seemed to smile with his whole face?
238.I made a mental note
239.to watch the way he responded to others.
240.*Someday*, <<I thought>>, <<as [EXTERNAL: TIME-SIMULTANEOUS] I listened to this genius man talk>>, *someone will love me*.

Appendix D: Conjunction Analysis for "The Room"

1. I remember thinking
2. it would be so easy.
3. Grow up,
4. graduate high school,
5. go to college.
6. Leave my family behind.
7. Scrape off the sticky strands
8. of what we were never to call abuse, only punishment.
9. Peel away the pain of always being *wrong*
10. and [EXTERNAL: ADDITION-ADDITION] find underneath the new person, the one others would like,
11. would want to be around.
12. Find a way to drown out the sound of my mother's words.
    a. "People don't like you.
    b. You can't make friends."
13. Embrace a path
14. that was entirely mine and [EXTERNAL: ADDITION-ADDITION]not meant to belong to anyone else.
15. I remember thinking that.
16. I sat on a black computer chair,
17. slowly allowing it to swivel back and forth beneath me
18. as I studied the screen.
19. The room around me was a dank, warm hole, off-white walls cloying and obtrusive in the few light bulbs left alive in my ceiling fan.
20. The fan itself did nothing to help the heat,
21. instead spreading it around, thick and heavy,
22. weighing me down.
23. Everything weighed me down.
24. I pitied myself
25. when I wasn't busy feeling ashamed.
26. The television blared behind me,
27. the round, smooth tones of Oprah's billion-dollar voice randomly interspersed with self-conscious guests and petty commercials.
28. That made it four in the afternoon.
29. The shows marked the hours.
30. Wake to *The Golden Girls* around one.
31. Eat too much and not enough at all
32. while [EXTERNAL: TIME-SIMULATANEOUS] consuming *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* at two.
33. Stay steady until *Oprah*,
34. then [EXTERNAL: TIME-SUCCESSIVE] use it as background noise to fuel obsessive surfing of the internet and a driving need to connect with the only people left to me: online friends.
35. Until, of course, *Gilmore Girls* came on at five.
36. Six and seven, take a nap to the sounds of *Reba*.
37. Wake to an urgent need to pee,
38. at which point the television is muted
39. so [EXTERNAL: CONSEQUENCE – CAUSE] that, crouching near the door, the sounds of your roommates might filter in.
40. If they're moving,
41. stay still.
42. If [EXTERNAL: CONSEQUENCE-CONDITION] they're silent,
43. run across the hallway to quickly urinate.
44. Don't wash your hands.

45. Washing hands gives them more time to hear you, to find you.
46. Dart back into your room
47. and [EXTERNAL: ADDITION-ADDITION]close the door.
48. Turn the lock.
49. Feel safe.
50. Shows rotate through the eight, nine, and ten o'clock slots.
51. Eleven is for *The Daily Show*.
52. After [EXTERNAL: TIME-SUCCESSIVE] that, pick whatever can be found to support wakefulness until, perhaps, five or six a.m.
53. Don't think about sleeping.
54. Thinking about sleeping forces it away.
55. Instead [EXTERNAL: COMPARISON-CONTRAST], ignore it
56. until [EXTERNAL: TIME-SUCCESSIVE] it attacks you,
57. takes you down.
58. Sucks you into a place
59. where your brain creates the programs
60. and [EXTERNAL: ADDITION-ADDITION] all you can do is watch.
61. The first year wasn't as bad as the second.
62. In the first, I was in a dorm.
63. I had no choice but [EXTERNAL: COMPARISON-CONTRAST] to interact with other people: my roommate, my resident assistant, the girls on my floor.
64. I would walk to my grandparents,
65. exercise with my aunt and cousin,
66. attend meetings as a member of the dorm council.
67. I wasn't well
68. but [EXTERNAL: COMPARISON-CONTRAST] I was active.
69. I wasn't normal
70. *(won't drink,*
71. *won't flirt,*
72. *won't screw,*
73. *won't smoke,*
74. *won't miss her shows)*
75. but [EXTERNAL: COMPARISON-CONTRAST] I was available.
76. I was seen.
77. Then [EXTERNAL: TIME-SUCCESSIVE] came the summer and the frustration of being thrust back into my parents' house with no understanding of how to express myself.
78. That summer is a mist of half-light and dust clouds in my memory.
79. I don't want to call it back.
80. There's nothing there worth witnessing.
81. I moved into a townhouse with two girls I considered my best friends.
82. Sarah and Becca.
83. I sat them down on the first day as [EXTERNAL: TIME-SIMULTANEOUS] we all moved in,
84. unsure how to broach the topic,
85. knowing I needed to.
    a. "I'm depressed.
    b. I mean, I have clinical depression.
    c. I'm taking medicine,
    d. but – " [EXTERNAL: COMPARISON-CONTRAST]
86. And [EXTERNAL: ADDITION-ADDITION] then a shrug.
87. Shrugs always help.
88. Their reactions were sympathetic, understanding.
89. They shared their stories.
90. They'd been sad before.
91. They'd taken medicine.
92. They knew it was hard,

93. but [EXTERNAL: COMPARISON-CONTRAST] it was going to be okay.
94. They'd be there for me.
95. They'd look out for me.
96. I smiled at them
97. and [EXTERNAL: ADDITION-ADDITION] knew, with their help, I would make it through this.
98. The board on the refrigerator glowed a translucent blue.
99. It slapped at me as [EXTERNAL: TIME-SIMULTANEOUS] I looked up,
100. trying to decide if I wanted popcorn chicken or [EXTERNAL: ADDITION-ALTERNATION] to make the drive to a nearby Hardee's.
101. Oblong shapes were drawn on the dry erase surface,
102. the marker pinned to its side like a soldier at attention.
103. I studied the shapes.
104. Frisbees?
105. Discs?
106. There were numbers beside them.
107. I couldn't tell what they meant
108. until [EXTERNAL: TIME-SUCCESSIVE] I saw the writing.
    a. "Thirteen dishes.
    b. Take your shit to the sink."
109. I spun,
110. panicked,
111. all the blood in my body sucked toward my center,
112. holding me in place.
113. The sink was full.
114. I should've seen that the sink was full, full of my dishes, full of my shame and pain and dirt and filth. Full of me.
115. But [EXTERNAL: COMPARISON-CONTRAST] I had stumbled around, unaware,
116. until [EXTERNAL: TIME-SUCCESSIVE] the sharpness of that blue.
117. That sick, simple blue.
118. They had been in my room.
119. They had seen me.
120. They had judged me.
121. They had found me.
122. And [EXTERNAL: ADDITION-ADDITION] found me wanting.
123. After [EXTERNAL: TIME-SUCCESSIVE] that, a lot of things began to be labeled or [EXTERNAL: ADDITION-ALTERNATION] written on the board for me.
    a. "Trash goes in the trash cans!"
124. was penned with a helpful drawing of a stick figure placing the bags in bins
125. a few days after [EXTERNAL: TIME-SUCCESSIVE] I attempted to clean my room
126. but [EXTERNAL: COMPARISON-CONTRAST] was unable to muster the energy to take the three giant black bags of castoffs farther [INTERNAL: ADDITIVE-ADDITION] than the hallway.
127. I ran out of milk
128. and, [EXTERNAL: ADDITION-ADDITION] at two in the morning, used some from someone else's gallon to wet my cereal.
129. The next day,
130. after [EXTERNAL: TIME-SUCCESSIVE] they left
131. and [EXTERNAL: ADDITION-ADDITION] I crept downstairs,
132. I opened the fridge to find <<"SARAH'S MILK. BUY YOUR OWN!">> in bold block letters on the jug with a line marking the level of the milk.
133. Telling my grandparents, who lived in town, about it later, [EXTERNAL: TIME-SUCCESSIVE]
134. I laughingly said
    a. I would buy a gallon and [EXTERNAL: ADDITION-ADDITION] put <<"FOR ANYONE!">> on it.

135.But [EXTERNAL: COMPARISON-CONTRAST] I knew that I wouldn't.
136.And [EXTERNAL: ADDITION-ADDITION] I didn't.
137. I meekly bought my milk
138. and [EXTERNAL: ADDITION-ADDITION]slid it in behind theirs.
139.There was no need to draw attention to myself.
140.I lusted after being invisible.
141.The days dripped past
142. and [EXTERNAL: ADDITION-ADDITION]bled into one another,
143.soaking into the paper of my mind
144. until [EXTERNAL: TIME-SUCCESSIVE] it all seemed a uniform gray.
145.I lived like an animal,
146.crouched in a burrow,
147.afraid of the predators outside.
148.My room was packed with the things I felt I needed for survival.
149.Clothes lay in piles thick and deep,
150.islands of furniture randomly popping up in the sea of cotton and denim.
151.Hampers sat empty of their intended contents,
152.instead [EXTERNAL: ADDITION-ALTERNATION] overflowing with books, trash, towels; and, on occasion, dishes.
153.I ate in secret,
154.cowering away from the other animals,
155.and [EXTERNAL: ADDITION-ADDITION] would only take dishes back to the kitchen
156.when it felt safe.
157.It was rarely safe.
158.The clothing and paper insulated the room
159. until [EXTERNAL: TIME-SUCCESSIVE] it was saturated with warmth.
160. I attempted to block the heating vents
161. as [EXTERNAL: CONSEQUENCE-CAUSE] they couldn't be closed,
162.but [EXTERNAL: COMPARISON-CONTRAST] my coverings were shoddy.
163.My only release was a window,
164.cranked open to allow the sharp autumnal breezes to burst into the room.
165. I would push my bed forward,
166.grinding over objects strewn on the floor,
167.and [EXTERNAL: ADDITION-ADDITION] lay in front of the window,
168.desperate for air.
169.Sometimes I fell asleep that way and woke, hours later, pleasantly frozen and stiff.
170.I would press cold fingers to the screen
171. until [EXTERNAL: TIME-SUCCESSIVE] its pattern was indented on my skin.
172.I didn't know they didn't like the cold
173. or [EXTERNAL: ADDITION-ALTERNATION] that it was seeping outside my room
174. until [EXTERNAL: TIME-SUCCESSIVE] they removed the knobs from the window.
175. I came home to find them gone,
176. unscrewed from their moorings and hidden away.
177.Instead [EXTERNAL: CONSEQUENCE-PURPOSE] of confronting them,
178.airing grievances I had
179. and [EXTERNAL: ADDITION-ADDITION] allowing them to speak
180. about the ones I knew they harbored,
181.I locked my door
182. and [EXTERNAL: ADDITION-ADDITION] sat with my back to it,
183.keeping the world out,
184.and [EXTERNAL: ADDITION-ADDITION] cried.
185.The heat was already paralyzing,
186.making it difficult for me to move.
187.So [EXTERNAL: CONSEQUENCE – CAUSE] I slumped down,
188.head pillowed on dirty t-shirts and sweaters,
189.and [EXTERNAL: ADDITION-ADDITION] woke at midnight

190.to find temporary scars running in heavy lines down my cheek.
191.I left the room in April.
192.I had gone home in December,
193.refused to talk about school until after [EXTERNAL: TIME-SUCCESSIVE] Christmas,
194.then [EXTERNAL: TIME-SUCCESSIVE] was forced into a therapy session with my dad
195. who convinced me, against [EXTERNAL: CONSEQUENCE-CAUSE] the cautioning of my psychologist, to go back for the spring semester.
196.I believed I could do better
197.than [EXTERNAL: COMPARISON-CONTRAST] I had been doing.
198.Within a week of returning to the townhouse, I had reverted back to where I'd been before the break:
199.skipping class,
200.sleeping during the day
201.but [EXTERNAL: COMPARISON-CONTRAST] never at night,
202.hiding from my roommates who I hadn't talked to directly in months,
203. only leaving to drive through fast food restaurants
204. or [EXTERNAL: ADDITION-ALTERNATION] spend Sunday with my grandparents, for whom I made an effort to look normal.
205.Eventually [INTERNAL: TIME-SUCCESSIVE] even that was too difficult
206. and [EXTERNAL: ADDITION-ADDITION] I began to make excuses
207. as [EXTERNAL: CONSEQUENCE-PURPOSE] to why I couldn't see them.
208.The room was my only resource.
209.Sanctuary and prison, I allowed the scared safety I felt there to trap me
210. until, [EXTERNAL: TIME-SUCCESSIVE] finally, [INTERNAL:TIME-SUCCESSIVE] even it no longer sufficed.
211.I escaped to the arboretum
212. where my parents were engaged.
213. It was frigid, the March wind chill and biting.
214. I wandered the paths,
215.having never been there before,
216.studying the trees that stood tall and still and enclosing.
217.The dirt was moist beneath my feet,
218.my steps lightly sinking before [EXTERNAL: TIME-SUCCESSIVE] springing away again.
219.I couldn't remember
220.when I'd showered last.
221.I had just received an email from the Honor's Program
222.telling me I was failing all of my classes.
223.On some level, I was already aware of that;
224.it's impossible to pass when you haven't been on campus yet that semester.
225.I unzipped my jacket to feel more of the wind
226.that was no longer allowed in my room sweep under the heavy cloth and rush away.
227.The panic set in.
228.My breathing halted,
229.stuttered out.
230.Tears fell, unstoppable,
231.but [EXTERNAL: COMPARISON-CONTRAST] there were no sobs;
232. instead, [EXTERNAL: COMPARISON-CONTRAST] my mouth gaped open, tongue extending, eyes wide and blank.
233.Vaguely, I was aware
234.there were two other people moving through the trees
235.but [EXTERNAL: COMPARISON-CONTRAST] they saw me and [EXTERNAL: ADDITION-ADDITION] stopped,
236. turned around the other way.
237.My fingers curled and clenched,
238.my shoulders tightened.

239. I fell to the ground as [EXTERNAL: TIME-SIMULTANEOUS] my knees gave out,
240. the wet immediately streaking through my jeans and underwear, into my skin.
241. The shock of it made me jerk back,
242. slapping my head solidly against the trunk of a tree.
243. Pain blasted through my skull,
244. wrapping it in deafening waves of agony.
245. But [EXTERNAL: COMPARISON-CONTRAST] at least it started my breathing again.
246. I sat there for a few minutes, maybe half an hour.
247. My hands, <<now unwieldy with the penetrating cold>>, reached into my jacket pocket,
248. pulled out my cell phone.
249. It took only a few rings before [EXTERNAL: TIME-SUCCESSIVE] connecting with my mom.
    a. "You have to come get me.
    b. You have to."
250. Words <<that I'd held back for months>> spilled into the empty air.
251. She tried to talk
252. but [EXTERNAL: COMPARISON-CONTRAST] I drowned her out.
    a. "You don't know –
    b. you don't know what it's been like here,
    c. what's been happening to me.
    d. I can't live here.
    e. I can't be here.
    f. I'm failing everything,
    g. you're going to hate me,
    h. I can't do this,
    i. I need help,
    j. please.
    k. Please come get me,
    l. don't make me stay here.
    m. Please.
253. It was silent.
254. Then, [EXTERNAL: TIME-SUCCESSIVE]
    a. "Let me call your father.
    b. We'll be there this weekend.
    c. And [EXTERNAL: ADDITION-ADDITION] Erin – "
255. I waited.
    a. "Try to relax."
256. I went back to the room
257. and [EXTERNAL: ADDITION-ADDITION] fell into my bed.
258. In a few days, I would stay up for thirty-six hours, hysterical
259. as [EXTERNAL: TIME-SIMULTANEOUS] I tried to wade through the mess in anticipation of my family's arrival.
260. The look on my father's face <<when he saw me for the first time since December>> would mark the only time I witnessed him seem scared.
261. They would be blandly, politely cheerful
262. as [EXTERNAL: TIME-SIMULTANEOUS] they allowed me to sit in stained pajama pants
263. while [EXTERNAL: TIME-SIMULTANEOUS] they packed up my things,
264. threw away eight overflowing bags of trash.
265. We would rip my posters from the walls, the mounting squares tearing away sections of the paint and drywall paper underneath.
266. My father would ask what happened to the knobs on my windows
267. and [EXTERNAL: ADDITION-ADDITION] I wouldn't have an answer.
268. My mother would take me to my grandmother's house,
269. where we spent the night,

270. and [EXTERNAL: ADDITION-ADDITION] both of them would gently encourage me to take a shower.
271. But [EXTERNAL: COMPARISON-CONTRAST] that day, <<the day I had finally laid myself bare>>, I remained motionless on my bed, books wedged beneath me,
272. and [EXTERNAL: ADDITION-ADDITION] stared at the creamy, all-encompassing walls of my room.